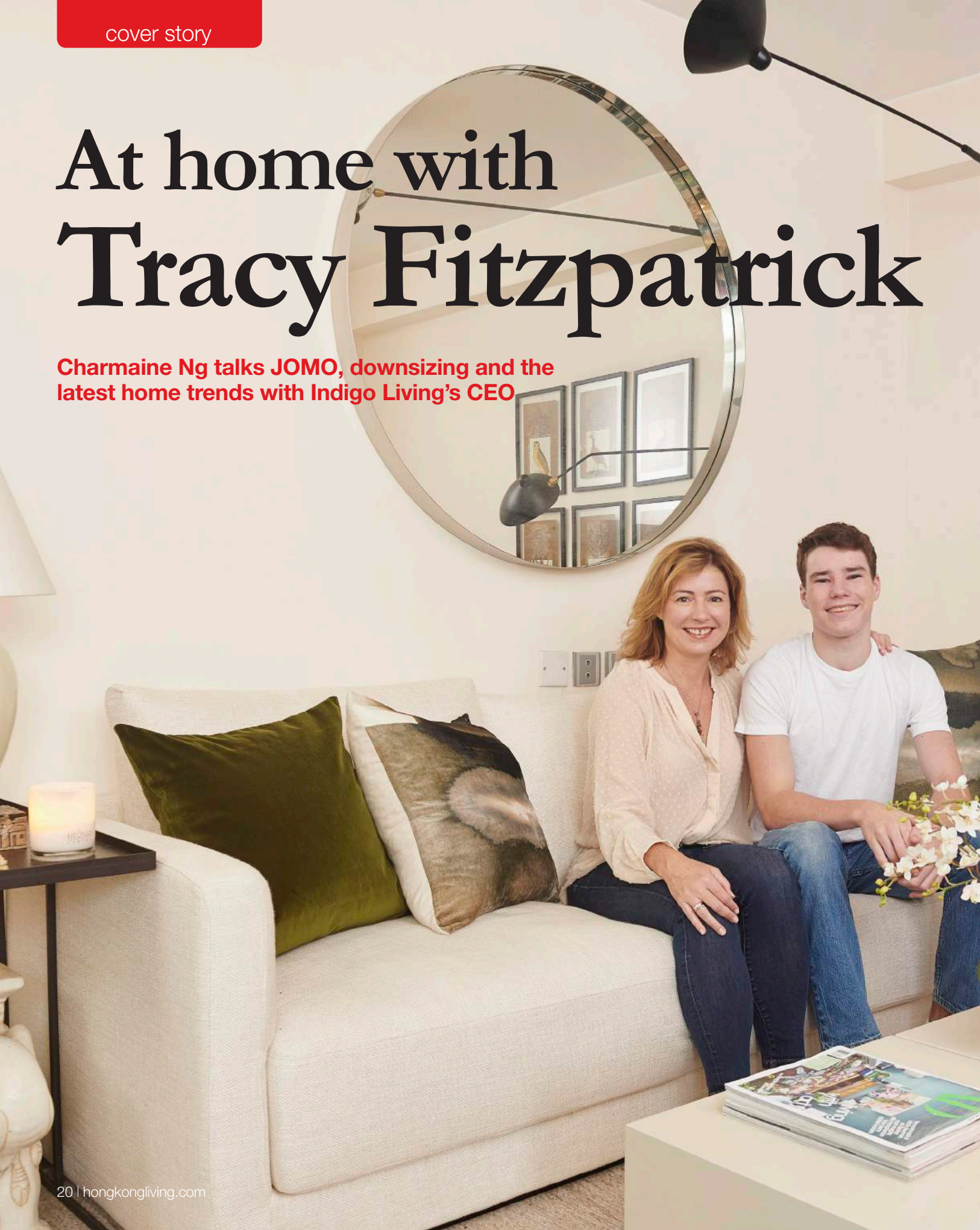


At home with Tracy Fitzpatrick

Charmaine Ng talks JOMO, downsizing and the latest home trends with Indigo Living's CEO



What brought you to Hong Kong and what led you to the role of CEO at Indigo Living?

I originally transferred to Hong Kong with a shipping company in 1996. I was tasked with setting up a Global Account management programme for the Asia Pacific region, which gave me a great opportunity to travel the whole region and deal with many types of corporate accounts. Eventually, I left the business and started consulting.

My friend, John McLennan (now my business partner at Indigo) was about to embark on new opportunities in the Middle East so I joined him on this venture. Soon we realised we complemented each other in our work styles and started to build the business together. That was 14 years ago.

How's life in Shek O? What inspired your move here?

The children are finally flying the coop, so downsizing seemed appropriate. Having lived in Shek O briefly before, we knew the slower-paced, chilled, beachside atmosphere was perfect for our new chapter in life.

