

# NATURE'S *gift*

Supported by an authentic materials palette, this getaway – just a stone's throw from Sydney – is a luxurious yet laidback home away from home.

STORY *Jackie Brygel* | STYLING *Claire Delmar* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Pablo Veiga*



**EXTERIOR** Surrounded by tall trees and beautiful vistas, this property is less than an hour's drive from the city but feels a world away. Premium Classic French pattern travertine in Oyster Grey, Artmar Natural Stone. Malmo outdoor dining chairs and outdoor lounge chairs, Coco Republic.

“You really feel like you’re in the country and miles away from everything.”

ANTONINA SCOTTI, SUKARI INTERIOR DESIGN



**E**nsconced by towering gum trees and enjoying all-encompassing views of the countryside, this rural retreat basks in its soothing green surrounds. Belying its proximity to the city – less than an hour’s drive from Sydney’s CBD – it’s impossible not to feel a connection to nature at this country lodge-style retreat. This surely rings true for its owners, a couple with three children, who escape to the property every chance they get.

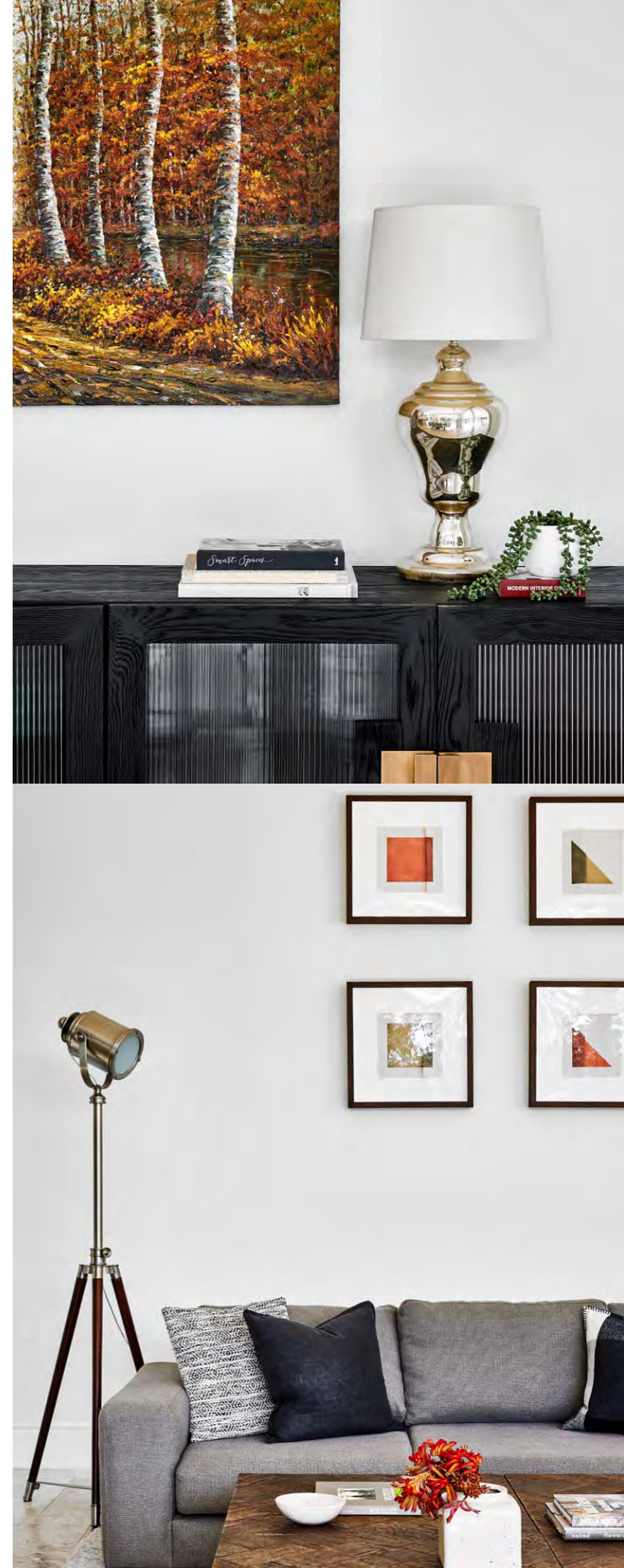
“Taking advantage of the outdoor surroundings as inspiration” was imperative to the couple when envisioning their new rural getaway. Their brief to the design team? “A country home that had a lot of space to entertain and to have views of the outside”. A long, leafy driveway flanked by ornamental pear trees leads to the house, which set on two hectares of bushland and complete with a flourishing citrus and peach orchard.

