



An Australian CLASSIC

ENDURING STYLES INSPIRE
A REFINED MELBOURNE HOUSE

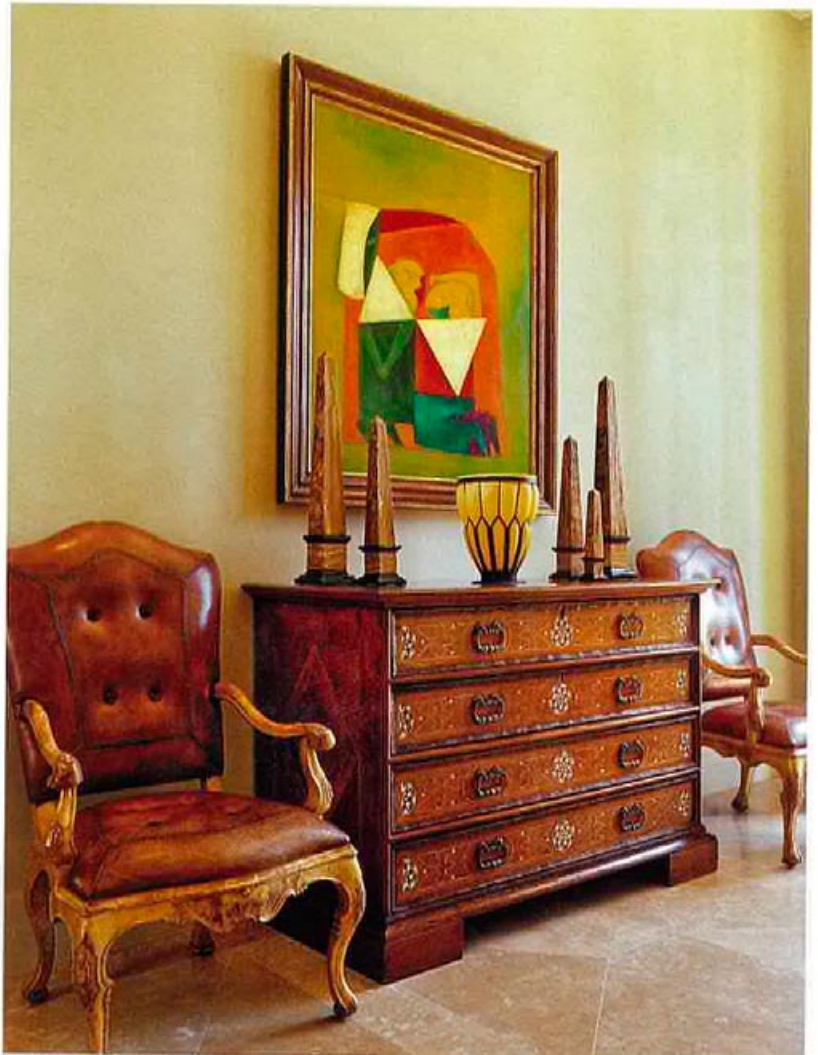
Architecture by Ivo Krivanek/Interior Design by Hendrix Allardyce
Landscape Architecture by Eckersley Stafford Design
Text by Penelope Rowlands/Photography by David Matheson

Come near me, while I sing the ancient ways," the poet W. B. Yeats once exhorted. A century later and at least half a world away, Ivo Krivanek, a Victoria, Australia-based architect who is of the exuberant belief that "everything we know derives from the Parthenon," vocalized those ways anew in an expansive Neoclassical house in an exclusive Melbourne neighborhood. "I'm very preoccupied with the classical model," Krivanek says.

