

{ PROJECT }

RESIDENCE R, NORTHBRIDGE

{ ARCHITECT }

IAN TRAILL ARCHITECTS

{ INTERIOR DESIGNER }

NINA MAYA INTERIORS



BELLEVARDE

Welcome to Building with Belvedere: Insights.

In this edition, we take a closer look at a superb house in Northbridge.

A steep site with a narrow frontage called for some innovative building solutions including a major cantilever to suspend the pool in mid-air.

Belvedere's Site Managers, Adam Howe and Jason Cooper, and Project Architect Caroline Kite worked with the owners, architect, and interior designer to create something quite special.

We hear from the owners and from Architect Ian Traill as well as from Interior Designer Nina Maya about their experience working with the Belvedere team on this stunning house.

We hope you enjoy their stories.

As always, we welcome any questions, feedback, or opportunities to discuss your next project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Fielding', with a stylized, cursive script.

JOHN FIELDING
AND THE BELVEDERE TEAM



The owners were very familiar with the house and site and purchased it whilst on an extended sailing trip overseas. The house was constructed approximately 27 years ago and internally the layouts were typical of houses of that era — planning was less open, rooms were dark and the floor layouts had to be organised better. The house required major alterations and additions and demolition by a competent builder.

I met John Fielding some years ago when I was living in Byron Bay and Belvedere were doing a big renovation nearby, so I knew the kind of work he could do. John goes above and beyond when looking at the finer details of a job. He comes up with alternative solutions which are always worthwhile considering and reviewing in the detailing process. When the owners were looking for a builder, John and Belvedere were included on the list. The owner, being a builder himself, was impressed with the projects Belvedere had completed and chose to go with them.

Being all concrete, the existing house had a lot of merit in its construction and its amalgamation to the steep site. It was substantial and cost effective to keep but this made changes and additions somewhat challenging. The length of time for demolition and stripping out the house was an extensive undertaking. The site is steep with a narrow frontage and it called for some innovative building solutions. Materials arriving at street level needed to be craned over the top of the building. Creating additional and more useable living and entertaining deck areas,

consistent with today's expectations, was at times difficult but the Belvedere team took it in their stride.

Some of the interior darkness was created by the screening effect of the existing concrete balustrades/planters and limited external glazing linking all deck levels. The design intent was to maximise the amount of natural light intrusion into the house by removing the heavy balustrades and the internal corridors and rooms and reorganising spaces so all the living areas faced the harbour views with new maximum floor to ceiling glazing to the decks. Ancillary rooms like bathrooms were moved to the back of the floor plates and living areas brought forward.

The owners wanted to extend all balcony areas and add a swimming pool to the house and link it to the lowest living area. The pool in particular presented a few challenges as it was essentially suspended in mid-air and required a major cantilever and some serious engineering.

John recommended getting engineering firm PMI involved whom Belvedere had worked with previously. PMI made a positive contribution to the project with several creative design solutions throughout the build. A positive contribution that provided greater flexibility in the design.

It was great working with Site Manager Adam Howe and the Belvedere team. Adam was a constant presence and I was very impressed by his knowledge of construction and what we were trying to achieve. Both John and Adam's experience, having been in the industry for so long, was a definite bonus. I think their team were very much able to realise, and in some cases improve on, our vision for the place. They were always helpful in their interpretation of what was designed. I believe it was a good relationship.

I think the owners are very happy and have a lot of respect for Belvedere and what's been achieved. The owners are great people and clients who wanted everything done properly and then to have a skilled builder who tied it all together, fantastic. The quality of the finish is highly impressive.

I would certainly recommend building with Belvedere. Their ability to fine-tune detail is outstanding and their ability to focus on quality is paramount. They realise high end projects with a lot of confidence.











NINA MAYA
(Interior Designer)

The owners and I shared a very similar aesthetic so their brief to us was very open—modern, contemporary, and minimal. We came up with some initial concepts and shared some physical samples so they could see and feel them. Whenever I work on the waterfront, I try to keep the palette of the selected materials neutral so there's nothing inside that's too high-contrast or overly colourful that could distract the eye from the view outside. There was a little back and forth but overall it was a remarkably seamless process.

For the larger materials such as the flooring we chose a very clean porcelain tile that could run seamlessly indoor and outdoor and across every level so there was no jarring point when you were looking across the house. The Arda Dance tiles are high quality and we'd worked with this finish a lot before. Even in commercial spaces, it holds up well. Across a large area like we had here it really shows off its beauty.

