

# real living >

Put your feet up and take a peek at these clever homes

believe it or not,  
it's a barbie

## 70 The easiest lesson

Fiona Lyda uses fabric to stunning effect

## 80 Gem of a place

Jeweller Ray Griffiths's amazing (and tiny) apartment

### High life

On deck at one of the apartments stunningly decorated by Fiona Lyda in Sydney's new Lumière Residences tower. Relax chair in Walnut, \$858, matching ottoman, \$352, and Costarica cushion, \$180, Spence & Lyda. *Turn the page for more.*



# "DON'T BE AFRAID OF PATTERN AND COLOUR"

Fiona Lyda transforms an empty, white city apartment with paint and a one-stop shop

Guyana print = starting point for the room's colour scheme

writer natalie walton | photography maeve homer styling sam moller

**Black beauty**  
Fiona created an authentic dark rust-like finish on the wall of the living area by mixing Porter's Paints Liquid Iron (\$70 a litre) with Instant Rust (\$51 a litre). The "Rusted Iron" was applied four times, with water from a fine misting gun used to keep the surface "alive" and to remove any evidence of brushstrokes. Fiona describes the finish as "rain moving down a valley". On the balcony is an Eva Solo barbecue grill from Fiona's store, Spence & Lyda.



**Eye tricks (above)**  
The white kitchen at the end of the room reflects light from the balcony doors and creates even more depth against the long, black wall.

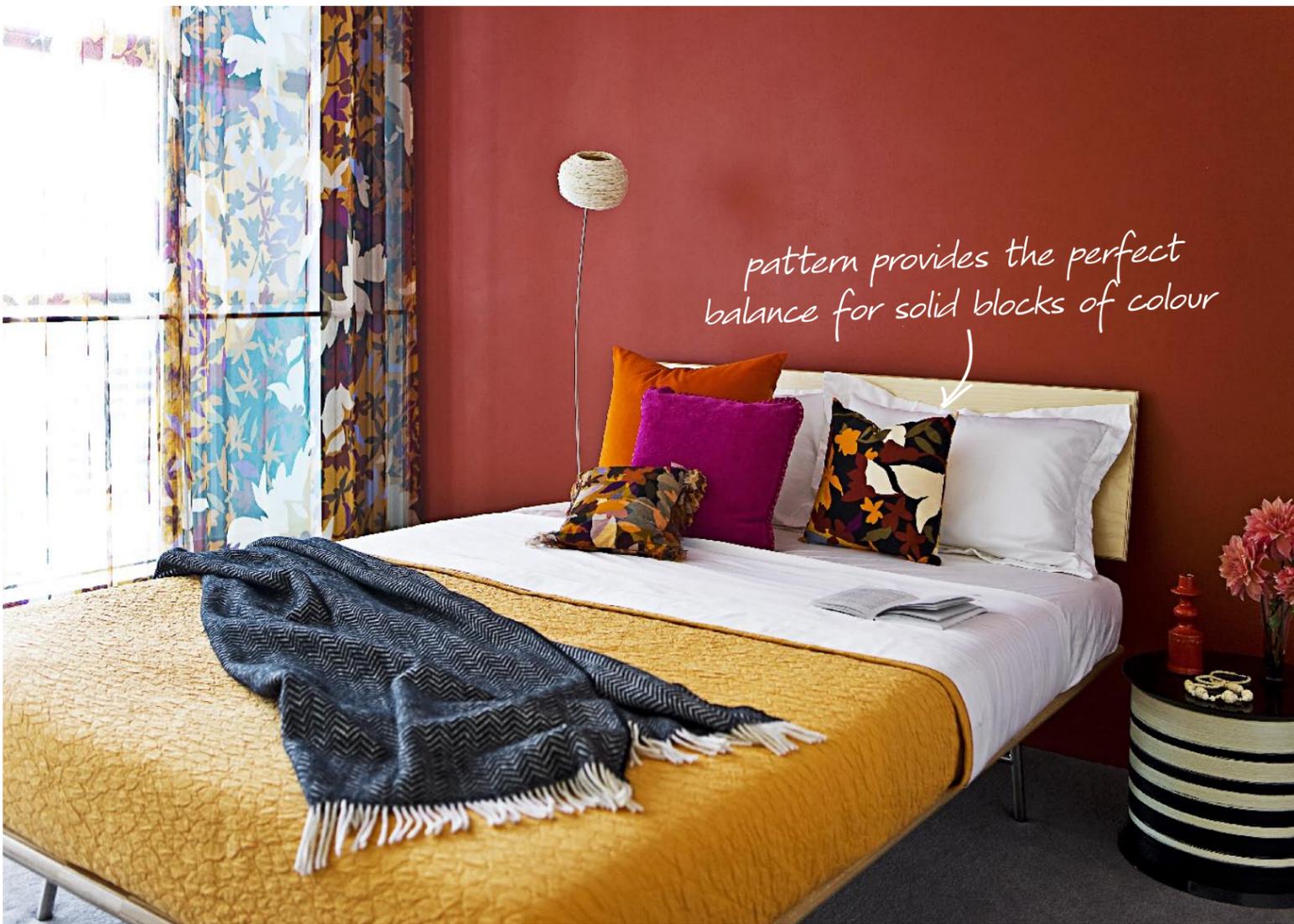
**Stylish storage (left)**  
All too often dining rooms only house tables and chairs while attractive storage in the space is overlooked. These sleek white drawers work well against the black wall and also provide a much-needed spot for placemats, napkins and candles.

