

# THE APARTMENT

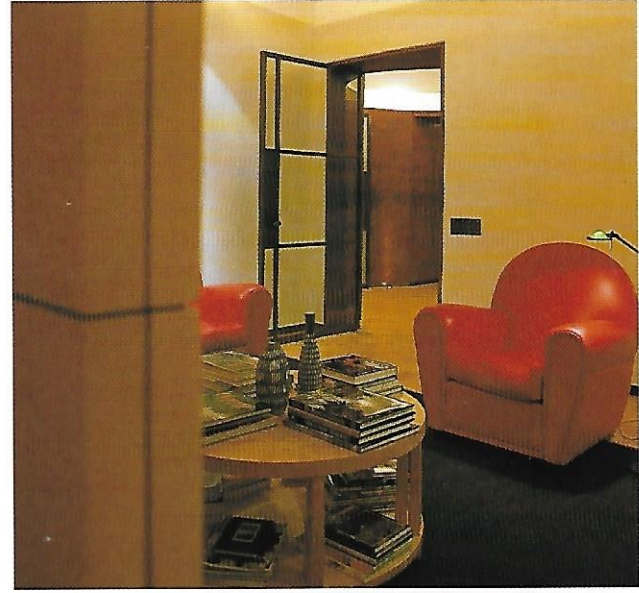
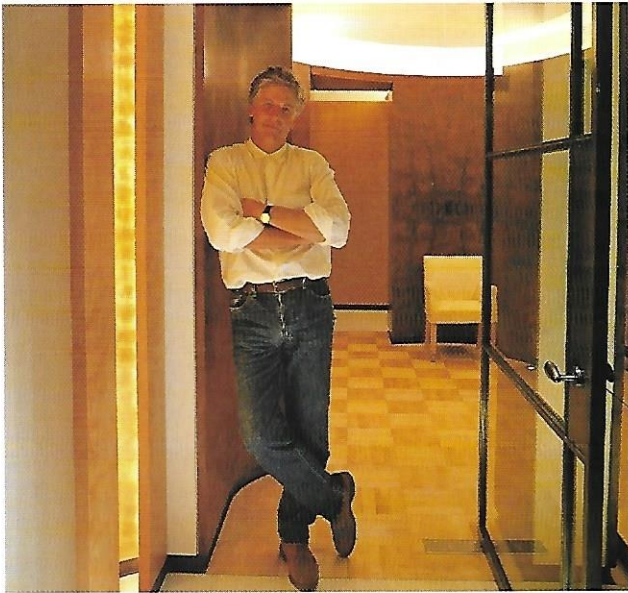
For a discerning client with a desire for the finest quality and most exacting design detail, architect Greg Anderson created the ultimate city pied-à-terre, a highly polished artwork to live in.

The centre of the apartment has been reworked into a circular 'rotunda' from which pivoting bronze and glass doors by La Maison de l'Art lead to the entrance at right; sitting room and dining room to the left. Walls are clad in walnut veneer and floating floors in birch parquetry with white mosaic tiles from Bisanna laid in the entrance foyer. Skirting boards throughout are custom-made in bronze.









**Architect Greg Anderson (above). The sitting room (shown these pages) features a Tamo beech veneer joinery unit incorporating a gas fireplace. Red leather armchairs by Poltrona Frau; 'Farnesina' sofa designed by George Freedman covered in 'Marquis' by Sahco Hesslein.**

**I**n architectural ethos there are two desirable qualities rarely found in a single client: an acute sense of contemporary design and *means*. Not only were Greg Anderson's latest clients so disposed, but they also had the foresight to include the Sydney architect in the purchase of a suitable pied-à-terre. One of the clients (a semi-retired company chairman) "called me to say that he'd found an apartment and that if I thought I could do something with it, he'd buy it," he says. Anderson gave the go-ahead.

"It wasn't an expensive unit," he remembers. The expense, as it transpired, was in the renovation's singular attention to detail: custom-designed bronze-patinated brass-framed glass doors (over \$6000 apiece), brass custom skirting boards, sculptural plasterwork, custom door handles, handmade mosaic tiles, a 'floating' acoustic floor and immaculately finished custom joinery *everywhere*. This is clearly not a residence rejuvenated with an eye on resale.

It took two years to complete. For a year, hordes of specialist tradesmen lugged materials four floors up a back stairway of the Woollahra property. For the year before that, local residents had put up what Anderson calls "major opposition" to the old apartment being remodelled. Concerns were raised because of the structural work the Sydney architect had prescribed.









