

home truths

Who lives here: Interior stylist and buyer Karen Kelly Tarasin; daughter India, 20; sons Remy, 17; and Noah, 16; and Ziggy, a border collie.

Style of home: A mid-century timber and sandstone house, built in the style of modernist architect Harry Seidler, located on Sydney's Northern Beaches.



DINING ROOM A Saarinen 'Tulip' table from Dedecé is paired with original Hans Wegner chairs from Vampt Vintage Design. **KITCHEN (opposite)** Owner Karen with her daughter India.

HAIR & MAKE-UP: JESSICA DIEZ (ON SIDEBAR) AND BOWL (ON DINING TABLE), BOTH VAMPT VINTAGE DESIGN. VAMPTVINTAGEDSIGN.COM. ON DINING TABLE: URN AND COPPER SCULPTURE, BOTH SMALL SPACES. SMALLSPACES.COM.AU. BLACK CUP AND BRONZE BOWL (OPPOSITE), ON BENCHTOP, BOTH PLANET. PLANETFURNITURE.COM.AU



RAY OF LIGHT

This family home proves beachy can be chic, with the addition of classic design pieces. It just takes a good eye for style, something this owner has in spades

WORDS **LYNNE TESTONI** STYLING **CLAIRE DELMAR** PHOTOGRAPHY **PRUE RUSCOE**

Calling Karen Kelly Tarasin a collector underplays it – a curator would be a more accurate description. Over more than 20 years, Karen has pulled together an enviable selection of quality furniture, which has found a home in her Sydney residence. Among her collection are some of the icons of the design world – think Hans Wegner and Marcel Breuer – interspersed with newer collectables, plus the odd family photo and piece of whimsy.

Karen works as an interior stylist and buyer, consulting to interior companies such as Vampt Vintage Design, a family-run business offering a smorgasbord of quality vintage Scandinavian furniture.

Long before impeccable styling became her job, it was Karen's passion. You only need to look at the imposing mosaic skull on the dining area wall (seen on page 70). "I saw it on my honeymoon in Santa Fe 20 years ago and fell in love with the piece," she says.

Back home in Australia, Karen spent several years working with bespoke furniture maker Mark Tuckey and it was this experience that heightened her love of the timeless modern design pieces that would end up filling her own home.

This classic modernist house – Karen was told by a local that Harry Seidler's builder built it for his own daughter – has been her "dream home", the perfect environment for her furniture, art and other treasures. Located on Sydney's Northern Beaches, however, it is far from being a design museum – it's a much-loved family home for Karen and her children.

Although the space is a reflection of Karen's unique aesthetic, she loves it not for its looks but its feel and what it represents. "This is where I care for the people I love most – it's just that simple."

There's a friendly, relaxed atmosphere about the place. Karen baked a cake for our team, offering pieces around as her sons wandered back from a morning surf and onto school. India, a university student, stayed around to help and watch. →

LIVING AREA A mix of new and old buys fills this open space. The original stone fireplace is flanked by a bar – "we have great martini nights here", says Karen. Both the sofa and Muuto 'Unfold' pendant light are from Mark Tuckey.

white out Karen painted the entire house, including the floorboards, in Dulux Antique White USA to take advantage of the light-filled sitting area. Full-length windows and louvres are on three sides of this living zone.



VELVET CUSHION (ON SOFA), THE DESIGN HUNTER, THEDESIGNHUNTER.COM.AU, YELLOW & LIME STRIPED CUSHION AND WHITE CUSHION, BOTH MARK TUCKEY, MARKTUCKEY.COM.AU, ARMCHAIR, VAMPT VINTAGE DESIGN, VAMPTVINTAGEDSIGN.COM, ARTWORK: LEFT) BOTTLE PRINT BY DAVID BAND, (ON FIREPLACE SURROUND) PORTRAIT BY WARWICK ORME

“I just painted everything in white. I didn’t have to do much else. It’s now so light - it’s like living in a light box”



LIVING AREA The Adirondack chair on the balcony is from Beachwood. **KITCHEN (opposite, top)** The stools are “ancient, but really comfortable”, says Karen. “If I bring home a new stool, the kids make me take it back as they are never as comfy as these old things, which were given to us by a friend when she was moving house.”



