

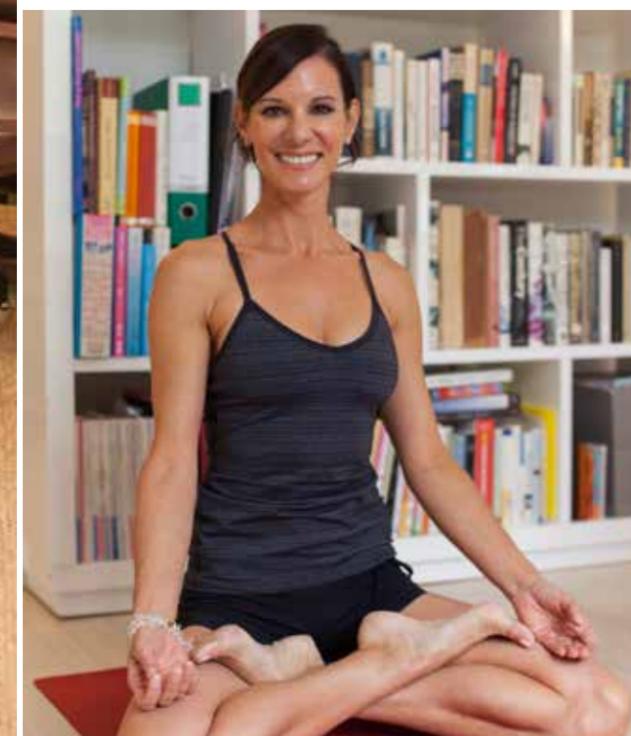
An Eclectic Escape

By Kate Farr; photography by Helen Jenkins

A two-storey townhouse in leafy Shouson Hill makes for a comfortable and eclectic retreat for this busy family.

Perched in the leafy Southside enclave of Shouson Hill, HEATHER THOMAS SHALABI's tranquil home offers a family-focused haven from the stresses of city living. As co-founder of noted Pilates and yoga studio Flex, Heather – along with husband Hani, 13-year-old daughter Noor, nine-year-old twins Sami and Rafi, plus a second set of “twins”, rescue pups Jake and Okli – needed a space to accommodate the whole family's diverse needs in style and comfort, alighting on this 3,300-square-foot townhouse as their perfect pad.

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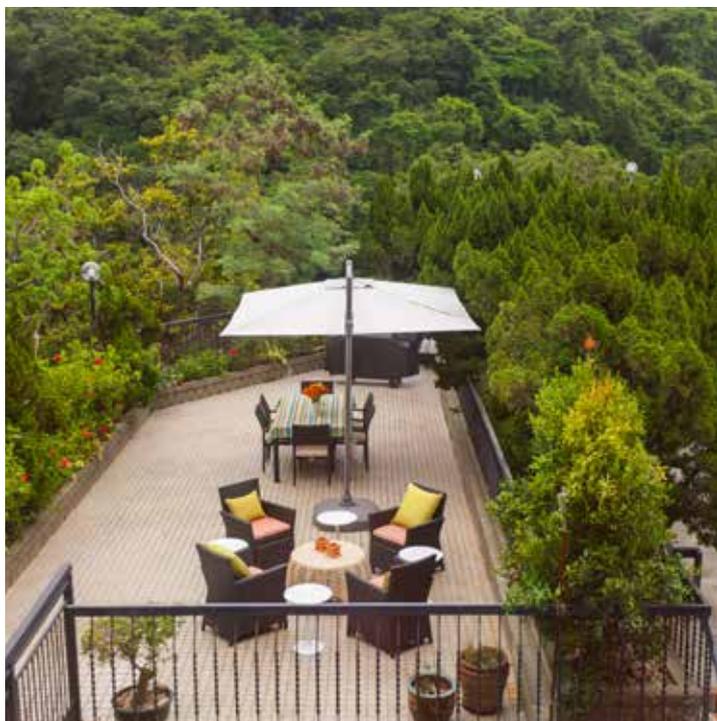


Location, location, location

Describing how the family ended up in their current space, Heather explains, "We've lived in Hong Kong since 2001, and we were previously in Tokyo for three years." A long-time Southside-dweller, she says, "Prior to our move to Shouson Hill, I lived on South Bay Road and Repulse Bay Road - always within walking distance to the beach. My boys were really keen to have a dog, so when we saw our current home with its pet-friendly terrace, we made the move."