Life in Shek O is blissful. It's a place to relax and wind down away from the hustle and bustle of the city. When we step outside we can immediately engage with the shopkeepers and villagers and there is always something going on.

You moved from a beautiful home in Pok Fu Lam. How does your home in Shek O compare?

Our Shek O home is smaller which offered us an opportunity to reorganise, figure out what we really needed, declutter and do a home refresh.

We have a rooftop and balcony with views of both the sea and Dragon's back. We wake up to birds chirping and the sounds of the sea – it's pure bliss.

How does a beachside lifestyle compare to city life? What's an average weekend like?

We feel closer to nature here and take every opportunity to get up into the hills with our dog Rosie. Then we follow up with a refreshing swim right on our doorstep. We also love having friends over since we can entertain on our rooftop, hang out on the beach or grab a coffee or drink at the Back Beach Bar.

What did you have in mind when designing your home? Where did you take inspiration from?

I had the pleasure of working with Alexandra, our Indigo Living interior decorator, while designing my home. The brief to her was to create something completely different from my previous home, something simple and clean yet elegant and sophisticated.

Given Shek O is a beachside village, inspiration was drawn from the beach using a natural colour palette of creams and beiges with hints of blues and greens coming through in the accessories.

How has your style evolved through the years?

I have always been a combination of town and country. The city is there, dynamic, accessible and fun but with this move I find myself relaxing into country, coastal, beachside living and my style reflects that. It is also important for me to create memories from my travels around the



Tracy at home with her son



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Bright kitchen space

world which is very much reflected in the artwork we have.

What do you look for when selecting a piece of furniture or artwork for your own home?

For furniture, I love the combination of contemporary and rustic. A piece needs to be comfortable yet practical to cater for family living – especially when you live with boisterous boys and a dog!

With artwork, I am looking for something that is real, not too off-piste and most importantly makes me feel happy. The artwork always evokes memories either of the time or place it was purchased.

During these tough times, how can Hong Kongers make their home into a sanctuary?

With extra time at home, now's the time to redecorate and make it as comfortable and as inviting as possible. You want to create a space

to enjoy spending time in, whether it be on your own or with family and friends. It's also a good time to declutter, organise and find better storage solutions to help keep your place clean and items easy to find. I also think it's nice to have a pick-me-up during difficult times by transforming everyday occasions into special ones, be it with a new floral arrangement, scent, beautiful dinner set or fresh cushions to brighten up your day.

As we're celebrating International Women's Day this month, can you describe any challenges you've faced as a female CEO in Hong Kong?

When I first started out, admittedly it was very much an 'all boys club' and having to push through that barrier, focus on my career, as well as balance my life back then as a single mom was challenging and tough at times. I found the best way to get through those moments was to take a step back, go for a walk, swim or do a

yoga class. Taking that break to breathe gives you the clarity you need to find a solution from a different perspective, to recharge and find the inner strength to face your next obstacle.

As a CEO, I have tried to lead and guide at the same time, to break down barriers, empowering employees, encouraging more open communication and teamwork across the different business units. At the end of the day, our people are our biggest asset in ensuring a successful business and I have strived to build a positive culture and workplace to foster company culture, communication and greater accountability.

How have you worked as a business to overcome recent events in Hong Kong including protests and the virus?

Our Indigo family has really pulled together to support each other, we are working as much as possible to be able to deliver to the company's high standards. Everyone has been very understanding and flexible in their decision making, which helps boost morale and overall positivity.

We are trying to maintain a 'business as usual' approach with our customers in store and also offer an online and over the phone service. Needless to say, we are also undertaking every preventative measure to ensure the safety and health of both our staff and customers from regularly sanitising our stores to our staff and delivery teams wearing masks and taking temperature checks.

What's big in the interior design world for 2020? What are you excited about instore?

It's all about JOMO – the Joy of Missing out, a phrase replacing FOMO (fear of missing out). JOMO is all about wellness in the home, and if staying in is the new going out then why not make your home the best place it can be? As a result, we are seeing a lot of comfortable yet stylish furnishings, design looks that bring the outdoors in with botanical motifs and animalia accessories,



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as well as an art deco revival with bright, colourful, fun accents and terrazzo materials.

Another continuing trend we love is small apartment living. As apartments get smaller, people are opting for sustainable, minimalist home furnishings where every object has multiple functionalities.

Sustainability is becoming a key trend in many businesses now. What steps are you taking to become more sustainable?

We have put more focus on sourcing products from sustainable suppliers and supporting local designers and businesses. Sustainability for me is also about buying good quality items that can pass the test of time in terms of style and durability.

What advice do you have for people living in a small place, how can they make the most out of it?

My first point of advice would be to make sure your furniture fits your space appropriately. In small apartment living, less is more. Use a lighter colour palette to make the space feel

larger and invest in multifunctional furniture to really maximise the use of space and purpose. You can then add colour with accents such as cushions, accessories and artwork.

