

# 01 Modern Classical

Design Handbook 2026

Modern Classical is evolving from elegant, warm and whimsical forms. The design extends its timeless elegance through functional simplicity and purposeful layouts, balancing classic European symmetry with more approachable detailing.



# Meet your team of experts

Guided by leading experts in architecture, design, lifestyle and global trend forecasting, this handbook draws on deep experience and distinct perspectives in creating homes that are thoughtful, relevant and future-focused.



Cover  
The Modern Classical house uses Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding on the ground floor and vertical Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture on the upper level to create a distinct curved architectural feature.



Neale Whitaker  
Interior Design Expert

Neale is a renowned Australian design expert recognised for his thoughtful approach to residential architecture and interior home design.



Justin Logan  
Architect/Founder, OBI Office

Justin's residential architecture is recognised for creating connection, wellbeing and a strong relationship between interior and exterior spaces.



Rebecca Caratti  
Editor-in-Chief, VOGUE Living

Rebecca leads Vogue Living, recognised globally for its design authority, creative and cultural reach and rigorous curation.



Jenny Li  
Trend Specialist, WGSN

Jenny analyses global data and trends shaping design, lifestyle and consumer behaviour and contributes as a researcher and writer for WGSN content.



Matt Leacy  
Creative Director, Landart

Through Landart, Matt designs landscapes connecting nature and architecture, creating outdoor spaces that restore and inspire.

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# Lifestyle themes

Guided by grand yet approachable, harmonious ways of living, the Modern Classical home responds to the evolving needs and aspirations of contemporary life, supporting multigenerational connection, graceful independence and adaptable, elevated daily living through structured softness and seamless indoor-outdoor flow.

## 01—Evolved Living

Modern Classical delivers enduring value through purposeful simplicity and serene materiality. It balances timeless form with contemporary function, offering homes that feel elevated yet approachable—ready to adapt across life stages.



Milan Design Week Photography by Paul Barbera.

## 02—Creative Living

This style reinterprets European grandeur with sculptural restraint and biophilic grace. Through gentle curves, botanical accents and tactile finishes, it invites emotional ease and quiet self-expression.



Milan Design Week Photography by Paul Barbera.

## 03—Multigenerational Living

Modern Classical blends structured elegance with fluid accessibility. Its intuitive layouts, softened transitions and integrated outdoor zones foster togetherness while respecting individual rhythms.



## 04—Autonomous Living

Autonomous Living defines Modern Classical as resilient, self-assured and elegantly efficient. Structured forms are supported by passive design, durable materials and considered planning, enabling homes to perform with minimal intervention. This approach supports comfort, ease of maintenance and long-term adaptability, offering calm stability amid shifting environmental and economic conditions.

Milan Design Week Photography by Paul Barbera.



# Grand, approachable & harmonious



Featuring softer curves and expanding indoor-outdoor flow to create more harmonious spaces that foster both shared connections and personal solace for multigenerational living.

Modern Classical is a reimagining of classic European elegance, balancing timeless architectural symmetry with approachable detailing. It softens grandeur with quiet opulence, while embracing evolved living through functional and flexible layouts suited to multigenerational households. This style also invites creative expression, giving residents the freedom to bring ideas to life and shape their spaces in ways that truly reflect who they are. Sensorial, tactile and playful, its patterns and forms celebrate individuality while honouring enduring design.

Modern Classical weaves graceful curves, minimalist outlines and seamless indoor-outdoor connection.

Subtly curved archways and textured materials bring soft, practical elegance to classical forms. Designs seamlessly connect shared, private and outdoor spaces to support both harmonious multigenerational living. Smooth connections from indoor to outdoor spaces, such as terraces or a pool area, combined with integrated biophilic elements can help to enhance emotional wellbeing. Intentional layouts prioritise movement, ease and enjoyment across all life stages.

A serene palette of muted creams, botanic greens and grounding earth tones establishes a warm, resort-like elegance with enduring appeal. Tactile surfaces create visual depth, while traditional forms such as arches and trims are re-envisioned with calm, contemporary colours. The result is seamless living spaces that foster both shared connections and privacy, allowing different generations to live together comfortably.

- 1 The Modern Classical facade uses archways and enclosed thresholds to shape moments of arrival, creating a feeling of compression before opening into more expansive spaces beyond.
- 2 Geometric curves define the cantilevered sections of the upper level, mirrored in the windows and doors to frame views from inside the home to the pool outside.



