

HOME & DECOR

THE BATHROOM EDITION

**ZERO TO
HERO:**
HOW THIS
SELF-TRAINED
DESIGNER
BECAME ONE
OF SG'S TOP IDS

PROPERTY

Are the
new HDB
entitlements
for singles
good enough?

YOUR PERSONAL RETREAT

WHY THESE 10 BATHROOM
TRENDS ARE IN DEMAND

WATER HEATERS: HOW TO CHOOSE
AND HOW MUCH THEY COST

HOW TO ADD SENSUALITY TO YOUR
SPACE WITH THE RIGHT FIXTURES

OCT 2023



S\$6.00

The living, dining and dry kitchen is one big open space that can accommodate large gatherings with various seating configurations.

ROOMS FOR GROWTH

Smart lighting, minimalist material palette and clever spatial tweaks come together to create a cosy home with thoughtful considerations for the future. ASIH JENIE takes a tour.



WHO LIVES HERE

A family of four and their pet turtles
HOME A five-room HDB apartment in Buangkok
SIZE 1,184 sq ft
ID SqM² Interior Design
www.instagram.com/sqm2interiordesign

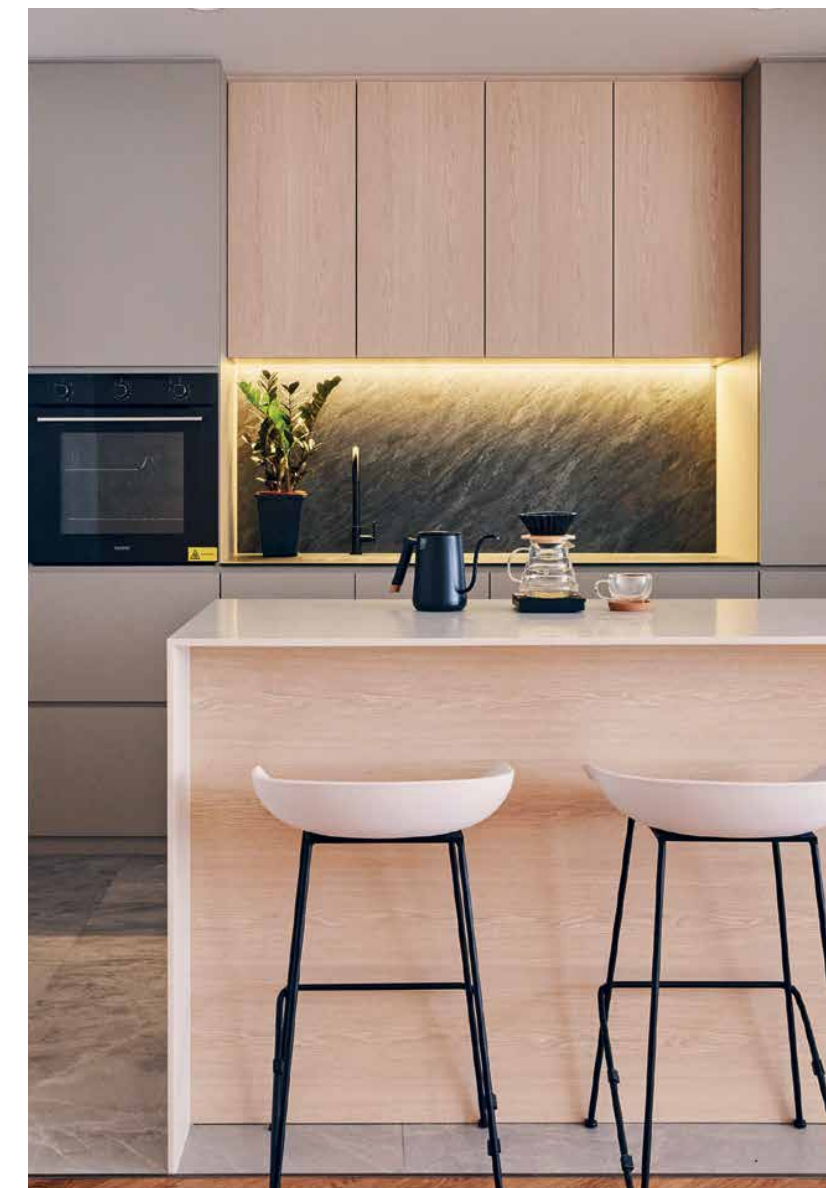
Husband and wife Don and Sherry Wong had been living in their five-room HDB flat in Buangkok for 15 years when they contemplated an upgrade. Their children, 12-year-old daughter Kyliia and 11-year-old son Cyrus, would soon need their own spaces. “But after some viewings, we decided that it made more sense to renovate our old flat, after all,” Don shares. “The size is just nice, and we only had to tweak the layout a little bit.”

