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# Ask the Designer: Aviva Duncan on small space style, where to shop for rugs, and more

Answers to your design dilemmas,  
straight from the pros.



Whether it's tips on  
renovation or advice on  
styling,

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recommendations for bespoke upholstery or go-to's for antique furniture, it helps to rely on the experience and expertise of a trusted source.

Which is why we're kicking off a new series featuring just that: experts in the fields of interior design and architecture, taking your queries and quandaries on all things home decor.

Here for our inaugural edition is interior designer, stylist and curator [Aviva Duncan](#), with questions from readers and followers on Home Journal's [Instagram](#). Read on for tips and inspiration, plus how to submit questions for our next round.



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Photo: Mitchell Geng



## 1. Top tip for decorating or adding style to a tiny apartment?

I find that a small space always looks bigger if you paint a rear wall in a dark, neutral or muted colour; it draws your eye to the back of the room. I also like to mark out different areas within a small space using rugs. If your floor is light, go darker and vice versa.

Claim any real estate that you can with



a small space: mount TVs on walls, use as many transparent accessories as possible, i.e. lamps with glass bases, glass coffee tables, and perspex frames on pictures.

Instead of overall lighting, use pools of light made by lamps and track lighting with dimmers.



Mirrors from CB2

## 2. What are some of your favourite materials to work with?

I love fabric; I use fabric in different textures to layer a look, such as different weaves and thicknesses, sometimes in the same colours but with differing tones.

I also love mirrors. I'm a fan of mirrored sideboards and side tables, and my recent favourite is to have a huge framed mirror leaning against a wall.



In terms of the best value material ever, I'd say good old paint! It gives a space so much character, it's inexpensive, and it's easy to reverse if it goes wrong!

See more: *Cheat sheet: 10 tips for your living room*



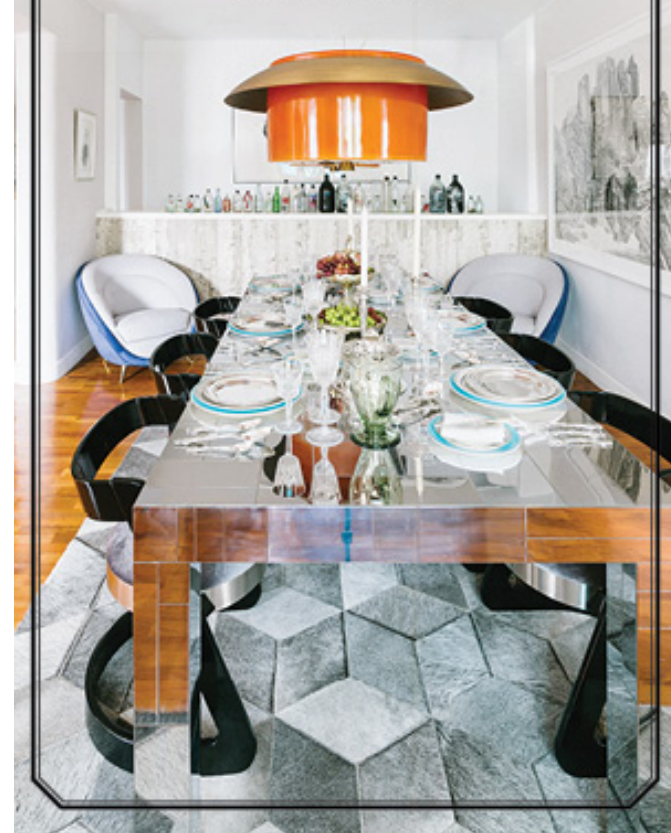
Photo: Edgar Tapan

3. Which pieces around the house are worth investing in more than others?

One single thing that is always worth

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investing in is art. Art transcends fashion and can stay with you for a lifetime. Other stuff comes and goes, but you tend to keep your art forever!

Other than that, invest in a great sofa; if it has a good structure you can keep reupholstering it for a lifetime. I also love a signature piece of furniture – an Eames armchair or a Corbusier chaise – as it always keeps its value.

*See more from the above home: [Street art takes centre stage in this sprawling home on The Peak](#)*