# Floorplan

This floorplan home balances timeless elegance with contemporary function. Designed for large or multigenerational families, it uses sculptural curves and rhythmic symmetry to create calm, sun-lit living.



From Justin:  
 'This design blends structure and softness—curved forms, timeless symmetry and spaces designed for comfort, longevity and multigenerational life.'



## The brief

**Site & location context**  
 Nedlands, WA. Large corner block. A house to withstand hot summers and cooling coastal breezes.

**Homeowner profile**  
 Large multigenerational family, requiring five bedrooms and separate zones for generations. May be converted for all ability access in the future.

**Intended use**  
 Primary family residence

## The layout

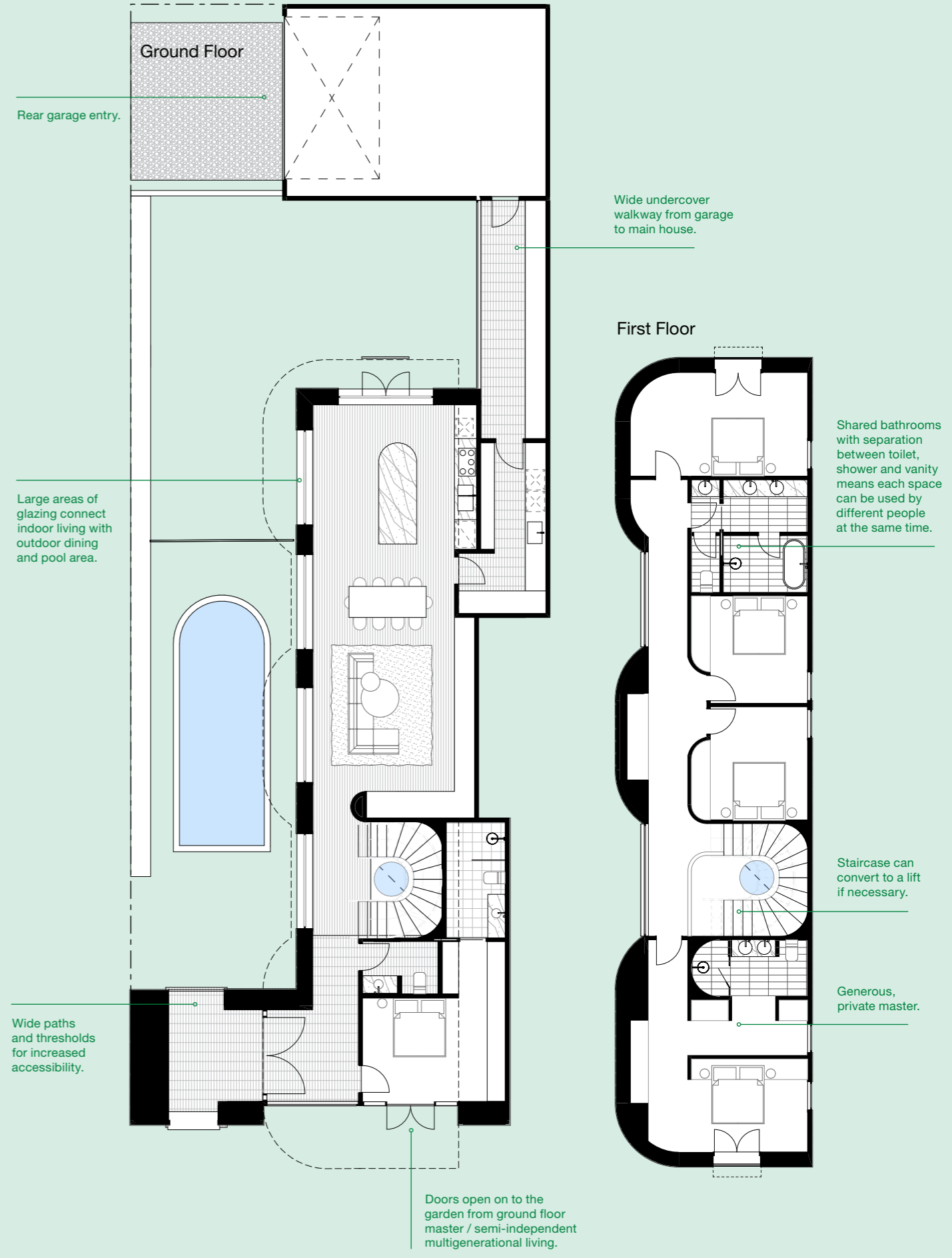
5 bed | 4 bath | 2 car  
 This layout blends classical symmetry with modern ease. A separate entry to the self-contained master suite gives the home a graceful dual-wing feel, while wide, stair-free circulation on the ground floor ensures accessibility. The living spaces run parallel to the pool, creating a bright, airy centre to the home and the kitchen's direct connection to outdoor dining reinforces a relaxed, social rhythm. Throughout, arched thresholds and gently rounded transitions introduce a resort-like calm—elegant, welcoming and intuitively functional.

