

The Chic Apartment

# Perfect home, at last

After living in a partially renovated flat for 13 years, the Joachims finally get the look they want



Civil servant Andrew Joachim with his wife Rozita Zin, daughter Nur Iman and son Mikail.

**Alyssa Woo**

Fourteen years ago, Mr Andrew Joachim was left stranded when the contractor he hired to renovate his three-bedroom HDB flat disappeared midway through the renovation, along with the \$60,000

Mr Joachim had already paid him.

The rogue contractor left the Build-To-Order flat in Punggol in shambles – the bedrooms had no doors and electrical wires hung from the ceiling and walls.

Mr Joachim, 42, a civil servant, and his 40-year-old bank officer wife, Ms Rozita Zin, had to fork out

another \$20,000 for a new contractor to finish the job.

This set the couple – who have two children, Mikail and Nur Iman, now 16 and 14 – back financially and their dream “holiday look” for their 1,150 sq ft home did not materialise.

Instead, they had to make do with poorer-quality chipboard furniture

and lived with ripped curtains. As they did not want to spend on a sofa, they sat on the floor or at the dining table.

For 13 years, the family lived like this. However, in May last year, Mr Joachim, having saved up, decided to renovate the flat again as he felt it was time his family had a

home they could be proud of.

He says: “I wanted a home that I would look forward to coming back to.”

Having been burnt once, he was more cautious this time when looking for the right company to handle the renovation. He checked out design firms online and read customer reviews of contractors.

He then met Mr Alex Liu, design director of Right Angle Studio.

“I was initially very apprehensive and kept my wallet very close to me,” he recalls. “What sealed the deal was that he was recommended by our family friend.”

After a two-month overhaul that cost about \$80,000, the Joachims’ home now looks warm and welcoming.

Mr Joachim says: “I told Mr Liu I wanted a clean, classic look that would stand the test of time.”

The flat is dressed in neutral colours and furnished with custom-built wood veneer and laminate furniture. The original slate-grey tile flooring is replaced with a vinyl material that replicates the look of wood.

Built-in cupboards – storage is important to the family – line one side of the entry way, connecting to the cabinets in the open kitchen, where a countertop was added to provide a casual nook for breakfast.

And the Joachims finally have a sofa – an L-shaped one with a storage bench. A low wooden coffee table and television wall shelf complete the look in the living room.

Mr Liu says the living area used to resemble “an incomplete jigsaw puzzle”. An Ikea bookshelf laid horizontally was used as a TV console, while a foosball table that stood where the kitchen counter is became a makeshift clothing rack.

Ambience – non-existent previously – is now possible with concealed warm lighting in strategic areas such as under the sofa bench, television wall shelving and under the kitchen counter.

A sliding wooden door separates the living and dining areas from the bedrooms, which also underwent a complete transformation.

Within the tight space in the children’s bedrooms, Mr Liu carved out distinct spaces for work and play by designing study booths. Their metal-frame bunk beds made way for a wooden platform with mattress in Mikail’s room and a cushioned bed frame in Iman’s smaller room.

In the master bedroom, Mr Liu built a platform for the mattress, with storage for the family’s bedlinen and extra clothes, and concealed lighting under it. Shelves were built into the walls on either side of the windows.

Now that the Joachims finally have their dream home, housework is no longer a chore. They gladly mop the flat three times a week.

Mr Joachim says: “We have no complaints. It’s about appreciating what we have now because of what we went through before.”

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The master bedroom (above) has a platform with concealed storage; and the entry way (left) to the living room. PHOTOS: NEO XIAOBIN, JONATHAN DANKER OF ANSEL MEDIA