

SECRET SPACES



Open HOUSE

Award-winning interior designers Arent&Pyke reveal their latest project – a sophisticated yet playful family home. Words by Natalie Walton Photography by Tom Ferguson

Above: Sarah-Jane Pyke (left) and Juliette Arent. **Right:** Opening up the space between the dining and living room “has flooded the space with light,” says Pyke. “It’s such an inviting spot to sit.”



The pendant light creates a focal point in the room.

This year marks a decade since Juliette Arent and Sarah-Jane Pyke launched their eponymous interior design business. Ever since, they have been creating contemporary, welcoming spaces that have won numerous awards. Here, they show us through one of their latest projects, a 1930s Sydney bungalow revamped for modern-day family living, and provide helpful tips for achieving this look in your home.

— 1. **Create balance.** White was used in the south-facing kitchen to help reflect as much light as possible. “The black is a lovely foil and helps anchor the space,” says Pyke. “And we needed the warmth of the timber floor and marble to break down the monochrome palette.” They also incorporated tactile elements, including Tasmanian oak custom-made handles, painted to match the cabinetry, in the kitchen.

— 2. **Add a dash of colour.** Four years ago, when Arent&Pyke first met this client, her family home was very neutral. “We were trying to encourage her to have some colour on the walls,” says Arent. “It can be very inspiring and liberating for a family to break out of their neutral mode.” As a result the client chose this artwork by Dana Dion.

— 3 & 4. **Go off the straight and narrow.** “I like asymmetrical geometry all the time,” says Pyke. Here, it helps the eye move towards the stained-glass window. “That’s the direction you want to look,” she adds. The placement of the pendant so it can be seen from the hallway is both a practical and aesthetic consideration.

— 5. **Embrace earthy tones.** To complement the green of the living room sofa, colour was also used in the dining space. This time the designers used earthy tones of camel and forest green. “We do a lot of bench seats,” Arent says, “to introduce fabric into a space where you wouldn’t always find fabric. It’s not always practical to upholster timber dining chairs for families with young children, but bench seats provide this opportunity.”

— 6. **Think about rhythm.** It has become commonplace to hang two or three pendants above a kitchen benchtop, but that shouldn’t be an automatic choice. Arent&Pyke instead chose this single but substantial pendant and the bar stools that wrap around the island to create “a full stop at the end of the kitchen,” says Pyke.

— 7. **Conceal spaces.** This is especially true for busy work zones. The client was running a business from home so installing a screen sliding door allowed light to filter into the space while keeping it separate from the rest of the living room. “Using the black joinery and the screen element, you get a strong directionality – your eye keeps moving into the kitchen and out into the garden,” Pyke says.

“It’s incredible how bringing green into your decor scheme can be successful,” Arent says of the choice of sofa colour. “It’s greening the interior.”



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Arent&Pyke wanted to create “a small dining moment” at the end of the kitchen.





"We are always talking to people about the power of art in their spaces," says Pyke. In this section of the living room, the client opted for colour.

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"We wanted to introduce stone in a solid and grounding way," says Pyke. The result was creating a deep apron from a mitred marble slab on the top of the vanity.



"Black joinery into a white space is a nice playful touch," says Pyke of the home office.

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The rear of the house is south facing and there had been a wall between the dining and living room. The space was opened up and the window was enlarged to let in more light.

