

# You and me both

The revamp of this home was a delicate balancing act, with the results a sophisticated mix of his and hers.

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*IF THE SECRET TO A HAPPY LIFE IS* finding balance, Kiriana and Will Tipping have it down. With mother/student Kiriana favouring the flamboyant and lawyer Will a more traditional type, the renovation of their villa in Auckland's Freemans Bay was a careful alchemy that transformed the home over the course of a year into a spectacular blend of exciting visual statements and pared-back sophistication.

Not for the first time in the history of romance, it's this couple's differences as much as their common ground that make them the perfect pair. "I can be quite out there and Will's super-relaxed and easy; I'm more of a social person and he's more of a homebody," says Kiriana. "We just seem to work really well. I kind of push him and he holds me back

a bit – and I need that. Because Will's a lawyer, he's detail-driven, whereas I don't always think of the consequences. I'm just like, "That sounds amazing, let's do that!" and he's the complete opposite."

Never was their dynamic more evident than during the acquisition and renovation of the home they stumbled on one day when out for a walk. True to form, "Will fell in love with it straight away, and I hated it," says Kiriana. "It had not been taken care of and needed everything done to it. But Will could see past all that, and once the cleaners had been brought in, we both saw what it could be."

Built in 1904, the three-storey home had been renovated in the 80s, resulting in a structurally sound shell with a great layout and flow to which the couple applied their ▷

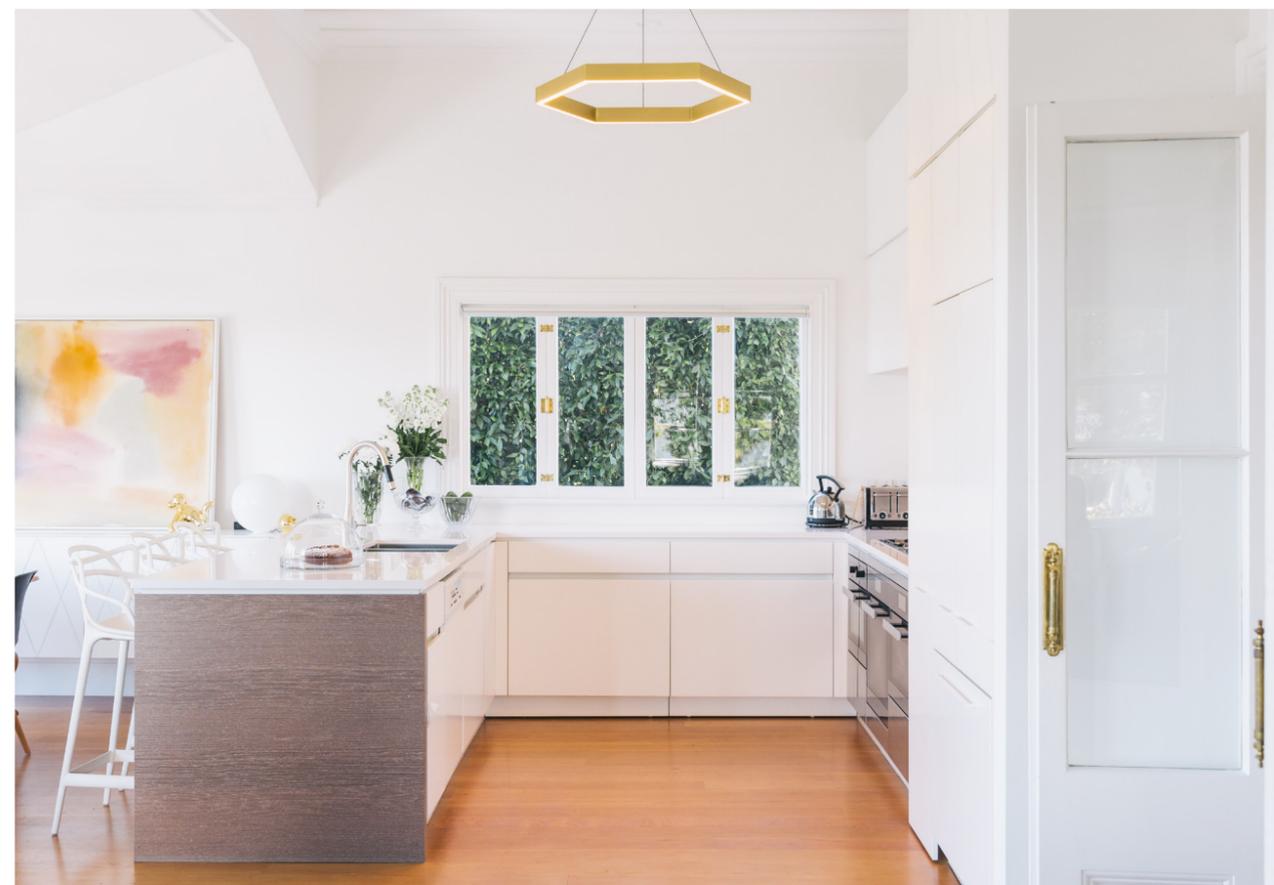
**ABOVE LEFT** The villa's front entrance retains its classic appeal. **ABOVE RIGHT** Casual dining on the middle-storey deck. **OPPOSITE** The team embraced the existing cabinetry in the living area, simply perking it up with a lick of paint. A Light Ring pendant by Massimo Castagna for Henge, a photographic print from Shelton Woolright's Native Beasts series, sofas from St Clements, coffee tables from French Country Collections (left) and Simon James, and a Plumage rug by Emma Elizabeth from Designer Rugs combine to make this space extraordinary.

