

HOME

TEXT REBECKKA WONG
PHOTOGRAPHY VEE CHIN
ASSISTED BY ELTON CHONG
ART DIRECTION NICCO LIM

take comfort

A COHESIVE COLOUR PALETTE PULLS THIS SPACIOUS HOME TOGETHER, WHILE GEOMANCY ADVICE HELPS KEEP THE FAMILY WELL.

the facts

WHO LIVES HERE A MOTHER IN HER FIFTIES, HER GROWN-UP SON AND THEIR DOG HOME FIVE-ROOM, 1,280SQF FLAT IN ANG MO KIO

Visitors have said they feel good upon entering this newly built five-room HDB flat in Ang Mo Kio. It could be the spacious living area (larger than most new flats of this size), the wall of windows that has created airy and bright interiors, the muted but elegant colour scheme, or perhaps something completely invisible to the eye – the good energies flowing through the space.

Designer Benjeemen Heng of Benjeemen Heng Design follows fengshui principles in every home he designs and this one, occupied by a mother and son, is no different. He explains, "Many people think fengshui is taboo and Chinese superstition, but it's actually about harnessing the energy within a space. This includes space planning and choosing the right furniture and colours. Good design coupled with fengshui will give you good vibes when you enter a home." The designer's interest in the ancient art of being in harmony with the environment was piqued six years ago, and he has since studied under Taiwanese and local fengshui masters.

Thankfully, the homeowners also shared the same belief in geomancy and gave him free rein to design the flat. "They only asked for it to be bright," shares Benjeemen. >

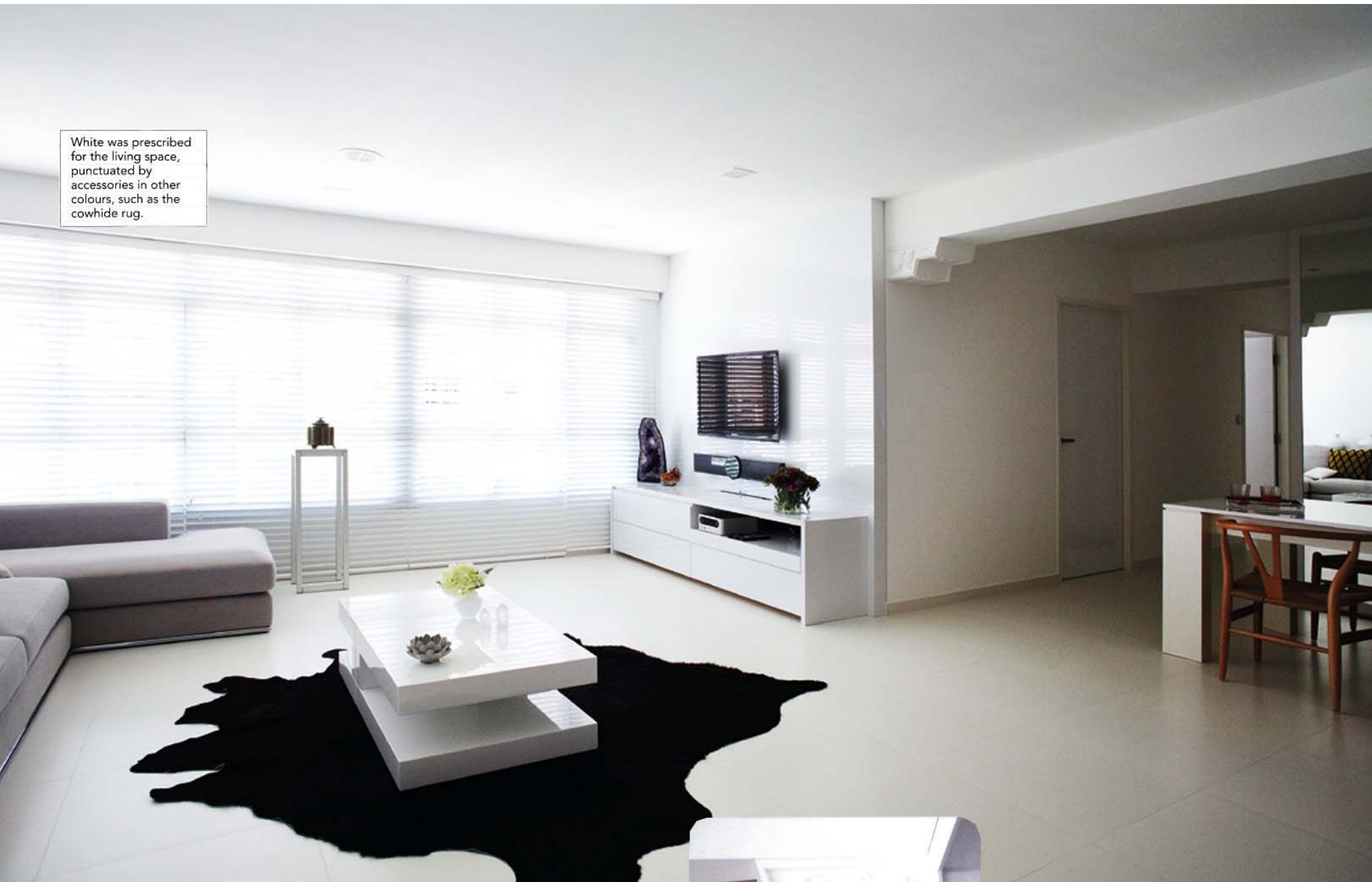
The living room is spacious enough to accommodate a large plush Le Mercier sofa, which works to anchor the space.