**Refined style (below)**  
The copper-coloured leaves on the Sunet cup and saucer from Spence & Lyda carry on the natural theme and celebration of colour.



**“THE LIVING AREA IS VERY APPEALING. THE BLACK WALL ALTERED THE APARTMENT”**

**Casual dining**  
Who says you can't mix your timbers? The sculpted woven chairs work wonders with the solid timber table. The Fat Boy pendant lamps, designed by English architect Angus Hutcheson and stocked at Spence & Lyda are, surprisingly, made of rubber.



*pattern provides the perfect balance for solid blocks of colour*



**Colour connection (above)**  
 Guyana sheer fabric by Missoni (used as drapes and cushion covers in this bedroom) was the starting point for the whole apartment's colour scheme. The wall colour is Porter's Paints "Red Bank".

**Going mono (left)**  
 Monochromatic pieces work just as well with colour and pattern as in neutral interiors. Every home should have at least one piece! Here, the striped Missoni "Spool" side table creates a funky focal point.

IT'S SO SIMPLE, so true and yet so easily forgotten. "Take something you truly love and work from that," Fiona Lyda says. That was the strategy she used for decorating this apartment – in the new Lumière Residences complex in Sydney's CBD – from scratch.

The piece Fiona loved was a beautiful 10-colour sheer print fabric – Guyana by Missoni – which she stocks in her design-mecca store Spence & Lyda in Sydney's Surry Hills. But Fiona says you could easily use the same strategy with a favourite rug or any other piece that brings you pleasure.

So how does it work? Well, in the case of the Guyana fabric (pictured above – it's the sheer hanging from the window; the design