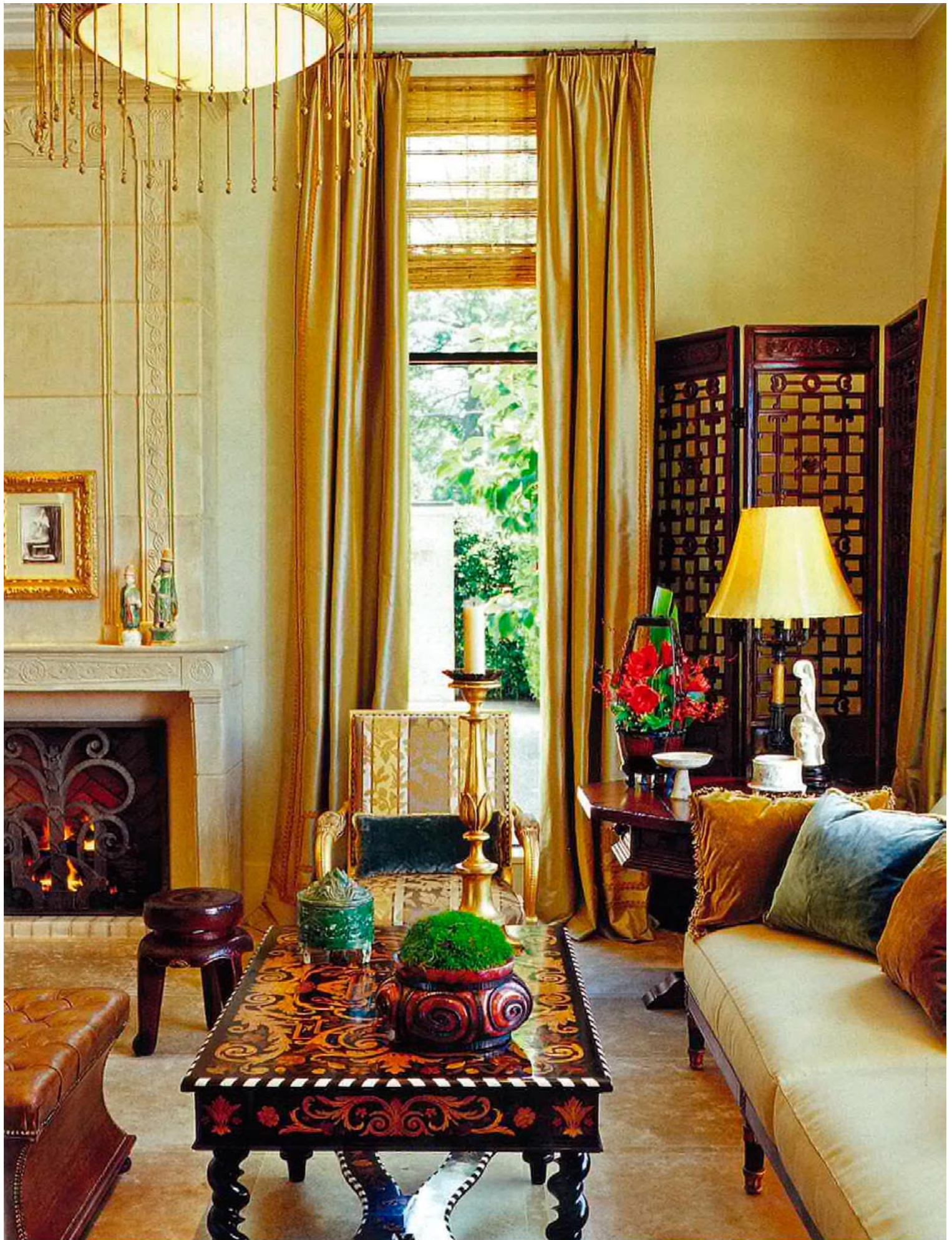
Set on a leafy street, the house is a serene presence, with a sand-colored plaster façade, an articulated cornice and what appear to be Doric columns with bronze-veneered capitals and bases. On closer inspection, though, these columns reveal themselves to be pilasters that, edged in bronze, give the illusion of being more three-dimensional than they actually are.