The owners love bronze and metal finishes so we wanted to bring that into the lounge and the fireplace and also on the stairwell. Everything else would be softened and contrasted with beautiful, luxurious upholstery and fabrics and dark charred timbers.

Collaborating with Adam Howe and the Belvedere team was something quite special. The level of engagement was just so reassuring. They provided us with large scale samples that were delivered to our door. This is the first time I have ever encountered something like this from a builder. We were thrilled.

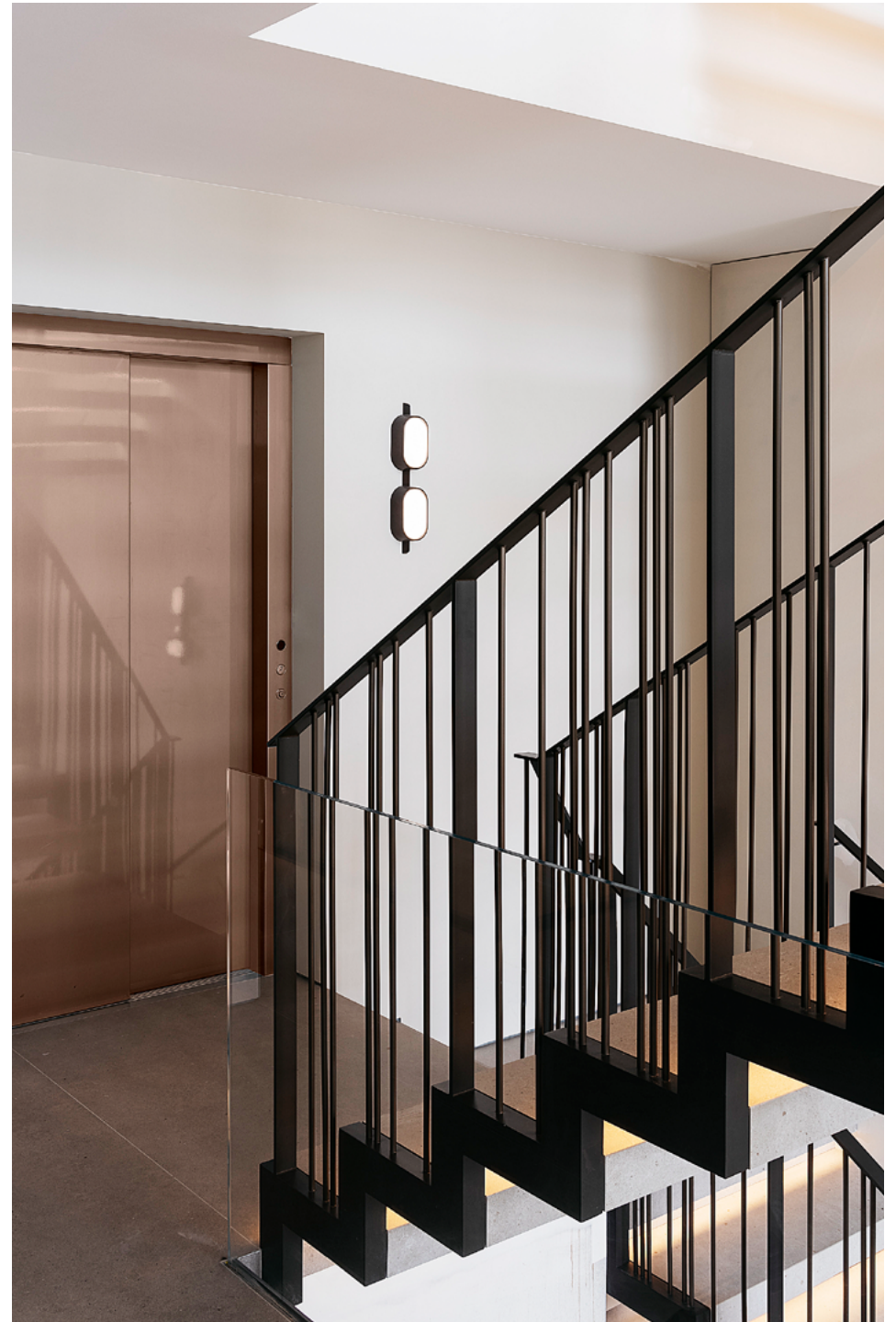
It really was an unparalleled level of service and attention to detail that made for a pleasurable and highly professional experience.

