

Tropical POWER

Model Jesinta Franklin opens the doors to the much-talked-about Gold Coast home she and husband Buddy bought last year

PHOTOGRAPHY KRISTINA SOLJO FASHION STYLING MONICA RUSSELL INTERVIEW BREE PLAYER

Jesinta wears Christian Dior top, pants, shoes and jewellery.



Jesinta Franklin is basking in the winter sun in the sprawling garden of her Gold Coast home. Dressed in a gorgeous full-skirted Christian Dior runway look, the model swishes from side to side as our crew exclaim that every frame would make the perfect cover shot.

And the resort-style house (known as Villa Casa) – with seven bedrooms, multiple living spaces and a sparkling swimming pool – ensured we were spoilt for choice when seeking out picturesque shots. As for Jesinta, well, the model and seasoned style icon is so at home in front of the camera, she makes it look easy.

And easy is her speed these days. The wife of recently retired AFL star Lance “Buddy” Franklin and mum-of-two tells *marie claire* she is all about simplifying her life and spending quality time at home with Tullulah, three, and Rocky, two. “We’re such homebodies,” she confesses. “It’s where we feel like we can really switch off, relax and just be together as a family. There’s lots of playing outdoors. Rocky loves going on the flying fox and the swings and they both spend lots of time in the pool, which I love because my childhood memories are of me either at the beach or by the pool.”

Public and tabloid interest follows everything the Franklins do, and buying the Gold Coast mansion in late 2022 was no exception – making headlines across various news websites. Jesinta, meanwhile, was focused on the bigger issue at hand: furnishing her family’s fabulous new abode. As a busy working mum, she knew she needed to call in an expert and – as fate would have it – she had recently met Sydney-based interiors stylist Olga Lewis on a modelling job. So Jesinta reached out to Lewis and the pair have been working together for the past six months to create the Franklins’ dream home.

“When it comes to making choices about what pieces to ... buy for the house, I always defer to Olga,” says Jesinta. “She has such a talented eye for interiors and her taste is so incredibly beautiful. She’s really into unique and interesting pieces, like me, which I think is why we work so well together.”

The reason Jesinta fell in love with the house was because the architecture made her feel like she could be anywhere in the world. “It really allowed me to focus on the idea that we are creating a home and a life that we don’t need a break from,” she explains. “We don’t need to go on a vacation because living here is like a permanent holiday. I’m looking around now thinking, ‘We could be in Italy!’” she says, laughing and gesturing to the alfresco dining table adorned with fresh fruit.

FROM TOP A Dina Broadhurst work hangs behind a Moroccan pot and French antique table, both from Watertiger; “Villa Casa” was the design project of Gold Coast-based studio Reece Keil Design and was bought by Jesinta and Buddy in late 2022. **OPPOSITE PAGE** The second living room features a sofa from MCM House, vase and Old World Beni M’Rirt rug from Tigmi Trading, and a Naga coffee table from Watertiger.



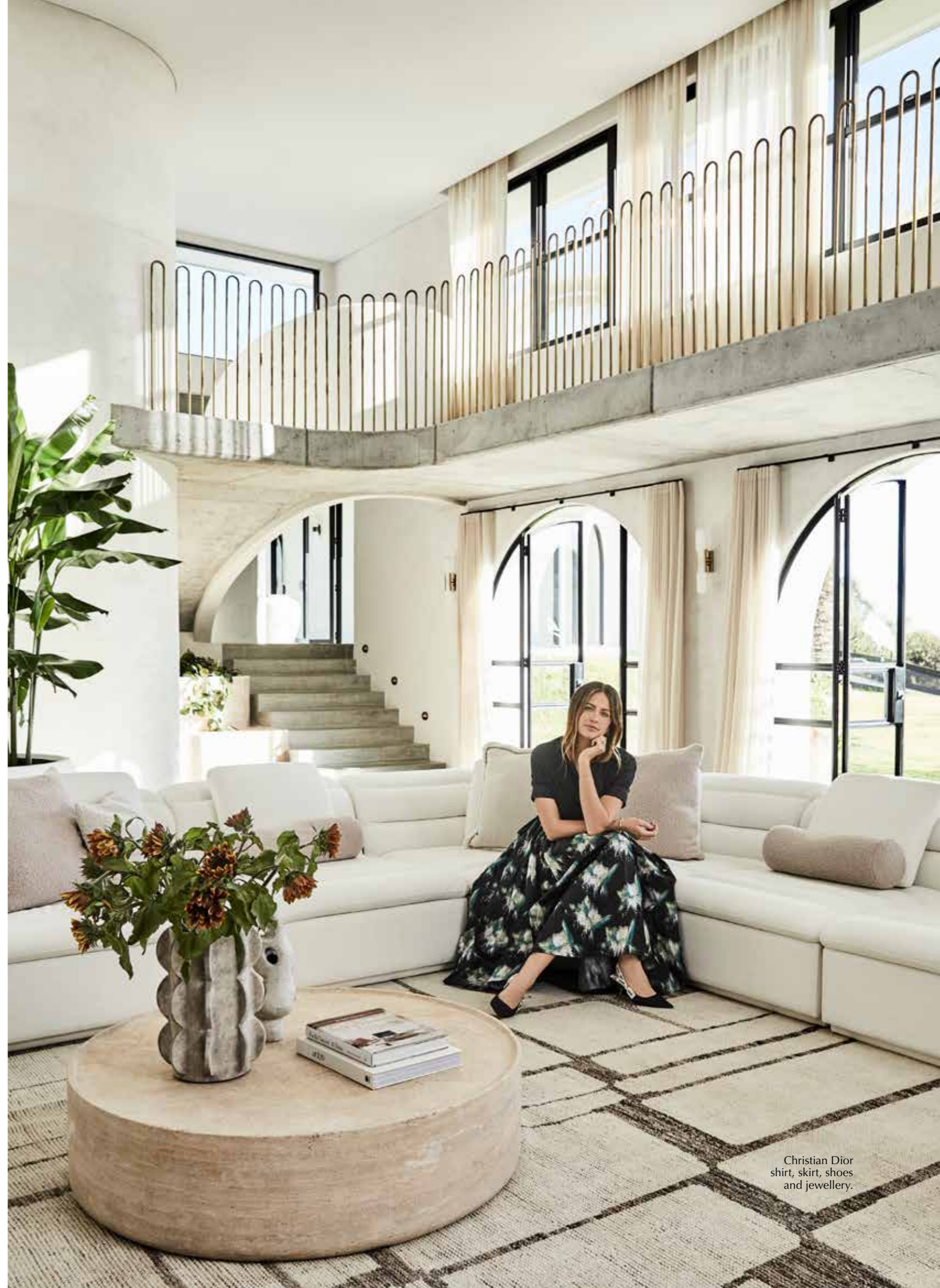
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Set on the living room shelves are a Mercer & Lewis statue, as well as vases from Curatorial+Co and Dinosaur Designs. **OPPOSITE PAGE** The Sarah Ellison sofa and Bova coffee table sit atop a rug from Cadrys.

