

Beyond The Sea

BY RACHEL READ **PHOTOGRAPHY** MICHELLE PROCTOR

Life's a beach for ELICE PARK and her family in their Repulse Bay retreat.



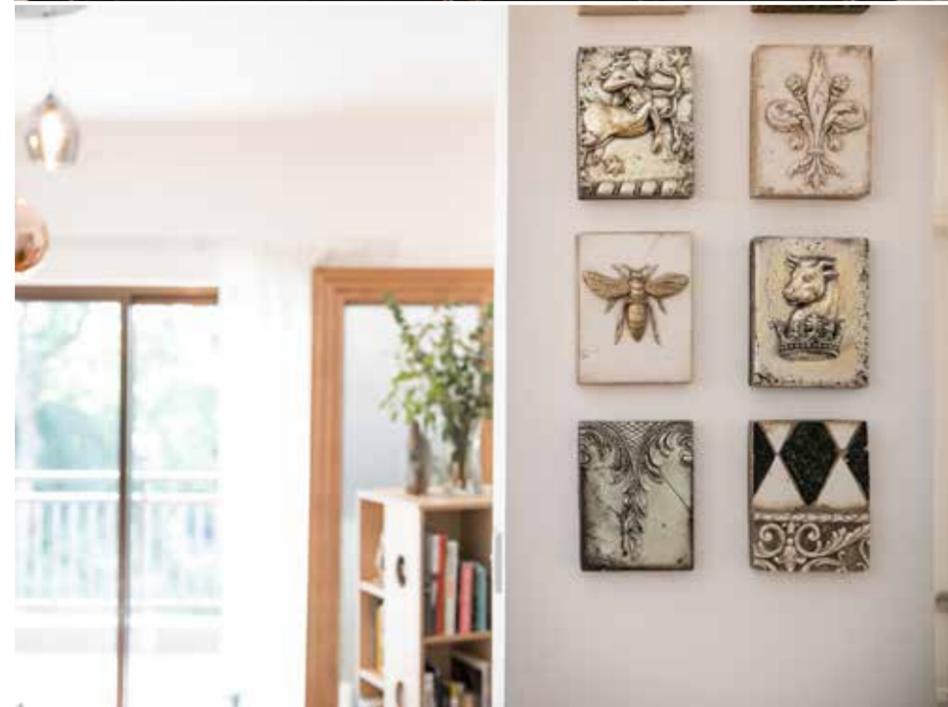
Light, airy and elegant probably aren't the first words that come to mind when you think of beach living. Elice Park's 2,500 square-foot home in Repulse Bay, which she shares with husband John Lee, daughter Vivian and their three dogs, offers just that. The home gives the family the best of both worlds – a serene and sophisticated retreat from hectic Hong Kong that's only a stone's throw from the sand and sea.

"There are so many things we love about Repulse Bay," Elice says. "My husband and I grew up near the sea, and heading to one of the nearby beaches in Repulse Bay, South Bay, Deepwater Bay or Stanley is our main weekend ritual. We love the fact that we can enjoy a beach lifestyle but also be in Central in 20 minutes."

Nevertheless, their choice of apartment was still something of a leap of faith. "It was undergoing renovation and there wasn't much to look at," Elice remembers, "as all the floors, cupboards, toilets and the kitchen had been ripped out. But as soon as we saw it, we knew it was for us! We're huge fans of its high ceilings and full brickwork – something you just can't get from new developments – and we also loved the view, with large windows that overlook the trees and sky, giving the apartment a tranquil touch. It feels a world away from the bustle of Central."

The focal point of their home is the living and dining room, a breezy open area that comprises almost half the space of their apartment. "I love to mesh a variety of styles, and our mix of East and West, and classic and modern, is best encapsulated by this room," Elice says. "When mixing styles, I pay particular attention to colours to make sure they blend in a harmonious way. I also believe you can decorate a house elegantly on a reasonable budget, so I love mixing expensive pieces with items from markets."

Although the apartment was quite spartan when they moved in, it wasn't long before the family started injecting their own personality. "The first thing we did was hang chandeliers and lamps – the soft lighting automatically changed the vibe of the house," Elice recalls. "For our curtains, I directly purchased materials and had them fitted at World Wide House in Central, which was extremely





economical.” Furniture and artwork completed the décor. “We love going to art fairs; our tip would be to buy in the last few hours as you can get some amazing discounts,” she adds.