## Why it works

This plan is designed for longevity, accessibility and effortless daily flow. The ground-floor master provides privacy and independence for multigenerational living, while the main living zone captures year-round light and a seamless indoor-outdoor experience. Spacious pathways, dual entries and sheltered links enhance movement and inclusivity, and the flexible room configuration ensures the home can evolve over time. Lightweight cladding on the upper level allows for refined cantilevers and soft architectural gestures without unnecessary structural cost.

## Adaptations

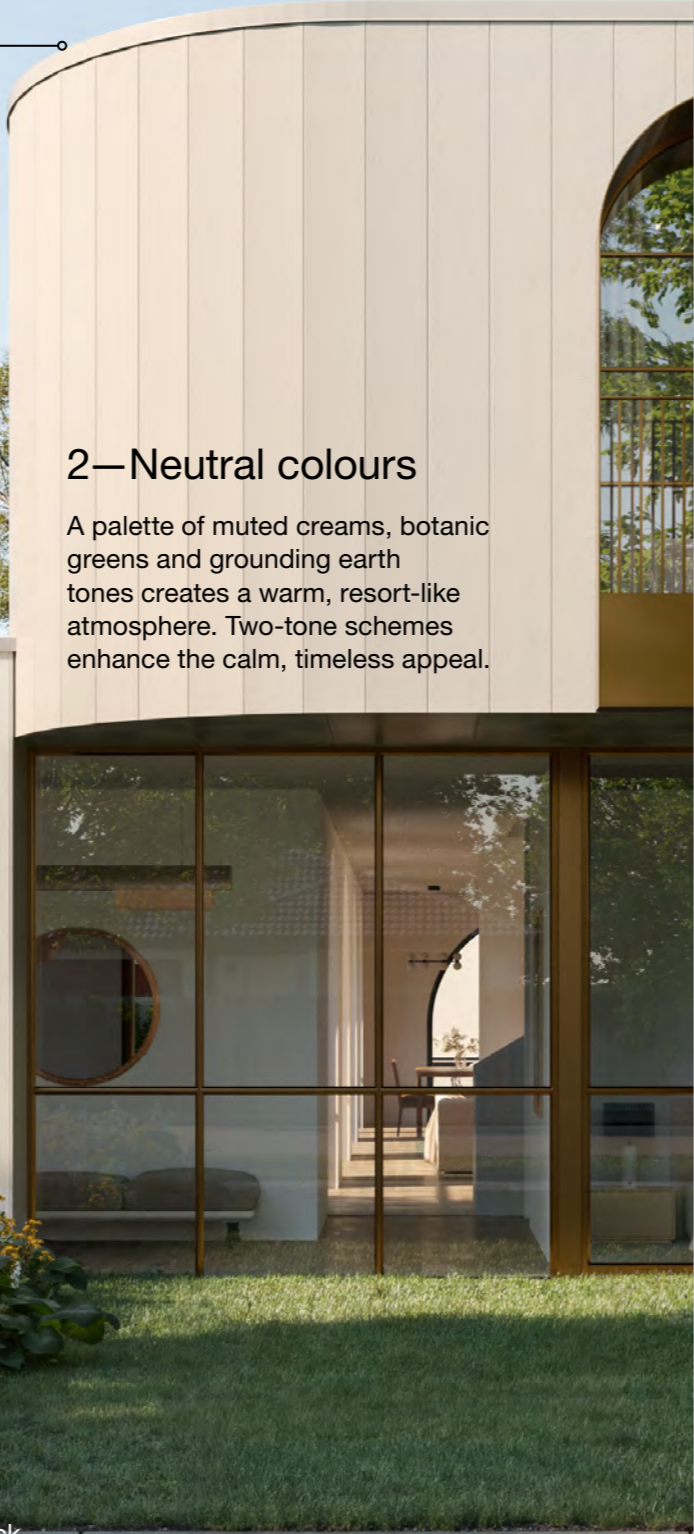
This plan is built to evolve with the household over time. Ground-floor suites can shift from guest accommodation to ageing-in-place retreats, while the upper level offers flexible space for adult children, extended family or future reconfiguration. Curved walls remain an optional gesture for budget control, and the staircase is designed to convert to a lift without major modification. The underlying structure anticipates change, supporting comfort, dignity and a consistent architectural language across generations.



