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STYLE **3** STAGE

{def. 1. sophisticated. 2. compromising. 3. adaptable. 4. family oriented. 5. personalised zones.}



LIVING WITH GEN-Y

TO COPE WITH SHARING A HOUSE WITH TEENS, INTERIOR DESIGNER FIONA AUSTIN STAGED A CLEVER RETREAT, SALVAGING HER SOPHISTICATED STYLE IN THE PROCESS

STYLING WENDY BANNISTER PHOTOGRAPHY GORTA YUUKI

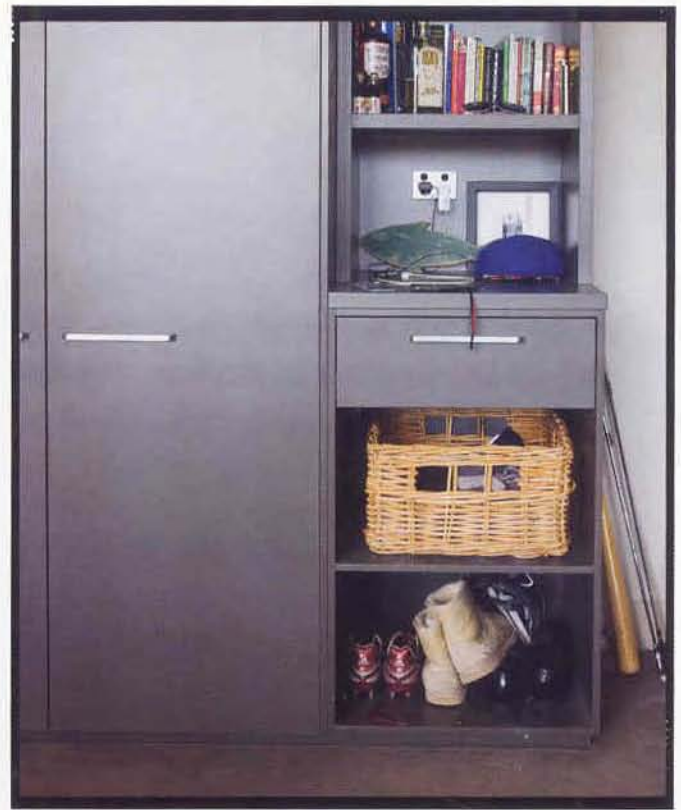


Fiona's teenage sons (opposite) Nick (left), 14, and Tim, 18, are free to spread out in their own rumpus room (this page). A custom-made sofa bed comes in handy when friends stay over, while a beanbag from Freedom is the perfect spot to relax. The boys' books and bits and pieces are tucked away in solid shelves from Temperature Design. >

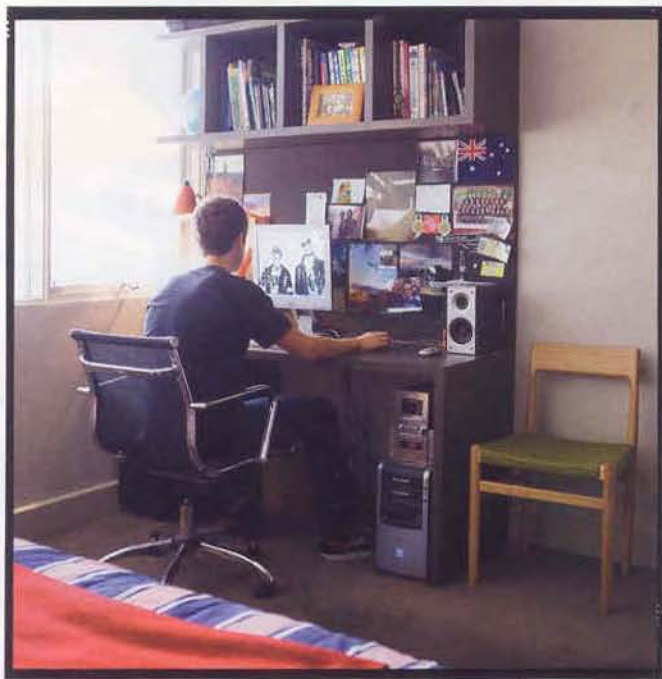


Beautiful pieces like this Eames chair from Living Edge can become magnets for discarded belongings.

Fiona has warded against this by installing 'boy management systems' in her sons' wardrobes (right), with power points for their phones and iPods, and drawers for their odds and ends.



WHERE'S A TEENAGE BOY GOING TO SPEND ALL HIS TIME? AT THE COMPUTER, OF COURSE. FIONA AND CRAIG WIRED EVERYTHING IN TO GET RID OF UNSIGHTLY CORDS. A PINBOARD BEHIND DISPLAYS THE BOYS' FAVOURITE ITEMS - WITH NO POSTERS OR BLU-TACK!



When interior designer Fiona Austin and her husband Craig, a professor of design, come home, serenity reigns. While music might be blaring, the floor thumping from the beat of a subwoofer and an Xbox game raging, it all happens in a special 'wing' designed by the couple especially for their teenage boys, Tim and Nick. In giving the boys their own rumpus room and kitting out their bedrooms as studies and entertaining spaces, Fiona and Craig were able to reclaim the living space for themselves. "We're both working and pretty busy so it's nice to have a room that's a retreat. We can walk in there and it always looks nice, whereas previously it might have had an Xbox control wired into the telly and things all over the coffee table. It's more our space now," says Fiona.

Their space is defined by clean design, with pieces from their past and masses of books adding warmth. "Because we've both always been interested in design, we've collected well-designed, well-made pieces. But everything we've done has always had to be practical. Our dining chairs are Series 7 chairs [by Arne Jacobsen, available from Nordic Fusion] which can be wiped down and we have leather couches [page 64]. We like to really enjoy our space, to be able to lounge on the couch without having to worry about it."

Renovating has been a family affair, with the boys not shy about putting forward their opinions. "We have great conversations. They question everything and were like clients when we renovated!" says Fiona. "They hated my sisal flooring with a passion so they got carpet."

But is it too good for them to ever leave? "Most of my clients tell me that their kids are going to stay at home until they're 25-plus," admits Fiona. "I think this house will really see us through the next stage. Our children could be living at home at 25 and we wouldn't be complaining. It would work."

Philosophy "Our previous house was white and I found that really difficult with boys. Everything had fingerprints all over it. Here, the laminates are dark grey and I used Resene Tea on the walls."