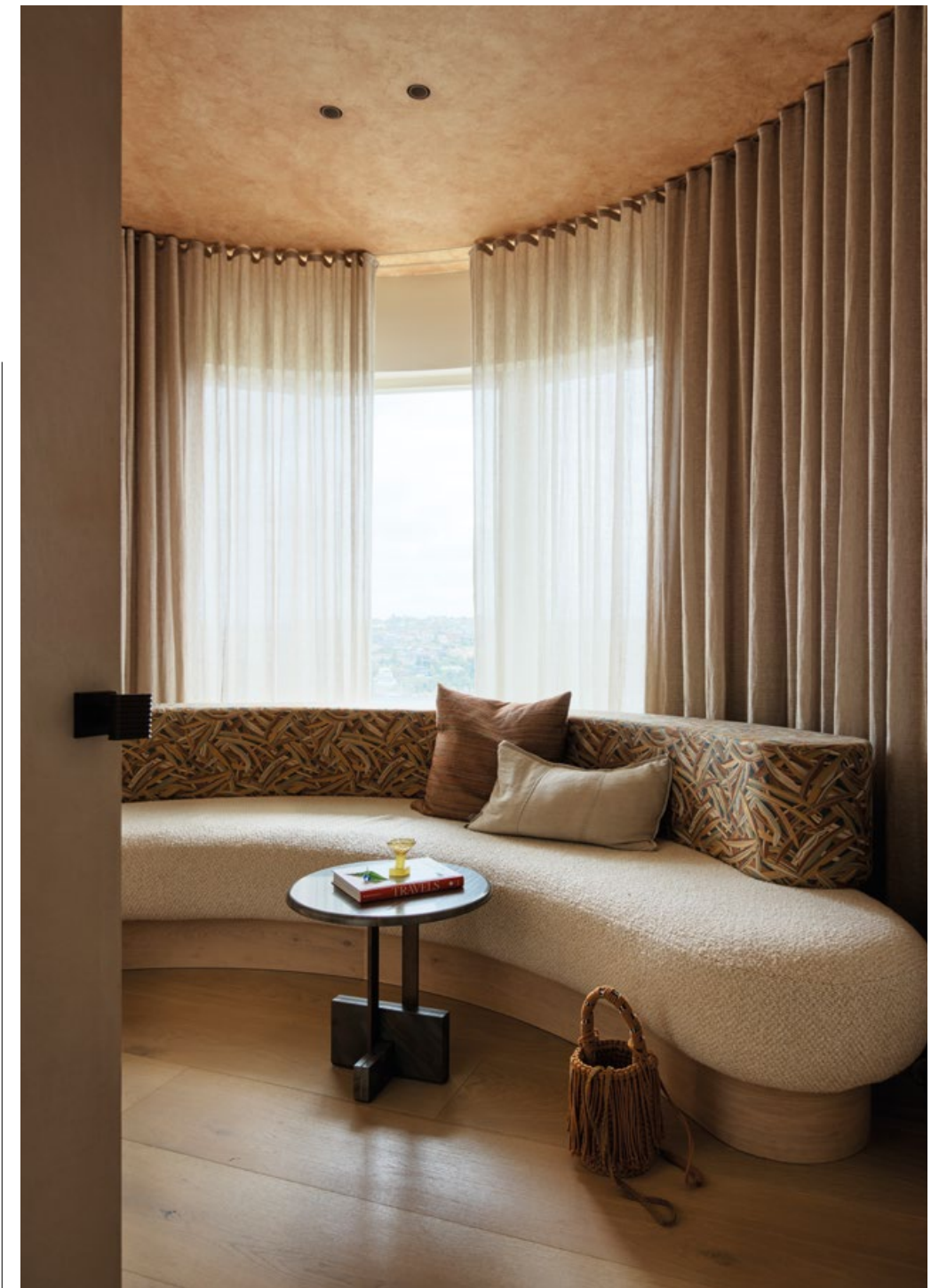


ROUGH DIAMOND



INTENSITY AND CONTROL ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE, AT LEAST NOT IN THIS RENOVATED FAMILY HOME IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. AS A DIRECTIVE, YSG STUDIO WAS TOLD BY THE CLIENTS THAT THEY WANTED TO COME HOME TO WHAT FEELS LIKE A BOUTIQUE HOTEL. THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF BOLDNESS AND VARIETY IN TEXTURES HERE, WHICH IS CLEAR FROM THE FIRST STEPS INSIDE.

With Black Diamond as its name, it is not surprising that this project has a profile full of expression. The concept had to be opulent without crossing the line with excess. Previously, the property was wrapped in grey walls and the layout felt oppressive. At the time, the outdoor spaces were not a smoothly integrated part of the house and the view of the city did not quite come into its own. With three floors, there was a lot of room at hand to turn this into something completely different. YSG Studio transformed the residence into a renewed idea full of assets and a logical and uninhibited floor plan. Founder Yasmine Ghoniem has gathered a very diverse and skilled team behind her since the beginning. With roots in Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil and elsewhere, the experts together form a structured hodgepodge of insights, contributions, and experiences. Ghoniem herself draws on an instinct for adventure. Her childhood years had nomadic overtones, as she grew up scattered across Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Sydney. With her visionary flair, design seems the most logical career today, but her former trajectory is also coloured by other interests. That is to say, she spent several years in the mu-





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sic and dance industry, but eventually she shifted her focus to interior design. In 2013, she partnered with landscape architect Katy Svalbe and together they founded Amber Road. In just a few years, the initiative would grow into one of Australia's most renowned studios. Eventually she felt the itch to start something in her own name and develop her strengths even more, so in 2020 she took the plunge to put YSG Studio on the map. With her own multidisciplinary agency, she brings architecture, interior design, and curation together under one name. Since then, she has rightly received several awards for her work, and together with her staff, she put her shoulders to the wheel on this phenomenal renovation project.

