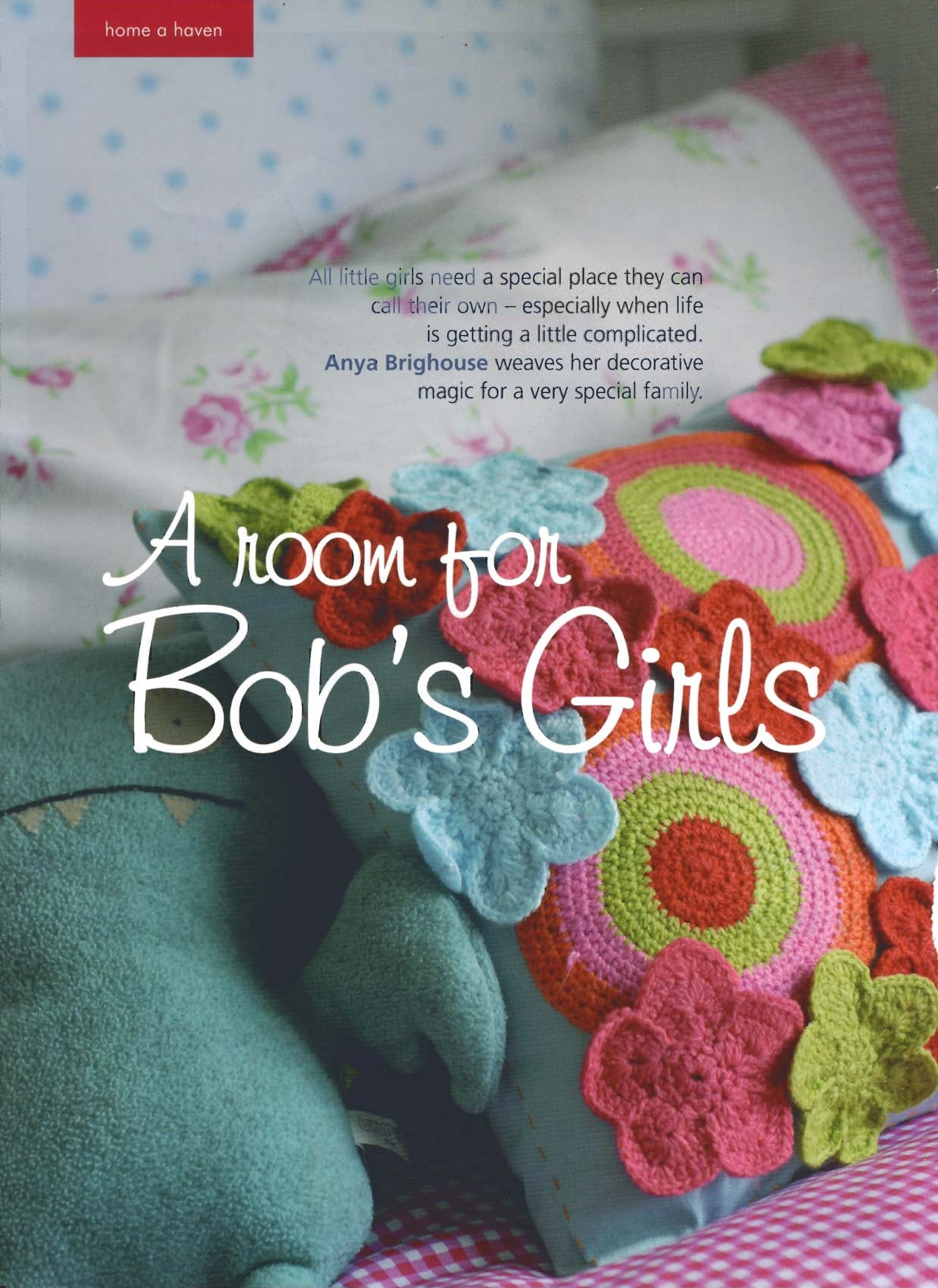


All little girls need a special place they can call their own – especially when life is getting a little complicated. **Anya Brighthouse** weaves her decorative magic for a very special family.

A room for Bob's Girls



There are some days as a parent when I beat myself up. Sometimes I don't feel like I'm a good one and I wish I did a better job. I worry that my kids aren't having as good a life as they could because of decisions I have made. I worry how the way I deal with things now will impact on them as adults. And I just know they will torture me with these mistakes when they are grown-ups! I know these are all normal parts of being a parent. Another normal thing is to assume that you will be there when your children grow up, go to school, make the inevitable mistakes, get married and have children. I know they will outlive me. That is how it should be. But I have never really considered I might have anything but a full, long life and plenty of time with them.

