

# A Design Life

Stephanie Astri is the founder of Arlen Interiors and is passionate about creating warm and inviting residential and commercial interiors. With a niche in coastal styling, she loves to create a holiday oasis that everyone can come home to. We catch up with Stephanie and find out about her latest project.

## Q&A

Can you tell us about yourself and your design business?

I'm Steph, the mummy of my 3 year old twin girls (Baylah and Mikahli) and founder of Arlen Interiors. I've always loved decorating from a really young age. When I was younger, my Mum and I would constantly be re-shuffling or re-decorating things in our home as we loved everything to feel 'fresh' again! Now I'm doing the same in my own home, much to my husband's dismay! She taught pottery to the children of the convent school. On our visits I remember a large wooden table 20 meters long, exploding with florals, colours, tools and clay. I was endlessly fascinated with it all and touched everything, exploring the clay with my little hands.

How did you start your career?

It all started when we moved into our current home. While I was on maternity leave with my 9 month old twin girls, my girlfriends gave me a little bit of the push I needed. I started posting spaces in our home on Instagram, this led to friends and family hiring me, which then led to breaking out into the commercial world one year later. Now we've styled over 16 homes and 2 beauty salons in two years.



How would you describe your creative aesthetic?

I am all about warm interiors, soft colours and a whole lot of texture! I love the cosy, 'lived in' feeling. My style has stayed consistent for many, many moons now. I enjoy using neutrals, browns, terracotta pinks and showing some fun through feature artworks. I lean towards Coastal styling as there are so many variations of coastal. I love creating coastal homes as clients get to walk into their own little holiday sanctuary every day.

You are known for bringing warmth into the spaces you create, what are some tips you can share to create cosy and warm interiors?

My top 5 tips to create cosy and warm interiors include:

1. Add a textured rug.
2. Include some plants (make sure you know how much sun the space gets before you choose, there's nothing cute about a dying plant).
3. Sheers have a huge impact.
4. Don't be afraid of colour or to add your personality! There's nothing fun about a cookie cutter home.
5. Add a candle. There's nothing like a sea salt scent to really incorporate that cosy feeling.

Tell us about your latest project and what you were hoping to achieve?

The brief was pretty simple, cohesively complete my client's new build with some Boho Coastal elements. I was engaged as the build was nearing complete, which meant all finishes had already been chosen and installed. As the finishes were quite 'cool', I wanted to add in a whole lot of warmth and texture through the furniture and soft furnishing selections to balance it all out.



Stephanie and her daughters, Baylah and Mikahli



Were there any challenges you had to overcome to create the look for your client?

Delays, delays, delays! Need I say more! I couldn't be more grateful when I get to work with clients that trust the process as well as appreciate and understand shipping delays are out of my control.

Where did you draw your inspiration from?

The artwork was a big motivation, as I wanted to create an inviting, holiday oasis for my clients. Travel is usually a huge inspiration for me, but being tied down with lockdowns and twin toddlers, I've resorted to travelling the world for inspiration on Pinterest.

What are your favourite elements in this space?

One of my favourite elements in this home is the open plan living and dining space, especially as the sheers have completely transformed this entertaining level. Some of my other favourite elements is the feature artwork in the master bedroom. It's a beautiful canvas print from a local artist in Wollongong. This really added a wow factor into the bedroom.

What is next on the horizon for you?

I'm currently focusing on all things business! There's a bit happening behind the scenes. We also have a commercial space we are in the process of designing, except it's still hush hush for now. But first, we are about to jet off on our first family overseas holiday to Bali, so wish us luck!

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