



# Styled to Perfection

An insta-worthy apartment in Discovery Bay makes the perfect backdrop for this chic stylist's work.

BY KATE FARR PHOTOGRAPHY MICHELLE PROCTOR



With the move to DB came two further additions to the family: Italian greyhounds Hugo and Argos, who, Emma cheerfully admits, rule the roost – even to the point of influencing design decisions! “Our dogs’ favourite area is our living room bay window; we had custom cushions made to increase our seating options, and they love sunbathing and watching the birds outside!”

Fortunately, other than keeping their canine companions content, Emma and Dave have had very little to worry about in terms of renovation. Emma explains: “I think we were pretty lucky in terms of layout, as the previous owner had already opened out the kitchen, making our additional renovations fairly minimal.” She adds that, even though the space isn’t huge, the floor plan is efficient in utilising space. “Our previous apartment was bigger but it actually felt smaller than our current home due to the layout.”

With the basic layout already working well for the couple, Emma was free to unleash her creative eye when it came to decorating the apartment. Choosing a minimalist palette of mostly grey and black, accessorised with vibrant pops of colour throughout, the décor manages to be simultaneously sophisticated and full of personality. Emma explains, “I really love mid-century modern interiors; to me, the lines and design are really timeless.” Key pieces in the living room include a simple wooden coffee table from TREE, a Danish Vintage Modern TV console, and a classic sofa by Decor8. These are teamed with a pale pink leather ottoman by Thorn and Burrow, a tonal West Elm rug and a striking swan painting by UK artist Abigail Reed, which originally featured in the TV series *Broadchurch*.

To chat to food and lifestyle stylist and social media consultant EMMA LAUREN – whose intricate photographic styling work has been featured in a long list of publications in Hong Kong and overseas – is to instantly feel that little bit more cheerful, no matter how grey the day. As naturally sunny as her beautifully curated Instagram feed ([instagram.com/emma\\_lauren](https://www.instagram.com/emma_lauren)), Emma’s quirky and often very dry humour shines through, both online and in person, and is reflected in the details of her unexpectedly whimsical home.

Arriving in Hong Kong five years ago with commercial pilot husband Dave, Adelaide native Emma struck upon Discovery Bay as the perfect foil to the often-overwhelming pace of city life. “We chose this area as the green spaces and living seemed like a good balance to Hong Kong’s busy lifestyle. Also, by being outside of the Central area, we were able to get a larger place for a smaller budget.”

The couple settled upon a two-bedroomed, 878-square-foot apartment with an open kitchen, lush mountain views and great natural light – a huge bonus for Emma. “When I’m not shooting in a studio or on location, I work from home. It’s very comfortable to have an open concept home with such an abundance of natural light to shoot products, or even just to catch up on emails.” Any downsides to island life? “Living by the ferry schedule! It does definitely force you to be more organised.”





Emma and Dave have collected many meaningful pieces on their frequent travels, which now take pride of place throughout the apartment. “Every time we travel somewhere we usually pick up an item for the home, so I feel like almost everything has a story behind it! There’s something so nice about having an item you love and use every day that invokes good memories.”

Describing both herself and her husband as “kind of hoarders”, Emma loves to uncover cameras and props that she can use in her photoshoots, while Dave favours building his book collection. “We try and arrange these collections so they are focal points of the room rather than clutter,” says Emma – and nowhere is this more evident than with the rainbow book stack, which creates a playful highlight on an otherwise unremarkable wall. The couple’s imaginative gifts also take pride of place in their home. “Dave’s favourite present from me is an antique puffin, which was originally from a London museum in the 1800s.” And her favourite gift in return? “A 1952 pink typewriter from New York, that he found and surprised me with.”



For all the flashes of colour and quirk in the living area, Emma has opted for restful understatement in the master bedroom. “I used a dark grey paint colour, with bright white linens and gold and brass features. Dark colours can often make a space look smaller, but for a bedroom I think it creates a cosy feeling. It also helps to balance the dark frame of the bed.” A large vintage mirror, along with a simple side table from Zara Home complements the Indigo teak and wicker bed and creates a tranquil, unified look. And while the room isn’t large, Emma has solved the age-old problem of storage by carving out an enviable walk-in closet space from an unused third half-bedroom.

Of course, we already know Hugo and Argos’s preferred hangout, but what about Emma’s? “I love our living space; the open-plan design makes it the perfect space for having friends over.” Meanwhile, Dave is happiest cooking up a storm. “The open-plan kitchen is definitely my husband’s favourite room as it makes it so enjoyable to cook together, something that wasn’t possible in our previous apartment.”



We asked Emma for a stylist’s perspective on decorating an apartment and she shared four failsafe tips with us.

- #1 Green leaves and plants freshen and invigorate an apartment. Cut tropical leaves can last four to five weeks, so they make a great budget-friendly alternative to cut flowers.
- #2 Colour co-ordinating your bookshelf turns a storage area into a focal feature. This also makes a small space look tidier.
- #3 Use trays to group arrangements together. This avoids your items looking cluttered, and makes them look like more of a curated collection.
- #4 Stick to using just one or two tones of wood in a room to keep your theme consistent.



## Emma's Recommendations

Danish Vintage Modern  
148 Magill Road, Norwood,  
Adelaide, South Australia  
[danishvintagemodern.com.au](http://danishvintagemodern.com.au)

Decor8  
8/F, Shun Pont Commercial  
Building,  
5-11 Thomson Road, Wan Chai  
5981 1636 | [decor8.com.hk](http://decor8.com.hk)

Indigo Living  
221-224 Landmark Prince's  
Building, Central  
2801 5512 | [indigo-living.com](http://indigo-living.com)

Klondike  
G/F, 39 Tung Street,  
Sheung Wan  
3956 4556 | [the-klondike.com](http://the-klondike.com)

Thorn and Burrow  
1/F, 30 High Street,  
Sai Ying Pun  
2559 9338  
[thornandburrow.com](http://thornandburrow.com)

TREE  
28/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee  
Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau  
2870 1582 | [tree.com.hk](http://tree.com.hk)

Zara Home  
Harbour City, 25 Canton Road,  
Tsim Sha Tsui  
2880 5068 | [zarahome.com](http://zarahome.com)

And it seems that Emma's innate sense of style runs in her family. "Something that my mum said to me a long time before we moved to Hong Kong was, 'When you decorate an apartment, you have to take a different approach to decorating a house,' and I think she is totally right. As the space is generally a lot smaller and rooms are often dual-use, you need to be careful when combining furniture pieces that the room doesn't become too visually cluttered, or messy."

Looking around this playful-yet-grown-up space, it appears that Emma has achieved the perfect balance between collecting and curating – all in her trademark colourful style. *æ*

