



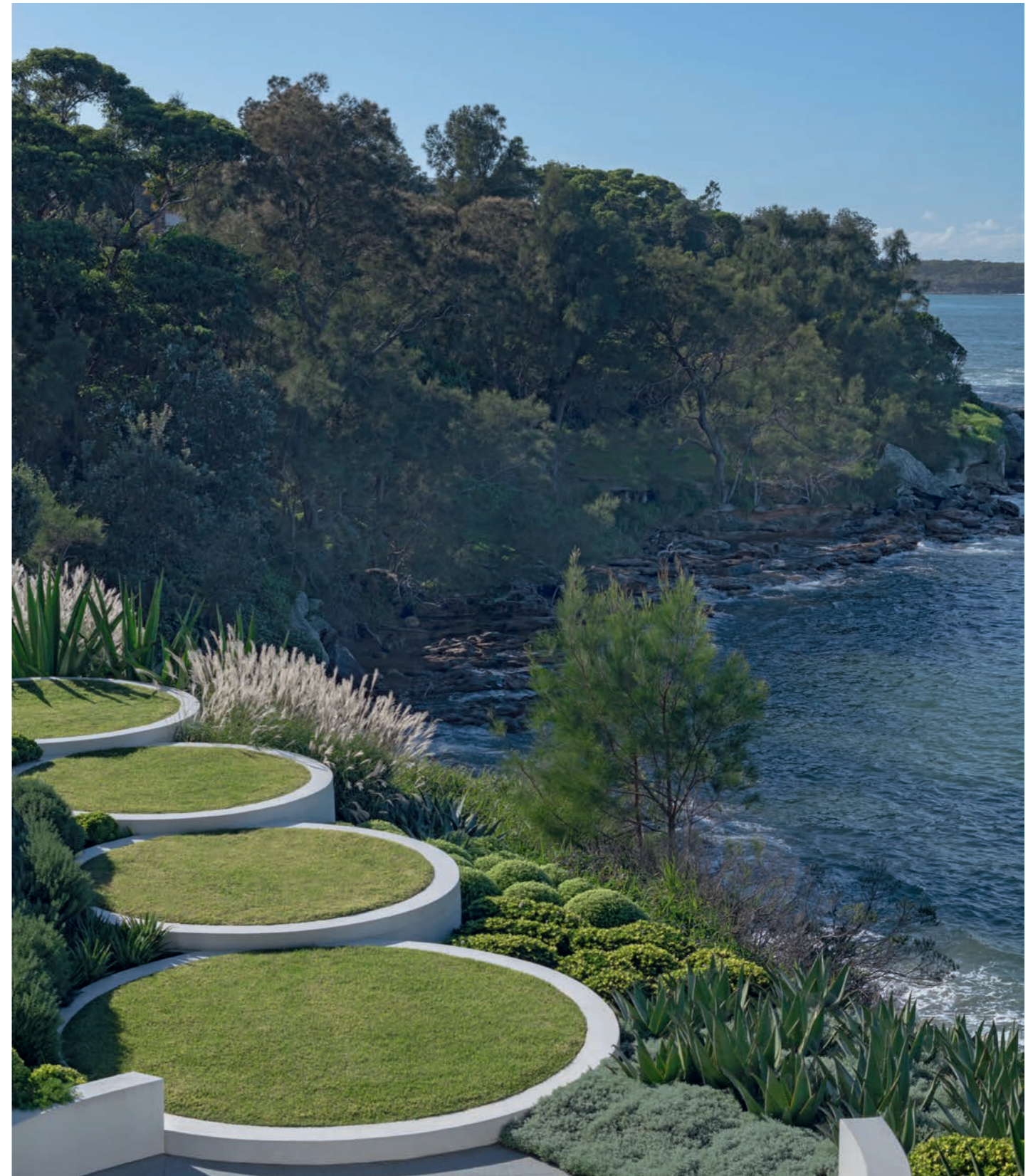
Cove House

Secret Gardens | Cronulla, New South Wales, Australia | 2017

Cove House commands a dramatic position, perched high on cliffs bordering the Royal National Park at the edge of Sydney's southernmost suburbs. Here, lagoons, remote beaches, and preserved pockets of native bush make this a precious location. Built in 1973, Cove House was designed by Australian architect Reuben Lane, whose vision had been shaped by time working for renowned Modernist Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. The mid-century influences are evident in the house's curvilinear appeal and strong form. This was the aesthetic that the owners loved—it just needed a garden of equal character. For Sydney-based studio Secret Gardens, the brief was to “be brave” in their landscaping, while ensuring that the plantings could withstand the strong southerly winds that sweep this dramatic coastline. Bold construction solutions were also required to cope with vertiginous access to the variation in levels. The answer

involved creating a range of spaces with retaining walls that define a lawn, swimming pool (tucked in under the house), and firepit, each designed to complement the form of the house. Perhaps the most decisive feature is the circular lawn stepping-stones that appear to float above the ocean's edge—their shape reflecting not just the curves of the house, but the natural formations found in the rock pools below the site. The plantings, too, are carefully considered, given the site's unique topography, with textural shrubs for shelter, resilient groundcover, and tufted clumps of miscanthus (*M. transmorrisonensis*), its white-plumed spikes dancing in the breeze. Despite its technical challenges, the garden at Cove House is indeed bold and unique, responding to both the architectural vision of the house and its dynamic natural surroundings.





← (pages 48 and 49)

This unique garden was designed to complement the architecture of the house, with circular stepping-stone lawns and a streamlined firepit reflecting the curves of the house and the bay itself.

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Circular pavers within the front lawn echo the statement-making lawn circles of this cliff-top location.