Elice says that the home reflects their love of travel – she and John once spent 80 days travelling around 26 countries. Mementos from their explorations can be found throughout the space, including one of the key pieces that visitors often notice first – a striking set of memory block plaques mounted on the wall facing the apartment’s entrance. “We purchased these on our honeymoon in Nice so they’re quite sentimental to us; they’re extremely heavy and we had to carry them throughout our Europe trip, making sure not to damage them. This is the first time we’ve actually displayed them, though, as they just didn’t suit our previous homes, so we were extremely excited to hang them here.”

As the owners of three adorable Yorkshire Terriers – named Napoleon, Jessica Alba and Kim Tae-Hee (the latter two after the American and South Korean actresses!) – it’s unsurprising that the family’s love of animals shines through their décor, with colourful dog cushion covers, an ornamental birdcage and other pictures and souvenirs of rabbits and horses all on show. “I grew up having dogs in the house and I’ve also ridden horses for many years, so I’d like to give the same exposure to animals to our daughter Vivian,” Elice explains.

There are more animals in Vivian’s room itself, which is themed around *Alice In Wonderland*. “As Vivian has so many brightly coloured toys, we decided to decorate the furnishings mostly in white, which I think gives a less cluttered look.” Elice also wanted the room to be playful; “We have a large picture



of a rabbit, and some cloud- and moon-shaped items to further enhance the dreamlike theme.”

In contrast, the apartment’s study is a tribute to her husband’s passion for rock music. “We packed this room with a study table, television, book shelves, and an electric guitar and amp. To match the guitar, we purchased a sofa from UK brand Timothy Oulton, which gives the room a British rock feel.”

As with many Hong Kong homes, however, storage did prove to be an issue. “While we thought the apartment was quite spacious when we first looked at it, later we found there was a lack of built-in storage space. I think you just have to be very economical and efficient; we purchased lots of boxes for storage and also donated a lot of our clothes.” For those facing similar problems, Elice recommends calling the Salvation Army, who can help pick up clothes for donation in large quantities.

So how does Hong Kong compare to the couple’s previous homes in Seoul and Sydney? “I think it’s a very special place,” Elice says. “One of my hobbies is taking photos and, although Hong Kong is very small, the diversity in landscape offers so many opportunities, from its urban lifestyle to its beaches and islands. In Repulse Bay, we hear so many languages – not just English and Cantonese, but French, Italian, Japanese and Korean! I think Hong Kong welcomes expats with open arms; it is definitely the most cosmopolitan and sophisticated city we’ve lived in.”

And now it looks like they have the perfect home to match.





Elice's Recommendations

FURNITURE & ART

Tequila Kola
1/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
2877 3295 | tequilakola.com

Indigo Living
6/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau
2555 0540 | indigo-living.com

Lane Crawford
Level 1, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty
2118 2288 | lanecrawford.com.hk

Antiques Shops
Hollywood Road, Central

Lighting Shops
Morrison Hill Road, Wan Chai

Puerta Roja
1/F, Soho 189 Art Lane, 189 Queen's Road West, Sheung Wan
2803 0332 | puerta-roja.com

Ben Brown Fine Arts
303 Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central
2522 9600 | benbrownfinearts.com

Connoisseur Art Gallery
G3, Chinachem Hollywood Centre, 1 Hollywood Road, Central
2868 5358 | connoisseur-art.com

Opera Gallery
W Place, 52 Wyndham Street, Central
2810 1208 | operagallery.com

White Cube
50 Connaught Road, Central
2592 2000 | whitecube.com

FOOD

Amalfitana
Shop 105, Level 1, The Pulse, 28 Beach Road, Repulse Bay
2388 7787 | amalfitana.hk

Chicken on the Run
Shop 112B, Level 1, The Pulse, 28 Beach Road, Repulse Bay
2537 4563

Pang's Kitchen
25 Yik Yam Street, Happy Valley
2838 5462

Kaya
9/F, Midtown Soundwill Plaza II, 1-29 Tang Lung Street, Causeway Bay
2838 9550

Sumac
8 Glenealy, Central
2147 9191 | sumac.com.hk

Qi - House of Sichuan
Shop 12, 2/F, J Senses, 60 Johnston Road, Wan Chai
2527 7117 | qi-sichuan.hk

Carbone
9/F, LKF Tower, 33 Wyndham Street, Central
2593 2593 | carbone.com.hk **u**