



HOME IS ...

Where the heart is

Rather than move, a couple decided to lay down roots – and put up some Hawaiian artwork – in their rented Pok Fu Lam apartment.

Text Eleanor McCallum / Styling David Roden / Pictures Nora Tam

There's something special about Malia and Peter Hirschmann's Pok Fu Lam home. It's not the size – although its 2,300 square feet feel decidedly roomy when compared with typical hutch-like Hong Kong residences; it's more the fact that, despite being rented, it feels as though the couple and their children have lived here their whole lives.

Nothing is overtly bold or designed to scream: "This is me; this is my personality." Instead, everywhere you turn are reminders of each family member, including mementos.

Hirschmann, a psychology researcher, and her husband, who runs his own mobile phone business, have lived in the apartment with their son, now eight years old, and daughter, six, since moving to Hong Kong six years ago; but it was only last year that they decided to transform it into what they consider a family home.

"We started to feel ready to move on but after some consideration, we realised that we hadn't invested enough of ourselves in the space," says Hirschmann. "Rather than the hassle of moving, we decided to see just how much we could make of it."



It seemed a daunting task, especially with both parents working full time, so they contacted interior designer Nicole Cromwell after coming across her website. Hong Kong born but British educated, Cromwell was able to satisfy the couple's request to marry Western ideals with Asian styles in the three-bedroom, two-bathroom home.

Hirschmann is from Hawaii and grew up exposed to its unique mixture of Asian and American cultures.

"It was really important to Malia and Peter to bring that Hawaii style into the home," says Cromwell. "It was a fairly easy task, though, because Malia has access to so many pieces of art and photography from the islands."

The colour palette in the revamped entertaining space is a mix of neutral tones highlighted by splashes of bright orange and red in one of its paintings. Another, a colourful still life by Hawaiian artist Lloyd Sexton, was given to Hirschmann's great-grandmother after she had arranged the flowers for the painting.

Originally where the family watched television, the room was transformed into a lounge >>

Good life cover: Dining room Hanging over the dining table is an Aeros pendant lamp in anodised aluminium by Ross Lovegrove for Louis Poulsen. It cost HK\$25,590 at Manks (3/F, The Factory, 1 Yip Fat Street, Wong Chuk Hang, tel: 2522 2115). The Gao dining table (HK\$14,500) has a walnut finish and came from OVO Home (16 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, tel: 2526 7226). The walnut chairs cost HK\$7,380 each and are also from Manks.

1 Drinks cupboard The blue drinks cabinet was custom made for HK\$13,000 by Oriental Home (20/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau, tel: 3542 5336). Around the cabinet are prints by artists such as Horatio Poole, Huc-Mazelet Luquiens – to whom the family are related – and John Webber, the official artist for Captain James Cook's third voyage of discovery around the Pacific Ocean (1776-1780) aboard the HMS Resolution. The rattan weave stools on either side are from Inside (12/F, Horizon Plaza, tel: 2873 1795). The cushions were made by designer Nicole Cromwell (tel: 2521 9299; www.nicolecromwell.com) from Jane Churchill fabric (HK\$480 per metre from Altfield Interiors, 11/F, 9 Queen's Road Central, tel: 2524 4867).

2 Living room The large living room rug was sourced from Woven Accents in Los Angeles, the United States (wovenonline.com) for HK\$75,000. Hanging on the wall is a 1930s oil painting by Lloyd Sexton. The seating is old, but the armchairs were reupholstered for



HK\$2,200 by Larredo (1/F, Lucky Building, 39 Wellington Street, Central, tel: 2886 0821). The fabric used (HK\$558 per square metre) is by Osborne & Little, sourced from Kinsan Collections (59 Wyndham Street, Central, tel: 2526 2309). The glass Noguchi coffee table (HK\$15,800) and the orange tripod lamp (HK\$7,999) are from Aluminium (36 Cochrane Street, Central, tel: 2546 5904). The rattan weave stool (HK\$1,400) is from Inside. The chest of drawers beneath the painting was bought years ago.

