

BLUE HORIZONS

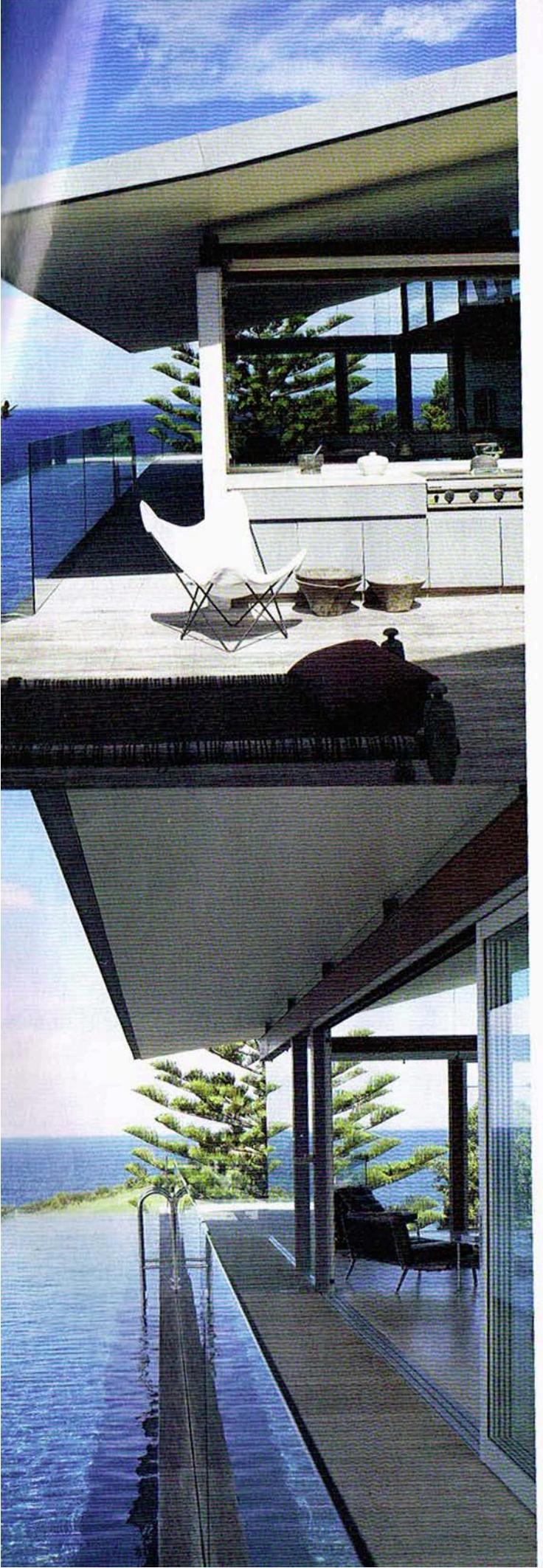
This sea-changer home in Terrigal, on the New South Wales Central Coast, is an oasis of calm, with pared-back interiors that make the most of the spectacular ocean views.

PHOTOGRAPHS PRUE RUSCOE PRODUCTION + WORDS JEAN WRIGHT



OPPOSITE PAGE The seaside theme is continued in the guest bedroom and living area, which is downstairs, directly underneath the pool. Walls are painted in Dulux Stowe White and the black coral is from My Home and Home. OPPOSITE PAGE Floor-to-ceiling glass walls maximise the sea views in the living area. Norm 'Happy' chairs by Antonio Citterio are from Uniform and the timber stool/table is from Orient House. Zebra rug from Les Interieurs.





Jorge also elevated the house to further improve the views and bring the sun all the way into the main bedroom and bathroom. This wing is situated closest to the street and is separated from the open-plan living, kitchen and dining area by the central courtyard.

"A lot of technology and engineering went into this house," says Jorge. An important – and expensive – example of this is the seamless intersection of fixed glass in the guest bedroom and living area downstairs, where the eye is transported out to nature. Details like these make one aware that the house is more complex than it looks.

The pool is a strong visual element as well as a natural insulator and its positioning was important. Running off the central courtyard, beside the living and dining area, its high-tech design is impressive. It rests on thick rubber pads to minimise vibration and the side walls have massive beams to support its cantilevered position. "Richard wanted a pool and it is a beautiful pool to be in," says Valerie, adding that she also loves going to the beach most mornings.

The house was a fresh start for Valerie and Richard. With their children grown up, they were downsizing from their previous large family home and Valerie wanted the house to be pared back and uncluttered. "We just walked out of our last place," she says. "Even stuff in the kitchen was left behind because I was excited by what was ahead."

"[Building this house] was a learning curve for both me and Jorge. I stood my ground on the things I was certain about," says Valerie. To add warmth to the guest bedroom she insisted on carpeting, as she felt there was enough concrete with the ceiling. The rest of the house, however, has heated concrete floors in a soft sandy colour, chosen as a change from the usual grey.

