



# KEEP CALM AND DECLUTTER

Things bring joy – but there is a limit. Find the sweet spot and bring balance into your life.

BY *Karen McCartney* | PHOTOGRAPH BY *Anson Smart*

**W**HY IS decluttering easy for other people and not yourself? I recently came over all school marm-ish and stood over my poor sister making her choose which handbags went to charity and which could stay in the back of the cupboard. We had laid them all out on the floor to compare and contrast her collection, which had been gathered over time. My sister had a serious op-shop habit.

I asked: "Would you ever choose this one over that one?"

"No," my sister said weakly, and then we moved on to bath towels.

It's actually a good process to place all items of the same genre together and cull. The principle works across the spectrum for bowls, books, saucepans, cushions and bedsheets.

The aim, in the words of now-famous tidy expert Marie Kondo, author of the best seller, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*, is to "choose those things that spark joy".

Embedded in this notion is that the well-designed bottle opener or coathanger is valued as much as a display of 1950s ceramics.

Clearly, my problem is that joy is sparked too frequently and too easily and so the process of culling can be difficult. Things resonate, remind you of people and places, and so the pursuit of the visually perfect home is often

**STYLING TIP:**  
"Symmetry is an easy trick which can be predictable: counterbalance it with an element of surprise such as the bolt of energy from the flowers."

Justine Hugh-Jones

marred by the personal and characterful.

Sydney interior designer Justine Hugh-Jones is renowned for homes that evoke calm while keeping an eye on style. "There is a careful balance to be achieved by not going too far and stripping the room of all of its character and

becoming too tidy, sparse and verging on minimalism," she says.

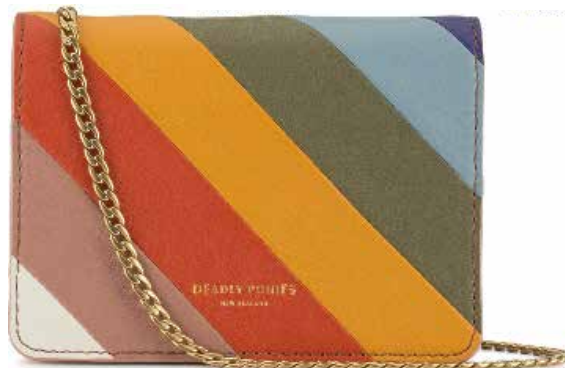
Hugh-Jones starts every project with a floor plan - a perfect layout that ensures a room isn't overcrowded or over-furnished and there is space to move around. Do this yourself by taking everything out of a room and placing things back slowly and deliberately until you hit that sweet spot of objects relative to space.

"A sense of calm is achieved through proportion, editing the furniture, using the space well and incorporating natural elements, rather than resorting to an all-white scheme," says Hugh-Jones.

Her colour palette tends to reflect the more mellow tones and muted shades. She also harnesses a certain energy generated by using antiques and vintage pieces. "These older pieces are almost like comforting calling cards to the past," she says.

She has some tough advice. "Be tidy and disciplined in the appearance of your home as you would yourself. Isn't your home a reflection of the person who you are? If one new thing comes into your home then consider what it can replace and aim to remove what is no longer needed." The designer school marm is never far from the surface.

STYLING BY ALEXANDRA GORDON. PAINTINGS BY SOUTH AFRICAN ARTIST KRISJAN ROSSOUW



## OBJECT OF DESIRE

**DRAFT TEXT ONLY:** Boutique New Zealand label Deadly Ponies is loved by fans for its luxe materials and quality workmanship. This Spring they have launched their largest collaboration to date: 'Deadly Ponies for My Little Pony', with global toy giant Hasbro. The range plays tribute to My Little Pony with rainbow motifs and *Pony Puff* bag accessories in the shape of characters and icons from the series. The clutch bag (pictured) *Mr. Boxette Pony* has taken the colours of the cartoon's *Equestria* rainbow, and tweaked them to the tertiary colours that Deadly Ponies is known for. Liam Bowden says of the partnership "It's a charming reminder of simpler times and values, celebrating diversity, creativity and most

## SHOP

# Brewed to a T

## Time for a full-flavoured cuppa.

STYLING BY *Anna-Lisa Backlund*



*Salt & Pepper Canteen Tea Pot With Infuser, \$60*  
DAVIDJONES.COM.AU



*Torus Tea Infuser Set by Ommo, \$68*  
THESTORE.COM.AU



*Abel Design Deep Diver Tea Infuser, \$20*  
PRINKBOX.COM.AU



*Water Kettle Large, \$85*  
T2TEA.COM