

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

When a sweet but tired 1950s beach shack with absolute water frontage came up for sale, architect Harry Poulos just knew he could turn it into a dreamy family holiday home...

STORY *Elizabeth Wilson* | STYLING *Georgia Poulos* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Scott Burrows*



Breakfast on the deck is served with fresh sea air and the sound of waves lapping on the shore. The all-new decking is made from blackbutt. Aluminium louvres, Bradnam's Windows & Doors. Dining setting and deckchairs, The Bach Living. Pink tableware, Country Road.

H&G AT HOME WITH

Brisbane architect Harry Poulos and his wife Georgia adore the beach. Queensland born and raised, they both grew up holidaying by the ocean and share a love of salty air, sand between the toes and horizons of blue-on-blue.

They've always enjoyed family getaways on the Gold Coast and had often fantasised about owning a holiday home on that famous stretch of golden sand. A couple of years ago they began casually casting around for a place where they could create an escape for themselves, their daughters Lauren, 21, and Demi, 18, and the family pooch Winston (Winnie), a tan-coloured groodle.

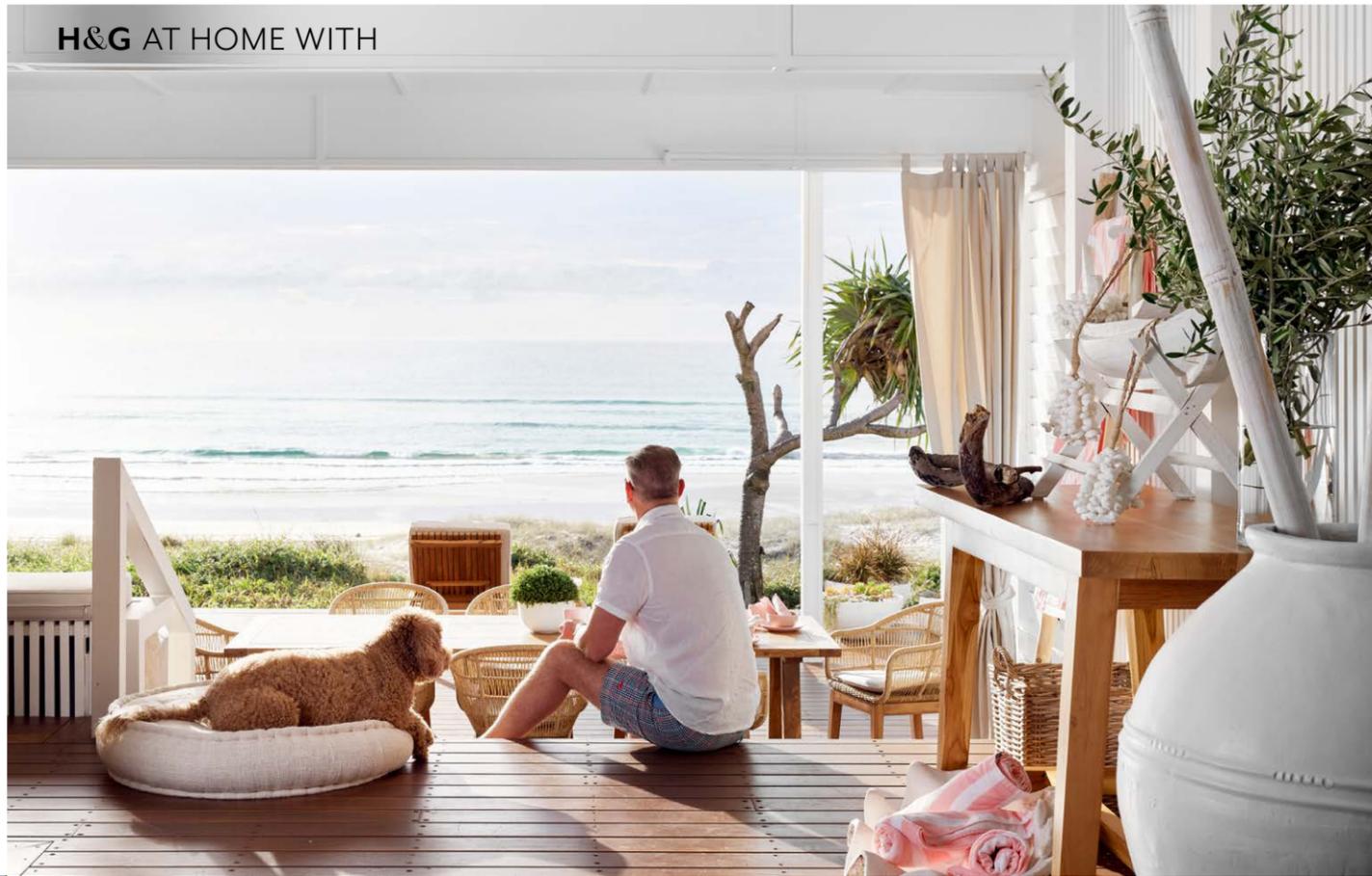
Property sales are rare along the waterfront strip, so when a 1950s cottage came on the market last year, they snapped it up. "Everyone else who saw it, wanted to knock it down," says Harry. "It was a classic beach shack and it needed work, but it was in a wonderful location elevated off the street with direct access to the beach."

