



One half of *The Block*:  
Glasshouse's winning duo,  
Shannon Vos of VosCreative,  
voscreative.com.

## DESIGN FOCUS

# open-plan living design

This issue, Shannon tackles that modern dilemma: how to get combined spaces right. Here are his top three floorplan solutions WORDS SHANNON VOS

**P**reparation is key. Or, as my brother, Simon, was quoted saying on *The Block*: “Prior proper preparation prevents piss-poor performance.” Not too subtle, but the truth shines through. Open-plan living is great in many ways, but can be tricky to get right. The most common mistake is a space that feels awkward, with no flow or focus – a dog’s breakfast. Proper planning where your furniture will go (from sofas to lamps) will make life so much easier, not only when you start to build or renovate a space, but when you’re making those big investment purchases and in turn, when you start to live in that area. You’ll be surprised how much better it will all come together if you keep in mind those seven Ps. Let’s take a look at three solid layouts for the most popular open-plan living shapes. *Turn the page to check out Shannon’s solutions to those tricky-shaped open-plan layouts.*

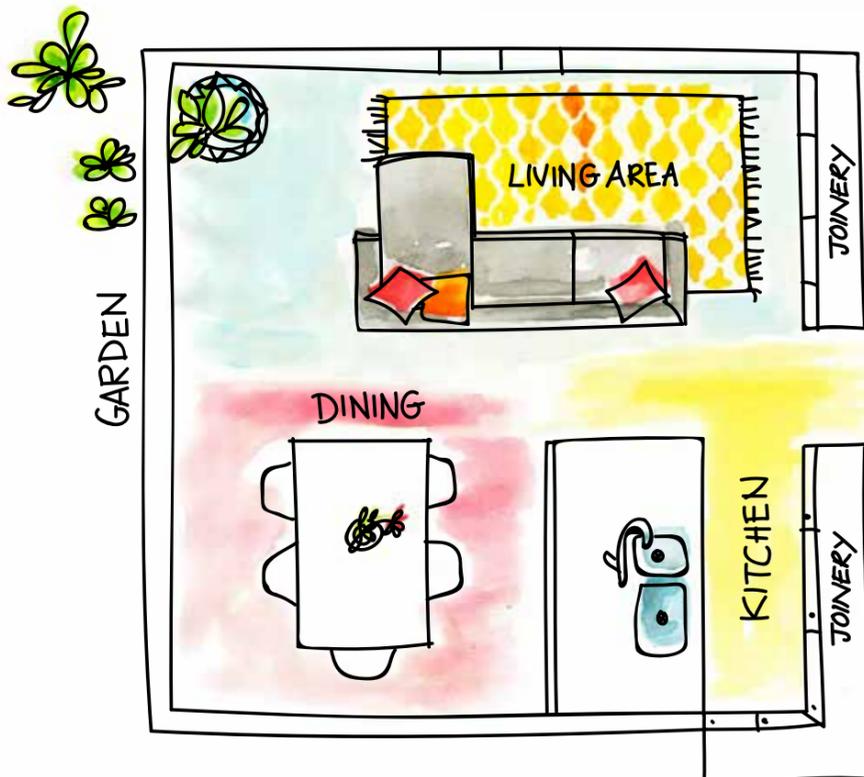
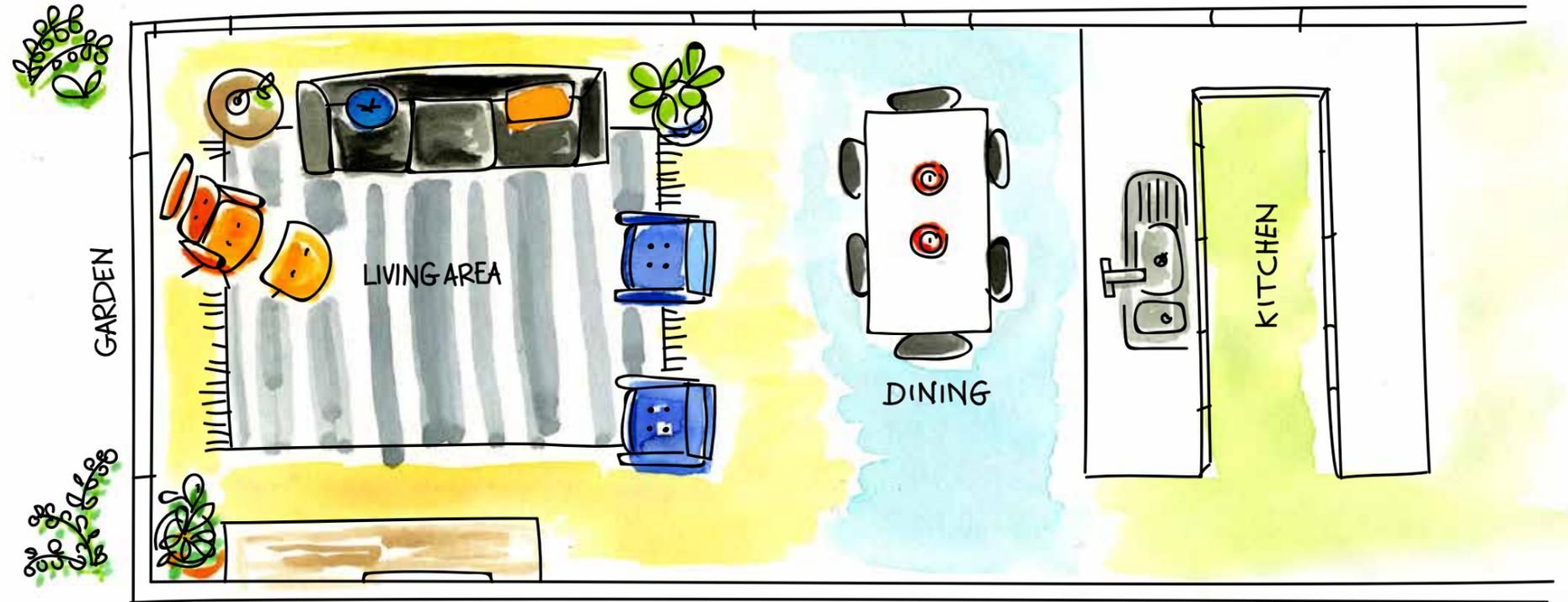