# Design features

## 1—Structured softness

A balance of straight-edged facades and soft curves creates a refined silhouette. Flat roofs and boxed forms are softened by arched openings and rounded transitions, blending classical elegance with modern restraint.



## 2—Neutral colours

A palette of muted creams, botanic greens and grounding earth tones creates a warm, resort-like atmosphere. Two-tone schemes enhance the calm, timeless appeal.

## 3—Contemporary archways

Curved doorways and arched windows in black steel add sculptural interest to textured exterior walls. These elements reimagine classical forms with a minimalist, contemporary edge.

## 4—Integrated biophilia

Potted plants, hedging, and green walls are thoughtfully integrated into terraces, patios and balconies. These elements help enhance wellbeing and connect the home to its surroundings.



## 5—Interiors

Interiors feature soft curvatures, natural light, and tactile materials in neutral tones and simple shapes. Seamless transitions and intentional layouts support comfort, movement and multigenerational living.



Modern Classical townhouse development by Orton Haus, designed by Ziel Design, built by Ort & Co Building. Photography by Nat Spada.



# Cladding solutions

Modern Classical supports layered cladding treatments to create elegant, textured facades with refined vertical precision.

## Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture

Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture brings a refined, rendered look with subtle v-shaped grooves, perfect for creating softly layered facades. Its tactile finish complements Modern Classical's structured softness and adds quiet depth to both straight-edged and curved forms.



## Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding

Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding introduces soft, organic texture to Modern Classical homes. Ideal for ground floor applications, the brushed concrete finish adds quiet depth, complementing curved forms and grounding the home in understated elegance.



## Axon™ Cladding 400mm Smooth

The wide groove spacing of Axon™ Cladding 400mm Smooth delivers a vertical line detail that adds height and architectural sophistication to any part of the home. Its clean, contemporary aesthetic complements Modern Classical style, offering a seamless blend of Mediterranean form and modern refinement.



James Hardie has provided Australian-made building products for over 100 years, with a wide range of our fibre cement products being GreenRate™ Level A certified including Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding, Linea™ Weatherboard and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture. All Hardie™ residential exterior cladding has a standard 25-year warranty period.



# Introducing **NEW** Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel (AAC)

Build modern mixed-material homes with one trusted brand.

The introduction of Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel marks an important evolution in how modern Australian homes can be built with Hardie™ products. By bringing autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC) and fibre cement exterior wall solutions together under one trusted brand, James Hardie offers a complete exterior wall solution for builders, installers, designers and architects delivering modern mixed-material homes.



Dulux Acratex® Coventry®  
Coarse Steel Trowel Applied



Dulux Acratex® Mediterranean  
Classique Coarse



Dulux Acratex®  
Super Trowel 2mm



Dulux Acratex® Contempo  
Advance® Coarse

James Hardie provides an integrated exterior approach to deliver speed, efficiency and contemporary design. Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel works seamlessly with Hardie™ fibre cement cladding to enable modern, mixed-material designs, delivering energy-efficient performance, design versatility and streamlined installation backed by a 25-year warranty.

- 1 Featuring Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel (AAC) finished in Dulux Acratex® Contempo Advance® Coarse Brushed Finish on the ground floor and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture on the upper level.
- 2 Featuring Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel (AAC) on the ground floor, finished in Dulux Acratex® Super Trowel 2mm and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture 405mm on the upper level.



# Colour palettes

The colour palette embraces muted creams, botanic greens and grounded earth tones to create a warm, resort-like atmosphere. These considered neutrals soften structured forms and highlight Modern Classical symmetry, allowing light, texture and gentle curves to take centre stage.



From Jenny:

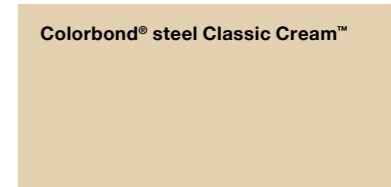
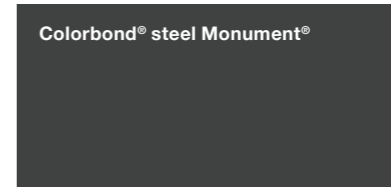
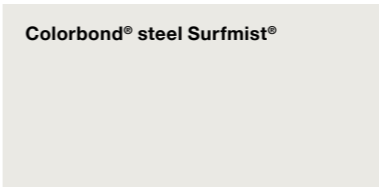
‘This colour palette softens the classical structure while allowing light, texture and architectural symmetry to truly shine.’

