

# the life.



PRUE RUSCOE

**LOVE NEST**  
Designer and artist  
Camilla Franks' passion  
for creativity is  
reflected in her happy  
bohemian home



# ART HOUSE

A global nomad by nature, designer **CAMILLA FRANKS** was never one to settle—until she discovered a space that made her reconsider

by **EMILY TAYLOR** photographed by **PRUE RUSCOE**

Franks in her sunny front courtyard, relaxed in one of her trademark designs. Giant pots planted with magnolia trees frame the entrance to the home. OPPOSITE: A custom-print Camilla surfboard stands next to a side table in the sitting room. Maison Balzac coloured glass vases; maisonbalzac.com





With an empire built on fashion inspired by exotic and diverse destinations, near constant travel has been a career reality for designer and artist Camilla Franks. From India to Italy, the creative has spent extended periods immersing herself in contrasting cultures that inform the opulent prints of her eponymous brand, Camilla. She was as bemused as anyone, then, when she found herself head over heels for a house in Sydney's stately Woollahra, just minutes from her "stomping ground" of Bondi Beach, where her first boutique opened more than 15 years ago. "For someone forever on the move, this home is the first I truly settled into—I feel like we waited to find one another," she says of the smart Eastern Suburbs address she shares with her fiancé, Welsh artist and musician JP Jones, and their two-year-old daughter, Luna Gypsy.

Franks has undertaken a journey of a different kind within these walls over the past three years, from bringing home her baby girl to battling breast cancer. And she's grateful to this special space for providing sanctuary. "My home brings me a sense of sacred calm," the designer explains. "It often surprises people to learn that I am a secret homebody...I appreciate the need for rest and wanted my home to not only be an extension of who I am, but to also be a temple which I can retreat to and reflect in." Another requirement was a gallery-esque feel, allowing for daily interaction with meaningful pieces unearthed on adventures. "I am surrounded by memories, keepsakes, vintage textiles and artworks—essentially everything that makes me feel safe and connected to who I am," she says. "It reminds me I am on my own path and that this is the one place in the world where everything is in its right place."

Those familiar with Franks' inimitable fashion aesthetic will be surprised that her living space features a relatively pared-back colour palette. Here, pops of print are offset against monochromatic walls in white and charcoal. Neutral curtains and floor coverings and pale furniture pieces complete the property's classic foundations. This "blank canvas appeal" was one of the drawcards for the designer, allowing her treasures to take centre stage. Case in point: the art-filled living room at the front of the house. "This is my favourite room—it's taken a lot of patience, travel and adjusting to get her just right," Franks explains, referencing the dramatic collection of curios that dominate the space. "Everything on the wall is something personal

FROM TOP: Bespoke Camilla wallpaper elevates the sitting room; "Where Is My Mind", a painting by JP Jones, hangs above the affectionately named Bondi, a pig-shaped sidetable by Mooi, in the home's entrance



"It is important to us that we are surrounded by things that serve as constant inspiration," says Franks of her favourite room, the gallery-like living area



Neutral furnishings and woodwork in the light-filled sitting room allow the designer's standout prints to shine. Water Tiger drum used as side table; watertiger.com.au



FROM LEFT: Franks in the entrance hallway with Luna Gypsy and fiancé JP, "my little tribe"; forever embracing change, the designer swaps her printed bed linen in the master bedroom weekly, while cushions are switched each season.

Hair: Michael Brennan Make-up: Noni Smith



to me. There are pictures from travels, artefacts and jewellery from almost every pocket of the world...that jump out against the charcoal backdrop." It provides a moody counterpoint to the vibrant sitting room across the hallway with its leafy outlook. It's here that the early riser watches the sun come up in the morning and spreads out on the circular coffee table when she is working from home. The space vibrates with a joyous energy drawn from the floor-to-ceiling jungle print wallpaper, hand-painted by her brand's in-house artist at the head office studio. Franks enjoyed the process of its creation so much she intends to build it in to her product portfolio very soon. "Wallpaper is my new passion, so stay tuned!" she grins.