When Antonina Scotti, co-director of Sydney design studio Sukari Interior Design, first visited the property in early 2019, it was home to a nondescript, ageing house that didn’t do justice to its captivating setting. “It didn’t take advantage of the beautiful landscape,” she recalls. “The area is so lovely and quiet. It’s very peaceful and calming with no overlooking neighbours. You really feel like you’re in the country and miles away from everything.”

Bluestone Projects was engaged and the new home was constructed over a two-year period. Having worked with the owners on previous projects, Antonina quickly formed a clear understanding of their needs. “They wanted the house to be open-plan in style, with a wonderful kitchen and lovely entertaining spaces that can be opened up to the elements year-round,” she says. Indeed, while the core living domains bordered by a wraparound balcony showcase natural light and space, courtesy of soaring panelled ceilings and walls of glazing that blur the distinction between indoors and out, the home feels surprisingly intimate. And that’s just as intended.

It was imperative that the house offer a warm welcome to family and friends. And this is truly a home that ▶

**LIVING** *This page and opposite* Raylan armchairs, Pottery Barn. Montrose wood fireplace, Regency Fireplace Products. Rockface sandstone cladding (on chimneybreast), Australian Sandstone Merchants. Ella rug, Amsterdam sideboard in Drifted Matt Black and Odessa coffee table in Drifted Timber, all Coco Republic. Artworks above sofa: *Folded II Art, Angle I Art, Folded I Art, Angle II Art* all by Boyd Art, Boyd Blue. Artwork above sofa by unknown artist. Custom modular sofa.



THE PALETTE

Dulux Monument (kitchen hanging shelves and cabinetry)

Dulux Mt Aspiring (kitchen ceiling, architraves and skirting boards)

Dulux Vintage Linen (kitchen walls)



Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

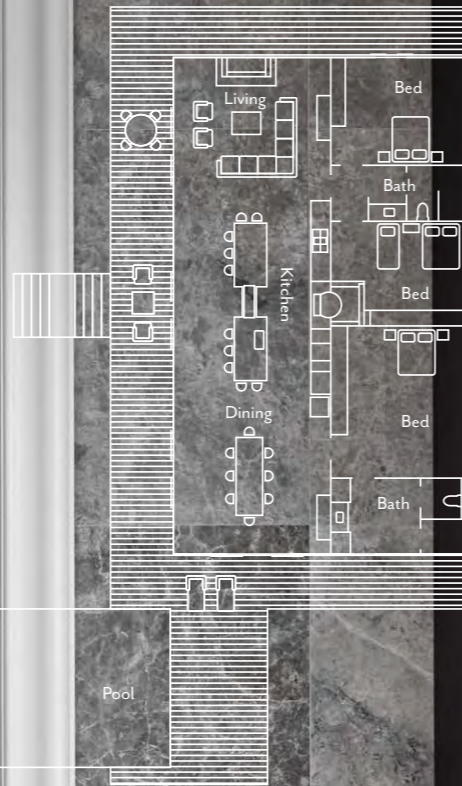


**KITCHEN/DINING** Oslo dining table and Malmo outdoor dining chairs, Coco Republic. Arteriors 'Tuttle' vases, Boyd Blue. Valoriani Top120 wood-fired oven, The Pizza Oven Store. Rockface sandstone cladding, Australian Sandstone Merchants. Shelving above bench joinery and custom commercial rangehood in Dulux Colorbond Monument. Bankston 'Cali' drawer pulls and 'Bronte' cupboard knobs, Keeler Hardware. Quartzite Lava Black benchtop, Gitani Stone. Joinery in Navurban Toorak timber veneer, New Age Veneers. French door refrigerator, Samsung. Libera kitchen mixer, Parisi.

