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PostMagazine

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# Raffles at 125



HOME

## Pottery potty

A mother of five with a weakness for blue and white ceramics goes all out in her 2,900 sq ft Tai Tam apartment.

Text Charmaine Chan / Pictures Jonathan Wong / Styling Fox Daniels

Sharing a ceramic-filled apartment with five children, all aged under 10, and a Labrador with a waggy tail may sound like a recipe for disaster. But for Philippa Haydon and her husband, their 2,900 sq ft Tai Tam duplex is a comfortable – if fragile – family home. Such is the Aladdin's cave effect of blue-and-white jars in the living areas you almost expect to see a sign warning: "You break it; you pay for it."

Haydon, from Sydney, Australia, is quick to dispel notions of frequent accidents resulting in broken pots and red faces. "People remark, 'She has that much china in her house and she has five kids!'" Haydon says. "But really, the pieces are indestructible. They are very thick and they don't

chip. Not one blue-and-white piece has been broken [by the children]."

Unfortunately, some statuettes haven't fared as well, such as the decapitated Chinese figurines in the living room. But, Haydon says with a laugh, "There's nothing like a good glue."

And little could be done to save the top of a ceramic box that began Haydon's love of things blue-and-white. "This is what my mother used to keep our tea in when I was a child," she says, displaying an old Twinkins' candy used as a vase since her children smashed the lid. "I've always loved the look of it."

So much so that, partly to satisfy her now decades-old fixation, Haydon last year opened a home-wares store in Ap Lei Chau selling, you guessed it, blue-and-white ceramics. With her youngest children (twins, then three) old enough for her to start working again, Haydon realised where her energies should lie after visiting a warehouse selling such goods in Shanghai. Quick to capitalise on a niche in the market in Hong Kong, she started Chapin House, a 10,000

sq ft expanse that also sells furniture and other home accessories, mostly from Asia.

The store has already gained a robust following, with some customers' homes being kitted out almost entirely with items from the shop. Not surprisingly, Haydon's home, a rental with glorious sea views, is also full of Chapin House products, although there is much from other local retailers and trips abroad.

Like her love of blue-and-white ceramics, Haydon has long indulged in indigo as a feature colour. The hue, which announces itself in the dining area on the lower floor, is also dominant in the stairwell leading to four rooms, and in the bedroom shared by her three sons: Oliver, nine; Edward, six; and William, four.

"When the walls were being painted the boys said, 'The room's very dark,'" Haydon says. But, having tried the colour in previous homes, she knew it would work. "It's always OK to use a dark colour when you're putting a lot of stuff against it because then it pops out." >



**1 Dining area** Much in the dining area is from Chapin House (Level 2, Oceanic Industrial Centre, 2 Lee Lok Street, Ap Lei Chau, tel: 2552 2727), including the solid oak table (HK\$4,960), chairs (HK\$1,430 each), mirror (HK\$3,700), bureau (HK\$5,790), credenza (HK\$1,560) and table lamps (HK\$1,720 each). The jars from HK\$450 to HK\$1,200 are also from Chapin House. The blue-and-white balls, some used in the vase to prop up flowers, make up a collection that started in Sydney, Australia. The painting, by Ye Hongxing, came from Zee Stone Gallery (Chinachem Hollywood Centre, 1 Hollywood Road, Central, tel: 2820 5495).

**2 En-suite bathroom** Most of the accessories in the bathroom also came from Chapin House, including the mirror cabinet (HK\$7,040), lamp (HK\$1,870) and glass jars (HK\$200 to HK\$350 each). The white, latticed incense jars were bought years ago.

**3 Living room** The largest ceramics in the living room are the hand-painted dragon temple jars, which sell for HK\$3,500 at Chapin House. The next size down costs HK\$2,900 and the

rest, or similar, are priced from HK\$125 to HK\$1,200. The television console is from Altfield Home (12/F, 9 Queen's Road Central, tel: 2524 3066) and cost HK\$18,000 several years ago. The pictures flanking the screen are antique sleeves from a gallery now closed. Other items from Chapin House include the chrome and glass coffee table (HK\$3,860), the silver Chinese stool (HK\$4,450), candlesticks (HK\$440 each) and statuettes (from HK\$260 to HK\$680 each). The blue armchair was designed by Philippa Haydon and made by Cotton Tree Interiors (92 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, tel: 9045 5320) for about HK\$6,000.

**4 Stairwell** The pendant lamp was a gift from Haydon to her husband. The artwork on the blue feature wall came from Florence, Italy. The set of six blue-and-white ceramics pictures were bought years ago in Stanley Market.

**5 Balcony** The colour of the sea is behind Haydon's love of blue-and-white ceramics, which also have a place on the balcony, teamed with yellow pots (HK\$1,040 each) from Chapin House. Also from the shop are the lanterns (HK\$870 each) and the ginger jars (HK\$2,040 to HK\$2,700).



Good life Design

As neutral as her daughters' room is colourful, Haydon's romantic master bedroom is bedecked in beige and given a lift with mirrored surfaces and clean white trappings. The look extends into the en-suite bathroom, where, like the rest of the flat, accessories enhance the fittings that were already in place when the family moved in a year ago.

Haydon's background, like that of her husband, is in finance, but her new career has deeper roots: her father was a furniture designer and manufacturer in Australia. "We always had design magazines lying around so I used to flick through them," she says. "I've always been interested in interior design."

Specifically design that incorporates blue and white. "It works in any room," she says "And you don't have to have blue in the room to have blue and white. It's a classic and it will go anywhere."

While certain looks have remained constant in Haydon's homes, chrome has been creeping in bit by bit. But, she says, it will never supercede blue. "I find it very calming," she says, attributing her fixation to the colour of the sea. "In Australia, you grow up around water; I can't stand not being able to see water."

"Blue is my favourite colour. It's never going to go away"



**6 Master bedroom** A feature wall was created with wallpaper by Jocelyn Warner and bought from Kinson (59 Wyndham Street, Central, tel: 2526 2209) for HK\$890 a roll. The bedside lamps (HK\$1,919 each) are from Indigo Living (6/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau, tel: 2555 0540). Chapin House was the source for everything else: the queen-size storage bed with headboard (HK\$5,950), the bedside tables (HK\$8,990 each) and the mirrors (HK\$800 each).

**7 Girls' room** The single-bed headboards (HK\$2,900 each) came from Chapin House, and so did the blue bedside table (HK\$2,150) and the lamp (HK\$980). The striped blind and assorted cushions were made by Cotton House (3 Li Yuen Street, Central, tel: 2530 0087). The face masks came from Venice, Italy, and the Chinese girl posters (HK\$20 each) were from the jade market in Yau Ma Tei. The white-framed picture cost HK\$360 from The Pink Pagoda (www.thepinkpagoda.us).

TRIED + TESTED

Lifting the lid Philippa Haydon stores not only shoes in her large alright ginger jars (HK\$3,500 each from Chapin House) but also umbrellas, toys, passports and electrical accessories such as extension cords.



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