And it's not just the furry family members that are well catered for, with the Shalabis' location. "Shouson Hill is very convenient to all our places of work and study; it gives easy access to the Southside and Wong Chuk Hang (where Flex Studio is located at One Island South), as well as the Western Tunnel, which is key for my husband who works at the ICC and my daughter who commutes to Harrow."



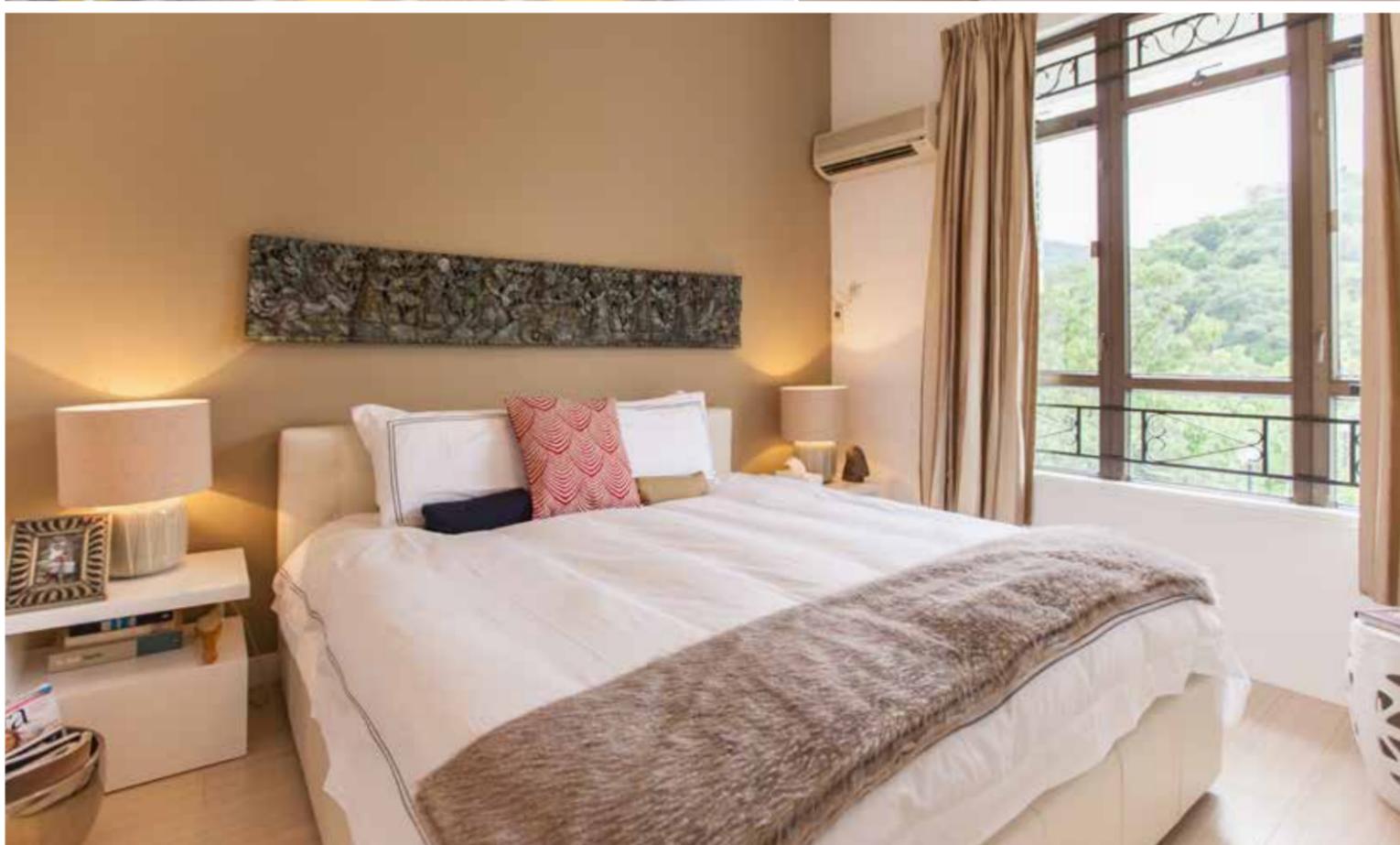


Flex it out

With two floors plus that breezy outdoor terrace to play with, the house has a spacious and airy ambience that allows the family to accommodate their individual niches. The first floor houses the main living areas, including the bright and comfortable lounge, prominent raised dining area, spacious kitchen and office.