What advice do you have for people looking to refresh their space?

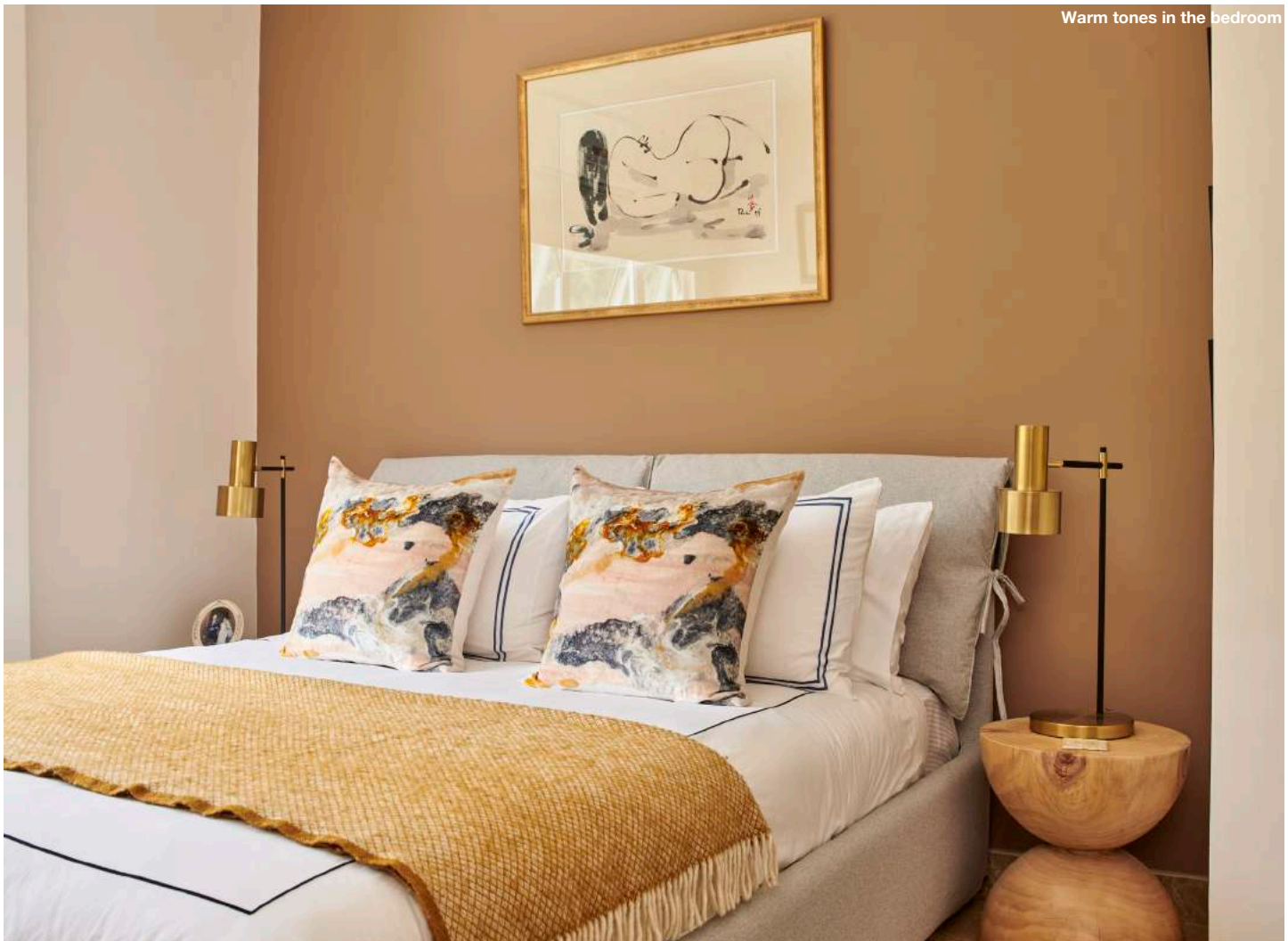
Try and let go and be prepared to be open-minded. I like using Pinterest to collect up ideas or look through magazines to get inspiration. I recommend people take the free Indigo Style Quiz, which helps identify your style. I would also recommend getting a free design consultancy with one of our designers – they help gather your thoughts on your style, colour palette and teach you how to select key pieces and how to best utilise the space you have.

How is a perfect weekend spent for you and your family?

A perfect weekend is staying in Shek O and not having to drive into the city at all. JOMO! We start the day going for a hike or run in the mountains and often end with a trip to the beach. I find cooking very therapeutic so you will find me in our open plan kitchen engrossed



in a cookbook and making a great mess. I enjoy making meals for family and friends over the weekend and love to have people over for a BBQ – the more the merrier! **S**



Warm tones in the bedroom