

TEXT *Christopher DeWolf*
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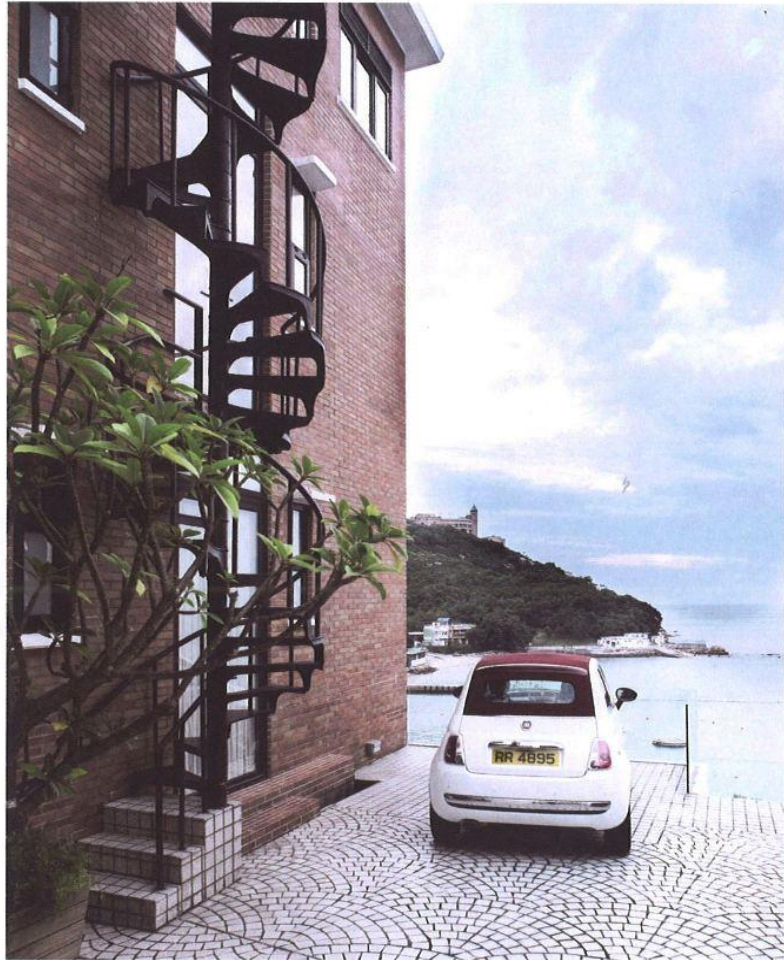
THE ESCAPIST

Sea and believe

Eve Mercier thinks that design must reflect its environment – and she has the perfect match at home

When Eve Mercier returned to Hong Kong after 15 years in Europe, she knew exactly where she wanted to live: Wong Ma Kok Road on Stanley Peninsula, in a particularly fetching four-storey building perched on the bluff overlooking St Stephen's Beach. "I remember looking up and thinking, 'This is a really cool building,'" she says. As luck would have it, the 1950s-era structure had been newly renovated, with four units available to rent. Mercier snagged one and moved in four years ago with her husband, Edouard, and their 11-year-old twin daughters, Violette and Céleste.

Space is important to Mercier, a French interior designer and art historian who's lived in various European cities including London and Paris. So was finding an apartment that felt like home – after



moving house 15 times in 20 years, she was ready to put down roots. "I wanted to find a place that has soul," says Mercier. "I wanted to be able to open my window, have a balcony, be on a low floor, know my neighbours, where it doesn't take 15 minutes to find the lift to take me to Tower A. I wanted to find a house that felt like we were on vacation."

That's exactly what she's created in the 1,481-square-foot, three-bedroom flat. "I love the fact that I have these beautiful framed views everywhere I go," she marvels, sitting in a living room flooded with natural light. "Every time I go into the living room, my head tilts and that's what I see," she adds, nodding towards the shimmering blue sea. The family is greeted every morning by the cheerful sound of beachgoers. "That's a

very beautiful thing to wake you up."

Violette and Céleste are constantly coming and going, spending time with the downstairs neighbours or heading to the beach, which is connected to the building by a private outdoor staircase. "It feels more like a house by the sea than an actual apartment," says Mercier. She calls it an "LA/California/Australia meets Hong Kong kind of vibe".

That inspired Mercier's design approach. "You always get the sun coming in, and I wanted that to be reflected in the colours in the house. It's a fairly neutral background – white and beige – but then you have touches of very bright colour – yellow, pink, blue. I wanted something that looks fresh. You're in a humid, tropical environment, so I'm not very keen on putting in wall-to-wall carpet or

From left: Mercier kept her sea-view living room bright and cheerful with paintings by Anish Kapoor, light-toned furniture, a playful Berber rug and a coffee table she designed herself; the beach is easily accessible from the home's private outdoor staircase