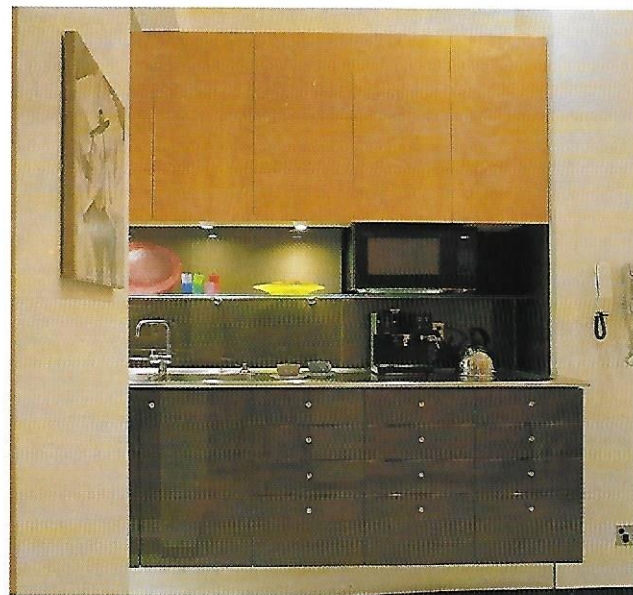
The sunroom off the sitting room is furnished with a pair of Flexform armchairs covered in canvas and a burr elm veneer table designed by George Freedman. Erica Riley made the fabric banners which frame the large window.











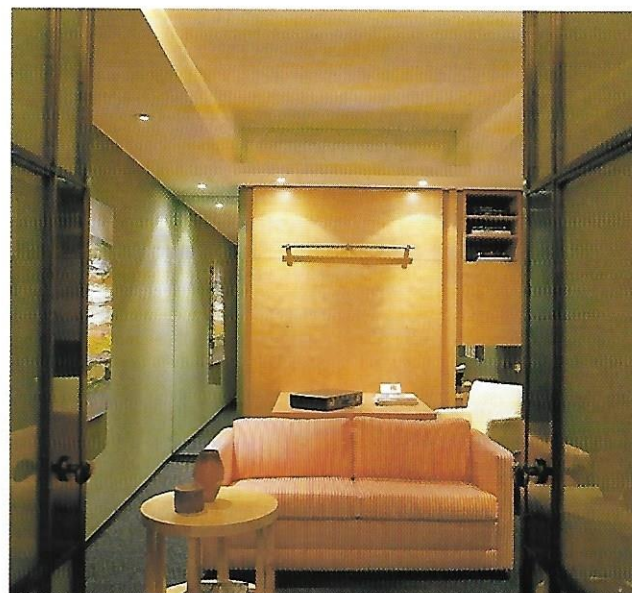
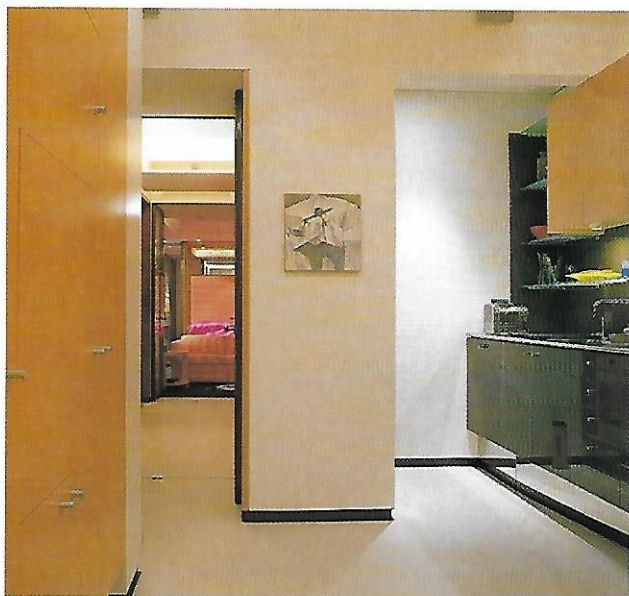
**The underbench kitchen cupboards (above and bottom left) are finished in Dulux automotive paint. Splashback is Colourback glass by Pilkington. The guestroom (opposite and below right) features a pull-out bed. Bedhead and sofa are in Canovas stripe; the bedcover in fuchsia satin.**

The first major consideration was in the relocation of the kitchen from the “wrong side” to a much more logical place at the apartment’s front. Here, in a space where cabinetry “functions as pieces of furniture”, views of Sydney harbour could best be savoured. The planning of the apartment then “just fell into place,” says Anderson.

