MEDIA RELEASE

Luigi Rosselli completes a $203 million Italian hill estate above Sydney Harbour

In Vaucluse, Sydney, Australia, Luigi Rosselli, Handelsmann + Khaw and Dangar Barin Smith have completed Hillside, four houses on a harbour ridge drawn from Rosselli's memory of the hill estates of Italy, with Terreno, the largest of the four, offered at circa $80 million.

Luigi Rosselli first walked the cul-de-sac at the top of Hillside Avenue in Vaucluse eight years ago, shortly after the 2,586 square metre site was consolidated. It occupies the highest point of the street, with an outlook that runs north over the spires of historic Kincoppal and across Rose Bay to the city skyline. "My first impression was the joy of seeing a hillside," he says. "It reminded me of manor houses perched on a steep hill, with imposing ramparts and antique columns becoming part of the landscape of Italy. I felt that this hillside deserved to have a portrait as wonderful as my memories."

Hillside, the estate Rosselli designed for developer Moshav Financial, is now complete. Its four houses take their Italian names from the elements they sit between. Terreno and Mare, earth and sea, are a freestanding pair of six bedrooms each. Cielo and Luce, sky and light, are semi-detached residences of four bedrooms. All four sit within a secure gated estate, with interiors by Tania Handelsmann and Gillian Khaw of Handelsmann + Khaw and gardens by Dangar Barin Smith. Rosselli, Handelsmann + Khaw and Dangar Barin Smith were each named to Vogue Living's VL50 list of Australia's best architects and designers in 2024.

Tal Silberman, founder and chief executive of Moshav Financial, gave Rosselli an open brief, asking first for a sketch of what he thought the site should hold. The drawing that came back, created by hand on the yellowtrace paper Rosselli uses for all his concept work, set out the whole estate in a single sketch, and Hillside as built follows it closely. The pergola columns are deliberately set at irregular heights, some taller and some shorter, with the planting floating above.

Rosselli was born in Milan and trained under Mario Botta, Álvaro Siza, Umberto Riva and Aldo Giurgola before establishing his Sydney practice in 1984. He describes his approach as humanist, one in which people and the environment take precedence, and at Hillside that philosophy is expressed most clearly through material. The houses are built in solid masonry, lime rendered and punctuated with rammed earth, with tall columns and walls rising the full height of the elevations and the sediment banding left visible. Handmade terracotta screens shade the western face. The roofs carry a copper finish, with copper gutters and downpipes that will patina over time. The steel balustrades are finished with a five-coat paint system, in keeping with Silberman's view that Hillside should be built to last.

Rammed earth has long been a preoccupation for Rosselli, and here it forms the base that anchors each house to the slope, along with the columns and parts of the upper levels. Its layering is almost geological, and its thermal mass draws heat from the rooms by day and gives it back at night. "I'm a soft architect. I

have a soft spot for soft materials," he says. "Rammed earth is very soft to touch and very soft to look at." The terracotta screens come from an older lineage still. Their semicircular tiles take the form the Romans used for culverts, repurposed here as screening and set within a fine framework so that the orange of the clay warms the rooms behind.

The interiors are shaped by curved walls and elegant, sinuous stairs. The stairs are Rosselli's signature, and because Terreno is built into the hillside it has several. A grand stair rises from the lower garden to the front door between tall columns, with handrails of a deliberately idiosyncratic shape. Inside, the main stair is lit from three levels above, and a dedicated flight leads to the main bedroom. "Going from one floor to another is normally an exercise of effort, and it should not be an effort," Rosselli says. "The light attracts you to altitude, and the wish to see the views from the top is a stimulus to go up." The climb ends on the fourth level, in the room Rosselli calls the eagle's nest, a main bedroom with views that turn a full 360 degrees from the ocean at Bondi to the harbour, and a bathroom that looks down onto the pool.

Arrival is handled with the same care. A steel pergola frames the entry drive and has been planted with bougainvillea that will grow, in time, into a covered arcade, and each house has its own gate in rammed earth and steel. From the front door of Terreno the plan opens in several directions at once, back toward the view and across to a suite of living rooms that cascade from one level to the next beneath ceilings of four and a half metres. Double-height steel French doors open onto limestone terraces, pergolas and belvederes, and every room on the ground floor spills outside, which Rosselli describes as his reconstruction of the hilltop country house his family kept in Italy when he was young. Behind the classical language, the houses are fully automated, from the curtains and climate control to security and the aluminium louvres.

