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Lighten up

Get inspired by the work of the creative sisters behind Amber Road design. Opt for clean lines, warm textures and comfy seating to create a fresh and inviting summer sanctuary.

Whether it's a boutique hotel in Miami, a laid-back burger joint or a mid-century beach house, no project is too big, small or left-field for Sydney-based design collective Amber Road. The interior and landscape architecture company was founded by siblings Katy Svalbe and Yasmine Ghoniem, who take a collaborative approach to working with their clients and a contemporary approach to their design practice.

A deep love of travel and adventure informs their aesthetic, which might see eccentric elements come together – like curios collected from around the world paired with bold-flecked terrazzo tiles. But they always keep it fresh and clean, with neutral palettes and beautiful open spaces acting as blank backdrops.

“Casual, cool and non-pretentious” is how Yasmine describes Amber Road’s summer aesthetic. You see it in their work on this light, bright coastal residence in southern Sydney suburb Cronulla. They’ve been working with the family over the years and most recently were engaged to inject some life into the pool house and convert the garage into a self-contained bedsit for a lucky teenager.

Mere metres from the ocean and flooded with natural light, the space sums up their ethos of letting the outside in, which is essential when the weather warms up. One way they suggest blurring these boundaries is stocking up on indoor plants, using outdoor furniture inside the home and thinking of your garden or deck as an extension of your lounge or dining room – as spaces for socialising in summer.

Yasmine tends towards timeless rather than on-trend as a general rule of thumb for interior decorating. “Try to avoid changing things up too often,” she says. Put the paint pot down and instead use accessories and textiles to transform your home throughout the seasons. “Rugs and throws can dramatically change how one might perceive a space. Hang up the textural Turkish rug and go for something more woven in texture, like a Moroccan Tuareg mat or a natural fibre that can breathe in the warmer months – and bury the mountains of sand your kids might bring in from the beach.”

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Choosing a neutral palette in the home can help create a look that's clean and spacious, according to Amber Road designers Yasmine and Katy. Simple changes like new accessories and textiles can transform a room: “Rugs and throws can dramatically change how one might perceive a space,” says Yasmine. Their recent work on this light and airy Cronulla residence perfectly illustrates their ethos of letting the outside in.





Choose earth tones and pale wood finishes when it comes to furniture, and go textural with your soft furnishings and rugs.

1. Ecology plate, \$14.95. 2. Kip & Co throw, \$269. 3. Salt & Pepper bowl, \$14.95. 4. One Duck Two cushion, \$49.95. 5. David Jones placemat, \$12.95. 6. Bang & Olufsen Beoplay A9 Wireless Speaker, \$3499. 7. Country Road wooden box, \$39.95. 8. Tivoli Audio digital radio, \$449. 9. Molmic armchair, \$2795. 10. Native Union marble iPhone dock, \$179.95. 11. Tony Parker TV unit, \$4495. 12. Smeg fridge, \$2299. 13. Wedgwood vase, \$99. 14. Country Road throw, \$99.95. 15. Moran sofa, \$5295.