# are you long, square or L-shaped?

Every home will have different spaces that require a case-by-case approach to layout, but here are three common options and the best way to attack them

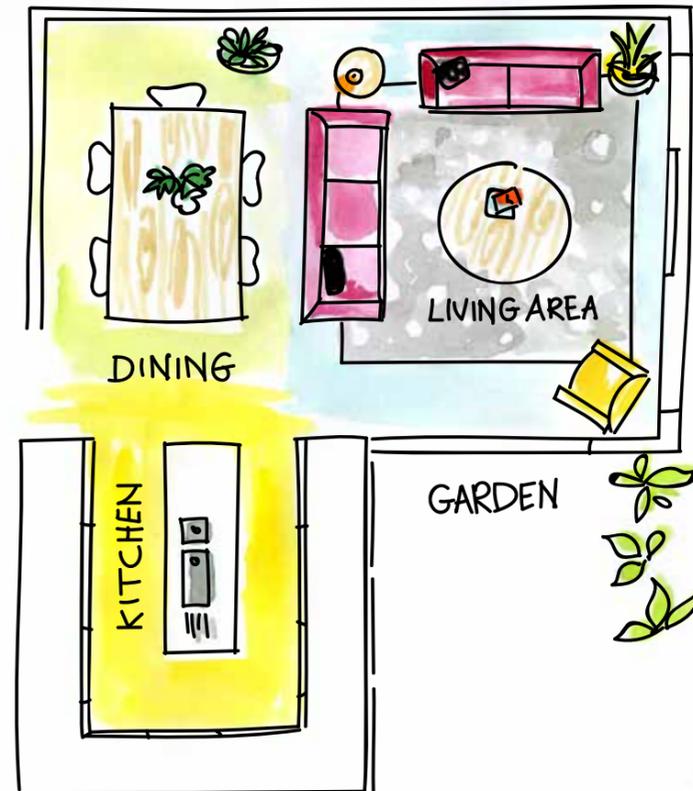
## long room

- 1/ When lining up space lengthways, ensure you leave a gap of at least 800mm between separate zones.
- 2/ Avoid a TV-focused orientation, or positioning the TV opposite a window. On one hand, you don't want it to dominate, but then you do still need to be able to see it.
- 3/ Use an oversized rug to mark out a zone for your living space.
- 4/ A quick and easy way to create a connection between the spaces is to repeat the use of colours or textures.
- 5/ The kitchen and dining spaces tend to work best when they're connected.
- 6/ If you don't need six dining seats, consider flipping the table 90 degrees and pushing it against the kitchen bench.
- 7/ Incorporate greenery into the space adjacent the outdoors to create a nice merge between the two.
- 8/ DECLUTTER! We don't need half of what we have (this goes for all spaces).



## square space

- 1/ In a square space, you almost end up dividing it in half, and then creating two smaller spaces from one. In this case, the kitchen and dining are in one half, then the living space ends up a little more roomy. Consider which space you want larger.
- 2/ Joinery is always a good way to define and link spaces: use the same material combinations to tie them together nicely.
- 3/ Instead of creating movement in and around the area, a square should feel open and clutter free.
- 4/ The kitchen shouldn't feel secondary, instead keep it open to the other spaces and avoid tall storage between zones. Island benches are a good option.
- 5/ I've found an L-shaped or modular sofa works best in a long skinny living room, however, you could also go for a long couch with occasional chairs.
- 6/ Use a wider kitchen bench (wider than 1000mm). It's rare to have the space, so make the most of it.



## L-shaped zone

- 1/ The great thing about an L-shaped space is that the zones are already defined. The kitchen is usually best kept in the space by itself and place the living and dining together to keep unwanted noise to a minimum.
- 2/ Allow a 1000mm gap down the thoroughfare that splits the L.
- 3/ An L-shape normally incorporates an outdoor space of some sort. It's a great opportunity to orient the flow of your space to include the outdoors.
- 4/ If it's possible, find a way to make your kitchen open to the outdoors: you will thank me in summer.
- 5/ If there's a flow between inside and out, avoid flooring choices that stain easily, as you'll have dirty foot traffic.
- 6/ Orient your furniture towards your most valuable asset: outdoors. Whether that's a garden, courtyard, or even a window, take it into account when you're positioning your sofa, dining table and kitchen, to maximise the outlook.

ILLUSTRATIONS: CRYSTAL OSBORN



Follow Shannon and VosCreative on Instagram @shannonjvos