One of the original dwellings in the area, the three-bedroom fibro home had seen better days, but it had many endearing qualities Harry knew could be reimaged. The sweetest of these was a 1990s extension by former Brisbane architectural firm Donovan Hill. This included an upper-floor main bedroom opening onto a timber viewing platform - like a crow's nest on a ship - offering stunning views up and down ▶



Harry paid homage to the home's 1950s origins by designing a carport with V-shaped detailing combined with stone walling and crazy paving. **BELOW LEFT** The revived exterior features new cladding and decking. **BELOW RIGHT** Entry to the property is along this side walkway: "As visitors walk along there they see the pandanus palm and the ocean - the beach is the entry to the house" says Harry. **OPPOSITE** The 'crow's nest' viewing platform is perched on stilts.





Harry designed upper and lower decks with multiple seating options for family and guests. Two sets of bifolds and a large sliding door all open up, blurring the line between inside and out. New timber battening echoes the original detailing. Bodega stone cladding, Eco Outdoor. Timber armchairs, Abide Interiors. White side tables, Uniqwa Collections. Chunky throw, Adairs. **OPPOSITE** Georgia and Harry with their beloved goodie Winnie and their stunning beach backdrop. Console table, Uniqwa Collections. Large white pot, The Bach Living. Vintage boat sculpture. ▶



the beach. The steel frames underneath were corroded and the timber decking was rotten, but again these were not an impediment to Harry's vision.

Harry and Georgia bought the home in November with an audacious time frame in mind: they wanted to renovate in six weeks and be in it for Christmas Day. Harry had been working up the plans and documentation before the purchase, and enlisted builder Daniel Klinge of Klinge Constructions to carry out the works. "We gutted it right back to bare studs," says Harry. All the asbestos fibro sheeting was removed and the corroded steel frames under the 1990s extension were replaced. In keeping with the beach house vernacular, Harry opted to clad the exterior in James Hardie's Scyon Linea fibre-cement weatherboards.

Interestingly, he also used the same material for the interior walls in the kitchen/dining area, to provide some texture in that space. New solid-oak floors went in and larger windows (double-dipped in a powdercoating to cope with the coastal location) installed throughout.

The layout was renewed too. Previously, the entry was on the left-hand side of the home but this has been eschewed. "We didn't want a front door," says Harry. "We wanted the house to be casual, so now people are directed down the side of the house and they arrive at the beach first- it's a lovely way to enter the home." Visitors proceed via a side walkway which is covered with a white-painted arbour designed by Harry so that it frames a view of a pandanus palm and the ocean beyond. ▶

"IT'S A FAMILY HOME AND VERY CASUAL SO I WANTED IT TO LOOK CLEAN AND WHITE BUT NOT STARK." Georgia Poulos



To warm up the white-on-white palette, Georgia opted for caramel-toned furnishings. Timber and rattan armchairs, Abide Interiors. Chunky timber side tables, Uniqwa Collections. Large floor cushions, The Bach Living. Rug, Whitecliffe Imports. Crab ornament, La Casa Vita. Engineered white oak flooring in Lagano, Tongue N Groove Flooring (throughout). Walls painted Dulux White Polar Quarter.

H&G AT HOME WITH



ABOVE LEFT They never tire of the view... Harry, Georgia (and Winnie) soak up the sights and sounds of their beachfront outlook framed by a pandanus palm: "As soon as I smell the saltwater, I relax," says Georgia. **ABOVE RIGHT** Dining table, dining chairs, pendant and large white pot, all The Bach Living. Wall hanging, The Dharma Door. Wall lined in James Hardie Scyon Linea weatherboards. **BELOW** The living area is designed for comfort. Sofa and floor cushions, The Bach Living. Armchairs, Abide Interiors. Console and chunky timber side tables, Uniqwa Collections. Rug, Whitecliffe Imports. Artwork by Tania Blanchard. Macramé wall hanging, The Dharma Door. ▶



“THE VIEWING PLATFORM EXTENDS OFF THE BEDROOM. IT’S ON STILTS AND FEELS LIKE IT’S FLOATING ON AIR.” *Harry Poulos, architect and owner*



There are now four bedrooms, including two king-sized rooms with ensuites (a garage was converted into a downstairs ensuite) and three bathrooms. The staircase to the upstairs bedroom has been rebuilt and all original timber battening has been replaced.

At the front of the home, Harry wanted to honour the home’s 1950s origins, so he designed a V-shaped carport structure and installed rock wall cladding, giving the house a distinctly *Brady Bunch* vibe. At the back, the entire home opens up via sliding and bifold doors, with cascading timber decking down onto the sand. The kitchen and living spaces are literally a frisbie-throw away from the waves. “The beach is the main focal point, and everything is focused around that view,” says Harry.

