



Ron Goh

HOME TOUR

Digital designer Ron Goh's inviting Auckland home is an urban jungle oasis, inspired by his love of travel, art and culture

Words: Colette Earley | Photography: Holly Jolliffe



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Originally from Penang, a small island in northwest Malaysia, Ron Goh has lived in his penthouse home in Auckland’s central business district for the last three years. Despite the urban location, Ron has slowly but surely transformed the space into a plant-filled, peaceful haven that he shares with his partner Matt and their two dogs, Ninny and Teddy.

The property is almost 100 years old, and thankfully, still retains much of its original charm. ‘Our building is so special and unique,’ says Ron. ‘It used to be a factory back in the 1920s through to the late ‘80s, when it was converted into four units. I love the high ceilings and all the details from its factory heritage – exposed brick and beams, as well as oil-stained floorboards really give it unique character.’

In order to maintain the property’s historic charm, renovations have been kept to a minimum, with a focus on decorating. To modernise and brighten the industrial tone, every wall is painted in Resene’s Black White; a blank canvas on which to add their personality and treasured finds. Combining interests in arts and travel with his experience in digital design, Ron gathers inspiration and applies it to his home: ‘I love to take photos of the scenery and plants around me and save these to my Instagram feed, so I can come back later and replicate the style when I get home,’ he explains. ‘But what really motivates me to create a beautiful scene is how special and unique our place is. I feel like I have to do the space justice.’

BOTANICAL CHARM

Ron’s love for plants is unmistakable - a robust theme that trails from room to room, even adorning the staircase which leads to the bedroom. ‘I find plants really give our space a homely and inviting feel,’ says Ron. ‘I don’t even notice how many plants I’ve accumulated, but it’s the first thing people comment on when they walk through the door.’ This being said, Ron admits that his green-fingered journey didn’t begin until he moved into their current home. This particular space has developed his interest in horticulture due to its high ceilings and ample amounts of natural light - perfect conditions for housing plants. ‘I wasn’t really a plant lover before we started living here,’ explains Ron. ‘Over time, many visits to various plant stores, watching trends grow online and being adventurous, really ignited a passion in me.’

With such a huge family of flora, pinpointing favourites has become a near-impossible task, although Ron admits that he has a particular penchant for his giant Bird of Paradise and San Pedro cactus, both of which add a tropical vibe to the living area. Ron has recently combined his love of plants with a fascination for furniture, selling a selection of both through an Instagram side business: @mrhomebody. ‘Seeking and curating furniture seems to have become my addiction lately. I wanted to share the love, especially when I find a great piece that people would appreciate.’



With so many varieties of houseplants available, how do you select those that are right for your home? 'It all depends on what vibe you're going for,' says Ron. 'A snake plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*) in a retro plant stand will add a mid-century touch to your space. These are good for accenting a room - especially hallways - as they aren't too high or large, and are easily moved around. They also look great beside an armchair or couch.' Ron's home is living proof that plants can totally transform a space. Even the most mundane of rooms can be given new life with a touch of green: 'I have a trailing cactus that I picked up for a bargain. It's pretty simple to take care of and adds a lot to an otherwise boring room,' says Ron of his laundry room addition.

To contrast with the greenery, Ron has added a number of bright, intricately patterned rugs and textiles, injecting colour and character into the environment. Many of these are second hand, discovered in thrift stores, while others were purchased from local design shops, like the Mudcloth rug which Ron discovered at Auckland store, Citta. The green couch, which takes pride of place in the living area, is a vintage daybed that he purchased on Trade Me - a second-hand selling website based in New Zealand. 'The couch has a very heavy spring mechanism, which just needed a little oiling and cleaning - it works perfectly,' says Ron. 'We love that it can turn into a bed for when we have visitors, or just fancy a lazy day!'





GLOBAL STYLE

Much of Ron's inimitable taste has been inspired by his love of travel and culture; an element that shines through his décor, embodied in the exotic objects found around his home. The cushions in the living area are from Idee and Muji; Ron bought them while he was traveling in Japan. 'From there, I had to carry them in my luggage through Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Just imagine how much I love those kilim cushions!' Ron's Malaysian roots also influence his design aesthetic - the traditional handmade hats displayed on the wall of the dining area were crafted in the town where he grew up.

Ron's next project is to work on a balcony area - a space similar to a rooftop terrace. As well as implementing his signature botanical vibe, he plans to create some protection from the wind, so that the balcony can become the setting for summer parties with friends and family. 'I have a visual in my mind every time I change something,' says Ron. 'I do a lot of research before I make the final decision. I haven't bought anything that hasn't ended up working well in our space - it has been a good journey so far.'

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