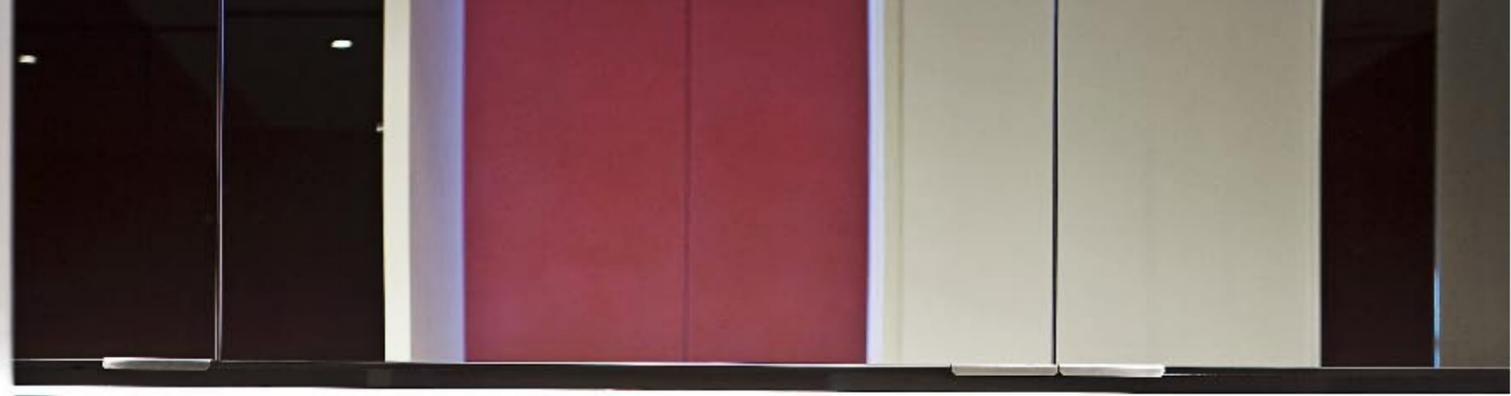
is also visible in the rug on the floor of the living room, see page 70), Fiona used it as her colour cue to decorate this blank canvas of an apartment. The black background was replicated on the wall and sofa in the main living area. Against this, cushions in rustic reds and burnt oranges were scattered on the sofa, reflecting the colourful leaf pattern (also used on the bed, shown above). Rich-stained timber furniture pieces were placed on the balcony and also in the dining room to tie in with the nature theme.

While the black wall and sofa seem like a brave decision – and perhaps one that many people would shy away from in an apartment – Fiona says it's "very appealing".



**"COLOUR MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD – THAT'S WHY WE'VE MISSED IT FOR SO LONG"**

**Visual break**  
 Strong colours can work well in bedrooms. But it's best to have the wilder wall behind the bed so that when you're awake you have something more serene to look at, such as this soft green shade.



**Bathroom beauty**  
What would have been a very plain and minimalist bathroom is given an injection of life with bright accessories, such as the colourful candle, and Missoni towels and bathmat. The mirrors reflect the wall outside the door back into the room to give the space an added hit of colour.



mirrors make the space feel bigger



**Touch of luxury (above)**  
Black in the bathroom adds a luxurious touch. Coloured-backed glass panels have been used.

**Bright idea (right)**  
Fiona believes that hanging fabric is an "underused" decorating device. But she doesn't approve of people covering canvas or frames with fabric. "Fabric is fabric," she says, not an artwork; you should let it hang naturally.

**Bold design (below)**  
The Missoni "Kew" fabric on the chair gives life to what could otherwise have been a forgotten corner.



## "TAKE SOMETHING THAT YOU TRULY LOVE AND WORK FROM THAT"

In fact, everyone who has stepped into the showroom of this Lumière apartment – from interior designers to potential buyers – "feel immediately at home", Fiona says. (And, yes, you can buy it "as is".)

And while many people automatically think a dark colour makes a room feel so much smaller, the opposite is proved true here. "The dark wall gives a sense that this space is larger," Fiona says. It creates a huge impact and also creates depth to the room. Using a similar coloured sofa against the wall helps, too.

As the living area is open plan, it's quite easy to see how Fiona has kept the look

cohesive. But applying the same strategy to other rooms, such as the bedroom, bathroom and study, is where some people might come unstuck. "I used the same colour palette throughout," Fiona explains. "People who feel daunted by choice should stay within the colourway of the pattern."

In the bedroom, Fiona has used the same colours from the fabric but emphasised different hues. Again, there is a strong feature wall – Porter's Paints "Red Bank", which Fiona loves because it's "not too blue and nasty" – finished off with a wax to give it a gentle sheen. Red can be a tricky colour. But the shade she's chosen "sits gently





Visit [spenceandlyda.com.au](http://spenceandlyda.com.au) to view gorgeous homeware products, from furniture and lighting to bath towels and bedding. Plus, check out the colourful range of Missoni Home. See [lumieresydney.com.au](http://lumieresydney.com.au) for more inspiring Lumière Residences interiors.