It helps that Don is an interior designer with his own recently established practice,

SqM² Interior Design. “I know well what to prioritise in a renovation,” he says. His approach was to maximise every square footage of the flat for built-in carpentry and storage spaces, tailoring the design to the family’s needs and ensuring it is easy to maintain and looks timeless, seamless, and streamlined. And he succeeded.

Entering the home, one is welcome into its communal zone, comprising the living room, dining room and dry kitchen area. The first two areas are demarcated from the last one by a different floor treatment. Finished with vinyl with herringbone wood parquet print, the seamless living and dining area features loose furniture pieces, including a sofa, a circular dining table that fits four dining chairs — all from Harvey Norman, island barstools from Taobao, and custom settee and floating wall shelves. “We host gatherings a lot, so the idea is to make these areas as flexible as possible so our guests and their kids can have a variety of seats,” says Don of the open space.

The dry kitchen rounds off the communal zone with its coffee counter and custom kitchen island finished with a 12mm-



ABOVE LEFT Door to the private zone of the home features slatted nook that artfully conceals the aircon unit.

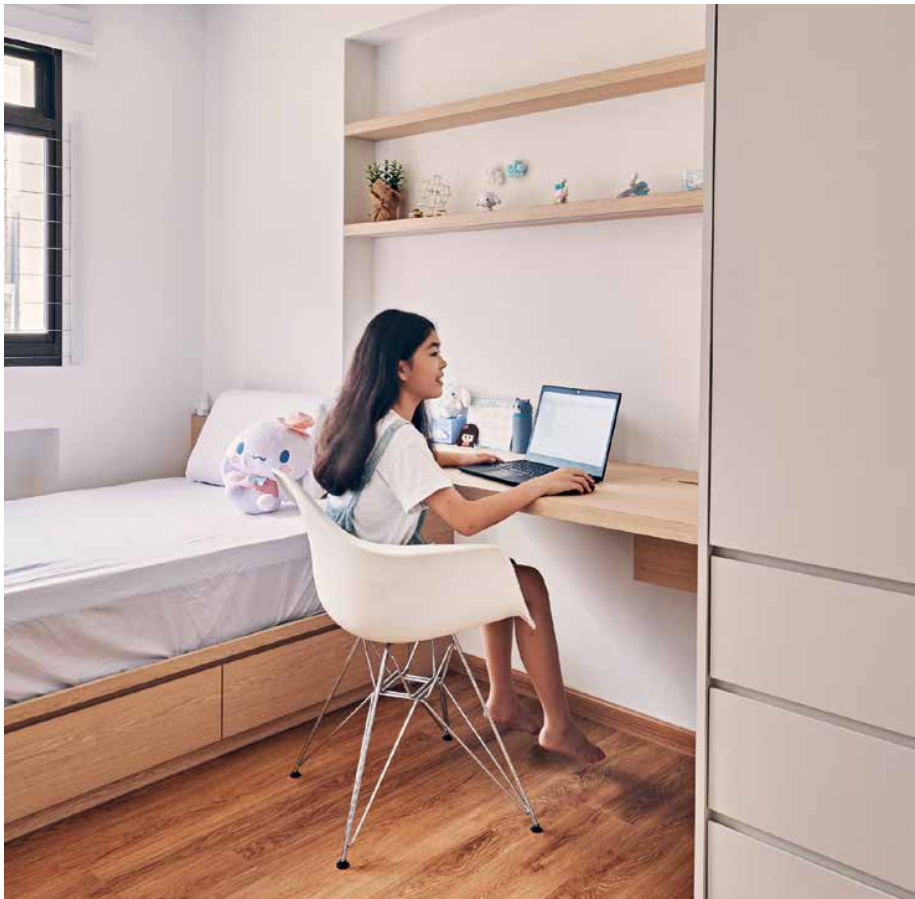
ABOVE The kitchen island functions as breakfast counter, hangout coffee spot, working space and learning space, depending on

who and when the family use the space.