Harry and Georgia wanted the interiors to feel casual, easy and beach-savvy. For Georgia this meant blond floorboards with a largely white-on-white palette enriched by caramels and touches of pink. A three-seater caramel sofa is the anchor point in the living room. Timber, rattan and tan leather recur throughout. “It’s a family home and very casual so I wanted it to look clean and white but not stark,” says Georgia. “We’ve used raw and chunky timber pieces - nothing too fine - to help it look and feel

relaxed.” Large floor cushions - favoured by Winston - emphasise the point. “We only half joke that we centered the colour scheme around Winnie!” says Georgia.

Upstairs, the main bedroom features a wall-to-wall sliding window and bespoke slatted-timber cabinetry echoing the white battening below. Extending off the bedroom, the restored and freshly painted crow’s nest, perched on stilts, is Harry and Georgia’s favourite seating nook for Sunday morning breakfasts. “It’s a magical spot - it feels like it’s floating on air,” says Harry.

The renovation went to schedule, with building works wrapping up on December 24, coinciding with the arrival of all the new furnishings. Just as they’d planned, Harry and Georgia hosted their family for casual festivities on Christmas Day.

The house has fulfilled all of Harry and Georgia’s dreams of achieving a getaway destination only 50 minutes’ drive from their Brisbane base. “As soon as I set foot on the property and smell the saltwater, I feel myself relax - it’s like a sigh of relief,” says Georgia. “As I always say - life is better at the beach.” ▶
*Harry Poulos Architects; www.poulos.com.au.
 Klinge Constructions and Developments; klingecd.net.au.*

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT Harry and Georgia’s favourite sunny seat is the viewing platform that extends directly from their upstairs bedroom. It was built as part of the 1990s extension and revived by Harry with new steel frames and timber battens. The cushions are covered in Sunproof fabric in Palazzo. **OPPOSITE TOP** Whites and sandy tones prevail in the main bedroom where everything is oriented to that view. Custom slat-fronted cabinetry. Mirror, Brisbane Mirror Shop. Chunky throw, Adairs. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT** The ensuite is petite and pretty with marble benchtop and white kit-kat tiles from Edge Tile+Stone. Mirror, Brisbane Mirror Shop. Basin and tapware, Abey.





LIFE & STYLE

Harry Poulos shares some firsts and favourite things.

FIRST ADULT HOME? An early 1900s Queenslander in Ascot, Brisbane. It was a great project for us as a young couple. I painted a little watercolour of it (7).

BUCKET-LIST DESTINATION? Mexico (1). I'd love to hit the beach, eat some tacos and sip margaritas. I'm also partial to a nice sombrero!

DREAM RESTAURANT TABLE? 11 Madison Park (10) in New York City. It does an exceptional degustation and every plate is like a piece of art.

FAVOURITE DOWNTIME PURSUIT? I enjoy Saturday mornings working in the garden and soaking up the sun (6). I may not be the best gardener, but it gives me a chance to switch off and relax. Winnie (our dog) stays by my side the whole time.

FAVOURITE ARTIST? Australian artist Robert Hunter (2). I really appreciate his minimalistic and geometric style and I am intrigued with how he uses everyday materials like house paint and masking tape to create simple but layered works of art. We purchased one of his pieces years ago and still admire it every day.

FAVOURITE DESIGNER? Without a doubt, Frank Lloyd Wright. I have admired his work since I was in high school and the detail, particularly in his residential designs, interests me to this day. The Guggenheim Museum (3), one of Lloyd Wright's commercial projects, is a must-see for anyone visiting New York.

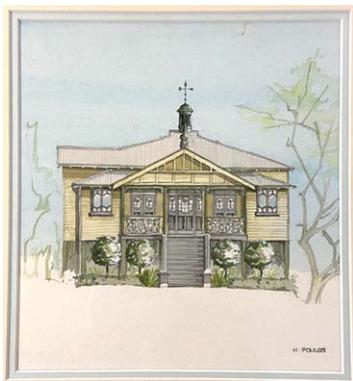
FAVOURITE FASHION LABELS? Massimo Dutti (4), a Spanish brand that is classic in style, good quality and not too expensive. R.M. Williams (5) are a must!

FAVOURITE SCENT? At the moment, Louis Vuitton L'immensité (11).

A HOMEWARE PIECE YOU COVET? A vintage Mario Bellini 'Camaleonda' sofa (9) in leather. They're very rare and hard to get, but well worth the hunt.

NEXT MAJOR PURCHASE FOR THE HOME? A Slayer espresso machine (8).

I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT... A felt-tip pen – fine-tip, of course! Whether I'm in the office, car, on site or at home, I will have a handful of Artline felt-tip pens within reach, ready for designing, marking up drawings or even just doodling on a loose piece of paper. **H&G**



Artwork by Robert Hunter (2). Photography from Alamy (1), Getty Images (3).

“My dream car is a 1955 Mercedes-Benz Gullwing coupé – silver with a red interior. It’s the ultimate in design and detail.”