## Scheme 1

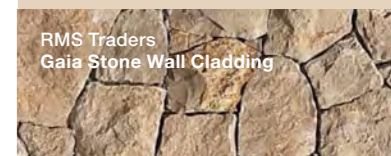
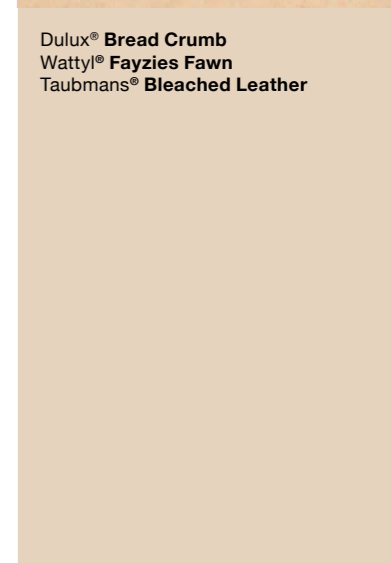
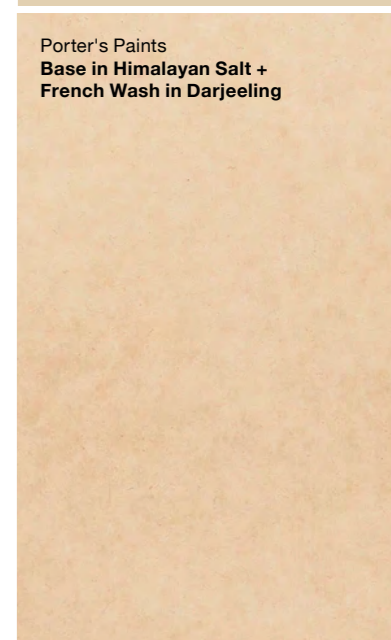
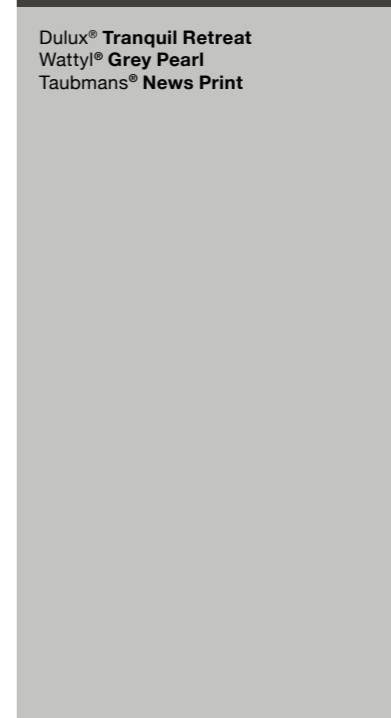
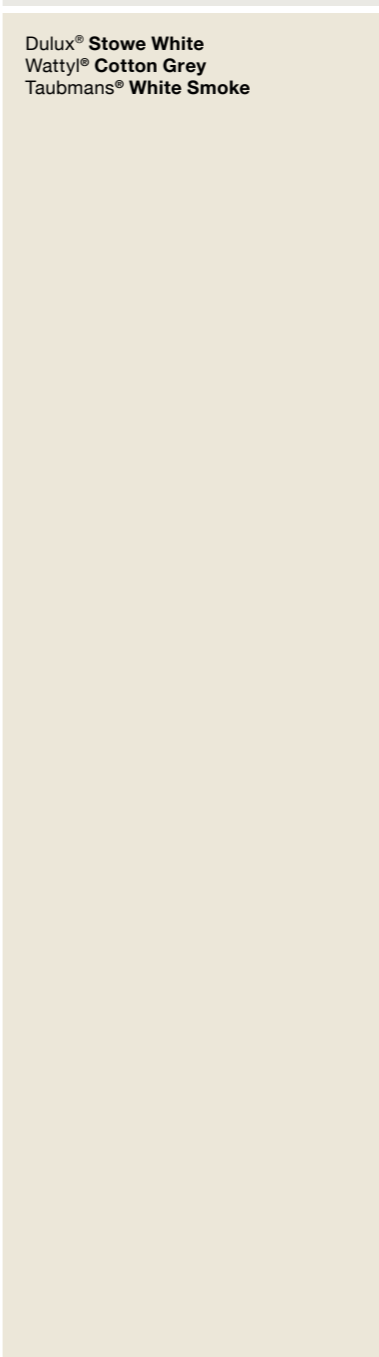
## Scheme 2

