

we are family

Poncho, 2, lives with Victoria Aguirre and her partner Carl Wilson.
Pampa.com.au | @our_poncho



REAL pets

beach boy

Victoria Aguirre, co-founder of homewares brand Pampa, lets us in on life with her fun-loving chocolate Labrador, Poncho

Top dog The Pampa showroom in Byron Bay is stocked with handwoven textiles from South America. Poncho likes to keep his owners company in the office above the showroom. "He's totally our boss," Victoria says.



Poncho is a bright-eyed Labrador and a very special member of the Pampa team. He loves hanging out on the beaches of Byron Bay and making friends with locals.

How did you find Poncho?

We wanted a chocolate Labrador and hoped to adopt. We couldn't find one, so we bought Poncho from a really nice family and he was the most adorable, fluffy little ball with the sweetest personality. I was first drawn to his eyes.

What's a day in Poncho's life like?

A morning run or a game of Frisbee at the beach before work. He chills in the Pampa showroom all day, with a walk and toilet time at lunch. After dinner he likes to sit on our laps and watch a movie – especially if there are animals in it. That's probably our favourite way to spend time with him.

Is Poncho outgoing or shy?

We call him Mr Social – that says it all. His favourite thing to do is play with other dogs at the beach or park. Once he's met you, he'll run up to you and want to play every single time, but if someone new comes to our front door, he puts on his guard-dog bark first.

What sort of bond do you share? Poncho is my best friend and we're both very needy. Carl and I actually argue over which one of us is his best friend!

How does Poncho improve your wellbeing? He's made my house feel like a home. He makes us leave work on time, and taking him for a walk or swim every day no matter what forces us to just switch off, which Carl and I need.

What is Poncho's role at Pampa? He comes to work with us every day and he is part of the Pampa team. As a joke we have named him Chief of Security. 🐾

Pooch perks Poncho's favourite spot to hang out in the studio is on a big latte-coloured Monte rug from Pampa (above). "He's in love with it," Victoria says, laughing.

Chocolate coated "We named him Poncho because I am from Argentina and we wear ponchos in winter," she says. "When I saw him, he reminded me of a cuddly brown poncho!"



a dog's life



Top collar Leather dog collar in Vanilla, \$69.95 for large, Sebastian Says.



Fresh scent Pampa x Posie "Paz" candle, \$29 for 150g, Pampa.



Stylish spot Sasha bed cover in Brown, \$175 for small, Molly Barker.



who lives here?

Alex Bennett, an interior stylist and creative consultant, her husband and their sons Parker, 4, and Scout, almost 2.
@alex_bennett_design



SUMMER
LOVE

Family is everything in this renovated coastal home, and with lots of space to share, friends are never far away



Splendour in the grass "Everything was done by us," says homeowner Alex of her Suffolk Park home's backyard (opposite). She and her husband planted natives and put in a pool. Dulux half-strength paint in Fair Bianca was used on the facade. **Keep your cool** Linen curtains, 3m-high ceilings, cane armchairs from Worn and MCM House cushions create a relaxed, coastal vibe in the living area. →

ALEX BENNETT'S HOME is a breath of fresh air. Sure, it's got that dreamy, sun-bleached style that makes you want to start meditating again and buy a home by the beach. But it's more than that. The sofa in the living room, for example, doubles as a fortress and trampoline. And no one's safe from getting splashed when the kids take over the pool. "Each space strongly reflects our family's style and the way we live," Alex explains. That's not a coincidence, given she and her husband decided to renovate a year after buying their home in Byron Bay. What was once an '80s brick bungalow is now a modern abode, awash with lots of natural light and laughter.

LABOUR OF LOVE When Alex bought the property in 2016, she was drawn to the coastal location and existing architecture. "We loved the brick house, it felt so solid and homely from the first time we walked through," she says. The house was dated but had plenty of potential, so they enlisted architect Simon Addinall from Those Architects to update their home with bright, open-plan spaces. "We wanted something practical, with a big kitchen and living area. And we got all that plus more!" The reno involved adding a two-storey extension, with skylights and glass that embrace the outdoors. "The house is so light. I'd hoped it would be, but hadn't expected it to be flooded with natural light which is just beautiful," she says.

SET THE TONE Now, Alex's home is a reflection of her style. "It doesn't feel tied to any time or particular style" she says. "It helps me feel clearer and calmer." Alex wanted the interior to be soft yet sturdy, which was achieved by mixing all sorts of textures in warm, neutral tones. Natural stone and oak floors add depth to the walls, which were painted in Dulux half-strength Natural White with Vivid White trims. And despite all that open space, Alex says there are lots of comfy nooks to curl up in. Artworks by Australian creatives add warmth, too. "I like to shop for handmade items from humble, small businesses and explore the works of local artists," she adds.