PUZZLING WITH THE FLOOR PLAN

Apart from the carefully developed atmosphere of the house, several structural modifications took place. These were necessary to appropriately tailor the property to the needs of its occupants and better fulfil its potential. The primary living space is located on the second floor. First, the decision was made to add a part of the interior area to the terrace. Previously, in fact, there was a glass alcove that extended outside, awkwardly dividing the available outdoor space into two. That structure was scaled back and replaced with more user-friendly sliding glass doors. In addition, two central partitions were removed





Originally, the second floor had a separate powder room. That too was given a new location, and more specifically in the curve of an existing wall near the kitchen. On top of that, Ghoniem deliberately thought about entertaining guests. On the balcony, therefore, there is a built-in barbecue connected to the inside thanks to a pass-through window. However, there were still elements on the

so that the floor plan inside could be arranged more logically. The interior walls were replaced in the form of steel planes that serenely blend with the space. For extra support, they added a teal column, as well as a canary yellow and a neutral pole. This floor accommodates cooking, eating, and relaxing. Although the space retains an airy feel, the construction with the open shelves serves as a subtle boundary between the dining room and the TV corner. At the same time, the sightlines remain intact, and the dynamic is still very open.

upper floor that called for a change. One is the master suite, where originally there was not enough closet space and the navigation lacked logic. Initially, the walk-in closet was only accessible through the ensuite bathroom; as a solution, the team created a new entrance from the bedroom itself. Furthermore, space was reserved for a wooden desk. Another separate bedroom serves exclusively as a private office from now on. On the ground floor, below the central living areas, are the children's room and the laundry room, among others.





The former was reduced in size to enlarge the latter. There is also a guest room that is now directly linked to the bathroom. Finally, in the outdoor area it was decided to clearly carry through the idea of a boutique hotel. An inviting lounge complete with a fire pit makes this concrete, as does the swimming pool with round contours. Here, residents can stretch out on a matching lounge bed that extends over the water, reminiscent of an image from retro times in Palm Springs.

NODS ALL AROUND

Those who want to reap success sometimes must be daring when putting together their palettes. In terms of colours, Black Diamond unites warm shades with colder tones. As the name rightly suggests, the home contains several examples of black elements and applications. In the living space, tiles in this colour adorn the TV wall and the kitchen island displays a dark marble stone. Yet the dominant effect is one of calm and relaxation. At the same time, the home needed to be challenging enough in terms of textures and touches. Glass bricks, different stones and smooth woods are some examples. Scattered throughout the floors, the designer placed seating with a variety of finishes, including bouclé wool in the master suite and

a mix of wool and alpaca in the lounge area. Also note the colour accents that beg for attention. For the living room, the team took inspiration from teal accents; these also go smoothly with the combination of the shimmering black mosaics. When you swap the living floor for the top level, you make a transition to cautious wheat and oatmeal tones. These are clearly meant to increase the calm factor and ensure the most peaceful sleep possible. In the ensuite, a lilac colour references the Jacaranda trees surrounding the building. This is not the only nod, as the purple dining chairs on the balcony and the oyster shells in lilac are also meant to do just that.

The concept had to be opulent without crossing the line with excess



A lounge bed that extends over the swimming pool with round contours reminds of an image from retro times in Palm Springs



On the upper and lower levels, the ceilings are deliberately on the lighter side. The teal colour of before evolves in the office and guest room to dark green variants and ocean blue. Clay tiles show off on the floors; good for a natural look that is a welcome change from the wood and black tile flooring elsewhere. Although the home amply meets the needs of the clients, the studio was careful to make further deliberate additions that visually enhance the spaces. The tactical positioning of mirrors and large wooden pivot doors, for

example. Very special is the front door, which was custom-made and contains spherical notches. These refer to the home's unique gate windows, as well as the round windows in the basement door that overlook the wine collection. Even on a small scale, the designer is consistent here. For instance, the hinged doors and cabinets were given their own circular handles. Citing these attentive details, we can confidently conclude that Black Diamond is the outcome of a thorough concept vision. With the charm of a boutique hotel, YSG Studio presents residents with a design that does not shy away from using varied and distinct colours. With views of Sydney Harbour in the background, they enjoy a personal oasis here, full of a wide range of bold materials and witty combinations; each connected by a practical floor plan.

From start to finish, the studio made thoughtful choices that are intrinsically linked. As a result, the final design is a consistent feature that, despite some special factors, still guards a strong concept and does not descend into chaos. Structurally, several adjustments were necessary, but these only proved how great the experts' insight is. Conceptually, they came up with several references that made the interior hugely cohesive. Nevertheless, they ensured surprising elements in every room. Different from the rest and yet rhyming with the qualities we always look for: that is a fitting summary as far as we are concerned. Aspiring designers can definitely gain valuable insights from their successful methodology. In the future, we especially hope to see more similar styles and wish all parties involved good luck in their upcoming activities. (Text: Cara Jacobs)

Photography by Anson Smart



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