

Post Magazine



POLITICS IN PLAY

Calls to boycott the 2008 Beijing Olympics show sport is about more than just the games

WHY SINOLOGIST
JEFFREY WASSERSTROM
IS UNLIKELY TO VISIT CHINA AGAIN

ONCE OVERRUN BY
TOURISTS, BARCELONA IS
UNDERGOING A QUIET REVOLUTION

SCMP

INTERIORS

The bright side

A photographer has stopped a Hong Kong high rise for her Australian hometown, spreading her colorful wings in a spacious mid-century modern Melbourne home.

TEXT: ADILE BRUNNER | PHOTOGRAPHY: BELINDA BATH

You can see the girl out of Hong Kong but it seems you can't make Hong Kong out of the girl. She, through photographer and art director, looks toward light in her native Melbourne at the end of 2018, her time of the fall, when she hung her 12-year, six-month, international love-making in Australia home.

She is known for her mid-century-themed photographs, portraits and editorial prints of Hong Kong, which reflect her love for the country, nearly to the point of obsession, in even the smallest of places. The rooms in Hong Kong were for other women, packed up, or their own, like the one she spent in each room. She is now a professional and under the microscope.



"Once we knew we were moving back to Melbourne, we had quite a few bits of furniture made or bought for the space we knew we were moving into," says Bell, who kept busy during the pandemic lockdown creating pieces and selling wares through her website, bellshelldesigns.com.

"We collected some lovely art in our travels and there was also my own artwork created especially for the space - although I've tried not to hang too much of it," she says. "Art is extremely important to me, so I've always looked out for pieces that

connect. I've got a box of plates, which I sometimes struggle with as a stylist because I end up collecting a lot of 'props' as well of my Asian collection art in a big cupboard."

Bell and her husband, Glen, who works for global trading group C&P, bought the five-bedroom house in 2011 while they were still living in Hong Kong. Both love mid-century modern style so that was the starting point for their home search, along with open space and lots of character. And they hit the jackpot: a two-story house with an abundance of original timber.

FEEL

The kitchen opens onto a patio with stone floors in pink. The pendant lights were chosen to resemble another key original 1960s styling: a pair of concrete discs for a lamp in Melbourne.



SHED THE STAIRS

The ottoman was custom-made by David (david.com.au). The storage unit, table base and the bench for guests. The plant is the table, Pink (see list) - Red (see list) by British. Bell (bellshelldesigns.com) and the collection of glass jars and plates again Hong Kong. The artwork inside Red (see list) by Gallo. Tanya Water - items from Red (see list) (www.red.com.au) in Fremont, South Africa. The bench seat was from Peter & Rufus (www.peterandrufus.com.au) and the table legs (www.123.com.au) came from R2R. Magazine (www.r2r.com.au/magazine/). The pink (www.123.com.au) from Peter & Rufus.



NEW BEDROOM

When the Pacific Ringier moved into the 2007 space, which was custom built by Interior Design Partners, the furniture from the British Tables series by B&B, the cast-iron leather tables were \$870 and the steel chairs \$400. The pendant lights were original Vitraa B&B units with the brass. The coffee table was \$1,200 from a 1960s catalog, now up with the coffee and table lamp on the left came from the Tony Stone Art Co. Los Angeles Commercial Building, 97 Hollywood Blvd. Contact: Joe 310-372-1171.



KITCHEN

Always reminiscent of the B&B family's look, the kitchen has been left unchanged. The coffee-making came from Royal Copenhagen (see page 102).



DINING AREA

The dining table was used as a dining table the way it is today. Just the right of the window is a long table, a table from the British Tables series by B&B, the cast-iron leather tables were \$870 and the steel chairs \$400. The pendant light was \$1,200 from a 1960s catalog, now up with the coffee and table lamp on the left came from the Tony Stone Art Co. Los Angeles Commercial Building, 97 Hollywood Blvd. Contact: Joe 310-372-1171.



SOFT-TONE HOME

The look is more than a little (classical) chic, and the mid-century modern accents were A&J's idea from the start. The Clear Water Bay Boat sign over the headboard is a custom job after 2008's Lightbox Hospital. The Dutch Eggplant print is by Beth.

STYLING

The pendant light and bedside lighting on the staircase are original fixtures and fittings. The chairs above govt in by Beth.



bedroom, including bedside lighting for the bed, up-lit stairs and, in terms of the bathroom, under-lighting, glass-tiled walls and showerpan supports. On the first floor are light fixtures, open glass recessed stairs and three bedrooms with the ground-floor master suite. Two further bedrooms (one a dedicated home office) for Beth's two teenage children, and other rooms.

"We chose the tones for the great rooms and walls rather than the bedrooms," says Beth. "It had been recently renovated so the walls were still remaining soft-toned to the period in which it had been built so there wasn't much to do. We painted the floor a neutral white and had stone marble-look for the showers."

They also incorporated a "dark and heavy" look even on the ground floor. "I usually used to be into having some neutral paint tones for adding a refresh, a bit of spice and light colors in the form of art and accessories."

Beth characterizes her style as style as simple styling with a touch of edge. "While color is her styling passion, Beth says she is currently obsessed with lighting and is on the hunt for interesting fittings to replace those that don't quite sit with her modern period feel. One of her favorites is the semi-problem hanging above the staircase, which gives a soft glow."

"Lighting can add so much ambience and warmth to your home as well as creating points of interest," she says. "I have lots of items in my home, which gives

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aboutHome

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a sense of the bed also reminds me of Hong Kong" (the Print is new).

Since the arrival of the home office all the Bell family loves, they have turned their focus to remodeling the outdoors. Thanks to the disruptive labor that Covid-19 brought, the landscaping remains a work in progress.

"Outdoor living is just as important to us as indoor living so we are in the process of bringing a backyard, which will be in keeping with the style of the house," says Bell.

After living in a flat living for a decade of

the city, it goes without saying that she is enjoying the extra perspective of her new home and all the benefits a month club offers.

"You're a money girl, so I give up with an abundance of space around me. High-rise apartment living in Hong Kong was never really for me but you do what you have to do," she says. "I love that we can now have all our friends and family over and entertain, and that the house is full of life and that friends come and dining. That's what I've always wanted." ■



RENOVATE

Looking off the edge from the terrace is one of Bell's favorite places to relax at work. The deck plans by the firm's interior team and landscaping around the terrace from Hong Kong are available for sale. The terrace table is from West Elm (\$200), and the chairs are from the same store (\$100). The yellow cylinder is a custom piece from The Printery (\$1,000). The landscaping is from the firm's in-house team. For more on this and other design projects, visit www.houzz.com. The designer, Therapopoulos, can be reached at 416-291-1100 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays.



TRIED + TESTED

Let there be light! Exterior Bell found one of Hong Kong's best decorators, Wu Chi Ho (Chicago Industrial Building, 371 at Mid-West, Peak Cling, tel. 9021-1760), and commissioned her to create a lounge room (see page 148) for the real-life millennial business trip. The old-school glass table is filled with gas and mounted on a Hong Kong streetlight. It resembles what you'd see in

"Most interior design has been replaced with LED so it's a dying art," explains Bell. "I am obsessed with creating it, such a special thing to have."



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