## Scheme 3

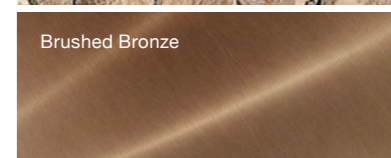
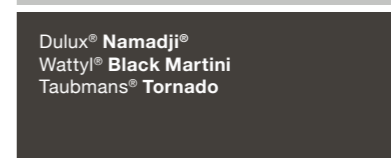
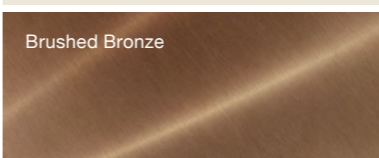
Roof



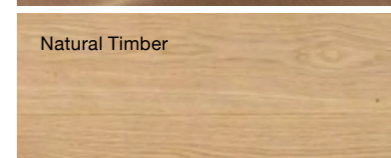
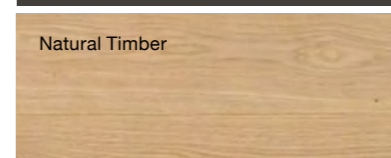
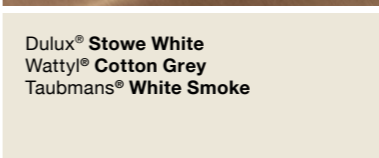
Walls



Trim



Front Door



# Style variations

While structured symmetry and softened arches anchor Modern Classical, variations respond to lifestyle, site conditions and climate. Material palettes, openings and detailing evolve to suit context, enabling elegant yet practical homes that balance grandeur, comfort, performance and long-term adaptability.



## Modern Classical Duplex

A style perfectly suited to symmetry, with graceful arches and harmonious dual living.

Featuring Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture on the ground floor and Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding on the upper storey.



## Mediterranean Modern Classical

Deep earthy tones and natural stone accents soften the classical form with warmth.

Featuring Hardie™ Gravis™ Panel in Dulux Acratex® Mediterranean Classique Fine on the ground floor and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture on the upper level with natural stone accent.



## Contemporary Provincial

A pitched roof, clean lines and the elimination of curves reinterpret the classical form with restraint.

Featuring Stria™ Cladding Smooth 325mm.

## Neo-Classical Townhouse

Repeatable forms and clear zoning deliver efficient, refined townhouse living.

Featuring Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture and Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding.



# Materials & textures

Modern Classical materials balance structured elegance with tactile warmth. Calming neutrals and botanic greens ground the palette, while timber, stone and softly ribbed finishes introduce depth and refinement. Fluted panels, brushed textures and gentle undulations add quiet dimension, creating interiors that feel elevated, harmonious and enduringly welcoming.



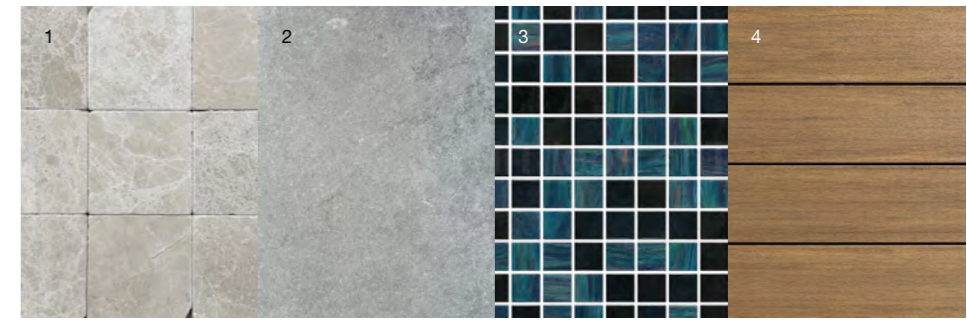
From Rebecca:

‘Modern Classical materials work best when refined textures meet warmth—layer stone, timber and fluted finishes thoughtfully to soften symmetry, creating interiors that feel elevated, welcoming and quietly luxurious.’