OPPOSITE Interior-designer owner Don Wong with his wife Serene, daughter Kyliia and son Cyrus.

**“I ACTUALLY DESIGNED THESE ROOMS
AS COSY HANGOUTS FOR KIDS BECAUSE
RATHER THAN LET THEM SLEEPOVER
ELSEWHERE, I PREFER THAT THEY HOST
THEIR FRIENDS HERE.”**

- DON WONG, HOMEOWNER



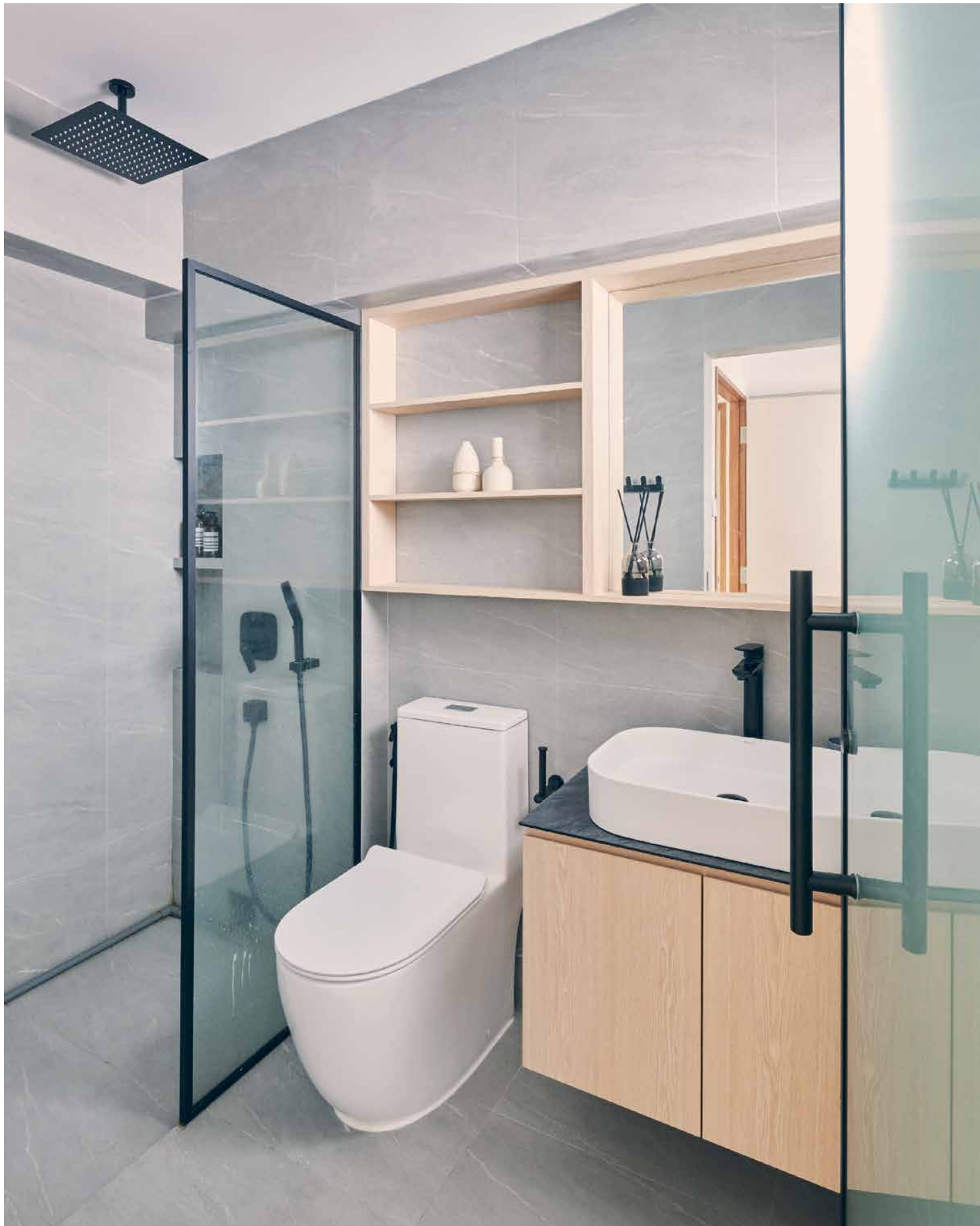
TOP
Cyrus' room has bed platform that doubles as storage for his robot figurine collection.

