

SECOND HOME

Youtuber **Taylor R's** Clear Water Bay abode is a chic reflection of her style and her story

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GREY THROW AND YELLOW AND BLUE PILLOWS, AVAILABLE AT BED & BATH

Left: Taylor R with a painting by Virgis, After the Rain, from Carré d'Artistes gallery. Below: The living room

features floor-to-ceiling windows that open fully to draw the surrounding greenery into the living space



When popular YouTuber Taylor R first saw her Clear Water Bay apartment, with its generous windows giving way to expansive green views, it was love at first sight. Her husband, Tom, took more convincing, having lived most of his life amid the hubbub of Hong Kong Island. But installed with their poodle Rosie in the sleek, contemporary flat with chic interiors courtesy of designer Peggy Bels, it all feels right.

“This was the first place we looked at in Hong Kong and I immediately fell in love with it because it’s a bit out of the city,” says Taylor. “I’m from Canada, so I really like how you can look outside and see greenery.”

It’s a scene far removed from the former model’s first spell in Hong Kong nine years ago. “I did a few overseas contracts before I came to Hong Kong and I loved it so much that I decided to stay for four years. I stayed in

models’ apartments with up to eight girls from all over the world. Because of modelling, I moved around a lot and lived in different countries, in different apartments and with different people, which was fun and gave me great experiences, but really lacked stability and longevity. I’m so glad to finally have my own space that I could make my own for the long run.”

Almost a decade on, her home is now a spacious, light-filled haven that includes a rooftop of the same size. However, it was a long process after finding the apartment until finally moving in.

“It was a new apartment but we started from zero,” says Taylor, who enlisted Bels to strip the space back and transform the layout, turning the original four bedrooms into a vast master bedroom with a large closet and a bathroom with serious wow factor, a guest room with an en-suite bathroom, and an office for Tom. The resulting apartment, which was seven months in the making, has a



PLATES (ON THE DINING TABLE), WOODEN CHOPPING BOARD AND LILAC TRAY, ALL AVAILABLE AT IDECORATESHOP.COM



The grey hues in the guest bedroom are warmed by soft furnishings in pink. Opposite page: Taylor opened up what was a closed kitchen, transforming it into an interactive space that’s part of the dining and living room

"I LIKE CLEAN, SIMPLE LINES,
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OPPOSITE PAGE: VASES, AVAILABLE AT COMMON ROOM HOME & LIVING. THIS PAGE: THROW BLANKET, AVAILABLE AT DOVETAIL LIVING; "T" MUG, AVAILABLE AT DECORATESHOP.COM



Taylor's desk, where she edits and posts videos for her YouTube channel, which has more than one million subscribers. Opposite page: The neutral colour palette in the master bedroom is enriched by a mix of textures provided by the walls, carpet and furniture

“THIS WAS THE FIRST PLACE WE LOOKED AT IN HONG KONG AND I IMMEDIATELY FELL IN LOVE WITH IT”



The vanity table in the master bedroom.
Opposite page: Taylor R with her dog, Rosie

distinctive contemporary vibe—all concrete walls, metal detailing and monotone furnishings, aside from splashes of indigo on the dining chairs.

“I found Peggy on an interview on YouTube and checked out her Instagram,” Taylor recalls. “I noticed that all the homes she does have a very specific character to them. I could tell ‘That’s Peggy Bels,’ and I really liked that. She uses a lot of raw elements, like metal, wood and concrete. Tom and I spent a lot of time as a couple in Japan and many Japanese homes have those elements, and that’s what we liked and wanted to incorporate into our home. So she fit really perfectly with our taste.”

The Japanese element was important to Taylor for other reasons, too. “Japan was my first overseas contract, so it has a special place in my heart,” she says. “It was my first time to Asia, my first time stepping out into the world from my small town in Canada.” And it was where she started to explore YouTube fully and became something of a sensation on the platform, now boasting more than a million followers.

“I wanted to share more and to connect with people and to have a voice,” says Taylor, who was working as a model in Hong Kong when she first started posting on the platform. “Nowadays, models have voices because of social media, but back then it was just starting and we didn’t have much of a voice. People didn’t get to know our character or who we really were, because every day you have to play a role or be what the client wants you to be. I really felt a need to get my voice out there.”

Now Taylor does a weekly vlog covering fashion, lifestyle and beauty, shooting a lot of her videos at home and editing

WHITE PORCELAIN CUPS, AVAILABLE AT DOVETAIL LIVING, FLOWERS BY BYDEAU



them there too—she has set up her office within the master bedroom—and it was with this way of working in mind that the style of the apartment grew. “I like clean, simple lines, and since I work from home, I like my space to look very clean and organised. It helps me to be more productive.”

The apartment is also a reflection of Taylor and Tom’s journey, incorporating elements of her native Canada; Tokyo, where they lived together and still spend time; and Hong Kong, Tom’s hometown and the city they have chosen to make their home.