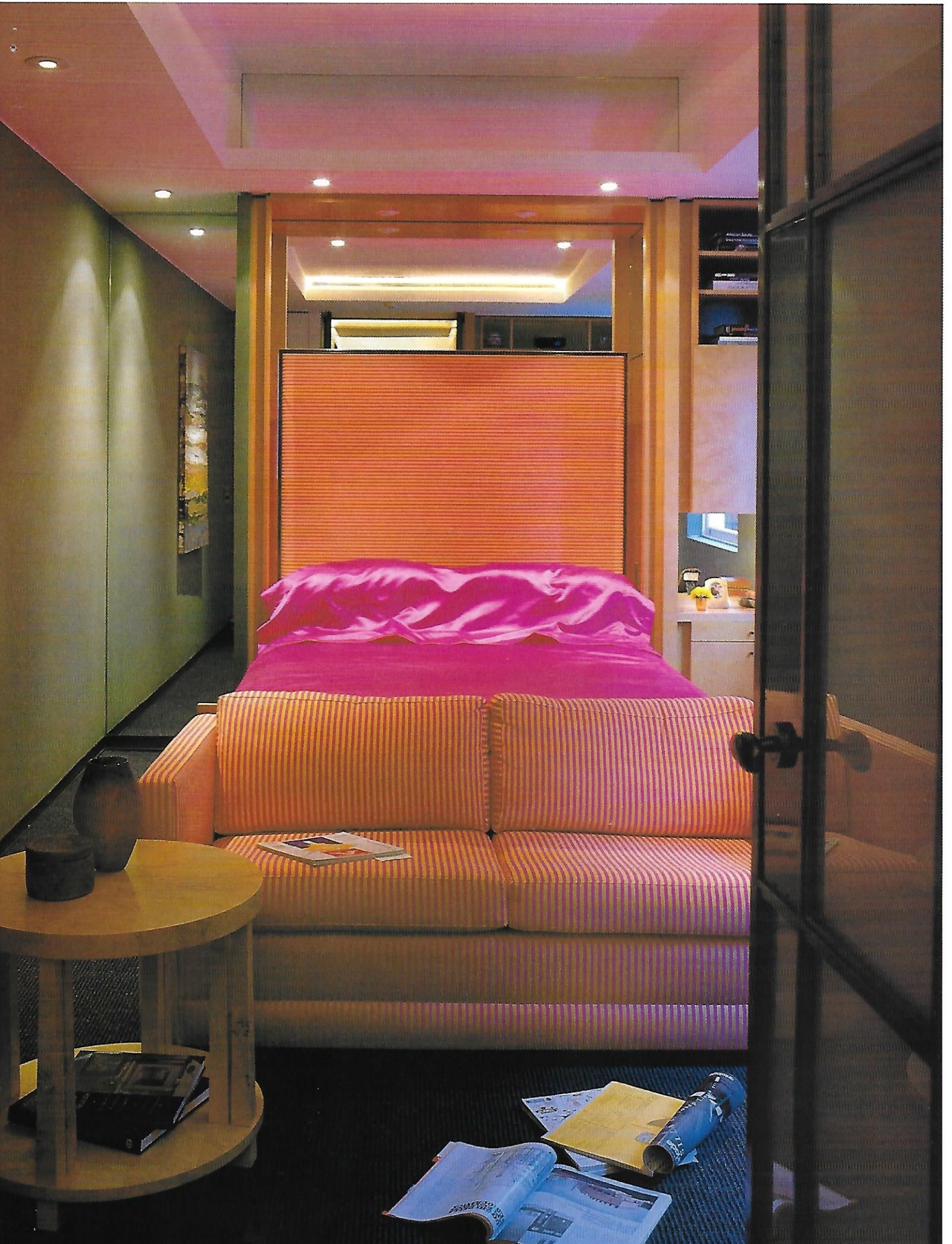
The circle of the kitchen’s breakfast table finds an echo in the rotunda at the apartment’s centre – a spacial device to create a sense of drama and elegance in what is essentially a smallish apartment. From this “desperately classical” element each of the rooms radiates. To the right is public space: living room, kitchen, dining room; to the left is private: master bedroom, guestroom/study (the bed flips up into a custom-built joinery unit) and bathrooms. Public spaces are defined by exquisitely detailed brass-framed doors; the bedroom and bathroom doorways are concealed in joinery walls.