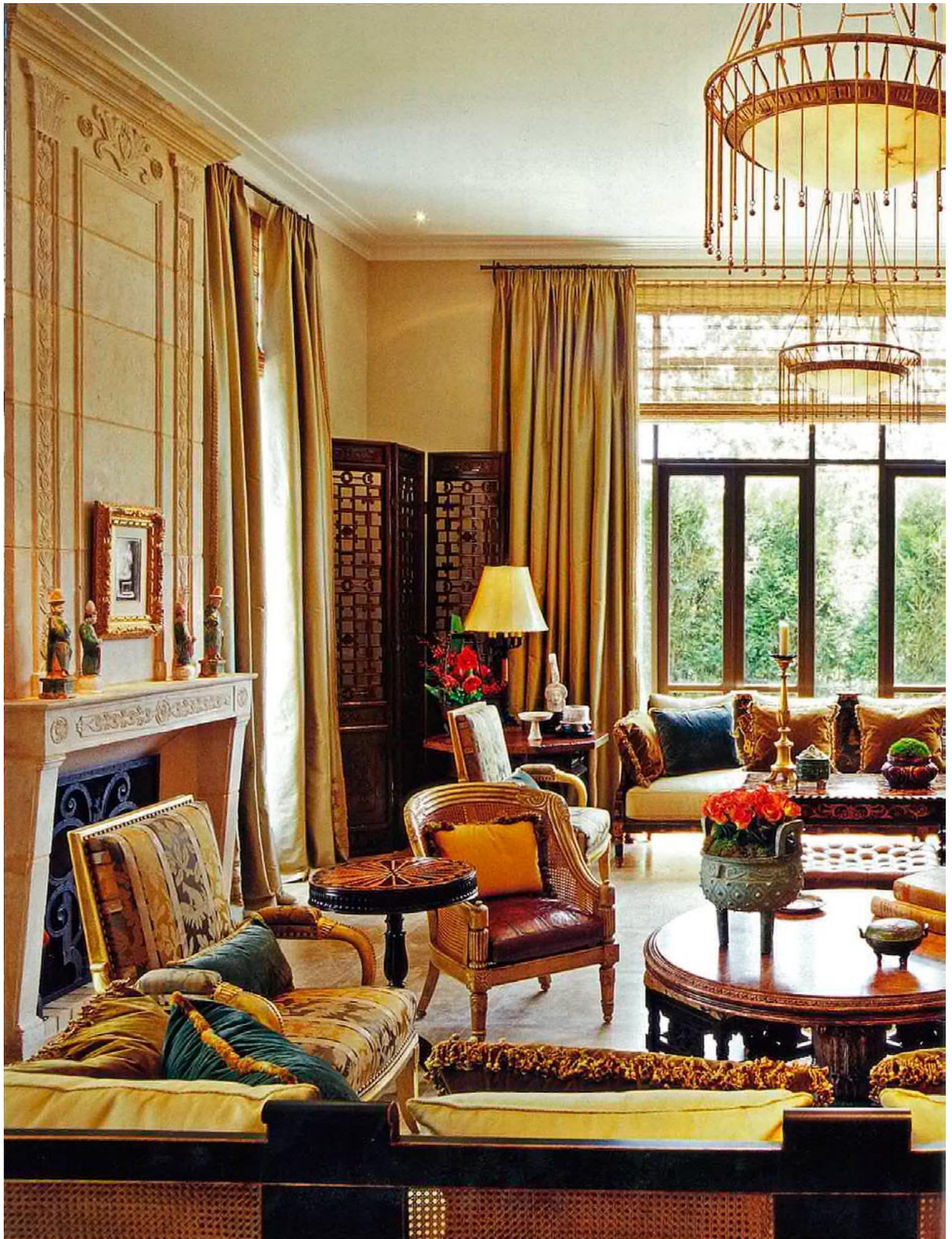
Krivanek looked back—way back—to the ancient world for this house, designing it according to the golden section, the proportion so favored by the Greeks. "I superimposed a series of larger and smaller golden section rectangles over the façades," he says, "then allowed the significant architectural elements to follow those lines."

The house is "a reinterpretation of the Neoclassical, based on Palladian principles," Krivanek adds. Even so, the pilasters' bronze edge lines, among other details, reflect more recent influences. "Edging is an important device," Krivanek



"It's an architectural play on Biedermeier style combined with elements reminiscent of the Wiener Werkstätte," architect Ivo Krivanek says of a house he designed for a couple in Melbourne, Australia. ABOVE LEFT: The entrance. ABOVE: Los Angeles-based designers Illya Hendrix and Tom Allardyce combined antiques and the owners' contemporary paintings throughout. *Peaceful Childhood*, 2004, by Thanh Chuong hangs in the entrance hall. Gilt armchairs, Hendrix Allardyce Design Collection. OPPOSITE: The living room.







says, pointing out that it's one that architect Josef Hoffmann—whom Krivanek considers one of his heroes—used at his Palais Stoclet in Brussels. While he credits “Hoffmann and other Wiener Werkstätte architects for the exterior detailing,” he identifies the Biedermeier style as another key inspiration for the house.

Such diverse influences sat well with the client, a property developer and builder who shares the house with his wife. “It had to be timeless so it didn't create a date stamp,” he says.