Heading upstairs brings you to the second-level bedrooms, and a unique use of what could otherwise be dead space. “We’ve turned the top of the stairs into a reading space, homework area, and best of all, a music room where the kids play drums and guitar. My husband is an avid piano player and we keep a piano downstairs, so I would definitely say music is a huge influence in our house!”

On the family’s need for a space that allows for multifunctional use, Heather elaborates, “I do most of the administrative work for Flex Studio from home and have my office right outside the bedroom. I also practice yoga in that space, and prepare for classes at home. I really enjoy working out in my space – it gives me a place to gather my thoughts and prepare my body for the day.” This smart allocation of living areas gives the family the freedom and space needed to pursue their own interests in comfort.



Every picture tells a story

When it comes to the Shalabi home's interior design, Heather laughs, "My home décor is more accident than design!" before adding, "I worked with Camilla and Annabel Temple of Temple & Rose to help me with drapes and carpets, along with Bowerbird to source key pieces of furniture. The paint colours downstairs were largely chosen to highlight our pieces of art. We've mixed contemporary pieces and a few antiques with Asian and European influences."

The family's art collection is clearly central to the look and feel of the home, playing a key role in the rooms' layout and furniture placement. "When I'm away for the summer, I really miss the artwork! We're particularly fond of contemporary Chinese art; each piece in our collection represents a different period of our time spent in China, making a statement about China's evolving contemporary culture."

This eclectic taste extends beyond China, and has heavily influenced Heather's sourcing of some of her favourite pieces; "We've sourced a few items on our travels in Southeast Asia and the States. We also have a few Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodprints purchased during our time living in Tokyo." Another notable Japanese piece is the *tansu* – a traditional storage cabinet from Kyoto – that was gifted to the couple as a wedding present and now has pride of place in the entrance foyer.

Dog days

While the home shares access to a swimming pool and communal outdoor space as part of the complex, the Shalabi's spacious private terrace provides an alfresco extension to their dining room, offering up

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a peaceful – and yet again, multifunctional – spot to catch up on the day. "I have become a bit of a barbecue junkie, and I grill outside as often as possible. We also eat lunch and supper outside when weather allows; the kids do their homework, and we all try to find time to relax in the evening and listen to the sounds of night-time descending upon Shouson Hill."

But when it comes to who benefits most from their outdoor space, Heather concedes, "Most of the time, the terrace serves as a romping ground for the dogs who are still frisky and full of energy!" And while Jake and Okli rule the roost, their dog-loving humans clearly wouldn't have it any other way.



Recommendations

Home and Garden

Andante

Shop D, G/F, The Design Showcase,
Ruttonjee Centre, 11 Duddell Street,
Central
2537 9688 | andante.com.hk

Bowerbird

Unit 5, 2/F, 2 Lee Lok Street, Ap Lei
Chau
2552 2727 | bowerbird-home.com

Bricks and Stones

G/F, 97 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai
2520 0577 | bands-co.com

Carpet Buyer

Unit 1718, 17/F, Horizon Plaza,
2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
2850 5508 | carpetbuyer.com

Choi Designs – Cotton Tree Interiors

Room 408 – 410, 4/F Dominion Centre,
43-59 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai
2866 0781 | choidesigns.com

Life's A Breeze

1602, 16/F, Horizon Plaza,
2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
2572 4000 | lifesabreezehk.com

Patio Mart

1601, 16/F, Horizon Plaza,
2 Wing Lee Street, Ap Lei Chau
2555 8988 | patiomart.com.hk

Tung Wai Garden Horticulture

Lot 903, 217 Tai Chung Hau, Sai Kung
2792 3389 | tungwaigarden.com

Art Galleries

Connoisseur Contemporary

Chinachem Hollywood Centre,
1 Hollywood Road, Central
3521 0300
connoisseurcontemporary.com

Long March Space

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