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The Art of Living Hi-Rise

Changing Rooms
A guide to sprucing up your home.

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Sustainably Vintage

Two architects adorn their converted family apartment with classical finds and natural materials.

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After many years of living abroad, J and T decided to return to Kuching, Sarawak to reconnect with family and kick-start their dream of forming an architectural practice together. In their mid-30s, J is originally from Hong Kong but has spent many years in Australia while T was born and bred in Kuching. For many years they had worked as architects in Melbourne, Australia where they experienced inner city living and enjoyed the arts and cultural scene there.

When the opportunity presented itself, J and T decided to convert one half of an existing apartment in a condominium centrally located in Kuching into a 3-bedroom apartment with ample views of the city and beyond. The apartment was once the formal living and dining area for T's grandparents, with a foyer that led to the formal rooms. The challenge was to carve out new living and dining spaces that felt open and bright, and to add three new bedrooms each with adjoining bathrooms. The brief had to work within the existing structural and mechanical service boundaries of the building floor plate.

Drawing inspiration from their travels to the Nordic countries and their love of vintage sensibilities, J and T were drawn to a palette comprising natural, raw textures. Locally sourced materials were utilised by the





The design of the living and dining areas is kept relatively simple, allowing one to enjoy the abundance of natural light flooding in.





In the foyer, an island bench demarcates the library from the entryway.



“Designed by T’s brother, who is incidentally another partner in J and T’s architectural practice, the hexagonal stools are made of the same local Lala plywood as the bookshelves. They’ve been used as a coffee table, side tables and seating stools of course. The stools are also a perfect height for T&J’s toddler boys who love to use these stools as a playground for their toys.”

couple as much as possible including Lala plywood, Selangan Batu timber, honed-finished granite, and travertine stone. They restricted the use of decorative finishes in order to enhance their collection of eclectic artwork and knick-knacks that they had accumulated over the years from their journeys all over the world.

The existing foyer was converted into a library to house their vast collection of books. The existing marble floor tiles were still in excellent condition, so they decided to retain them for the sake of nostalgia. The bookcases were constructed out of Lala plywood. As a finished product the plywood did not require any additional finishes

to dress it. Its natural, golden hue matched the existing marble floor perfectly and the edges were exposed to show the layers of the plywood. Designed from an architectural perspective, the vertical lines of the bookcases followed the existing marble floor border pattern, whilst drawing attention to the height of the ceilings.

An island clad in travertine stone was introduced in the foyer in order to create a division between the library and the entry. It was designed as a bench as well as a display cabinet for J and T's collection of family portraits and decorative vases. The pendant lights suspended above the bench are creations by Alvar Aalto, a famous Finnish architect. J and T had discovered them in an antique shop during their travels.

They decided to keep the design of the living and dining areas simple in order to highlight the high ceilings and abundant natural light that flooded into the space. The Selangan Batu timber floorboards were stained a dark walnut colour in order to add contrast to the white-washed walls and ceilings. On the wall adjacent to the vintage dining table that T had inherited from her grandmother, a steel fence that J had salvaged from an old factory was hung and customised to feature artwork, plants and recycled mirror pieces. Pieces of recycled mirrors were placed within the grids of the steel bars of a second piece of the restored fence which hangs in the library.

The steel fence hanging on the wall in the dining area was recovered. Filled with plants and artwork, the fence serves as a decorative piece itself.







Coloured in a dark walnut hue, these timber floorboards stand in stark contrast to the whitewashed walls and ceilings.





Driven by their love for simple, nonsensical designs, J and T's furniture collection is a combination of modern pieces with vintage chairs and modest, natural objects - such as the fossilised timber stools in the living room that they had stumbled upon in Bali. The Arne Jacobsen Swan chair was a birthday gift from J to T, and the Series 7 Butterfly dining chairs were surprise finds in a second-hand shop in Melbourne.

The apartment is now home to J and T's young twin boys as well, and they still consider their home to be a work-in-progress to adapt to their rapidly changing lifestyles and growing family. By using humble, simple materials in unexpected ways, they wish to continue the process of discovery to create objects and spaces of interest that captivate and inspire their young children and family. **hc.residences**

An iconic design by Danish architect, Arne Jacobsen, the Swan chair adds classical flair to the modest space.



The geometric print from Noble Wallpaper is a point of interest when contrasted with the nursery's white, grey and walnut palette.



The use of large windows allows sunlight into the space, making the atmosphere in the bathroom with its Volakas white marble floors, walls, and countertops even more spacious.

Opposite Attracts by Arne Jacobsen

Inspired by the notion that 'opposites attract', the 60th Anniversary Edition of the Series 7 chair is all about contrast – in materials and colours. While the deep dark blue and the pale pink may contrast each other, they also interact to create a calm and elegant look, attracting and complementing one another. To mark the 60th anniversary of this iconic chair, each chair has a golden plate mounted on the underside of the shell.

www.xrtafurniture.com.my



Wooden Chair collection by Arne Jacobson



Craftmanship



Ant Chairs



Series 7
Anniversary
Edition



Swan Chair



Swan Chair, Favn