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feels like home

Living in a rental doesn't have to mean temporary style, as this family proves with their relaxed approach

WORDS ROSANNE PEACH STYLING JACQUELINE KAYTAR
PHOTOGRAPHY FRANÇOISE BAUDET

cheat sheet

Who lives here? Jacqueline Kaytar, a creative director; her husband Oscar Nicholson, a managing director in digital media; and their daughter Ines, 13 months.
Style of house: A Queenslander worker's cottage in Brisbane's inner suburbs.

OUTDOORS "The outdoor deck is an extension of the home," says owner Jacqueline, with daughter Ines. Having renovated their Sydney apartment before becoming renters in Brisbane, the space had to be just as beautifully finished, but with the bonus of green space. **HALLWAY (opposite)** Handbags from Jacqueline's new label, Plus Equals, reflect her love of simplicity. "We kept taking off any unnecessary hardware or embellishment," she says. "It was about simplifying until you get back to its purest form."



Life was good in the idyllic Brisbane of Jacqueline Kaytar's childhood. Family was at the heart of it, with her grandparents sharing stories of the past in the 'good room'. There was always a gang of local kids to ride bikes with, tadpole catching took all afternoon and the bush was a wild whisper away.

It's a much more stylised, urbanised patch of inner Brisbane that she's returned to with husband Oscar and baby daughter Ines after 15 years in Sydney, but the idea of returning to a simple innocence permeates the space.

"I wanted to pare back," says Jacqueline. "What immediately got me about this home was that it was renovated beautifully. With the Japan black floors, all the tongue-and-groove walls and the exposed beams, it's kind of in its raw essence."

The 'great bones' are thanks to local interior design firm Georgia Cannon, who reworked the old worker's cottage to be a rental without skimping on good design. Three bedrooms and a bathroom sit at the front, with an open living and kitchen area spilling out to a leafy outdoor space through expansive bi-fold doors.

DINING ROOM (above) An exposed wall structure creates a dynamic backdrop. The interlocking wood base of the table, by Inde Studio, echoes the lines. **LIVING AREA (right)** A Fler sofa and Danish armchairs, reclaimed and re-covered, age gracefully. "The sofa folds out to a bed," says Jacqueline. "We love dual-purpose things." She found the coffee table on a trip to the US.



"What immediately got me about this home was that it was renovated beautifully"

ARTWORK: BABY BONOMO PAPER BAG, LASHMAMA, LASHMAMA.COM.AU



- 1. Entry
- 2. Ines's bedroom
- 3. Master bedroom
- 4. Bathroom
- 5. Study
- 6. Living area
- 7. Dining area
- 8. Kitchen
- 9. Outdoor area

In true Brisbane style, the deck is not just another room but the main living space, albeit one that hosts regular kookaburras and the odd scrub turkey. "We eat our breakfast out there every morning and feed the birds," says Jacqueline. "I really wanted Ines to be drawn to nature and one of her first words was 'bird'."

A giant potted ficus and ferns throughout the interior help blur the lines between the zones and are given the same reverence of space as the art and furniture. "I like clean areas as it gives your mind space," she says. "To me, your home reflects your mind."

A creative director with a background in textile design, it's from here that she recently launched her own label, Plus Equals. Echoing home, her range of leather goods are beautiful in their simplicity, stripped of excess. Likewise, they're pieces that patina and get better with time, something that underscores every textile, furniture or art indulgence.

"I've always tried to buy things that will age well, like our original Sydney Harbour Bridge light, which is now a lamp," explains Jacqueline. "When we had our Fler couches covered 10 years ago, I invested in a really good fabric, with marle through it so it would last. It's wool that has worn beautifully. Good textiles, especially linen, get better with age."

You don't have to look far to see a love of linen. "Texture is really important to me. All my bedding is 100 per cent flax linen. It's so strong and it's actually the only fibre that increases in strength when it's wet. I've been known to bring my own sheets on a road trip. It's a bit embarrassing for Oscar!"

There are tubs of linen, cushions and scarves stashed away but Jacqueline is ruthless and chooses to only showcase a few tactile pieces at a time. "The way I edit my home is similar to my design process," she says. "It's all about paring back and refining. When you don't have a big space, you don't want too much out or it starts to overwhelm you."

Jacqueline and Oscar have succeeded in making their rental home deeply personal. "We didn't have to touch anything when we moved in – it was perfect – but for me it was important to add elements that make a house a home; my textiles, colour and art," she says. "We've lived in a lot of homes throughout our 20s and 30s, and Oscar's mum's painting has always hung above the bed. It's our tradition and it's really meaningful to him."

It's clear this home will always be a place where creativity is nurtured, but where beauty is distilled to its simplest form. **10** For more information about Jacqueline's label, visit plusequalsstudio.com.

"We didn't have to touch anything when we moved in but, for me, it was important to add elements that make a house a home"



KITCHEN (opposite) Jacqueline and Oscar love cooking and entertaining, so their open-plan kitchen, which links the indoors to the outdoor living space, is ideal. **STUDY (above)** A collection of photographs of marholes Oscar took on a holiday in Japan evokes shared memories. **BATHROOM (below)** Smart joinery in marine ply creates texture and contrast in the bathroom. The antique Chinese urn was given to Jacqueline years ago by friends.



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5 GREAT FINDS

1

"Clean & Protect" interior low sheen paint in Diamond White, \$55.50/4L, British Paints, britishpaints.com.au

2

"73428" gloss tiles, \$2750/sqm, Academy Tiles, academytiles.com.au

3

"The Architect Collection" American oak floorboards in Brown Black, from \$93.50/sqm, Royal Oak Floors, royal-oak-floors.com.au

4

"Luxembourg" linen in Sandstone, POA, Westbury Textiles, westburytextiles.com.au

5

"Solon Stria" cladding, POA, James Hardie, jameshardie.com.au



LIGHT A copper lamp, hung on the Sydney Harbour Bridge when it was completed, sits atop an antique tripod.



3 easy ways to make your rental a home

Invest in furniture you love Jacqueline and Oscar have chosen pieces that have longevity, such as a lamp from the Sydney Harbour Bridge. "The copper patina just keeps getting better," says Jacqueline. "We'll have that piece forever."

Add in colour "Most modern rentals are neutral then you get to bring your own personality in with colour," says Jacqueline. She and Oscar have incorporated tones from the softer end of the spectrum, with pastel green dining chairs and lilac bedlinen in the master bedroom.

Personalise with plants Indoor greenery is guaranteed to bring an inviting feel, as well as a welcome touch of nature, into a living area. "I think plants are so important," says Jacqueline. "They have such a relaxing influence, bring life into a space and make it your own."