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At Home: Yasmine Ghoniem

—
Amber Road



Half of one of the most extraordinary young design practices, Amber Road, Yasmine Ghoniem takes us inside her beachside apartment.





inside: How long have you lived here and what drew you to the property?

Yasmine Ghoniem: We purchased the property in November of 2017. We spent six months renovating, then work commitments had me in Melbourne for a month as we prepared for the Rigg Design Prize, so I've only really spent about six nights total in its finished state, believe it or not.

We loved the property for its location (my husband's a mad surfer) and sensible layout mainly. Its green and butter cream terrazzo stairwells also struck a chord. It shares no common walls and has no internal corridor, meaning absolutely no space is wasted. It has great tall ceilings and even sports a vestibule, which is pretty rare in an apartment setting.

When did you produce this design?

Probably the minute we left the first showing. But, properly, the day after we bought it, when my husband and I were still living in Bronte... Albeit, we were designing right up to the day we moved in.

What was the thinking behind the design?

Definitely we had a 'less is more' approach. More importantly, compact living, making every square inch count. Much like in our own practice, this was a case of making things multifunctional. If there was a 150-millimetre space to spare, we were going to make it count.

Are you a good client?

We gave ourselves a brief, but quickly realised we were too ADD (attention deficit disorder) to ever stick to it. My head went spinning in a thousand different design directions. I'm hell to work with, I realised. My husband was like, 'Don't you do this for a living?'

Which is your favourite room and what makes it special?

We probably like the kitchen the most. It was the most difficult to configure, because it was like trying to stuff a cow into a sock. Maybe that's why we like

it so much. The materiality palette is really fresh. We love that it's not a white kitchen.

Tell us a bit about working with your art collection?

We've been collecting for a few years, all super personal, some gifted on life milestones, some purchased because we fell in love. Our favourite piece is from a friend who recently passed. She shared an office with us when we first started out. Magical person. Magical painting. I love that she lives on in her work.

Which is your favourite piece of furniture and why?

Saarinen's Womb chair. It's big and beautiful, and its wine coloured mohair is the antithesis of coastal living (which is ironically where we live). A close equal is our Kulchi rug, which we purchased when my husband and I first met. I think he was trying to impress me.

Does being in the design industry, where you're constantly looking at new design, make it difficult to choose products for your own home?

Yes and no. I feel uncomfortable in highly curated spaces. We wanted our home space to age gracefully, develop a deeper character over time. However, its inherent compact floorplan encouraged us to integrate a lot of the furniture to maximise storage, making opportunities to place product quite impossible! Our intent before moving in was to reduce - live minimally. We purged until we almost had nothing. If it didn't spark 'joy'...

Are there any loose elements that you change frequently and, if so, what are they?

Yes, I guess it would be our version of 'a cabinet of curiosities'. We integrated some wall shelving next to the kitchen to store the overflow of mugs, cups and ceramics, but it's also home to weird and wonderful 'life junk', not necessarily design beautiful, but personable to our past and every day.