The central staircase has become a standout feature and it was actually inspired by the one I have in my house. Again, Belvedere deserve a lot of credit here. Adam and the team spent months with the engineer re-imagining the design from my small terrace house and upscaling it to go through six storeys. This was one of the biggest challenges of the entire build and, despite the difficulties of such a task, the execution is absolutely flawless.

The main bathroom was another triumph. It's no mean feat to deal with large sheet porcelain, especially around windows and vanities as was called for here. The level of craftsmanship that the Belvedere people, the stonemason, and their subcontractors achieved was incredible—every one of them did a marvellous job. There's literally not one single item of the build that wasn't completed to this same standard.

When the house was finally handed over, I remember Alyssa said that one of the hardest things was deciding which part of the place was her favourite. We are thrilled with the final result too. To have our vision carried through from the beginning from client approval and to have it realised by the client and the builder to such a perfect level is a dream come true.

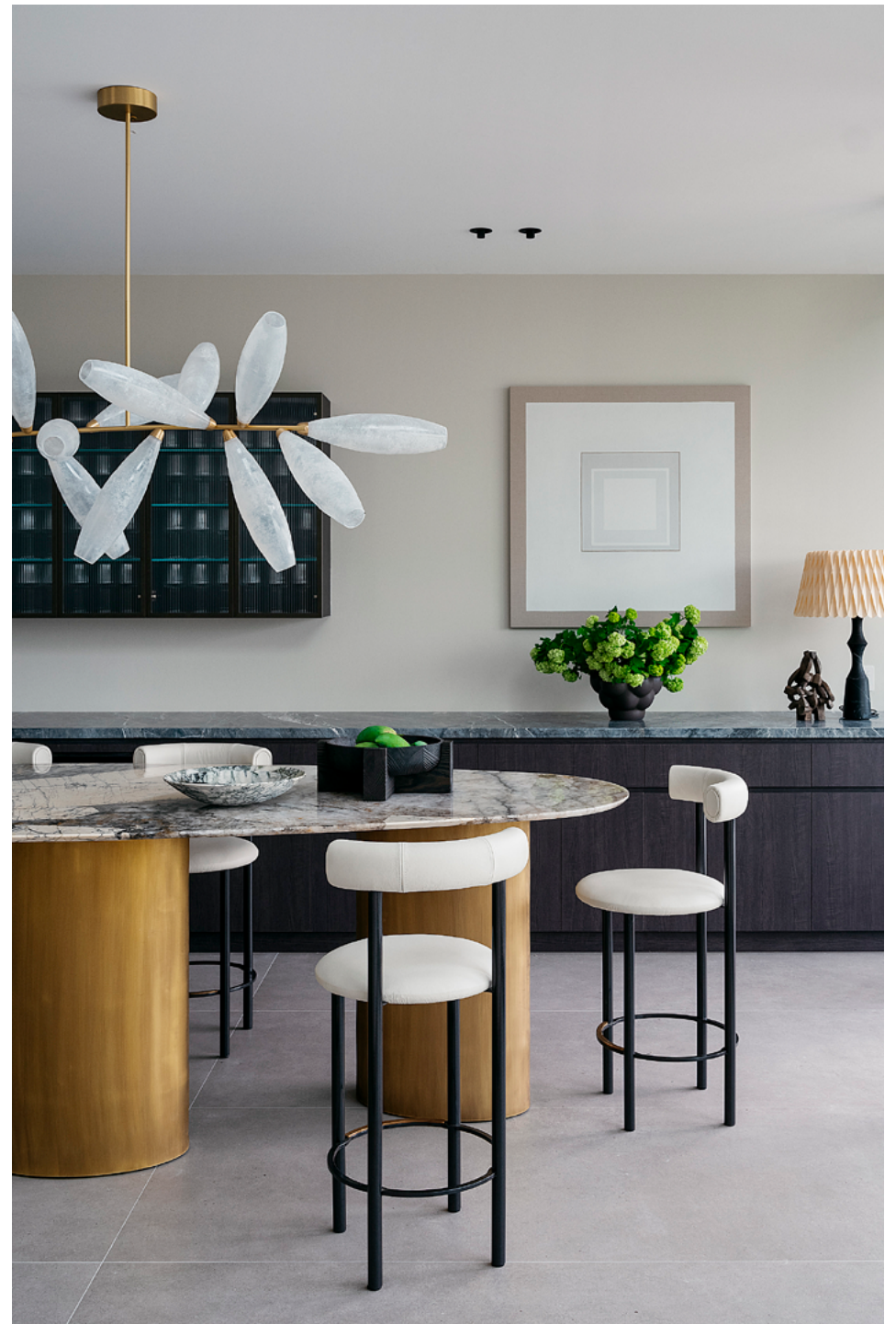






{20—21}





When we first saw it, we could tell this house had the bones to be a lovely place but it was very cramped and dark. It was built in the mid 90s, a time when having a north facing view probably wasn't as prioritised as it is now. We had the idea to create a modern, open-plan home that would let as much light in as possible—to form spaces that were more in tune with the lifestyle we like to lead.

Early on, when we were looking at which builder to use, we had a chat with a couple of owners of recently completed Belvarde jobs. The first owner said that Belvarde might not be the cheapest quote you receive but if they're anywhere near it, don't think twice. The second owner mentioned Adam Howe's name and said 'He's the guy you want to get.'

When we got closer to deciding who we were going to go with, I asked John Fielding who would run the project and he said Adam was looking for a spot. That sealed the deal. We went with Belvarde and I'm so glad we did. We've been blessed.

With many years of family experience in the building industry, we've had experience with a lot of construction supervisors and we've yet to come across someone as thorough and focussed on problem solving as Belvarde's Adam Howe. His approach was to look at everything in an additional light, from multiple perspectives, and ask 'Is this the best way of doing it?' He's very clever at creating synergies where things just got done better. And, with his ability to keep everyone and everything in check, he's something close to a perfect supervisor.



