

HOME

STYLE
DAVID RODEN



What: Miniature Rosenthal vases
Why: Collectors take note: these 12 classic vases have been re-issued in miniature sizes. They can also be used for small flower arrangements
How much: HK\$300 each
Where: Exclusivites, 1/F, Ruttonjee Centre, 11 Duddell Street, Central, tel: 2521 8626



What: Seville flush ceiling light
Why: Crafted using handmade glass and nickel, this stylish classic is from Vaughan's 2012 collection
How much: From HK\$85,840
Where: Altfield Interiors, 11/F, 9 Queen's Road Central, tel: 2524 3066



What: Nook sofa
Why: Available in a range of sizes and different configurations using environmentally friendly plywood and kiln-dried hardwood
How much: From HK\$33,210
Where: Nook, 11/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau, tel: 2518 3884



What: Bold chair
Why: Produced by Moustache of France, this cartoon-like chair comes with slip covers in seven colours: purple, pink, dark grey, light grey, yellow, black and navy blue
How much: HK\$3,999
Where: Aluminium, 36 Cochrane Street, Central, tel: 2546 5904



What: Nachtmann Ravello candelabra
Why: Introduce drama to your dining table with this crystal candle holder. Also comes in red and purple
How much: HK\$2,895
Where: Townhouse, Prince's Building, Central, tel: 2845 0633

INTERIORS



davidclovers tackles the space of this flat by installing wood cladding inside and out (above), and Nicole Cromwell creates distinct areas within the same room. Photos: SCMP Pictures



LOST IN SPACE ... HOW TO FURNISH A LARGER FLAT

Making capricious rooms cosy can be achieved with a unifying style and by using appropriately sized kit that fills space in a smart way

Eleanor McCallum
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In a city where an apartment of 500 square feet can be considered roomy, having too much space is not a problem many people face.

But there are the lucky few who live in large homes, be they luxurious apartments, houses, village houses, or re-purposed industrial and commercial spaces.

Those with room to move, however, can find themselves with a new set of interior-design challenges. Principally, how do you make a large space feel cosy? Simply filling the empty space with furniture would seem an obvious solution but, apparently, it's not the right one.

"It's a bad idea to just try and fill the available space," says Nicole Cromwell, a local interior designer who specialises in furnishing large spaces. "People should plan their furniture with the aim of creating a layout that has distinctly different areas."

Cromwell, who was born in Hong Kong but educated in Europe, has the practical experience of living in and designing the spacious homes more commonly found overseas.

This gives her a distinct advantage when working with international clients, many of whom are only in Hong Kong for short periods but have large apartments provided by their employers.

"I like to point out that short-term renting can actually be very liberat-

ing," she says. "It gives people a great opportunity to experiment with styles they wouldn't normally go for at home."

Selecting a theme for the entire space creates an instant stylistic unity that helps make furniture selection simpler, she says. Once the theme is settled, the key to making the home cosy is in using the furnishings to create pockets of space that are more manageable in size.

For a recent commission, a 3,500 sq ft home in Stanley, her client opted for a beach-house theme. Cromwell then went about choosing furniture and furnishings that reflected that concept, deliberately picking items such as an oversized white sofa set, neutral-coloured rugs and teak bookshelves that could be used to demarcate the space more appropriately.

"I arranged the seating so that the residents had a couple of different areas to sit within the same space," she says. "It's tempting to mark off the boundaries by placing furniture between spaces, but no one really wants to sit with their back to a room."

"Instead, I used furnishings such as rugs and plants to break up the room. This creates definition in each area but maintains the spacious atmosphere, giving the client the best of both worlds."

Hong Kong residents with large homes also face difficulties when it comes to furnishing their abodes, as most local stores cater specifically for rabbit-warren-sized apartments.

Irene Capriz met that challenge head-on when it came to furnishing her own 3,300 sq ft apartment: she set up Di Capriz House, a specialist furniture store in Chai Wan dedicated to providing unique, large-scale pieces for generously sized homes.

Among other things, her store carries feature pieces, including enormous industrial lamps previously used to spotlight theatre stages, vintage Italian trunks, large chic sofas and design classics, such as the Eames lounge.



A loft-style industrial show flat in Chai Wan: Photo: Jonathan Wong

People should plan their furniture ... [to create] a layout that has distinctly different areas

NICOLE CROMWELL, INTERIOR DESIGNER

"When furnishing a large space you have to be very careful about the proportions," says Capriz. "It is almost impossible to re-use furniture that once belonged to a small apartment. Everything from the beds, lights and even carpets should be scaled according to the room."

"Furniture transplanted from a previous apartment could very easily disappear in the space."

Although Capriz shares Cromwell's view that all furnishings should be carefully considered, she believes it is more important to get the scale than the style correct.

"All styles of furniture can play a role," she says. "When you have an abundance of space, you should take advantage of the luxury by playing more."

Capriz says she can think of nothing worse than using standardised furniture. The way to make a home feel cosy is to pick items that truly reflect the characters of the residents, she says.

"I love when there is a story to be told behind a piece, either because of where you have sourced it or because of who designed it," she says. "It

creates a dialogue that runs throughout the home and is very likely going to be fascinating to visitors and meaningful to the residents."

Local interior design firm davidclovers recently completed the full refurbishment of a residential property in Stanley.

A well-known building in the area, the property accommodates four apartments. Although the apartments vary in size, even the smallest unit is a tad larger than 2,300 sq ft and the largest just shy of 3,000 sq ft.

"Our job was to make these apartments feel more manageable in size," says Clover Lee, the firm's co-founder. "The flats are for the rental market, so people have to feel that space is well proportioned and will work for them before they are furnished."

Originally, Lee's client planned a simple refurbishment of just one flat. But the noise of the works apparently led to the other tenants moving out, which gave the owner the opportunity for a complete overhaul.

As a result, Lee and her team were free to undertake a much more extensive job. The decision was made to enhance the apartments' first impression. The communal staircase was given a facelift and the design was extended into each living space.

"We wanted to soften the approach to the home, making it feel like a gentle arrival, so we used dark teak for the staircase cladding and the hand rail," she says. "We then continued the use of the material inside each apartment, which helps to make the transition between inside and outside much smoother."

The design makes each home entrance feel cosier and reduces the need for careful planning of the types and placement of furniture inside.

"It can be just as difficult to make even small spaces feel cosy," Lee says. "Furniture choices, clever layouts and architectural detailing can all be used in a smaller apartment to create a homier atmosphere. The same techniques work everywhere and doing them right can turn even a seemingly uncomfortable apartment into a relaxing home."

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ON THE MARKET

Evergreen Villa

The project is located on Stubbs Road, Hong Kong Island, providing easy access to the shopping district Causeway Bay and business district Central. Six residential blocks provide a total of 216 flats, enjoying a spectacular view of the racecourse. This flat is about 1,750 sq ft, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms, a maid's room, separate dining and living areas, fully equipped kitchen and a balcony. Asking price is HK\$30.8 million. Agent: Swan Chan of Colliers International (9150 6132)

On Fung Building, Caine Road
On offer is a two-bedroom flat at On Fung Building, a 34-year-old property at 110-118 Caine Road, western Mid-Levels. The flat is 623 sq ft; asking price is HK\$7 million. Agent: Ayumi Tang of Centaline Property Agency (9493 5277)