Throughout the house, walls are painted white and the woodwork and joinery are teak. In the kitchen, cupboards are integrated above and below the open shelves. "I'm not a hoarder," says Valerie, "but I do love my books and candles."

The only colour comes from outdoors. "That is my colour for the house," says Valerie, pointing to the sky, the water and the 40-year old Norfolk Island pine outside. "The house says it all – the light, the aspect and the strong lines. It was a case of not competing with it."

Valerie also wanted the new house to say something about her. "I like to get things right, so I would rather take my time [with the furnishings]," she says. For example she saw two brown chairs at Poliform that were perfect. "But I made the mistake of taking my husband Richard with me, hoping he would go 'wow'. Instead he sat in them and said 'bloody uncomfortable'." Later, Pamela Makin of Les Interieurs in Palm Beach suggested those same chairs, which gave Valerie the confidence to buy them.

"We achieved all the things I wanted to achieve with this house – light, sunshine, warmth," says Valerie. "I love the underfloor heating and would not be without it. The chill factor is never an issue."

"It was such a lovely project and we are all friends still – Jorge, Murray Bolton, our builder, and Michael Cooke, our landscaper. It was a great team. I would do it all again ... although that is highly unlikely!"

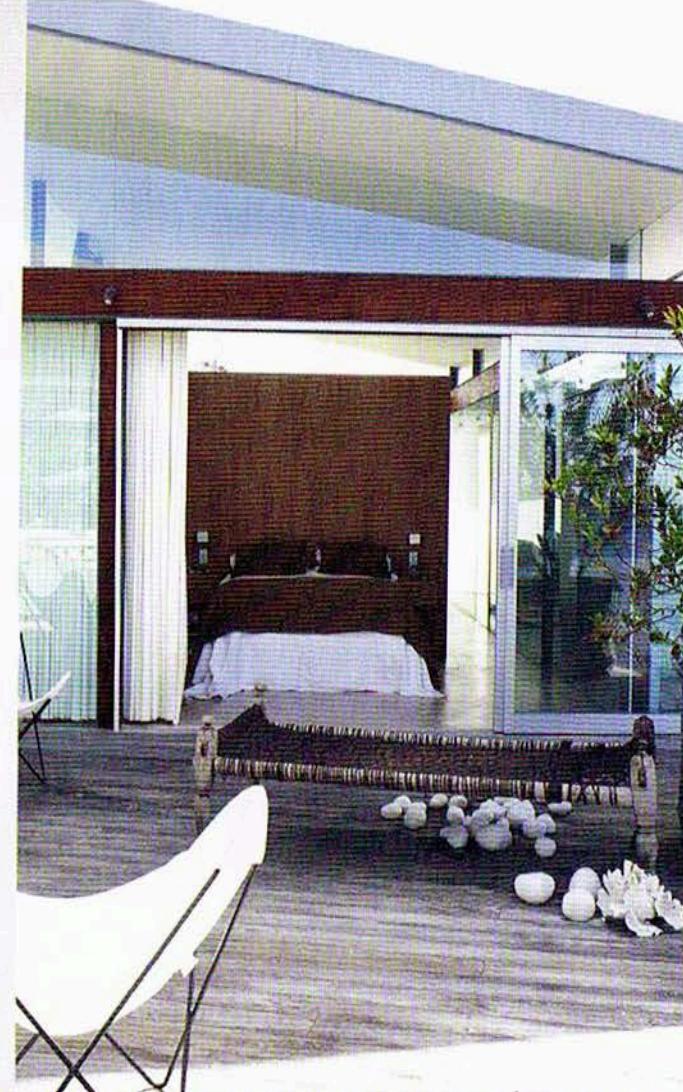


THIS PAGE Homeowner Valerie Hunter and her dogs, Phoebe and Lizzie, at the front of the house.

OPPOSITE PAGE The dramatic cantilevered pool runs alongside the living and dining area, and offers wonderful ocean views.

"I WANTED A
HOUSE THAT
WAS SOFT-EDGED
MODERN RATHER
THAN COLD
GLASSHOUSE."

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW The open-plan guest bedroom and living area has a sofa from King Furniture, and throw and pillows from Ondene. Pakistani daybed in the courtyard is from Les Interieurs. The main bathroom features a Kaldewei bath, Boffi spout, and a botanical sculpture by Tracey Deep. A sliding glass door separates the main bedroom from the bathroom; throw and pillows from Ondene.



SPEED READ Owners Valerie Hunter and Richard Haskell wanted a modern, light-filled home that was clean and uncluttered, but was also warm and reflected their personalities.

- Clever angles and glass walls make the most of the house's ocean views.
- The house looks simple, but architect Jorge Hrdina has filled it with high-tech ideas and smart engineering.