He was great all the way through. His attention to detail is just amazing.

One of the big early challenges we faced was the amount of concrete that was scheduled to be cut out of the floors on each level. In sitting down with Adam, it was in his view that it was over-designed and that there might be a smarter way. On his advice, we sought the opinion of another engineer and were able to find a simpler, more elegant solution. It didn't save a lot of money but we did save a lot of time—months, in fact.

The engineering and framing of the 'floating' pool was a major feat too. It's a massive cantilever over a gigantic stone and we needed to tie it back into the house and anchor it securely. Once again, Adam and the team looked at it and asked the important questions like 'Do we need as many columns or can we engineer it in a way to make it more minimalistic?' In reviewing it, they were able to find a way to enhance its look within the landscape and secure its place as a feature of the home at the same time.

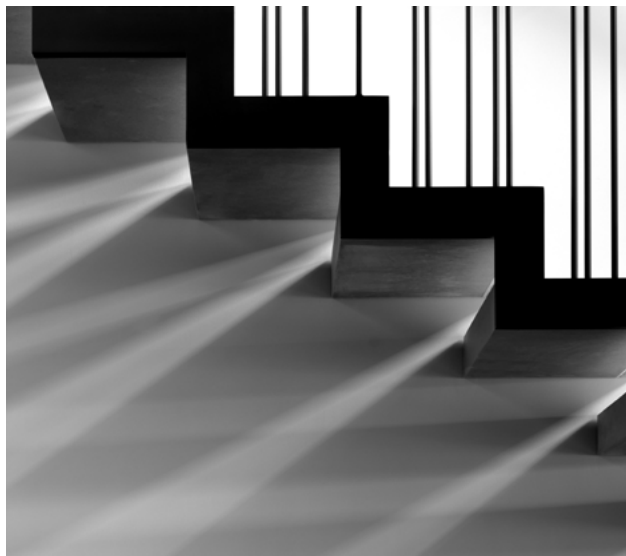
Among the many things that Adam contributed to were the shower screens. We were fixated on having something minimalistic and in metal. There was a company in Melbourne who specialised in these types of screens. We gave them all the specs and, disappointingly, they just came back to us with a list of all the things they couldn't do. We were sitting there one day with John and Adam, when Adam said 'The best thing to do is if we just make them.' We said

'How will you do that?' Adam told us he'd done it before. So he went ahead and drew up the sections, ordered the lineal metres of metal, milled it all down and here we are with these fantastic bespoke shower screens. It was quite amazing to see Belvarde outdo a company that specialised in that type of work. Then they went ahead and did a similar thing with the wine cellar.

The architect did a wonderful job with the design. At some point, though, you've got to make it work. Belvarde's Caroline Kite was an absolute gem. She did a fantastic job with putting the 3D modelling together for the staircase, which has become one of the standout features of the build and something everyone comments on. Caroline made sure everything connected—the heights, the connections, all the minutiae. She reviewed it and reviewed it again. It's an amazing piece of engineering and designing.

