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ON THE COVER

Interior designer Leigh Boswell shares
her tips for getting this look at home.



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A POINT OF *difference*





In this interior designer's home, creative flourishes have resulted in a unique sense of style.

STORY ALEXANDRA FISHBURN PHOTOGRAPHY TONY POTTER STYLING KIRSTIN RANDL-KATALINIC

In the entry foyer Amgad's unique Louis Ghost chair takes pride of place.



When you open the front door to Amgad Kamel's home you are greeted in the foyer by a rather unusual chair, but many people would immediately recognise it as the Louis Ghost chair by renowned French designer, Phillipe Stark. Just over a decade ago Stark famously took a Louis XV-style chair and molded it in transparent plastic – a classic reinterpreted for the 21st century so to speak.

"I love classical elements," confesses



Amgad, "but it's got that contemporary finish to it so I love that chair in general." That said, its stripped back, ethereal quality was, for him, just a little too simple to put in his home. So he stenciled an ornate damask pattern onto film paper and attached it to the back of the chair, giving it instant personal style. "That was just my input because you won't see another one like it," he explains.



FAR LEFT Interior designer, Amgad Kamel, often works out of his home office.

MIDDLE An extravagant light for an extravagant entry.

ABOVE During construction they realised they had allowed for an air conditioning vent that wasn't actually needed, so it was converted into this alcove.

With its woven furniture, dark chocolate feature wall and sisal carpet, the study has a British Raj feel.



Amgad's star sign is Leo, so naturally the lion is his favourite animal and takes pride of place above the fireplace. The two sofas in the 'fireplace room' came from their previous home but were completely reupholstered in black velvet with silver studs and statement hot pink legs.



This is quite telling of Amgad and of his home, located in the Hills district of Sydney. Great care has been taken to build up the layered and embellished quality to the interiors. "I had so many products and finishes and materials that I wanted to use," he says. "The challenge was to actually think about things that I wanted to use in the environment that suited my family rather than in general everything that I liked."

PRATICAL PRACTISE

Born in Egypt, Amgad studied architecture and interior design in Cairo before moving to Australia in 1991. After completing a further architecture diploma here he opened his practice, ak interiors, which specialises mainly in residential interior design. "We're really hands on," Amgad says. "We really listen to the client and we're more about designing a practical type of living environment for the

client rather than just looking good."

Practicality certainly shone through in the layout of his home. It has a conventional set up with bedrooms upstairs and living set up downstairs, as well as formal living and dining at the front with a multi-purpose open-plan room at the back. There is everything a young family could want or need, from a backyard to a state-of-the-art media room. "We lived on acreage before and we wanted to downsize a little bit, but in the meantime have quite a reasonably large house for us and the two kids," Amgad explains. They went with a local project homebuilder, Eden Brae Homes, and Amgad customised the plans as he saw fit.

LIGHT THE WAY

From the outset they were focused on building a house that suited their lifestyle, "we like entertaining, we like to have



FAR LEFT "I like skin, I like texture," says Amgad referring to the exotic decor. "I think it's more natural but it also has a great impact on the interiors when you work with it."

LEFT The hot pink of the sofa legs is subtly repeated in the dining chair upholstery and fabric lampshade.





The casual dining area in the heart of the open-plan design is where the family gather to enjoy dinner together every night.



Amgad describes his style as eclectic, elegant and riveting

BELOW Amgad's style is very unique and he's certainly not afraid of mixing patterns and colours.

open-plan living," says Amgad. However on the flipside of that Amgad needed room to work from home and consult with clients. Ultimately they wanted something open and inviting, but with a certain amount of sophistication and pizzazz. "What I tried by way of doing that is sort of make every room individual in its design approach," Amgad reveals. "Every room has its individual look, but it also flows from one room to the other without clashing in finishes, style, lighting or colour."

Rather than enclosing rooms to serve different purposes, Amgad has used his

decorating skills to mark out zones, and lighting in particular helped to do this. "Lighting can really influence the way you feel in a room," he advises. "You know you can feel happy and jumping and having a dance if you treat it in a certain way – or if you want to sit down in a corner reading and enjoying a drink you can create that." So as well as lighting for general visibility, Amgad has included numerous other treatments in each room that can be used to create instant atmosphere; an effusive golden glow is immediately relaxing for example, while dramatic spotlighting gets





BEHIND THE SCENES

Colour code: Dulux Beige Royal and Dulux Luck

Favourite room: I like the fireplace room for its symmetry, the kitchen where I cook for the family every night and my ensuite with its glamorous touch – but there are a lot of other areas in the house that I also really like! To be honest I like every single part of it.

Biggest challenge: Finding the balance between looking good, feeling good and

using practical, durable materials. I had to make sure it's not like a shopfront or a display piece because it's where my family lives!

Luckiest find: There is a hand-painted artwork of Arabian women in the entry that I picked up from a showroom that was closing down. It captures the imagination of everyone who walks into the house because it's so unusual and for what I paid for it and the talk that it creates I think it's quite a good find.

you in the mood to party. "The house really looks its best at night," Amgad enthuses, "and then you can see the lengths I've gone to with my lighting design."

SAME SAME BUT DIFFERENT

To keep a degree of cohesion across the interior scheme, Amgad developed a basic formula for the floors and walls to apply in every room. He chose Dulux Beige Royale for the walls, which he paired with Japanese black stained blackbutt floorboards, except in the formal living/dining room where he used sisal carpet. "I was really driven by



ABOVE In the master bedroom Amgad strayed from Beige Royal used throughout the rest of the house and went for a dramatic dark-chocolate colour called Luck, which he paired with luxurious sea grass wallpaper.

RIGHT The concept for the master bedroom was to recreate a five-star hotel suite, so beside the bed is a fully-integrated fridge for drinks.



The ensuite was designed to be "sexier" in its approach, not unlike what you might see in a five-star hotel.



those three elements – floor coverings and wall colours I wanted to use – and I basically took those elements and built up from that," he explains.

With this solid framework Amgad was then able to add an eclectic mix of exotic décor and colourful flourishes. The hot pink legs on the velvet sofas are especially hard to miss, and although highly unconventional, the shock of colour immediately lifts the spirits of the formal room. "I like the colour pink," Amgad explains, "and when I put that one in there it just dramatises and makes it quite different from just a black velvet sofa."

CREATIVE DRIVE

Wallpaper is used to similar dramatic effect, albeit sparingly, as a graphic relief in the open-plan living/kitchen/dining room, as well as lending warmth and richness to the master bedroom. As an interior designer, Amgad had the opportunity to play around with all the resources at his disposal and there is a sense that he has a lot of fun decorating his home. His creative flourishes seen throughout, from the wallpaper to the Louis Ghost chair, give the home individuality and spark, but at its core this is still very much a family home. "The biggest challenge from a design point of view was to come up with a house that as a designer I'm happy with but also very practical for the family," says Amgad, "but I think I managed to do it; we're very settled here and I wouldn't change a thing." **MH**

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