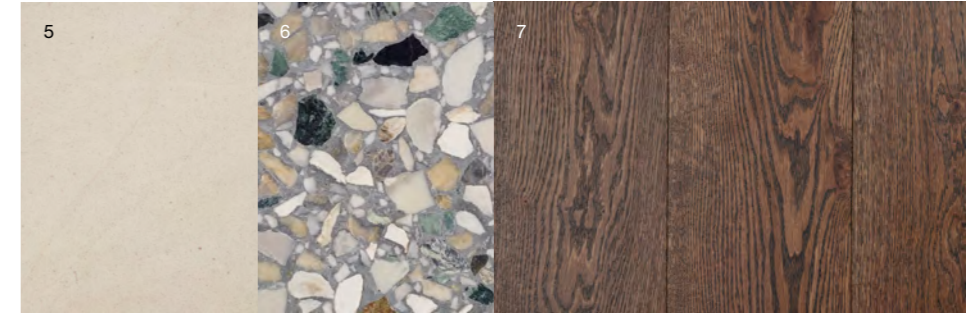
## Exterior

- 1 [Papillion tumbled cobblestones](#), RMS Traders
- 2 [London Grey Brushed Limestone Pavers](#), RMS Traders
- 3 [Peacock Pearl Blend Pool Tile Glass Mosaic](#), The Pool Tile Company
- 4 [PVC Decking, Vintage Collection](#), [Weathered Teak](#), TimberTech®



## Flooring

- 5 Natural Stone Rocca Bianca Tile, Artedomus
- 6 Polarity Terrazzo Tile, Fibonacci
- 7 Como French Chateau Floorboards, Kustom Timber



## Windows & Walls

- 8 Brushed Bronze window trim
- 9 French Green Interior Wall Paint, Porter's Paints
- 10 Flannel Flower Interior Wall Paint, Bauwerk Colour



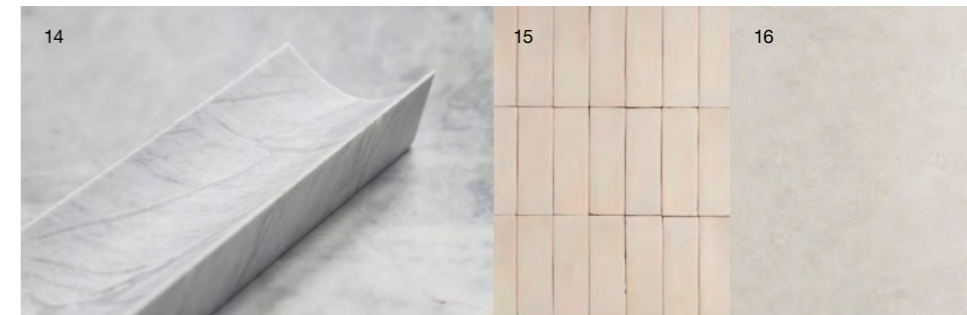
## Cabinetry

- 11 Maximum Michelangelo Benchtop, Artedomus
- 12 Fiandre Urban White Porcelain Benchtop, Artedomus
- 13 Laminex Otway, Flint, Laminex



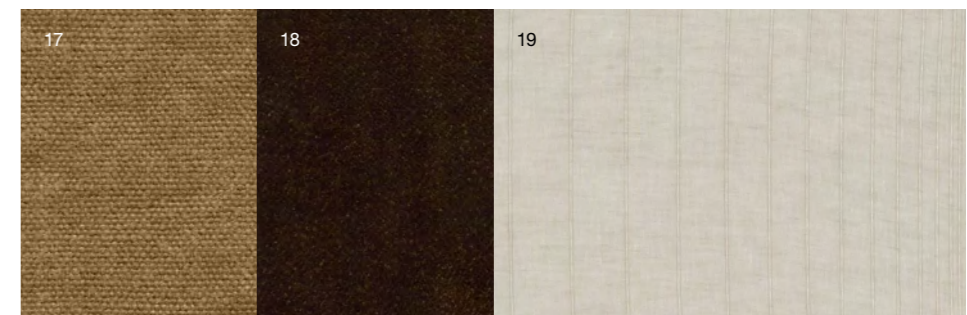
## Tiles

- 14 Artessarae Elba Flute, Artedomus
- 15 Noosa Semi Gloss Zellige, Bone, Tilecloud
- 16 Sydney Matte White Stone Look Tile, Tilecloud



## Textiles

- 17 Wappo Linen Curtain, James Dunlop Textiles
- 18 Lina Theodora Upholstery, Warwick
- 19 Cobbybob organic Linen, James Dunlop Textiles



# Landscaping

Landscaping in Modern Classical extends its structured elegance into the landscape, using layered planting, clipped hedging and textured stone to soften architectural symmetry. Outdoor zones feel resort-like and restorative, supporting passive performance while strengthening the seamless indoor-outdoor connection.