COME ON OVER At least once a week, the house comes to life with the sound of glasses clinking and the sizzle of food grilling on the barbecue. "We love having friends over for early dinners. The kids play together, we share food and drinks and have a laugh. It's such a special part of living in our home – sharing our space with the people we love," Alex tells. The home was made for entertaining. A cohesive colour palette ties the indoor and outdoor spaces and the barbecue and pool area is the perfect place to spend summer. "We feel very fortunate to live where we do," Alex smiles. And with friends just around the corner, who would want to leave? 🍷

style tip A bookcase that contrasts with the rest of your room makes a stylish and practical wall feature



text lindyl crabb | photography lynden foss | styling sarah ellison



All white During the day, sunlight ripples across the limestone tiles, which Alex describes as "a beautiful natural stone with a warm neutral tone". Wall lamps from Anchor Ceramics line the hall. **Embrace your curves** "I love an archway, so when we found this original '80s brick house with arched garages, I was instantly taken!" Alex says (pictured opposite with Scout). **Natural fit** Alex displays her books, plants and ceramics on the built-in birch plywood bookcase (opposite). "I've always been an avid ceramics collector." →



Heart centre "We do everything here – cook, eat, read and cuddle up by the fire." Alex says of the kitchen and living area. She chose silver birch plywood for the cabinets, brass tapware from Sussex Taps and a custom island and benchtops featuring Elba White marble. The dining table and pendant are by Pop & Scott and the chairs are from Something Beginning With. →



Little love The cot in Scout's room is from Kalon Studios. The linen bedding is from Deiji Studios, which "have the most beautiful colours", and the framed watercolours were a vintage find on eBay. **Nap nook** Alex's favourite piece of furniture is the linen Pop & Scott "Dreamer" sofa in her bedroom. The rug is from Pampa and the planter is also from Pop & Scott.



3 tips for first-time renovators

1

If, like Alex, you're planning a big reno, rebuilding may be a better option. Alex says renovating became more costly and stressful in the long run, because the quality of the existing structure was unknown.

2

Keep an open dialogue with your trades. "We were on site most days. I spoke to the builder and architect daily to make sure we got everything we could out of the process."

3

Figure out what you are willing to compromise on. "Try to let some of the little things slide, so it's less stressful if things don't go entirely to plan," Alex suggests. "This may be easier said than done!" →

Open air Rugs from Pampa and Magnolia Home define the living space. The linen sofa is by MCM House, the side table is from The Dharma Door and Alex loves how solid the Mark Tuckey coffee table feels. "We have lugged that rubber tree around for years," she says of her tree in the Pop & Scott planter. "It's one of the big loves of my life." The artwork is by her friend.



easy ways to create a chaos-free home

1

Install a set of hooks at the front door so you can hang school bags, car keys, handbags, hats, etc. That way, you'll know exactly where everything is.

2

Choose furniture and homewares that are made with durable fabrics, like sofas or bedheads with linen slipcovers that you can easily take off and wash.

3

Use baskets in the laundry, bedroom and bathroom to store and hide stuff like dirty washing, towels, kids' toys and extra blankets. Throw and go!

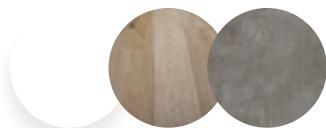
4

If you're fortunate enough to have more than one bathroom, assign one to the kids so you can contain the mess and keep yours tranquil. →

shop it! Keep it natural with lots of timber and neutral tones



1 The Peanut **hanging chair** in Natural Rattan, \$550, Fenton & Fenton. **2** *Lani* small framed **print** by Jai Vasicek, \$475, Ahoy Trader. **3** Alta oval **bar stool** in Old Elm, \$290, MCM House. **4** Mercer + Reid macrame knot **throw** in Mustard, \$71.99, Adairs. **5** Isaac **pendant light**, \$115, Castlery. **6** Monte pom pom **cushion** in Natural White, \$195, Pampa. **7** Muuto "The Dots" **hooks** in Black, \$179 for set of 5, Surrounding. **8** Egyptian alabaster **vessels**, \$189 for large and \$139 for medium, SVF Collection. **9** Kasbah wool **rug** in Ivory (1.52m x 2.44m), \$489, West Elm. **10** Parc extendable **dining table**, \$1599, Brosa. **11** Amazonian **basket**, \$229, SVF Collection. **12** Linen **floor cushions** in White, \$149 each, SVF Collection. **13** Muuto "Nerd" **chair** in Grey, \$679, Surrounding. **14** Fisher & Paykel 519L French door **fridge**, \$2099, Harvey Norman. **15** Arcadian **serving platter**, \$29.95, Zanui.



Colours and finishes

FROM LEFT Watty Interior Design contemporary matt **paint** in White, from \$64.90 for 4L. The Architect Collection smoked and limed **timber** in European Oak, \$93.50 a sq m, Royal Oak Floors. Ales text **tiles** in Dark Grey, from \$79.95 a sq m, Beaumont Tiles.