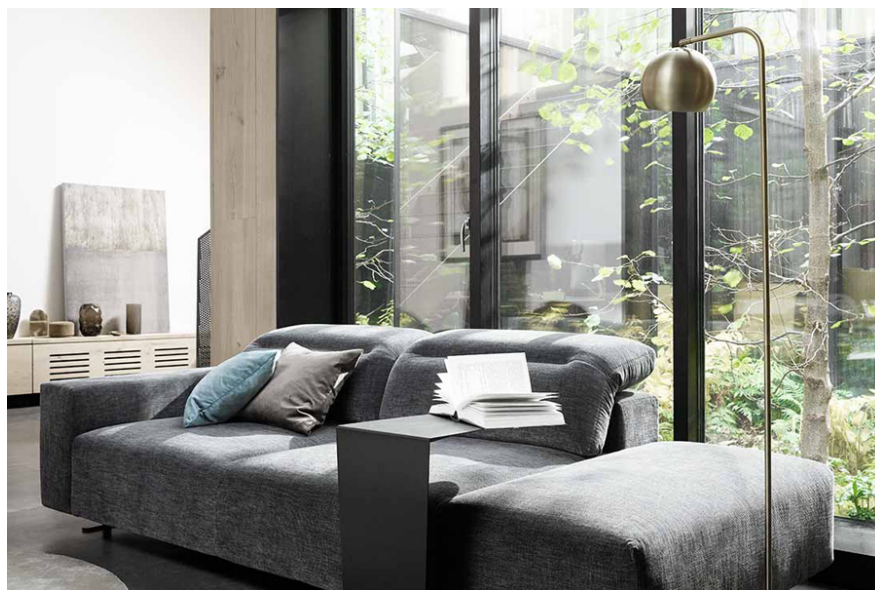


Photo: BoConcept

## 4. Where do you like to shop for furniture in Hong Kong?

[Lane Crawford](#) does an amazing job. They style pieces so well, it gives you a snapshot of how to use them in



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your own home. I also like [Habitat](#), and lately I have found some great pieces at [Sonder](#) in Horizon Plaza. For a certain look I also like [Bowerbird](#); they stock some very comfy soft furnishings at great quality for a reasonable price.

*See more: [6 micro-home tips for living small yet well, from SCAD interior design professor](#)*



Photo: Courtesy of BoConcept

5. Do you have recommendations for where





# to find good rugs in Hong Kong?

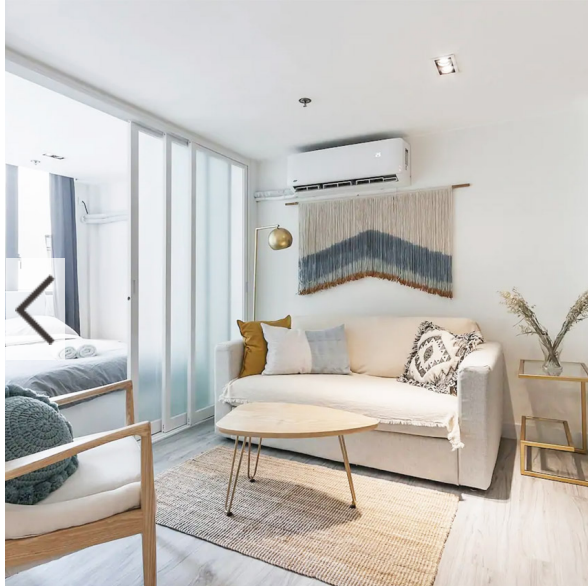
Rugs are a fabulous way of adding a personal touch to a room. I like the rugs at [BoConcept](#) and have found great ones at Sonder. For a signature look, have one made by Freda rug manufacturers.

My advice on rugs is to go bold – no need to be too safe as they can add a lot of interest. I just made an emerald green bamboo rug for a client that transformed their entire living space.

*Get a tour of Aviva Duncan's home in our [September issue](#), and for more interior tips and inspiration, pick up the latest edition of [Home Solutions](#), our home decorating and renovation bible.*

*Got a specific question on doing up your interiors, or a design dilemma you could use an expert's opinion on? Prep your questions and stay tuned for the next round of Q&A in our Ask the Designer series by [following @HomeJournal](#) on Instagram.*





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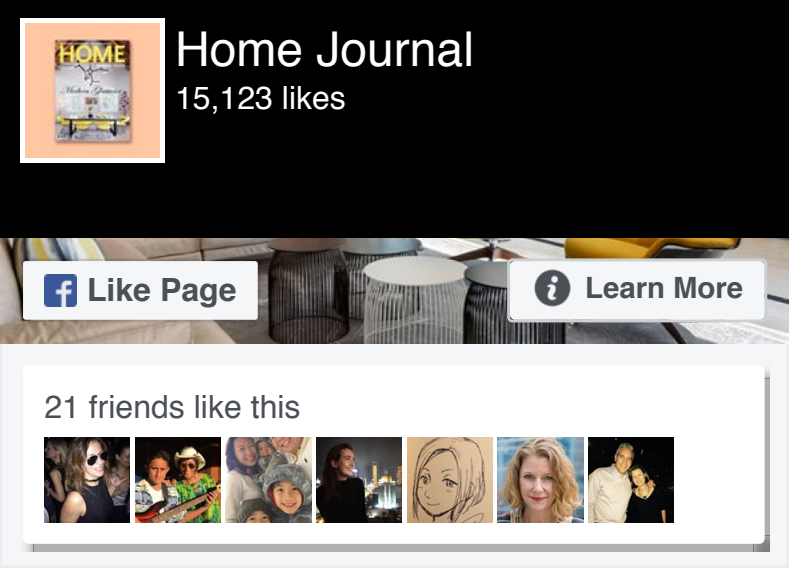
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