



▲ **BATHROOM** I wanted to lay a patterned tile on the floor and knew this was it.  
◀ **LIVING ROOM** It's our favourite spot. We love the winter sun coming in.  
▶ **ENTRY** I love having fresh flowers on the entry console – they're the first thing I see and smell when I come home.

# BEST DRESSED

THIS STYLIST AND FORMER FASHION EDITOR HAS CURATED AN EFFORTLESS LIVING SPACE

**WHO** Fashion stylist and presenter Anthea O'Connor, her husband, company director Matt O'Connor, their children – Violet, 11, Tom, nine, and Will, seven – and two dogs, Ned and Poppy  
**WHERE** Bayside, Melbourne **WHAT** Fresh and functional house with a relaxed edit

During my 10 years at *Vogue Australia*, I produced a lot of fashion and lifestyle stories that taught me to appreciate special things. They don't necessarily need to be big-ticket items – just interesting and unique. Style is not just about rolling out the most expensive pieces; it's about putting together high-low combinations, which is something I've always done in my job.

When we found this place six years ago, we'd just had our third child, Will. At the open for inspection it couldn't have looked more chaotic. There was a tank with snakes, yellow and pale-green kitchen tiles and crap everywhere. Everything was salmon – the brickwork, the driveway, the carpet, the walls. I wasn't convinced but, thankfully, Matt had great clarity to see past all that.

The house definitely took vision. It was a frightening combination of elements when we moved in. We just did the minimum to live with it. We painted everything white and used that kick-arse paint that covers tiles. We weren't in a position to re-carpet, so we dyed it from salmon to chocolate-brown. It was a big undertaking, because the entire house was carpeted. It took two weeks to dry and the baby was just 10 months old, so he was covered in dye. It was a whole world of ugly.

I think you need to live in a space and get a feel for it before doing anything major because, invariably, what you think you're going to do at the start and what you end up doing are two different strategies. It was good to live here for a few years to get a sense of how the house worked before making any major alterations.

We kept most structural elements. It was about working with what we had and making the best out of it. We replaced the windows and laid oak floorboards. Ripping up that revolting carpet was a great day. We went away for two weeks, but that was a ridiculous idea. We ended up being out of the house for three months.

We bought the major furniture items, but I've mainly just collected things over time; mostly they're items I loved or coveted. I'd prefer to hold on and get one good thing rather than lots of bits. It's an approach that has served us well.

Take a virtual tour around our favourite celebrity and designer homes at [homelife.com.au/home](http://homelife.com.au/home).



(from top)  
▲ **ENTRY** We opted for a white colour scheme with grey highlights. The cow prints are by Mornington Peninsula artist Neil Williams.  
▲ **DINING ROOM** Our architect, David Neil, uses warm timbers and creates accessible, livable spaces. The oak floorboards are a great relief after salmon carpet.



## STYLE STEALS

(clockwise from above)  
▶ **MISSONI** cushion, \$295, [safariiliving.com](http://safariiliving.com)  
▶ **WEST ELM** lamp, \$169, [westelm.com.au](http://westelm.com.au)  
▶ **CLICKON FURNITURE** coffee table, from \$395, [clickonfurniture.com.au](http://clickonfurniture.com.au)

## I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT...



▶ **JEWELLERY** The Cartier watch was from my husband after Violet was born. My sister gave me this Hermès bangle.



▶ **PHOTO** This picture of my kids was taken on the northern beaches in NSW. It was the best family holiday.

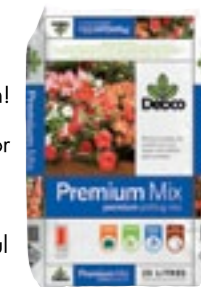


▶ **YVES SAINT LAURENT BAG** This was a present to myself on a recent trip to Paris. It's my mobile office.

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