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Christian Dior shirt, skirt, shoes and jewellery.



“
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OPPOSITE PAGE Jesinta's favourite part of the day is watching the sunrise from the kitchen as she prepares breakfast. **THIS PAGE, ABOVE** The butler's pantry houses Alex and Trahanas napkins, a Dinosaur Designs vase and painted urn by Santa Maria Novella. **BELOW** The alfresco table is set with Dior glassware, flowers and fruits from local farmers' markets.





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE A private rooftop deck off the master bedroom hosts a Sunlighten Sauna and outdoor furniture from MCM House; a Dior backgammon board and Tigmi Trading towel set the scene for an afternoon of poolside pleasures; and the master ensuite features a double shower. OPPOSITE PAGE Jesinta in her walk-in-wardrobe, with a Kerry Levy vase from Curatorial+Co, Aphrodite bust from Mercer & Lewis and Dior candle.



INTERIOR STYLING BY OLGA LEWIS. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY MICHAEL BROWN.



Christian Dior bralette, skirt, bag and jewellery.

The family, who were living in Sydney while Buddy finished his last season as star forward for the Swans, are moving to Villa Casa permanently. Jesinta says something the couple are most excited about is hosting family and friends at their home for barbecues over the summer.

"I love to cook, so I'll spend a lot of time in the beautiful kitchen," she says. "Meanwhile, Buddy is all about the barbecue. Our dream with this home is that everyone comes here and hangs out by the pool. Our entertaining style is very welcoming and relaxed, with big long lunches, early dinners, lots of family and delicious food. We love having a full house and seeing people having a great time."

With summer comes Christmas, and Jesinta confesses she is already planning for the holidays. It will be their first Christmas in their new home and they have invited their extended families. "I'm such a Christmas person," Jesinta exclaims happily, before admitting that one tree might not be enough. "I think we'll have two Christmas trees. I want to put one in the second living room where the sculptural lamp is and have another in the main living room. I want to keep them really simple – just fill them with fairy lights and

ornaments handmade by the kids. I'm thinking we can gather up dried leaves and paint them gold. I want a rustic look to fit in with the style of the home."

As someone with a busy social calendar, Jesinta is also planning plenty of chill days where the family of four can unwind and take time out from their public lives. "This home is definitely an escape for us," she shares. "Often when we're out and about, people want to come up and have a chat, maybe get a photo or an autograph – especially with Buddy. It is absolutely fine and we're happy to do that, but it means that when we're out we always have to be 'on'. I think that's why home always feels really safe to us."

Ensnared in one of the outdoor lounges and now finished with our photoshoot, Jesinta chats about what's still to be done around the home: namely styling the children's bedrooms and a couple of guest rooms. But she's not holding herself to a tight deadline. As she says, this is her happy place and stress holds no space here.

"I've never ever had a home as an adult where I feel like it's mine when I walk in," she says. "Every home we've had has been a building block to get to this point. Here I can open the doors and welcome everyone in and feel that, yes, this is my home and I've really put my heart into it." She smiles and then laughs as she adds, "All my money is certainly in it!"



ABOVE Lush greenery frames the swimming pool, where the family expects to spend plenty of time this summer.
BELOW A neutral palette is carried throughout the home, including the master bedroom on the top floor.
The photograph above the bed is by Laura Goodall, the tray is by Dior and the rug is from Cadrys.