Polaroids create a wall of art

# "MAKE A STATEMENT WITH ART SO EVERYTHING IN THE SPACE TIES TOGETHER"

**Keep it simple**  
The design elements in this study are quite simple – long desk, white chair, wooden shelves – but work well. It's the use of photo art by cinematographer Susan Stitt, plus the vibrant Italian cowhide (\$299 a square metre from Spence & Lyda; custom colours available) that bring this space to life.



**Splashblack (above)**  
Even in the study, a black feature along the wall behind the desk is used to create interest. Don't like a black board? Try a pinboard for practicality.

within the light". Fiona selected a strong orange colour for the bedspread – another hue found in the Missoni fabric that keeps the decor simple but striking.  
The same colours are continued in the bathroom, second bedroom and study, but as they are secondary spaces the palette is used in a more moderated way. For example, the walls and bedspread in the second bedroom are quite neutral. However, colour is introduced with a vibrant fabric wall hanging. As the zigzag pattern on this fabric is quite bold, it is in balance with the rest of the room. Mirror-finished cupboards in the bathroom are brought to life with a bright floor mat, towels and a colourful candle; the study introduces colour with the artworks of famed Australian photographer and cinematographer Susan Stitt attached to the mirrored wall. This makes the space seem much larger and brighter than the nook would have been with just a painted finish.  
As Fiona says, "You don't have to be afraid of pattern and colour – you can produce something to live with."

writer: venetia cation; photography: mareae homer (top3); still-life photography: will horner; still-life styling: zoey bourne



**Bright books**  
Get colour happy with Bookbinders stationery items, from \$23 each.



**Super stripes**  
Our style editor Zoey loved this colourful Missoni "Balbianello" fabric pouffe, \$595, at Top3 in Bondi.

## THIS PLACE IS TOPS

**Top3 By Design** at Westfield Bondi has to be one of Sydney's most-fun interiors shops. Owner Terri Winter established the first Top3 store in Crows Nest in 2001 with a view to bring together the "best three" design products in any one category – such as the three best table lamps – in the one location. And the Bondi branch has repeated the theme to great effect. Big-name international brands including Missoni Home, Kartell, Eva Solo, Iittala, Ester & Erik and Alessi share shelf space with local designers such as Marc Newson, Abi Alice and Marc Harrison (see page 37 for his Husque bowl). You can also order most of Top3's quirky merchandise online.  
*Top3 By Design, Westfield Bondi, Shop 5001, Level 5, 500 Oxford Street, Bondi Junction, NSW. (02) 9388 9699; top3.com.au*  
**Also try...** the sister branch at 391-393 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest, NSW.

## GET FIONA'S LOOK

It's contemporary with character – bold colours, striking patterns and rich texture



Brighten up your bathroom with a vibrant bath towel.  
*Missoni "Homer" bath towel, \$89, Top3 By Design.*



Keep it simple with comfortable woven rattan dining chairs.  
*Linus chair, \$70, Ikea.*



Treat your dining table to a funky patterned salad bowl.  
*Dusk 15cm melamine bowl, \$3.95, Freedom.*



A ruffled paper shade will dress up a bare bulb.  
*Orgel pendant lampshade in Natural, \$12, Ikea.*



Add texture and earthy colour with this comfy cushion.  
*Tybee cushion, \$34.95, Freedom.*



Invest in a statement piece like this throne-like handcrafted cane chair.  
*CI170 Relax chair by Yuzuru Yamakawa, \$870, Spence & Lyda.*



Be bold. Add colour with one of these intense hues.  
*Low-sheen acrylic in (from left) Chinese Firecracker, Gelati and Aniseed, each \$34 for 1 litre, Porter's Paint.*

Banish clutter with a sleek and stylish sideboard.  
*Hawthorn sideboard, from \$1099, Dare Gallery. For stockists, see page 158.*