Fengshui Fix

THE CLEAR QUARTZ CRYSTAL AND SMALL WATER FEATURE FACE THE FRONT DOOR TO ATTRACT GOOD ENERGY INTO THIS HOME.

White was prescribed for the living space, punctuated by accessories in other colours, such as the cowhide rug.



The location of the kitchen door was shifted and the door widened to facilitate movement. above Green mosaic and black tiles laid over the original tiling of the master bathroom enhance the Earth elements of the sector.

GO WITH THE FLOW

Although little needed to be done in terms of renovation (for this is a new flat), Benjeemen made subtle tweaks to improve the flow of energy in the home. The tall shoe cabinet, for instance, directs the energy from the main door to meander into the residence instead of rushing out the window on the opposite side.

The kitchen door, which used to face the main door, was also changed to face the living room – marking an improvement to the layout. Before the dining room, what seems like a nice decorative touch – the plaster corbels that jut out of the wall from the underside of a ceiling beam – actually hold a more important function. “Fengshui practitioners believe that sitting under a beam is akin to having something pressing on you from above, so the corbels help to ‘hold’ the beam up,” says Benjeemen.

To avoid having the mother sleep under a beam, the designer pushed the bed away from the window and used the space below the beam for storage instead. Tucking storage units neatly away also help maintain a clean, uncluttered vista in the home. >

Fengshui Fix



THE CUSTOM PLASTER CORBELS AT BOTH ENDS OF A CEILING BEAM FEATURE AN ELEGANT MOTIF OF DOUBLE PEACHES TO SIGNIFY LONGEVITY.





THE SHARP EDGE OF THE SINK WAS ROUNDED OFF TO STOP IT FROM BEING A 'POISON ARROW' TO THOSE WHO ENTER.

IN TUNE WITH COLOUR

In fengshui, using colours to enhance the different sectors of the home is also the easiest and quickest method. "I made sure the colours harmonised with each other, even though each area needed different hues," says Benjeemen. Fortunately, white suited the living room, and he could go with the space-enhancing colour there.

The brother's bedroom received a black, white and blue colour scheme in keeping with the Water element of that sector, while the master bedroom sports a mix of cosier earthy shades to enhance the Earth sector of the home. The wallpaper, for instance, is in a shade of sand. The bedroom between the two features a mix of both colour schemes. Benjeemen customised the headboards in all the bedrooms for a cohesive look that also adds a touch of luxury.

"Most importantly, for bedrooms, one should never sleep with your head and legs facing the door or window. If it is unavoidable, used blinds or curtains for your windows and keep the windows closed when you sleep," the designer advises.

The kitchen is also an important area in fengshui, in particular the location of the stove and sink, which could affect the person who uses the space the most – usually the mother. In order to prevent a sharp point from facing those who enter the kitchen, Benjeemen also rounded the edge of the sink countertop.

Guided by fengshui, the \$70,000 renovation produced a home that's not only in harmony with its occupants, but best of all, looks like a super-slick yet homely contemporary showflat. ●

where to go

BENJEEMEN HENG DESIGN TEL: 6221-0688



The mum's bedroom features a mix of Earth elements (in the wallcovering and bedspread) as well as Water elements (in the form of the silver lamp).