**THIS IS THE LIFE**

While this serene country lodge brims with style and sophistication, its robust finishes ensure it is a no-fuss sanctuary. "It was important to keep everything as low-maintenance as possible," says Antonina. "The kitchen benchtops are natural quartzite in a leathered finish that isn't polished or honed – you see all of the grooves and marks; it's very durable and practical." ▶

THE LAYOUT



brings people together, making entertaining a breeze. “The owners have Italian heritage and they love to cook.”

Several alfresco zones beckon from the interior. The main outdoor room, with its pitched ceiling and classic columns is of a majestic size, while another sweeping covered domain overlooks the pool. “We selected the same travertine pavers for the outdoor area as indoors, to keep the connection seamless,” says Antonina.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen Antonina proved that thinking out of the box was the key to an inspired result. “The owners wanted a barbecue in the kitchen, but that requires a large, commercial-grade rangehood,” she explains. “That would have been a bit of an eyesore in the middle of the room, so I had to come up with something different.” Her design solution? A bespoke rangehood deftly housed within an expansive custom steel shelving unit suspended dramatically above the island bench. “The unit is practical, and can also be used to display wine bottles and hanging plants – and it hides the huge rangehood. We powder-coated the hanging shelves in Dulux Monument, with the same paint colour also used on the cabinetry. I love a challenge, and this turned out really well – everyone loves it.”

Connection with organic materials was another important consideration for the interior designer. Purist in its finishes, the home’s earthy base palette of tactile timber and natural stone – travertine, limestone and sandstone – sits harmoniously in the spaces. “The decor is very natural and neutral, with the earthy tones broken up by pops of white, black and rust,” says Antonina. “For me, it was a joy to work on this home. The owners were very open to suggestions. It’s a timeless home, and one in which you feel very comfortable.”

Little wonder the owners can’t imagine ever parting with their beautiful country sanctuary. “We will love this home and have it for generations to come,” they say. ▶

*Sukari Interior Design, Pymble, NSW; sukaridesign.com. Bluestone Projects, Dural, NSW; (02) 8403 4049. Exotic Nurseries & Landscaping, Dural, NSW; exoticnurseries.com.au. Caprice Kitchens, Galstone, NSW; 1800 166 266. Gitani Stone, Seven Hills, NSW; gitanistone.com.au.*

**BATHROOM** *This page* Italian Grey Tumbled tile, Teranova. Pebble outdoor wall sconce, Coco Republic. Feature wall in Premium Classic travertine in Oyster Grey, Artmar Natural Stone. Engineered-stone vanity top, Gitani Stone. Tole mixer tap, Parisi. **MAIN BEDROOM SUITE** *Opposite* Platinum Plush carpet in Shell, Victoria Carpets. Barolo side table, Coco Republic. Custom bed upholstered in Warwick Fabrics ‘Malabar Nickel’.





“It’s a timeless home and one in which you feel very comfortable.”

ANTONINA SCOTTI, INTERIOR DESIGNER

**COURTYARD** Wyatt concrete stool/side table, Malmo outdoor sunloungers, outdoor dining chairs and outdoor lounge chairs, all Coco Republic.



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## THE SOURCE

*Earthy tones offset by natural and neutral decor come to life with pops of black, white and rust.*



Produced by Joshua Morris.

1 Blythe **candleholder**, \$54.95, Oz Design Furniture. 2 Gubi ‘Timberline’ **floor lamp**, \$1180, Cult Design. 3 Gebrüder Thonet Vienna ‘Bodystuhl’ **dining chair**, \$2130, Space. 4 Daisy wool-polyester **rug** in Ivory/Multi (300x240cm), \$1960, Hali. 5 Designer Boys Art *Botanical Bliss III* **wall art**, \$599 (framed), Hamptons Style. 6 Billy **bowl**, \$620, Greg Natale. 7 Hermitage **dresser**, \$5295, Coco Republic. 8 St Germain **candle**, \$199, Ralph Lauren Home. 9 Amalfi adjustable **outdoor chair**, POA, Janus et Cie. *For Where to Buy, see page 192. H&G*