Lush planting is set against strong architectural masses, softens the geometry and creates a modern classical landscape with a relaxed, resort-like feeling.



From Matt:

‘What I love about landscaping Modern Classical homes is layered plant compositions, green walls and terraces to soften symmetry, creating resort-like spaces that enhance wellbeing and strengthen connection to place.’

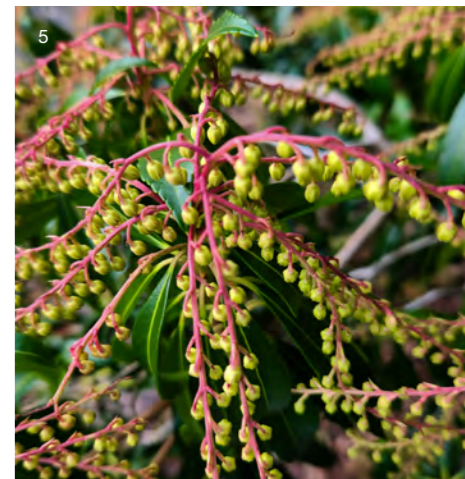
## Warm Climates

- 1 Tropical Birch—a fast-growing deciduous tree with deep green foliage and distinctive red-brown bark that becomes furrowed as it matures.
- 2 Tractor Seat Plant—a bold, clump-forming perennial known for its oversized, glossy, kidney-shaped leaves that create a strong architectural presence in shaded gardens.
- 3 Creeping Fig—a fast-growing evergreen vine with small leaves and aerial roots that cling to walls and surfaces, forming a dense green cover.



## Cool Climates

- 4 Silver Birch—a slender deciduous tree known for its distinctive white, peeling bark and light canopy that casts gentle, dappled shade.
- 5 Pieris—a broadleaf evergreen shrub with glossy dark green leaves, often producing bronze or red new growth and drooping clusters of small, urn-shaped flowers in spring.
- 6 Tom Thumb—a popular, fast-growing, compact and hardy dwarf shrub, often used for low-maintenance formal hedge.
- 7 Magnolia—ancient, flowering, woody plants renowned for their large, fragrant, and showy blooms (white, pink, purple, yellow) and glossy green leaves.



Get the Look

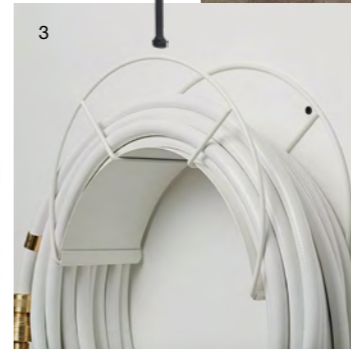
# Styling

Styling Modern Classical centres on an elevated, harmonious environment where refined interiors pair soft textures with natural materials and graceful detailing. Timber, stone and calming neutrals layer with gentle curves and sculptural forms, balancing practicality with understated luxury to create immersive, resort-like everyday living.



## Outdoor

- 1 [Breeze Outdoor Lounge Chair](#), Temple & Webster
- 2 [Arlon Tray](#), Freedom
- 3 [White Snake Kit](#), Garden Glory
- 4 [Kahuna Polystone Outdoor Coffee Table](#), Temple & Webster
- 5 [LEHI Sun Lounger](#), Freedom
- 6 [Marzia Ceramic Plant Pot with Saucer](#), Temple & Webster
- 7 [Smooth Solid Brass Floating Numbers](#), Passio Interiors
- 8 [Rova Outdoor Light](#), About Space



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## Interior

- 1 [Sydney Basin Spout + Benchtop Progressive Mixer](#), Warm Brushed Nickel, Yabby
- 2 [Palatine Steel Side Table](#), Temple & Webster
- 3 [Paulownia Wood Decorative Bowl](#), Temple & Webster
- 4 [Killian Boucle Swivel Armchair](#), Temple & Webster
- 5 [Caroline Pendant](#), About Space
- 6 [Orla Entertainment Unit](#), Black, RJ Living
- 7 [Brave Handles](#), Linea Standard
- 8 [Natural Flown Contemporary Rug](#), Temple & Webster
- 9 [Cindy Wall Mirror Black](#), Freedom



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### Explore the Hardie™ AI Visualiser

Visualise, customise and communicate your design vision with Hardie™ products and the latest modern home styles from the James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2026.

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