3 GREAT FINDS PRODUCT SOURCING: JOSEPH GARDNER; OPPOSITE: URN, SMALL SPACES, SMALL SPACES.COM.AU, PAPER SATCHEL, THE DESIGN HUNTER, THEDESIGNHUNTER.COM.AU.

3 great finds

1. 'Monjave' hide, \$1599, Citta Design.
2. 'Wall Flower' macramé vertical garden, \$560, The Descendant Store.
3. Ib Kofod Larsen sideboard, \$7900, Bo Butik. **ADDRESS BOOK** page 157

Finding the house was a happy coincidence. Karen had been having drinks with friends when she said she was house hunting. One of the friends mentioned that her home might be up for sale. Karen immediately agreed to take a look right there and then.

“When we turned into the driveway, I couldn’t believe it,” says Karen. “I had always adored this house – it was a dream house. I said I’d buy it even before I walked through the door! We sat here in front of the fire drinking red wine and it was all sorted.”

The home uses a neutral palette as a base for the interiors: white walls and clean lines, teamed with plenty of sunlight are the perfect foil for classic European furniture. It was originally much darker inside when Karen bought it – the timber had been stained brown but she decided to make the rooms all white, from the ceiling to the floors.

“I just painted everything in white [Dulux Antique White USA],” she says. “I didn’t have to do much else. It’s now so light – it’s like living in a light box.”

That was three years ago. Karen says she found it amazing how well her furniture fitted into this house. “As I unpacked I just thought, ‘this house will suit this and that and...’”

“The first night I just came to the house with a few things – a couple of chairs, the cowhide rugs. We lit a fire, and the kids, the dog and me just sat here for a few hours and enjoyed it. You have to love it. That’s how to live your life.” ❖

Follow Karen Kelly Tarasin on Instagram: @luxetradingco



HALLWAY (right) The white walls allow standout pieces to shine including a 'Rio' garden column from By Joost and a Hans Wegner sideboard from Vampt Vintage Design. **MASTER BEDROOM (opposite)** 'The Orient' copper lamps and timber nest tables from Vampt Vintage Design frame the bed dressed in bright Bedouin Societe linen from Mark Tuckey.



5 great finds

STATEMENT MAKERS 1. Carl Hansen 'Safari' chair, \$1456, Cult. 2. 'Citrus Punch' pillowcase, \$40, Major Minor Sydney. 3. Vintage copper and teak pendant light, \$375, Angelucci 20th Century. 4. 'Benedict' throw, \$179, Country Road. 5. 'Grid' garden column, \$795, By Joost. **ADDRESS BOOK** page 157

5 GREAT FINDS PRODUCT SOURCING: JOSEPH GARONER. TOP LEFT: CUPS, SMALL SPACES; SMALLSPACES.COM.AU. BOTTLE VESSEL, MARK TUCKEY, MARKTUCKEY.COM.AU. PORTRAIT BY WARWICK ORME. OPPOSITE: BEDLINEA, MARK TUCKEY, MARKTUCKEY.COM.AU. BLANKET AND BID VASE, BOTH PLANET, PLANET FURNITURE.COM.AU. GREY CUSHION, THE DESIGN HUNTER, THEDESIGNHUNTER.COM.AU. ARTWORK: DEBBIE HARRY PHOTOGRAPH BY JANETTE BECKMAN, BLENDER GALLERY, BLENDER.COM.AU



** on neutral ground*

Karen prefers an organic colour palette to quietly complement her collection of vintage Danish furniture and black-and-white photography. Most of the photos were picked up from friends who worked in fashion photography in the 1980s, or are treasured family portraits.

"I had always adored this house - it was a dream house. I said I'd buy it even before I walked through the door!"