The architect, who was born in Austria—which perhaps accounts for his affinity for Secessionist style—has been based in Australia for 20 years. “I came for a visit, and before I knew it, I had a mortgage,” Krivanek says with a laugh. He'd long known and respected the client, whom he describes as having a “very fine eye for detail. He has subtle European sensibilities and taste.”

To ensure a commensurate level of refinement in the interior design, Krivanek recommended Illya Hendrix and Tom Allardyce, of the Los Angeles firm Hendrix Allardyce, with whom he's successfully joined forces before. “We stimulate each other,” he says.

The client, who calls himself a perfectionist, was particularly hands-on, weighing in on “getting the finishes right,” he says. But he also wanted to have a “nonmuseum type of interior, the kind where you don't have to walk in and put on a pair of white gloves.” His mandate was straightforward, Allardyce says: “This house was to express a strong simplicity with clean lines.”

Hendrix and Allardyce worked on the interior architecture, aiming to create proportions that were generous without being overwhelming—“to humanize it,” Allardyce explains. The result is an expansive house, with 15-foot ceilings and copious volumes. The team conceived “a very neutral palette,” the designer adds, in part to show the interior architecture to advantage.

Still, to enter the house is to bathe in color, albeit of a subtle kind. The entrance hall's French limestone floors emit a lemony

A variety of European and Asian antiques were chosen to match the scale of the room. “There are juxtapositions of opposites,” Allardyce points out. The fireplace surround is from Exquisite Surfaces. Drapery silk, Great Plains. Giltwood armchair fabric, Dedar. Rogers & Goffigon sofa linen. Conrad shades.



"We wanted the house to look mature—not necessarily old, not necessarily new," says the client. ABOVE: The kitchen "has a timeless character adapted to a modern lifestyle," Hendrix notes. The cabinetry and island are their design. The reed shades are from Conrad.

OPPOSITE: Landscape architect Rick Eckersley lined the terrace with magnolias. The sandblasted-plaster façade is decorated with an embossed geometric pattern that evokes the work of Josef Hoffmann.

glow, recalling what Krivanek characterizes as "the yellow Hapsburg color" of the exterior walls. And the limestone staircase's wrought iron-and-bronze balustrade, which Krivanek designed, illustrates the quality and perfection of craftsmanship that dominates throughout.

Allardyce sums up the HendrixAllardyce design philosophy as "an interesting mix of opposites, all in harmony." That credo is on full display in the entrance hall, where some very sophisticated pieces, notably a Louis XVI gilt mirror, are combined with rough-hewn, yet equally elegant, pieces such as a black-lacquered yoke-back chair from 19th-century China. "We love the juxtaposition of refined and primitive objects," Allardyce says. "It creates the most beautiful blend."

