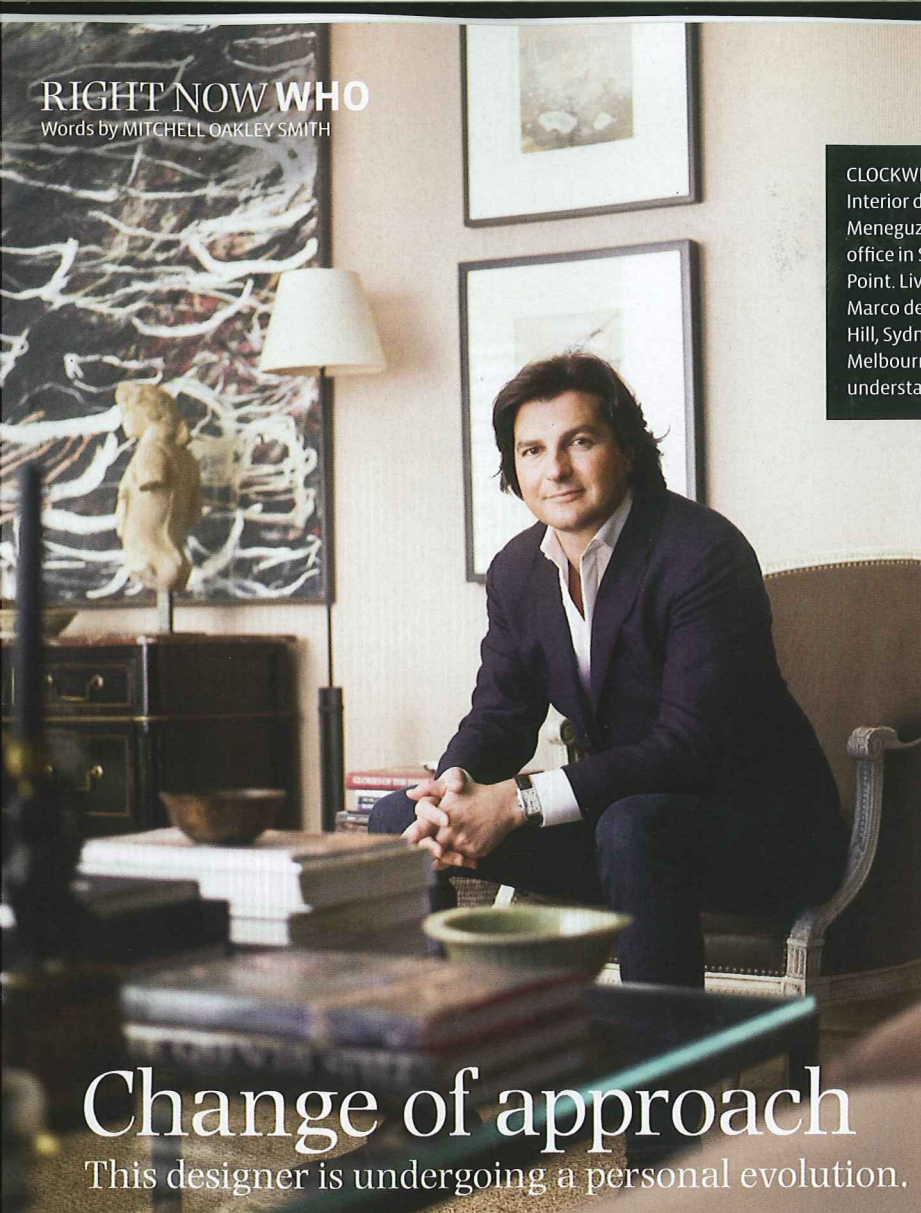


RIGHT NOW WHO

Words by MITCHELL OAKLEY SMITH



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Interior designer Marco Meneguzzi at his home and office in Sydney's Darling Point. Living rooms of homes Marco designed in Bellevue Hill, Sydney, and Armadale, Melbourne, display his understated, elegant style.

Change of approach

This designer is undergoing a personal evolution.



MARCO MENEGUZZI HAS SEEN a few changes take place in his business since the world's financial meltdown. For the Sydney-based, globally roaming interior designer, it's not necessarily that there's been less work around, but that clients take more time to commit. "There's a lot of interest and appointments, but when it comes to actually going ahead, people are certainly more careful," explains Marco, who has taken this new market conservatism on board in his practice. "People are somewhat embarrassed to be seen spending money at the moment so it's important to provide a range of options at every stage of the process," he says.

With this in mind it makes sense that Marco, who is known for his elegant yet somewhat stately home designs, has become a little looser in his approach and, as a result, his aesthetic has broadened. "I used to shy away from colour and pattern but I'm not so sceptical of them now," he explains. "I've been employing modern styles and tailoring them to what the client wants."

When we speak at Marco's combined home and office in Sydney's Darling Point, the designer has just returned from a round-the-world trip, having visited Hong Kong, London, France and the Italian island of Capri for both work and play. Travel is at the core of Marco's design ethos. While away, he scouts village markets, small boutiques and one-off makers for unique pieces to suit a client's home.

"I love the Christian Liaigre store in London," says Marco, "and Hollywood Road in Hong Kong is great for antiques." But his all-time favourite city for sourcing pieces is Los Angeles. "The lifestyle is so similar to our own, which means there's just so much there to buy," he says. Marco plays on Australia's lifestyle and climate in his designs. He blurs interior and exterior spaces by creating sitting areas in loggias or cabanas, and he extends and uses every room in the home. Our weather is also evident in his colour palette, which is typically light and natural, and in his use of washable linens and cushion covers.

Marco came to design in a roundabout way, after being asked by a client to help create the look for a room when he was working as a hairdresser. "It went from one project to 20 in the space of about six months," he says. His career path has led him, since the turn of the millennium, to running his own business with no formal training beyond living with his partner, fellow interior designer Michael Love.

Similarly, what began late last year as a fun side project, a capsule collection of tote bags under the brand M & M Sydney, has become a significant part of his output. Marco recently supplemented the range, which can be bought online and in boutiques, with a series of leather satchels, and he's now working on a range of totes lined with fantastic ikat prints. He's relishing being able to stretch his design bounds. "I'm loving it," says Marco. "It's really important to do new things. It makes you think outside the box."

For more go to marcomeneguzzi.com; mandmsydney.com.



WANT MORE?

To view a portfolio of Marco Meneguzzi's work simply download the free *viewa* app, select the *Belle* channel and hold your phone or tablet over this page. See p28 for more details.