LEFT
Kylia's room has similar storage platform and open shelves above her study for her knick-knacks collection.

OPPOSITE
The L-shaped wet kitchen features maximum storage unit with pullout mechanism so everything is within reach.

thick Iquartz surface in Misty Carrara colour from its Designer Collection. Its custom carpentry is finished with beige laminates from Panaplast, while the countertop and backsplash feature contrasting black composite material courtesy of Kompacplus. “We mostly just use this area to make coffee and serve snacks,” shares Don, explaining the counter’s compact, single sink with a custom lid. The counter transforms into a long surface when covered, making the area great as secondary working and learning space. On the wall next to the island is original calligraphy by Lim Tze Peng, Singapore’s oldest living pioneer artist, spelling 福杯满溢 (cup overflows with blessings), imbuing the space with artistic warmth.

The flat’s original wet kitchen stretched perpendicularly to the back



TOP
Don at his favourite reading spot, the custom settee that doubles as storage.

RIGHT
The material palette are kept consistent throughout the house, comprising pale woods and monochromatic shades.

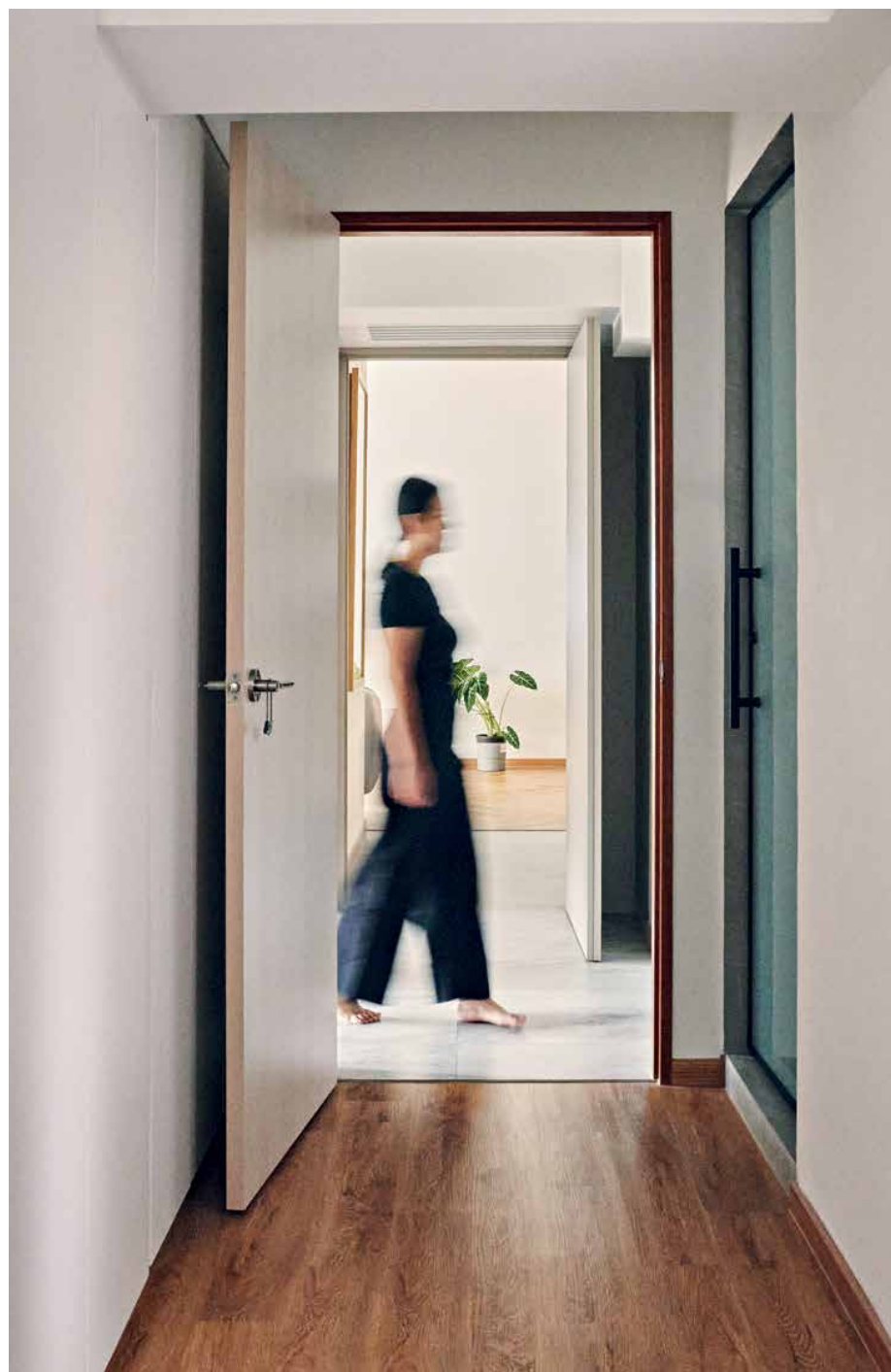
OPPOSITE
The bathroom's shallow open cabinet helps to keep track of the displayed items.