Those signature Camilla prints are also on show in the master bedroom, splashed across bed linen (Franks has recently launched a line with Linen House inspired by travels through France) and occasional furniture. "I feel safe in here—it's our little sanctuary," she says of the light-filled upstairs nook that offers a vista of the Woollahra treetops. "The three of us often snuggle up and watch movies to fall asleep to." The designer purposefully housed her wardrobe in another room to maximise space and serenity here. "I wanted it stripped back so the energy felt peaceful and calm, promoting rest and relaxation."

Asked what makes a house a home for her, Franks muses, "It's about injecting my sense of self and my complete way of being. There's a place for art, food, textiles, travel, wellness and play to be celebrated within these walls." Certainly, the bohemian sanctuary she's created is overflowing with hand-selected items that spark joy, rather than simply reflecting a trending interior design aesthetic. On relocating here, in fact, the designer had no particular style in mind, preferring to layer in pieces with meaning over the course of time. She describes the process as "a much-needed lesson in restraint", a practice of deliberate and conscious curation. As such, a visit here feels intensely personal, every corner reflecting the little family that inhabits this space. And Franks wouldn't have it any other way. "In the short time we've been in this house, we've already made a library of memories," she smiles. "[But] I have a feeling that the best is yet to come." ■

# The Details

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compiled by AMBER MACKAY

The living room's original marble fireplace displays traditional pieces and treasures sourced on Franks' overseas travels



## TREASURE-TROVE

The true beauty of embracing personal style is revealed upon entering Camilla Franks' home. "There's no one place that I regularly turn to for pieces; rather, I collect whatever I am drawn to," she says. The confidence to not follow trends or prescribed interior styles results in a home filled with whimsy, colour and true personality.



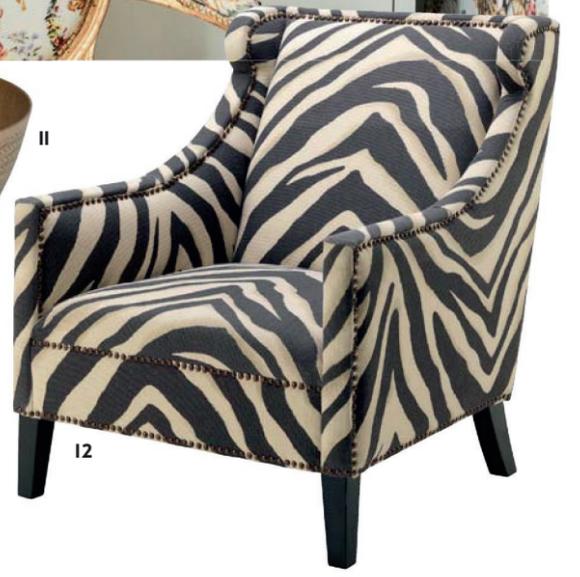
"Invest in pieces that will act as a canvas and will stand the test of time—and then slowly layer in more"  
—CAMILLA FRANKS



"My home acts as a gallery space: there is always room to shift things around...to allow them to shine"  
—CAMILLA FRANKS



The master bedroom is an exquisite mashup of styles, prints and patterns



1 Camilla silk and crystal cushion, \$199; camilla.com 2 Plaster bust, \$150; fentonandfenton.com.au 3 Cire Trudon candles, \$140 (Cire) and \$135 (Salta); at libertineparfumerie.com.au 4 Ceramic jar, \$199; domayne.com.au 5 Velvet couch, \$3,800; globewest.com.au 6 Rattan pendant light, \$1,370; spenceandlyda.com.au 7 Marble bookends, \$95; cocorepublic.com.au 8 Armadillo wool rug (1.7m x 2.4m), \$1,560; armadillo-co.com 9 "Wait Right Here" painting by JP Jones, POA; jpjonesart.com 10 Max Sparrow timber and terrazzo dining table, \$2,475; maxsparrow.com.au 11 Antique brass aluminium bowl, \$90; globewest.com.au 12 James Said zebra-print and wooden chair, \$1,890; jamessaid.com.au