The finishes throughout are a collaborative effort with designers Brian Keirman and George Freedman. “We sought Brian’s opinion on some of the finishes and it was his idea to use brass doors,” says Anderson. “He also thought the rotunda should be timber rather than anything else.”

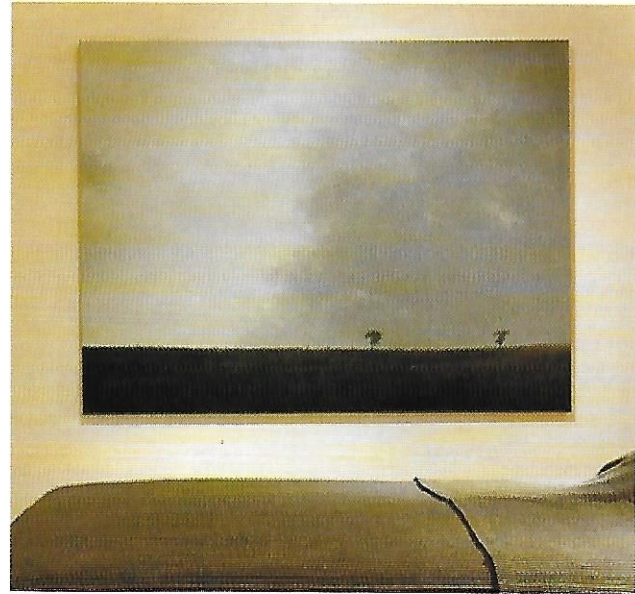
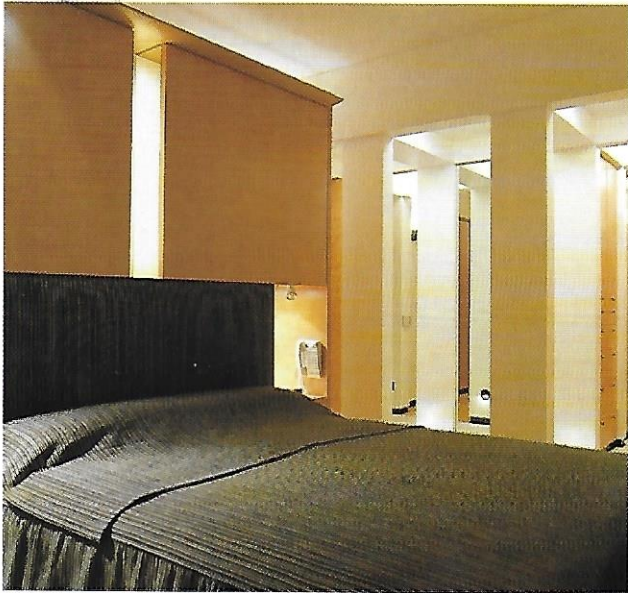
Anderson suggested Freedman be consulted on the question of colour. “The odd thing is that in this apartment there are very few colours,” laughs Anderson. “George ended up choosing the











**In the master bedroom (above) the bed in Canovas ‘Metternich’ ties in with Ian Grant’s painting (above right). A column in the guest bathroom (below left) is clad in handmade tiles. Mirror and basin in the main bathroom (opposite and below right) were designed by the architect.**

finishes, the fabrics and he did the floor coverings. He also had the couch in the living room made from one he’d first seen in Rome’s Farnesina Palace.”

“It was a fabulous job,” says Freedman. “The clients were wonderfully encouraging.” Spurred on to specify the ideal finishes, Freedman chose a “unique” Tamo beech veneer for the monolithic bedhead/wardrobe in the master bedroom and walnut burl for the rotunda and dining room. The bathrooms are finished in blue seraphic glass; a column in the guest bathroom (containing plumbing) has been finished in handmade mosaic tiles. Three glaziers worked on the bathrooms alone. “The job took an extraordinary amount of specialist tradesmen,” says Freedman, “and a lot of diligence to maintain standards.” In plastering, too, Anderson has demanded an impressive level of craftsmanship, especially in his colonnade – an area leading to the kitchen that gives the house “an outside”.

“The client urged me to do more and more detail,” admits Anderson, “as a consequence the price went up and up and the time it took went on and on.” The client, in accord with Anderson’s colonnade and rotunda, has functioned as classical patron to his architect, designers and tradesmen. The results, in restrained and immaculate fashion, are sublime. □

GUY ALLENBY

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