of the floor plan. Don turned a portion of this into a yard area and moved the door to the common bathroom to create a more efficient spatial flow. Both kitchens feature 80x80cm marble-look tiles from Lian Seng Heng and neutral-finished carpentry, all fitted with pull-out mechanisms so the family can easily reach the contents.

Don made subtle yet effective tweaks to the home's private zone, which comprises the master suite and two children's bedrooms, by shifting the walls between rooms and the common corridor to make space for storage carpentry. Both Kyla and Cyrus' rooms feature a platform bed frame with drawers and compartments and a custom study and wardrobe with more storage compartments in various sizes to house their current and future belongings. "We want the rooms to grow with them into teenage- and adulthood," says Don. "I actually designed these rooms as cosy hangouts for kids because rather than let them sleepover elsewhere, I prefer that they host their friends here," he admits.

The master suite has an L-shaped configuration; one side houses the wardrobe and the door to the bathroom, and the other the bed platform ➤



and the study. It is snug, highly functional and totally by design. “Sherry and I spend most of our time outside, so it’s really for sleeping or working,” he says.

Another notable feature of the house is the lighting, which was one of Don’s priorities to splurge on. Throughout the home, the lighting fixtures are understated and minimalist – hidden in recesses or installed in tracks, yet together they immensely enhance the spatial experience. Don also invested in smart, portable light switches from Vlux, which the family can carry and use to adjust the dimmable lighting from different spots like remote controls, both in the communal areas and bedrooms.

Completed in three months, the renovation costs around \$90,000. The family moved in just before Christmas last year. “The renovation wasn’t 100 per cent done by then. The biggest challenge I had as an interior designer renovating his own home was to split the contractor team’s manpower between this project and my clients’ projects. But we managed to do it!” This constraint turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as it gave him time to really curate and consider the furniture and fit-outs he curated for the interior, so they catered to the family’s daily needs while leaving ample room for future growth. ■

The master bedroom features a study nook behind the wardrobe, which are mostly used by Serene for her WFH arrangement.

OPPOSITE
The house has a clear private and communal divide, making it easy to set the day-to-day rhythm.