Huge terra-cotta funerary tablets, from the Han Dynasty, flank the entrance to

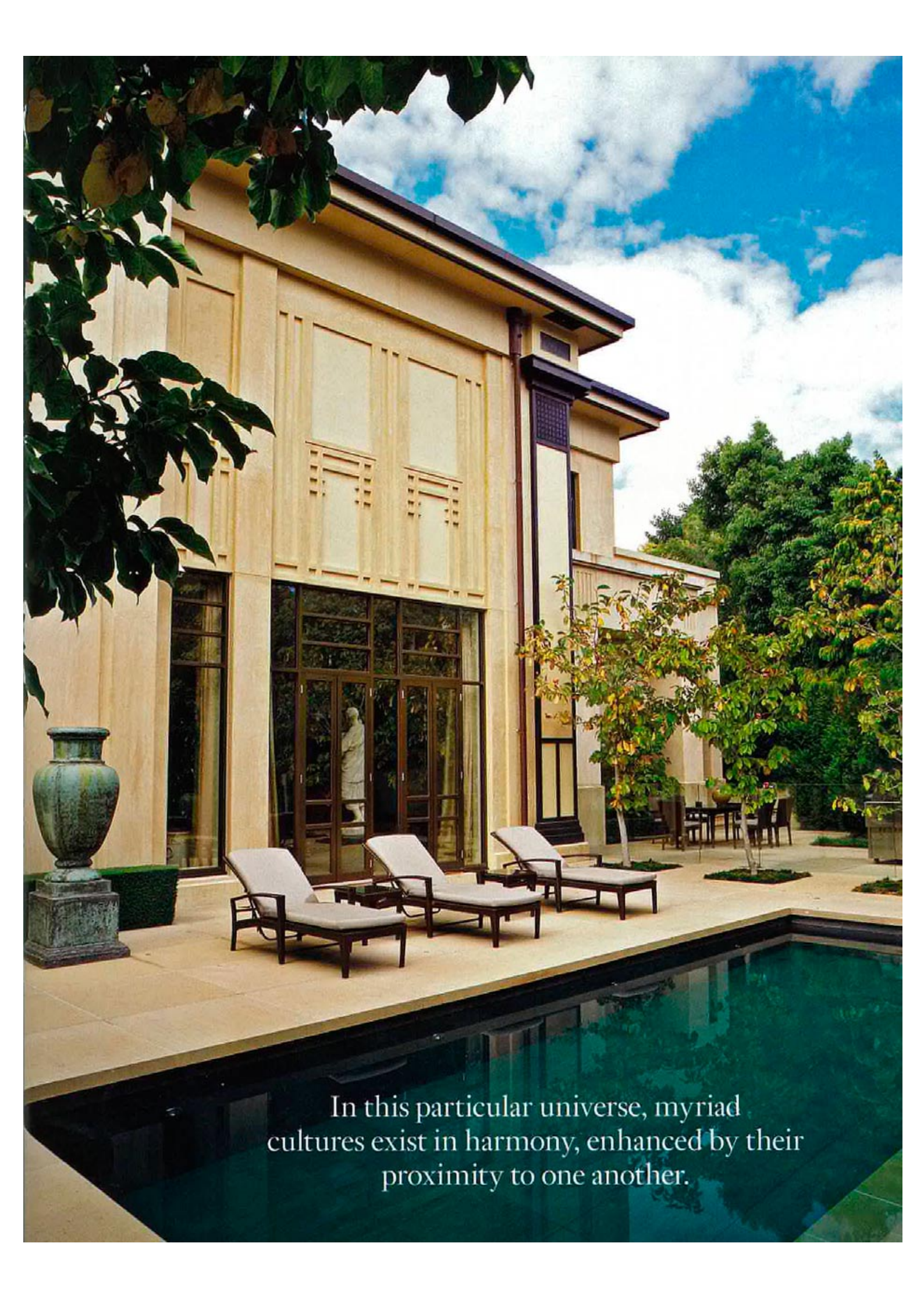
the family room, which includes the kitchen and a dining area. The nearby living room, while larger in scale, never feels overwhelmingly so, thanks to some artful maneuvering. It is divided into two discrete seating areas, each one anchored by three large-scale pieces: a cane-back chinoiserie sofa and a pair of giltwood armchairs. Almost everything here conspires to "keep the eye down at a human, very low level," Allardyce points out, including the delicate, gilt-iron-and-alabaster French chandeliers that are reproductions of a 1930s design—hung deliberately low in the room—and a pair of 19th-century screens from China's Zhejiang province.

This room is multicultural in the extreme. To circumnavigate it is to feel not just that you've rounded the globe but that you've stepped into history, too, from India under British rule (in the form of an ebony-and-inlay-veneer side table) to 18th-century China, represented by a pair of red-lacquered stools. In this particular universe, myriad cultures exist in harmony, enhanced by their proximity to one another. "Layering is very important. You'll find French, Italian, primitive and Chinese in this room," Allardyce says.

A bright, dappled painting by John Perceval—one of the couple's favorite artists—is among the room's few contemporary elements. They have collected modern art, mostly from Australia, for decades. "It just made the project come alive, having this wonderful art to work with," Hendrix says. "It's very uplifting." The couple brought art to their new home but little else: Almost all of its contents were newly acquired in Australia and Los Angeles.

With its lustrous mahogany paneling and ebony-finished chevron floors, the library is "a very sexy room and a real man's room," says Allardyce. It functions as both a home office and a repository for what the client calls his "accessories, artifacts and ornaments," including celadon vases and antique inkwells. The cabinetry that Hendrix and Allardyce designed is decorated with Oriental motifs in homage to the collection of Chinese artifacts it displays.

The calm of these rooms is contagious. From the architect's point of view, we have the ancient world—and its ways—to thank. "Proportion and symmetry create an underlying order that contributes to a sense of balance and well-being," he says. "It's necessary for mental and artistic health." It's a concept that's as old as the Parthenon, and yet, as this house in modern Australia shows, one that's as relevant as ever. □



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