Handelsmann + Khaw, who have collaborated with Rosselli for many years, have worked within a considered palette of stone, glass and aged metal. Silberman puts the pairing simply. Rosselli designs from the outside in, he says, and Handelsmann + Khaw from the inside out. In the kitchens, Gaggenau appliances sit behind fluted glass, set against marble benchtops and aged brass hardware. The butler's pantry is concealed behind sliding doors layered in a micro-cement finish. Powder room vanities are cut from single blocks of stone, and Kaldewei baths stand free beneath the windows. All of the joinery is custom-made in real timber veneer.

Stone carries much of the interior's character, and at Terreno each room has its own. The kitchen benchtops are Calacatta Monet marble, the fireplace is Silver Travertine, the main ensuite is Havana dolomite, the guest ensuites are Carrara and the powder room is Green Maestro quartzite. "One of the main ideas of the home is this feeling of permanence, and beautiful materials that age naturally," Handelsmann says. "The kitchen joinery is very grounded in the architecture, so we wanted the slab to introduce movement and character."

The furniture, chosen by the studio and available to buyers of Terreno as an optional extra, is there to soften all that permanence. Linen curtains, natural wool and silk rugs sit against the rammed earth and stone, and the sofas in front of the windows are kept low in the back so the eye travels past them to the harbour. In the

living room, which already has the direct view to the Harbour Bridge and one of Rosselli's fireplaces competing for attention, the studio furnished with a light hand. The piece that took longest to find was a Poltrona Frau sofa that moves in and out as it curves through the room, in thick wool bouclé paired with leather. "We were thinking of the palettes that Italian quiet luxury fashion brands use," says Gillian Khaw, co-director of Handelsmann + Khaw. "classic neutrals, punctuated with navy and terracotta." Outdoors, the upholstery fabric is Loro Piana. The studio imagined the house for a collector, a multi-generational family or a couple who entertain often, and furnished it so that any of them could see themselves there.

The gardens by Dangar Barin Smith are subtropical in their planting, with a Mediterranean looseness to the composition, and bougainvillea has been planted to run the length of the estate. At Terreno, the largest of the four houses, terraces step down through the garden, alongside a year-round heated pool. The planting is still young, and Rosselli expects the garden to fill out quickly over the next couple of years.

Moshav Financial was founded by Tal Silberman in 2012 and has built through Sydney's east for more than a decade, delivering Aqualine and AYA at Bondi Beach and Verdical at Bondi Junction, the last of these also a Rosselli design. Hillside is its largest project to date. "A house at this level is not bought from a drawing," Silberman says. "We took the view that Hillside had to be finished, planted and standing before anyone walked through it, and that is what we have delivered." Lords Group built the estate, as they did Aqualine and Verdical.

Two of the four houses are now offered to the market through Ray White Projects. Terreno, with six bedrooms across 1,628 square metres of internal and terrace space, is priced at circa $80 million. Cielo, with four bedrooms across 600 square metres, is priced at circa $30 million.

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Notes to editors

Project Hillside , Vaucluse NSW

Architect Luigi Rosselli Architects

Interior design Handelsmann + Khaw (Tania Handelsmann, Gillian Khaw)

Furniture Selected by Handelsmann + Khaw, available at Terreno as an optional extra

Landscape Dangar Barin Smith

Developer Moshav Financial (Tal Silberman)

Builder Lords Group

Site 2,586sqm, consolidated 2018

Houses Four. Terreno and Mare (6 bed, freestanding), Cielo and Luce (4 bed, semi-detached)

Collection value $203 million

Materials Lime-rendered solid masonry, rammed earth, handmade terracotta screens, copper-finish roofing with copper gutters and downpipes, steel French doors, limestone terraces, Calacatta Monet and Carrara

marble, Silver Travertine, Havana dolomite, Green Maestro quartzite, micro-cement, custom real timber veneer joinery

Completed Late September 2026

Photography Prue Roscoe

Agent Eddie Mansour, Ray White Projects, 0424 251 259, emansour@raywhite.com

Website hillsidevaucluse.com

Media contact: Trish Nicol, The Trish Nicol Agency, trish@trishnicolagency.com.au