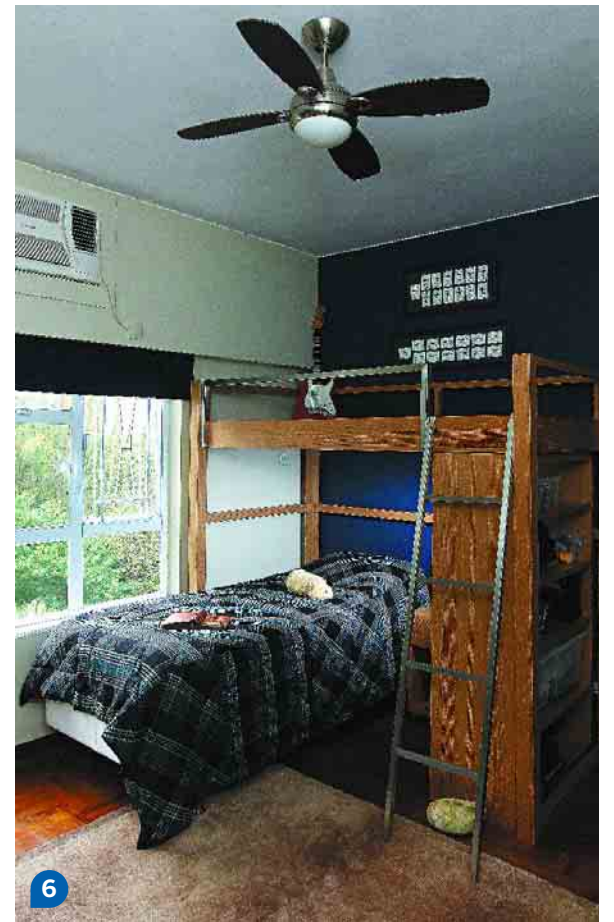
3 Study The Canaletto walnut writing desk by Porada was imported from Italian Solutions (italiansolutions.com) in Italy for HK\$20,000. The chair (HK\$3,450) was from TREE (various locations; www.tree.com.hk). The desk lamp was bought a few years ago.



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TRIED + TESTED

Woven dreams To introduce additional texture and warmth into the apartment, Nicole Cromwell used grasscloth wallpaper for a feature around the workspace. Woven from Asian grasses, the robust, thick material helps hide nicks on the wall. The paper cost HK\$1,060 per 11-metre roll and came from Altfield Interiors.

for guests. Sofas now face each other and a beautiful Noguchi table stands in between them. Specific pieces of furniture, including a brightly coloured custom-made drinks cabinet, have been used to lend an Asian flavour to the space.

Beyond the main living room is a bright dining area in what used to be a sunroom. Here, an eye-catching walnut dining table, which seats six people, is accented by a halo-like pendant lamp.

Next door is a small work space that accommodates an elegant walnut Italian writing desk. This provides a work area for Peter at night, but doubles as a neat display for his vintage mechanical calculators and cameras.

The master bedroom needed little work but was repainted a soft blue, to complement the calming colours found in the rest of the apartment.

In the children's rooms, Cromwell installed custom-made furniture. The couple's son asked for a "loft", where he could have sleepovers and he and his friends could play, so Cromwell had a platform built above his bed. Their daughter was given a huge built-in cabinet to house her toys.

"I can hardly remember what the flat used to look like," says Hirschmann. "It's difficult to know how far you can change a space when you're renting, but working with Nicole really helped us dress the space better.

"This is definitely the place we'll be calling home for a few years yet."

4 Bathroom The main bathroom has remained virtually unchanged since the couple moved in. The shower curtain came from Crate and Barrel (www.crateandbarrel.com) in the US and was bought years ago.

5 Master bedroom Although very little has changed in the bedroom, a fresh lick of paint and some new touches helped tie it in with the rest of the apartment. The painting behind the bed was formerly in the living area but was moved to the master bedroom and hung at a different angle, to give a new perspective. The Chicago-based artist, Keith Pastrick, is the lead singer of a band called Wicker Man.

6 Boy's room The platform over the bed can take a single mattress. The whole structure cost HK\$12,000 and was built by Arco Design (17/F, Richmond Plaza, 496 Jaffe Road, Causeway Bay, tel: 2519 8790).

7 Girl's room The storage unit, with a built-in desk, was designed by Cromwell and made for HK\$19,500 by Arco Design. The hand-tufted New Zealand wool rug (HK\$3,700), also designed by Cromwell, was custom-made by SEP Concept (5/F, World Wide Industrial Centre, 43 Shan Mei Street, Fo Tan, tel: 2520 0862). The chest of drawers (HK\$4,500) and the bed (HK\$4,900) were from Indigo Living (18/F, Horizon Plaza, tel: 2552 0545). The mini table-and-chair set (HK\$440) was from Ikea (various locations; www.ikea.com.hk).