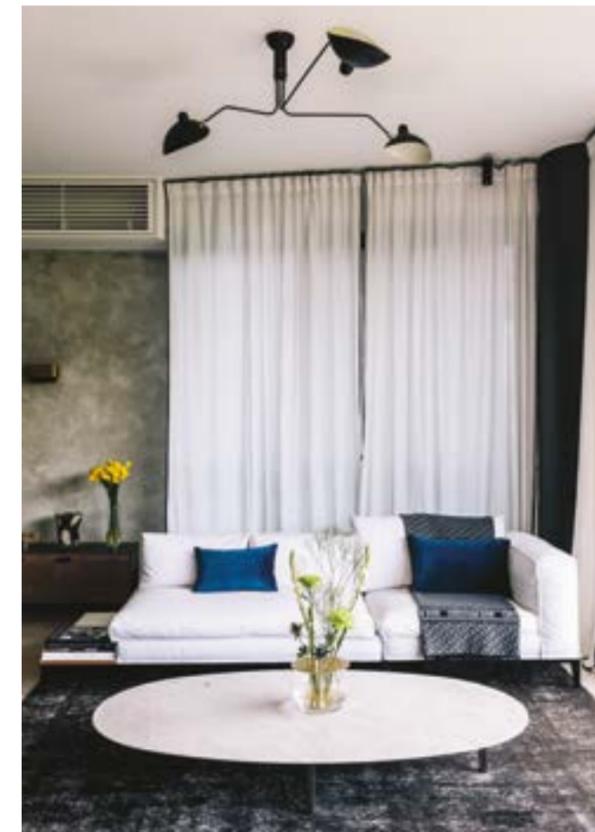
Take the kitchen, which transports Taylor back to her roots. Originally a small, sectioned-off room at the back of the flat, it has been brought up front. “In Canada we always had a big open kitchen. I have a big family and we like to cook together and be very interactive, so I really had to open up the kitchen,” she says. Then there’s the view and the living space’s floor-to-ceiling windows,

which open fully to let the natural world in.

The bathroom is inspired by the hotel where Tom proposed to her, Aman Tokyo. “My favourite room is the bathroom, specifically the bathtub,” says Taylor. “I like to unwind with a bath pretty much every night, and it was important to have a freestanding one. It just wraps itself around you and feels like a warm hug at the end of the day.”

The apartment is still evolving, particularly when it comes to what will enliven its super chic concrete-effect walls. “We can’t agree on a piece. That’s been the hardest part—finding the right art that works within our budget, that’s big enough and that is something we both really like,” says Taylor. “But I feel like a home is always a work in progress. I really want to film a house tour for my YouTube profile, but I’m always like, ‘Oh it’s just not there yet.’ But I said that when I lived in Japan and it never got there. I think a home is never finished—it changes with you.”

LARGE VASE, TEA SET AND TRAY, AVAILABLE AT COMMON ROOM HOME & LIVING; THROW BLANKET, AVAILABLE AT DECORATESHOP.COM; THIS PAGE, LIVING ROOM: YELLOW FLOWERS BY BYDEAU; BATHROOM: PINK SLIPPERS, AVAILABLE AT BED & BATH



From above: Indigo cushions add pops of colour to a sofa in the living room; the bathroom, inspired by Aman Tokyo, is Taylor’s favourite room.

Opposite page: The rooftop includes a spacious lounge area and a dining section that features a barbecue

HONG KONG HAVENS AND HAUNTS

Taylor R’s top spots in her adopted city

CYBERPORT DOG PARK

It’s where I go with my dog, Rosie. On Sundays there are lots of dogs roaming around so even if you don’t have one, it’s fun to go and pet them. It’s also the place Tom was thinking of proposing.

We used to live nearby and always walked around there, so it’s a special place to us.



LADIES MARKET

This is where I film a lot of my videos. I often try interesting fashion concepts or my own DIY fashion, so I like to walk around here. There’s always lots going on and lots of people. It’s friendly and fun, and I feel like it’s very Hong Kong.

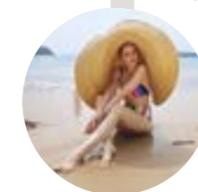
TEN FEET TALL

I love Hong Kong foot massages and at Ten Feet Tall the rooms are so nice, and they have frozen yoghurts and smoothies. It’s my favourite place to go to relax.



THE DRUNKEN POT

Hotpot is probably my favourite food in Hong Kong and I really love The Drunken Pot. They have two locations, but I like the one in Causeway Bay because it has amazing views of the harbour. They have really good homemade soups—and you can have five choices in one pot instead of the usual two.



CLEAR WATER BAY

I spend most of my time at home because I work from home and I shoot a lot of videos here. I also edit here, so home is my place. We like to hike around here, and the beaches are really nice too.