The finished place is just marvellous. We have a lot of friends in the building industry and they walk through and are blown away. It's a credit to Belvarde and Adam and the tradespeople that Belvarde use. They're top notch. Lovely people as well but wonderful in what they've accomplished. We really appreciate the finish and the workmanship.

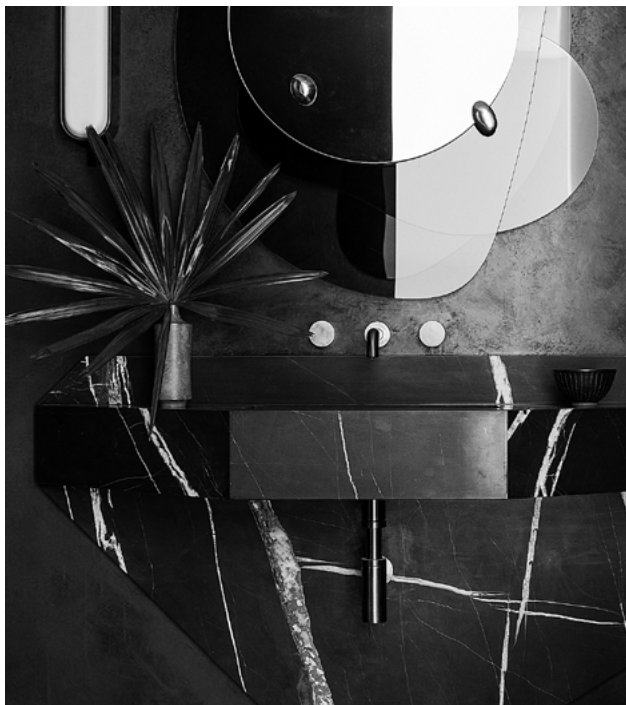
We would have no problem recommending Belvarde to anyone. The only reason we probably won't work with them again is that we intend to stay here forever.



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At Belvelarde, we have four principles that have served us well in ensuring we maintain standards across every job.

{*First Principle*}

FIND THE BEST PEOPLE

It is about searching until we find the people who share our love for building houses as well as they can be built.

That's what Belvelarde is—a team of us who just want to build extraordinary houses. It is an attitude that can't be driven or constrained by external factors. It's innate.

We employ apprentices to artisans and experienced site managers—the rest are tried and trusted contractors. Many of our people have been with us for over 20 years and a few for more than 40.

{*Second Principle*}

KEEP ON LEARNING

Everything we have learned in building some of this country's most complex and challenging houses is formalised in our 200-page Belvelarde Construction Manual.

It details step-by-step instructions on how best to perform every critical task.

It is on every site and is constantly reviewed and updated as our knowledge grows and as building techniques, materials, equipment, and technologies, evolve.

We visit completed builds and catalogue the best of each project to continually improve and refine our methods. We also keep a library of our favourite architecture and building publications to stay informed of the latest developments and learn from others.



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{*Third Principle*}

FORM A BUILDING TEAM

It takes three key players to create a great house: owner, architect and builder. That is why, on each site, we form the building team headed by our site manager who lives the project start to finish. The trio meets regularly to review, discuss, and guide every aspect of the project. This ensures everyone knows just where we are, where we are going next—and ensures that the team make the best decisions.

It is the best way to deliver an extraordinary house that only ever costs what it should cost, and brings great joy to all of us.

{*Fourth Principle*}

MAINTAIN THE HOUSE

This came from listening to owners. They asked us to take care of their houses as well as we built them. So we formed our own specialised Belvelarde Maintenance division. It benefits from access to all information about the build. Plus we can often call on the very tradespeople who built it.

Each new home has its own maintenance manager, who thoroughly understands the house and cares deeply about maintaining it to the highest standards.

According to owners and architects, we deliver the most efficient and skilled post completion care they have ever worked with—indeed several have asked us to take care of other properties we didn't build.

We welcome any questions, feedback or opportunities to discuss your prospective projects.

{*Construction*}

2020—2021

{*Interviews*}

Hamish Spencer

{*Design*}

Pidgeon Ward

{*Photography*}

Felix Forest, Nicholas Watt

{*Paper*}

Colorplan, Knight Smooth

{*Printing*}

Adams Print