## THE PROJECT

Mother/student Kiriana Tipping and her lawyer husband Will renovated this five-bedroom home in Auckland's Freemans Bay for themselves and their children Honor (8), Maia (6) and Niko (4).



**KITCHEN** Kiriana and Niko gather around the island. Behind Kiriana is not one but three Miele ovens, including a combination steam oven and microwave. Overhead is a Hex 750 pendant by Resident from Simon James Design. The Masters stools tucked into the bench are by Philippe Starck for Kartell.



**ABOVE** The material palette here includes Fijian kauri flooring, Prime Panels engineered oak on the island, Silestone benchtops, stainless steel, a splashback in Arabescato Bianco marble from Italian Stone and lacquered cabinetry with an argyle pattern custom-designed and made by Janice and her husband Julian Ward's bespoke cabinetry and furniture business, Mr & Mrs Ward. This continues into the dining area, where an artwork by Jade Bentley from Art Associates is teamed with a gilded dog sculpture from Design55 and a lamp from ECC.

ideas with the help of builder Mike Macdonald of Mac Build and interior designer Janice Kumar-Ward. Step one involved turning the sloping driveway and tiered garden into off-street parking and a flat lawn and pool area, a smart move that meant when the work started inside over summer, the couple had somewhere to retreat to with their three kids.

For the interior, it was essentially a refresh, which included removing part of the kitchen wall and extending the main bathroom a bit. Beyond the equilibrium Kiriana and Will found between their individual perspectives is the balance they achieved between old and new, their goal being to honour the character of the house but bring it into the now. The finished product is a fantastic mix of "quiet and loud" spaces that cater to every occasion,

with the master suite upstairs; the majority of the living areas on the middle level; and a games room, second guest room, third bathroom and laundry below. Little surprises in each space make it unique to the family, yet combine naturally with the heritage features. Pale Resene Alabaster on the walls throughout unifies the décor and allows these standout pieces to shine without seeming overkill.

"We managed to bring both of our styles into the house," says Kiriana. "Will's aesthetic is classic and homely, and mine would be... eclectic? I don't even know how to describe my style, apart from everything I love being super expensive! I think the house would be way more in-your-face if it was up to me. I had all these ideas in my head, but then Janice would send me pictures and I'd be like, 'Yeah, that makes >



sense.' It was great having her ticking off the things each of us liked, saying, 'This will work; that won't work; have you thought about this?' She was able to translate what we both wanted.

"Janice's big thing was creating memories in each room for the children. For example, when the Roman blind in the girls' room is down, it's like a beautiful painting – you can get lost in it. Lying in bed staring at their feather pendant – it's soft and serene but gets your mind going."

Lighting, meanwhile, became Kiriana's pet project. "I didn't realise how much I was into it until I started this," she says. "I really feel like it makes a space." Ergo, amazing pendants dot the house, and sensor lights lead along the hallway and up the stairs to the master suite. The couple didn't want a pendant in their room, so Janice suggested recessed lighting

that washes up the walls, and they went for a similar effect in the ensuite.

