

FAMILY TOWN HOUSE

HAPPY & GLORIOUS

A flamboyant take on quintessential English style has turned this London home from bland and beige into bright and beautiful

WORDS JENNIFER GOULDING PHOTOGRAPHS MARK BOLTON



RECEPTION ROOM
An antique chimney piece creates a fine focal point, while aged mirror tiles on either side enhance the soft light of the space. For a similar antique stone chimney piece, try Wharton Antiques, 07974 579694, whartonautiques.com. **Bespoke ottoman**, VSP Interiors, 020 8995 6684, vspinteriors.com. **Ottoman** in English Riding Velvet in Steeplechase Green, £80m, Ralph Lauren Home, 020 3450 7750, ralphlaurenhome.co.uk. **Flowers throughout**, Joanna Chaker, London Flower School Catherine Muller, 020 7259 0196, catherinemuller.com. **Cushions**, in vintage and antique textiles, Guinevere, 020 7736 2917, guinevere.co.uk.



STUDY

"We had great fun designing this room," says Charlotte. "I am mad about pattern and the wallpaper (above) makes me smile every time I walk through the door." Rosey Posey Trellis wallpaper in Pink Ginger, AUS\$220 a roll, Anna Spiro for Porter's Paints at Black & Spiro, 0061 7 3254 3000, blackandspiro.com.au.

LIBRARY

At the back of the house, a smaller reception room has been turned into a library (right). Accents of red and green, with the colourful book spines, help to brighten the scheme without detracting from its relaxing ambience. Haresfield sofa, from £1,822, Sofas & Stuff, 0808 178 3211, sofasandstuff.com. Blind in Bamboo Trellis in Green, £295m, Brunswick & Fils, 020 7351 7760, brunswick.com. Globular Sang de Boeuf table lamp, £450, Vaughan, 020 7349 4600, vaughandesigns.com.





KITCHEN
 “We recycled the existing handmade cabinetry by repainting the units, installing new worktops and adding an island,” says Charlotte. Glenn bar stools in White, £55 each, Ikea, 020 3645 0000, ikea.com/gb.



ORANGERY
 In this space, which links the kitchen with the garden, glass doors and a roof lantern give superlative levels of light. Maskros pendant lamp, £50, Ikea, 020 3645 0000, ikea.com/gb. Hideout Wigwam, £60, Great Little Trading Company, 0344 848 6000, gltc.co.uk.

Christmas was looming and Charlotte King, then pregnant with her second child, was looking for a bigger house in west London for her young family. “I grew up in the area and having lived all over London when I worked in the City, it felt like the right time to come home,” she says. However, her last two house purchases had fallen through and she was beginning to feel rather downhearted about the whole endeavour.

When Charlotte arrived for a viewing of this tall, semi-detached Dutch gable house the estate agents had just started taking photographs, but she knew straightaway they were wasting their time. “As soon as I walked through the door, it had me,” she says. As the house had previously been rented out, it was somewhat unloved. “There was a sea of magnolia and beige, with rather horrible laminate flooring. All very practical, I’m sure, but it looked very bland,” says Charlotte, who saw through this to the fundamental elegance of the property. “It was a beautiful house, but it needed some personality. I fell in love with what it could become for our family. Creating a wonderful, happy home for my children to grow up in is the most important thing in the world, and this felt like the right place to do that,” she says.

REDESIGNING FOR FAMILY LIFE

Although Charlotte was generally happy with the layout of the house, the dark and gloomy lower-ground floor needed a rethink. Aided by family friend and interior designer Annie Rice, Charlotte created an open-plan kitchen with a sitting and dining area, plus a playroom and laundry room. She also exchanged the dated conservatory for an orangery with bifold glass doors that open up to the redesigned rear garden. “The view from the kitchen during the summer is like a wonderful flower painting,” remarks Charlotte. “We spend an enormous amount of time in this part of the house and the joy of it is that lots of

things can happen at once in the same space: meals can be cooked, homework can be done at the island, the puppy can charge around the garden and the little ones can build pirate camps.”

The only other structural change was to the front of the house. Originally, there was just a single entrance accessed by steps. “It did not work with two children, a buggy and a puppy,” says Charlotte, who put in a new door that opens straight into the kitchen.

CREATING A DISTINCTIVE LOOK

A year later, the building work was complete, but Charlotte had yet to touch the rest of the house. “The double reception rooms on the raised-ground floor were still full of packing boxes, which was maddening because they are the most beautiful rooms in the house.” With six files full of pictures torn out of magazines collected over ten years, and dozens of Pinterest boards, Charlotte was not short of ideas for her home but she did not know where to begin. The answer came in the form of another friend, interior designer Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors. Totally unfazed by the profusion of material, Henriette set about sifting through Charlotte’s cuttings and online images to create a cohesive decorating scheme. “The process was a complete delight, as Charlotte was such an easy client,” explains Henriette. “She has distinctive taste and knew what she wanted: something classic and grown-up but with a touch of irreverence.”

For Charlotte, the additional boon was that Henriette pushed her to take risks. “She found this incredible textured Ralph Lauren wallpaper for the bathroom, which you want to reach out and touch; I would never have considered it,” says Charlotte, who likens the finished house to a boutique hotel. “People sometimes think decorating is easy, but actually it is the hardest bit. If it hadn’t been for Henni, I think I would still be living with magnolia walls.” □



MAIN BEDROOM

“I’ve always wanted a four-poster bed and this room is a heavenly place to retreat to,” says Charlotte. The heavy curtains (above), trimmed in soft pink velvet, lend a cossetting feel.

Curtains in Amersham in Beige, £75m, Colefax and Fowler, 020 7244 7427, colefax.com. Throw and antique rug, both Guinevere, 020 7736 2917, guinevere.co.uk.

BATHROOM

The delicately textured rose-coloured wallpaper (right) makes a pleasing foil for a trio of framed antique lithographs.

Acacia Grass wallpaper in Ballet Slipper, £227 a roll, Ralph Lauren Home, 020 3450 7750, ralphlaurenhome.co.uk. Similar bath, The Dawlish Victorian Slipper cast-iron bath, £795, The Cast Iron Bath Company, 01723 585896, castironbath.co.uk. >





PLAYROOM

Plenty of built-in storage (left) helps to maintain order and allows the cheerful rug and wall-mounted plates to take centre stage.

Similar rug, Pebbles PB-10 Multi rug, from £159.99, Modern Rugs, 01388 663738, modern-rugs.co.uk. **Natural World plates** and **Nature Table dessert plates**, £16 each, Anthropologie, 020 7870 4821, anthropologie.eu.

CHILD'S BEDROOM

Painting the back of the fitted bookcases bright pink (below), injects striking colour into an otherwise delicate scheme.

Galatee wallpaper in Sable, £64.80 a roll, Pierre Frey, 020 7376 5599, pierrefrey.com. **Curtain** in Provence Toile in Pink, £48m, Cabbages & Roses, 020 7352 7333, cabbagesandroses.com.

