

SATURDAY

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home

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Backyard bliss

A rocky sloping site becomes an entertainer's idyll **10**



Display Casaview's Oxley **16** **At home** Jules Sebastian **19**

LOVE YOUR KIDS AND YOUR STYLE

A beautiful home is still possible when you have young children and pets, writes **Catherine Nikas-Boulos**



Dulux Wash and Wear paints are made for family life.

Roll out the plastic sheeting. That's usually the band-aid solution for parents with young children taking their first steps while using your expensive furniture for support — usually with sticky fingers at the ready.

The brushed-suede couch may as well be a face wash while you're banking on the glass-topped table being shatter proof as your little darling clunks away with everything from the remote control to wooden blocks.

The family dog has also taken a shine to your favourite rug, while the cat is using an expensive wooden side table as a convenient scratching board.

Everything you had thoughtfully selected and carefully saved to buy pre-children and pets is being used and abused.

Where you had once carefully stepped, a mini army now stomps. Let's face it, your once-styled-up abode looks nothing like the magazine spread you so faithfully aspired to.

And that's the point.

Living in the real world with a young family and pets will smash any illusions of living in an over-styled glossy magazine. It may be time to re-think your purchases without losing your style — or your sanity.

STYLE VERSUS WHAT'S SUITABLE

Interior designer Karen Akers agrees that something has to give when you introduce children and pets into the home, but says that does not mean your house should go from fab to downright drab.

Her company, Designed by Karen Akers, has been involved in the evolutionary home style of many families.

Karen says it's normal for people to buy furniture without thinking of how it will stand up long term as your family grows. In most cases, it's not financially viable to make the switch to more durable furniture. ➔

SMART THINKING

- ➔ Cover your furniture in hard-working fabrics. The new ranges of outdoor fabrics look like linen but can tolerate spills.
- ➔ Indoor/outdoor rugs can withstand pretty much anything you throw at them. Use them in main thoroughfare areas such as the kitchen or playroom. The more detailed or colourful, the better.
- ➔ Rattan furniture is not just on trend, it's an extremely durable choice.
- ➔ Outdoor furniture has taken a stylish turn of late, with chunky, timber tables making for an innovative indoor dining table. Consider bringing pieces in from outside for relaxed family living.



Patterned rugs and elevated lounges like these from Oz Design Furniture are easier to maintain.

FOCUS

→ “Most people don’t think ahead and then panic when the kids are born. I wouldn’t advise people to run out and get new furniture, even if your furniture is white. You can’t be chasing kids all day, so let it get dirty for the first couple of years and then replace it if need be.

“Any cream, white or pale colours are going to be hard to keep clean and most people assume they should switch to leather, but that can be troublesome in its own right,” she says.

If you are at the point where you want to update your style without having to shift into child/pet-friendly plastic mode, then micro-suede fabrics are recommended.

“Micro-suede fabrics are washable, and they are pretty indestructible,” says Karen.

“Other things to consider are highly patterned fabrics because they can hide a lot.”

MAKING A CHANGE

Children can be accident prone, so you may want to consider re-styling part of your home.

Karen says commonsense things like swapping a square, sharp-edged table for a round one will give you peace of mind.

Glass tables should also be relegated to the garage for the time being.

“Dirty marks on the table will only irritate you,” says Karen. “You need to eliminate foreseeable problems as much as possible.”

You want your house to be stylish, but children need to be able to live comfortably.

A quick clean-up of toys before a guest arrives should be what you aim for, instead of banning children from spreading their toys beyond the bedroom.

“Getting organised with baskets is the trick,” says Karen. “Spend some money buying a set of six baskets that are all the same rather than random, different coloured ones.

“Label them so the kids know where the dolls go and where the puzzles belong.”

Karen says rugs are great for children to play on, but buying anything plain, or overly expensive would be a mistake.



Uncluttered spaces like this room by Karen Akers work well for families.

“I would say patterns for children would be a good thing,” she says. “You may fall in love with something simple, but think how impractical it would be before you buy.

“My best advice for the living area, where everyone comes together, is to buy a decent sofa that can be reupholstered and choose something that you are able to live with comfortably without stressing about it.”

ART WITH HEART

Thinking of ways to make your home child-friendly without losing the style you love can be quite the conundrum.

Forget your original artworks, children will want to display their priceless creations on the

wall too and, Karen says, fair enough.

But Blu Tacked drawings against a blank wall just won’t do it. If you have a beach-themed home, putting the kids’ artwork in white frames is a nice way to unify them, as is using felt pin boards to display the children’s proudest moments.

Dulux creative consultant, Bree Leech, says you can’t live your life in a style bubble. Accidents will happen, red wine will be spilled and mud will be traipsed through the house, be it by a child or a pet. Inevitably, your small artists armed with crayons, markers or paint brushes will find the all-white hallway too much of a temptation.

The company’s low-VOC, Wash and Wear Plus product has become the go-to product for parents.

“Absolutely, the vast majority of people buying this particular product are families with young kids.”

Bree says the specialised paint has a five-year guarantee, and is created to stand the test of time.

Aside from being washable, the paint has the added benefit of being anti-bacterial.

“If food goes on the wall with grubby hands, the bacteria will not continue to grow,” says Bree. “You know the hand soap that kills 99.9 per cent of germs? Well it’s kind of like that, but for your walls.”

Bree says even if you don’t get to the stain right away, it should still clean off with a damp cloth. This should come as welcome news to families who love to live with the colour white.

Antique White USA is still by far the favourite Dulux paint colour, with grey tones creeping in to the top 10 mix.

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Pictures Thinkstock (toy basket)

More Designed by Karen Akers,

karenakers.com.au; Dulux dulux.com.au

HAPPY FAMILIES

→ Contain the kid clutter. The living room, kitchen and dining room should be toy free. Have a play area for the children to stop their stuff spreading.

→ Try to teach the kids that everything they own has a home.

→ Ask them to clean up now and then.

Things will get messy again soon enough but at least they’ll be aware of the work needed to tidy up.

→ Purge at Christmas and birthdays.

Go through their closets and bins and ask them what they want to get rid of so they can make room for the new stuff.

→ Bins or baskets are the best type of containers for kids’ clutter because they’re so easy to use. The key is to make it easy for the kids (or you) to toss their stuff into the bins, making clean up simple. Label each bin so they know what goes where. If your child is too young to read, use picture labels instead.

Source zenhabits.net



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