Kiriana might still think the circular white pendants in the entryway – which Will chose for their elegant simplicity – are too boring, but she says some of her more extroverted touches have grown on her other half. "He thanked me for pushing him, which is really nice," she says, then laughs. "I was like, 'I told you I'm right!'"

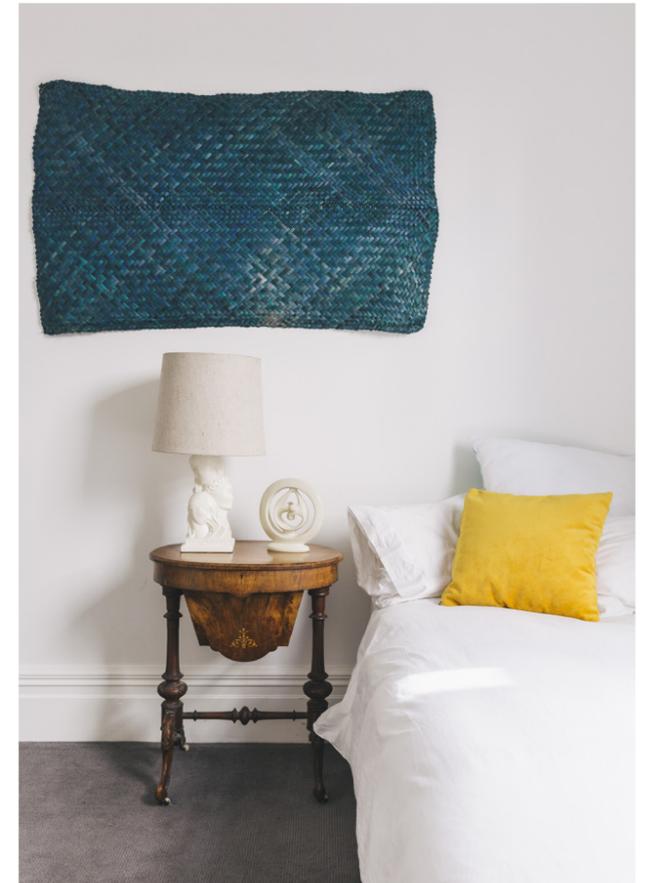
Seriously, though, for all the back and forth, they really have achieved an ideal mix. "I love how our house is so cohesive, yet every room is different," says Kiriana. "It's quirky but not in-your-face, simple but still detail-driven, luxurious without being over the top. And it has both Will and I in it. It feels like 'us', not one over the other. This is just me and him – you couldn't really separate us two." ■

**ABOVE LEFT** Tongue-and-groove panelling was added to the main bathroom's walls for era-appropriate texture and interest. The wallpaper is from Cole & Son's Fornasetti collection from Icon Textiles.

**ABOVE RIGHT** Kiriana found the floor tiles in the ensuite at Boffi Studio. "They're made from marble offcuts stuck together and sliced up, so you get all these different types of marble in one." Janice designed the cabinetry and handmade brass handles, and called on her little black book of contacts to get the shutters, tapware and towel rail custom-made.

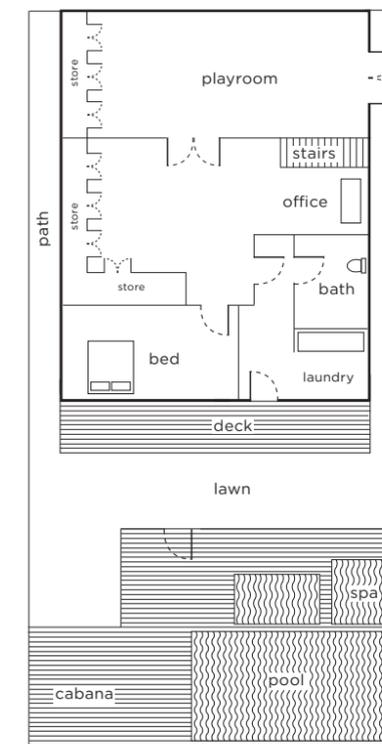
**MASTER BEDROOM** In lieu of adding a wall that would limit the flow in this space, Janice designed a cabinet that forms a headboard, provides extra storage and allows the bed to face the view. It also means the lines of the hipped roof remain uninterrupted. The couple's fantasy buy, electric curtains, lets them enjoy the city skyline from their bed without getting up to open and close them.