But Bob Laskey may not have plenty of time. He is married to the lovely Fianee and together they have two beautiful, delightful, strong-willed daughters. Matisse is three and Sienna is one and they are blissfully unaware of what their parents have been dealing with for the past few months. Three months ago Bob had a massive seizure one evening and

It has been a difficult time, but knowing how much they are loved has eased the pressure greatly.

this led to the discovery of a brain tumour. A few weeks after they discovered the extent of his ill-health, they took possession of their new house in Mt Albert, Auckland. It is a small, three bedroom, ex-state house with great bones and a lovely feel. Bob is a builder by trade (no smart comments at this point, as I imagine Bob has heard them all!), and had expected to do all the work on the house himself. This has not been possible, as major surgery and radiotherapy have slowed him down considerably. But Bob and Fianee have an amazing circle of friends who have stepped up and done everything it is possible to do. For two intensely private people this has been very difficult. People have donated their time, services, meals, gardening, painting, decorating and cleaning skills. Much as it has been difficult for them to accept all this from other people, everyone who knows them knows they would be first in line to help anyone else in need. It has been a difficult time but knowing how much people are willing to help, and how loved they are, has eased the pressure greatly.

We helped out in a small way by decorating a bedroom for the two little girls to share. I like to think this has meant one less thing for them to worry about at a time when there are much bigger things to attend to. The bedroom isn't big, so we had to make use of every available space for storage. I am sure you get sick of me harping on about storage, but you can never have too much of a good thing and a bit of thought at the beginning goes a long way!





You can never have too much of a good thing -- storage

Roller boxes are a great use of the space underneath Matisse's bed, the ones we used came from TomTomJak in Manukau Rd, Auckland. They are the long 'finger boxes' which fit from one side of the bed to the other and cost \$150 each. The smaller boxes are \$120 each. Target does a good 'save' option in MDF (\$45 each). It is a good idea to invest in painting them carefully with a good high gloss paint. I was all set to paint the two small chairs in the room in high gloss, when I realised that I hadn't allowed enough time for the paint to dry between coats. I will be better organised next time! The little 'star' drawers next to the bed are just the right size for socks, underwear and little girl's

treasures. This one came from EziBUY for \$129 and is definitely the 'save' option. The 'splurge' is a slightly stronger version from TomTomJak (\$300). The little blue melamine cup on the dresser came from Briscoes and cost just \$1.95. I have a whole stack of these at home as they are smash-proof (within reason) and the colour is lovely. We have used two accent colours in the room that go together really well now, but when it is time for the girls to have their own rooms they can take an accent colour each to make the space their own. The two colours we used were Resene Bordello (the pink) and Jordy Blue (the pale blue).

The bedding brings the whole



room together. It is from Wallace Cotton's Love Story range. We have the duvet on Matisse's bed (\$79.90) with a quilt (\$139.90) and pillowcase. The cot quilt (\$59.90) is on Sienna's bed. When she is older she can have the duvet on her bed, with the cot quilt at the end. We put one of the quilted pillowcases (\$24.90) on the old white wicker chair that was found on TradeMe for \$15. It's a small house, so we made sure any furniture we brought in could be used alongside the existing furniture. If the family are ever short a chair for guests, they can bring this one out. The square blue cushion on that chair is from Ezibuy (\$24.95), so is the lovely blue and white polka dot euro on the bed (\$14.95). I loved the wonderful organic-looking crochet pillow on the bed from TomTomJak at \$69. Thanks for letting us keep it as it was my favourite thing in the room. The striped monkey (\$59) also came from there.

The two painted chairs were given by a friend. The basket above them came from Madder & Rouge (as did the bunting, \$69), though you can get something similar from Trade Aid shops. The basket is perfect for shoes or toys. Above the wicker chair is a notice board from the Warehouse personalised with Matisse's name using letters from Spotlight. I would like to say the wardrobe is supposed to look like that – with no doors – for easy access, but actually the doors didn't arrive in time. The wardrobe was well planned with lots of clear floor space to cope with larger toys, shoes and the like. It came from Howard's Storage World in New Lynn. The blue plastic bucket from Briscoes cost \$23, and the white buckets are from Ezibuy, (\$13 each).

Thanks to the lovely people who helped make this happen

Kirstin Copely for making the blind in the girls' room – thank you for a beautiful job!

Karina at **TOMTOMJAK** for the lovely cushion, www.tomtomjak.co.nz

Paula at **WALLACE COTTON** for the bedding, www.wallacecotton.com

RESENE for the paint, www.resene.co.nz

PLANET PROJECTS for the painting, Rich Graham 021 225 4418

RAM BUILDERS for help with the building work, Ross McPherson 021 834 309

And a special thank you to Bob and Fianee Laskey for letting us traipse all over your house when it really was the last thing you wanted to worry about!

splash some colour

Splash some colour and creativeness around your place with free art ideas for children of all ages. The four step projects are suitable for young children with adult supervision; the six step projects can be done by older children alone or by younger children with willing adult helpers! More projects added regularly to keep budding artists busy.

So check out www.resene.co.nz/artprojects/kids.htm and get creative!



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