



AT HOME WITH RALPH LAUREN

AS THE FIRST FASHION DESIGNER TO PRESENT A COMPREHENSIVE HOME COLLECTION, RALPH LAUREN BROUGHT A DISTINCTIVE VISION AND COMMITMENT TO CRAFTSMANSHIP THAT HAS ENRICHED THE PLACES WE CALL HOME. BY THOMAS HYDE.

Ralph Lauren has always been an imaginative storyteller and his home collections celebrate a way of living. They may capture the allure of the American West, the glamour of Hollywood, the spirit of a safari, the simplicity of a modern beach house or the elegant poise of an English estate.

Whatever the influence, though, Lauren takes concepts that are timeless and reinterprets them for today, along the way imparting a set of values that create heirlooms.



Sonora Canyon Sling Chair

If Ralph Lauren was once perceived as a masculine designer, Ralph Lauren Home has an appeal that crosses the gender divide. The collections are diverse and women feel equally at home in these settings, according to Debbie Cavit, whose company, Cavit & Co, has been New Zealand's sole distributor of Ralph Lauren Home since 2007.

"I was in New York several years ago sitting in one of the Ralph Lauren design studios in lower Manhattan," she recalls. "It's where they test their styling and receive the final sign-off from Ralph Lauren himself prior to launching production.

"The room was dark-panelled and dressed as a New York apartment with dark mahogany bookcases, black-and-white artwork and the bed was highly polished mahogany with leather. There was a black baby grand piano. The upholstery was velvet and leather, the desk was glass and stainless steel: altogether a mix of

styles brought together so perfectly in one room, but unabashedly masculine.

"Yet, personally – and ironically, if you will – I felt very feminine sitting in that room, so much so it was hard to leave. I was left thinking that any man who lives like that will certainly know how to look after a woman!"

The latest Ralph Lauren Home collection, Corral Canyon, reflects what we've always known about the man – that is, his love of the West. He's often seen on horseback sporting a worn (but stylish) cowboy hat.

Corral Canyon, though, is not inspired by a single location; rather it speaks of a rustic yet luxurious world artfully in touch with its vast surroundings. The pieces form a natural, organic whole in a collection that works well across all age groups, each piece beautifully matched for the kind of informal living that evokes the natural beauty and tranquillity of a desert retreat.

ABOVE & OPPOSITE PAGE: The Corral Canyon collection evokes the natural beauty and peaceful ambiance of a desert retreat. A fusion of organic materials in modern architectural shapes and with a windswept palette of dusty corals, celadon and sand, the collection represents the ultimate California oasis.

The collection is typical of Ralph Lauren Home in that every piece is unique and as true to form as to function, expressing an ageless sense of sophistication and character. Lauren explains the brand's philosophy best himself:

"While our business evolves, our principles remain firm," he's been quoted as saying. "Rather than chasing the winds of 'what's hot and what's not', we remain committed to capturing the timeless, appealing elements

of the American lifestyle in our designs and global marketing. The concept of luxury is built on an enduring belief in living with style and quality.”

All Ralph Lauren Home collections reveal a deep respect for the age-old skills and materials that go into making them. Take Point Dume, for example, a coastal collection whose furnishings were inspired by

Lauren’s own home in Montauk, New York.

The airy mix of polished wooden frames and brilliant optic-white upholstery create a nice interplay with the outdoors (think: elegant Kiwi seaside bach with a touch of rustic and retro). Teak, rattan, canvas, bone china dinnerware, hand-blown glass, linen, polished nickel and silver, it’s all there.

The furniture in the Point Dume coastal collection was inspired by Lauren’s own home in Montauk, New York.





Apartment No. One, meanwhile, tells a story of old England. Its English and art deco themes were inspired by the Duke of Windsor and Kensington Palace. It's altogether sophisticated and dashing and though its Sutton Mixologist box is a 21st-century take on a gentleman's bar, the collection's combination of materials strike an ideal male-female balance.

It's the kind of creative equilibrium that resonates with Debbie Cavit and first inspired her to pursue the Ralph Lauren Home agency for her Auckland and now Arrowtown stores.

"I loved the furniture I saw in Ralph Lauren flagship stores on my trips through the USA as far back as the mid-1990s," she told us, "so I was especially excited to become their sole representative in New Zealand."

And why not? No other fashion designer in the world creates such all-encompassing collections of interior and exterior home furnishings – for men and women alike – that speak so eloquently about who we are. **W**

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