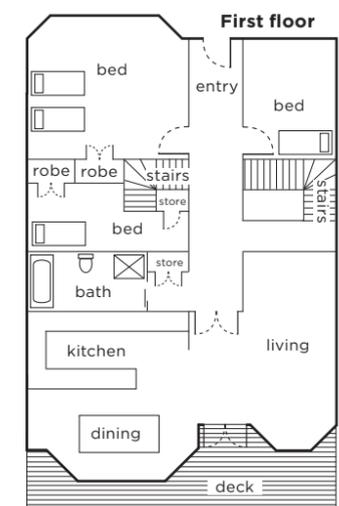


**ABOVE LEFT & OPPOSITE** In Niko's room, Janice used rich Resene Magnum paint, and blinds and curtains in fabric from Westbury Textiles. His neat bed was custom-made by Deluxe Interiors; the linen is from Thread Design. The *Native Birds of New Zealand* poster is from Father Rabbit, the chair is a reupholstered family heirloom, the sailboat cushion is by Ralph Lauren and the lamp is from Freedom. **ABOVE RIGHT** Kiriana is of Maori and Swiss descent, and various items in the house allude to that, including this piece on the wall in the first-floor guest bedroom by master weaver Hinekura Lisa Smith.

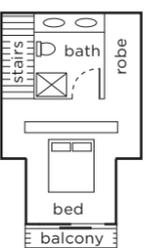
**Ground floor**



**First floor**



**Second floor**



“When the Roman blind in the girls’ room is down, it’s like a beautiful painting – you can get lost in it.”



**HONOR & MAIA'S ROOM**  
 The girls' Eos pendant light by Vita is from Bob & Friends, the blind was made using fabric by Jessica Zoob from Seneca, the sheets and duvet covers are by Wallace Cotton and the pink quilts are from Farmers. **OPPOSITE** Double doors in the playroom downstairs open onto the lawn, so the kids can have fun inside and out. The wallpaper is also from Cole & Son's Fornasetti collection.





**EXTERIOR** Designed by the couple's friend Richard Tyler of Site, the backyard is an entertainer's dream. The landscaping was completed by Second Nature, and the pool by Frontier Pools. Among the clever details is the spacing of the cabana's battens, which let in varying degrees of dappled light for comfort year-round.

DESIGN DETAILS



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** Copycat table lamp by Michael Anastassiades for Flos, \$1555, ecc.co.nz. Hex 750 pendant light, \$3395, resident.co.nz. Masters stool by Kartell, \$798, backhouse.nz. Turning table by Menu, \$938, simonjamesdesign.com. Chiavi Segrete wallpaper by Cole & Son, \$439/roll, icontextiles.co.nz. Kids Tepee Cabin bed, \$692, cuckooland.com. Moonstone cushion, \$149, penneyandbennett.co.nz.

**ASK THE INTERIOR DESIGNER:**

*Janice Kumar-Ward of JKW Interior Architecture & Design*

**Balance has been maintained so beautifully in this home, Janice. How did you help to achieve it?** Balancing a couple's renovation expectations is all part of the challenge. I love working with clients like the Tippings, who love great design, are open to ideas and appreciate each other's differences. This house is so special and retaining its heritage was important to both Kiriana and Will, so we kept the architecture true to the original and added modern touches in the form of lighting and soft furnishings.

**What advice would you give to couples about compromising during the renovation process?** There should be a Civil Defence warning: Be prepared! Successfully managing the sometimes

stressful process of renovating is mostly about forward planning, providing clear guidelines for each consultant and tradesperson, being able to answer curly questions by getting good advice, and knowing what's happening each day. Definitely don't compromise on the planning. If you can't make a decision together, put it on hold until you've worked through all the options. Don't rush choices you may forever regret.

**How should renovators integrate bold interior details without it becoming 'too much'?** There are no rules, but you need to understand yourselves, your home, your lifestyle and your budget. The Tippings hope to live here for a long time so, for example, investing in Cole & Son wallpapers was a decision based on longevity and the desire for textiles that would grow with them as a family. We opted for items they genuinely love, rather than on-trend pieces.