

---

# LOOK BOOK

---

THIRD EDITION

By ELEPHANT & THESE FOUR WALLS

---

## A showcase of inspirational Bristol homes

from leading independent estate agent  
elephant and lifestyle blog These Four Walls







# A Word from Elephant's Directors

A home is more than a building. It's a deep-rooted, personal belonging – a quiet oasis away from all the noise of this busy world, where we can express and reflect on what's important to us.

You only have to flick through a few pages of this Look Book to see the different interior styles and wonderful creativity which people use to make a space their own.

Yet despite the excitement which should come with the adventure of buying a new home, it's often viewed as one of life's most challenging experiences.

Interestingly, a number of stress tests have been compiled to analyse life events and moving home barely features. The best known is the Social Readjustment Rating Scale, developed by psychiatrists Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe, who asked people how stressful they found 43 different events. The death of a spouse comes top, divorce second and marital separation third, followed by going to prison and losing a close family member. In fact, moving house doesn't appear on the list at all. The closest you get is having a large mortgage at number 20, a change in living conditions at number 28 and having a small mortgage at number 37.

So, why do these studies not match the reality? Well, for many people a move represents a transition in life, and it's often instigated

by other dramatic events which bring their own stresses. What's more, shifting our lives and belongings is a massive upheaval, and humans are inherently territorial creatures who like familiarity and routine. The process runs over weeks and sometimes months, with big decisions, expenses and uncertainty at every step of the way. And, as the move only becomes binding when contracts are exchanged, the feeling of being out of control can soon take over.

But we're here to help. Whether you're looking to renovate or move, having the right support is crucial to whether you emerge on the other side feeling invigorated or decimated. Here at elephant, we pride ourselves on giving trustworthy, measured and expert advice which you can rely on to help you decide on any property-related dilemma. Time and time again, we're praised for going above and beyond the call of duty, as many of our former clients will testify – and please feel free to put us to the test, as we love a challenge!

We hope you enjoy this third edition of our Look Book, and find inspiration for your current home or ideas to help you move onwards to the next.

**Alec Jupp**  
Director





Since opening our office in 2011, we have been surprised and delighted by the number of inspiring properties within the area we operate. It was the quality and individualism of these homes and their owners which first spawned the creation of this Look Book back in 2016, and we're very excited to bring you the third edition.

The finish of a property is highly subjective, but there are a few widely accepted standards. Tell-tale signs of good quality include a nicely painted front door in an unusual colour (typically Farrow & Ball), a manicured front garden and plantation-style shutters. Internally, sleek appliances are an instant giveaway – our favourite is the Dualit toaster, which seems to be a must-have for everyone who's obsessive about their home!

But good design extends much deeper than finishing touches and decorative features. It starts with the bare bones of a property and a commitment to doing everything properly. This dedication often comes from the owners themselves, but professional and knowledgeable tradespeople are also essential; put the two together and you have something special. We all know a quality property when we see one – you can sense it. The way a door closes perfectly, or the wonderful scent which comes from the best natural materials. And well-designed homes don't just look and feel good, they also inspire confidence – a big factor in house moves.

*“Well-designed homes don't just look and feel good, they also inspire confidence – a big factor in house moves”*

The knowledge that you are buying or selling a quality product makes the process much less stressful, particularly when you consider the considerable amounts of money that we spend to live in a lovely city like Bristol. Right from day one, properties which have received a high-calibre finish and strong attention to detail have always sold more quickly and achieved higher prices than those which haven't.

At elephant, we always offer genuine and honest advice on how to prepare a house for market. I am particularly passionate about renovating, decorating and styling properties, and I love the opportunity to offer assistance when I can.

We feel extremely privileged to do the job we do, and helping people move home in such a wonderful area is a real blessing. We are constantly inspired by the endeavours of the people we meet and the creativity and character of the homes we sell, and we hope this Look Book inspires you, too.



**Matthew Bailey**  
Director







# Focus on... KITCHEN -DINERS

**An open-plan kitchen-diner is at the top of many people's wish lists when they describe their perfect home.**

Well-designed, multi-purpose spaces not only make everyday life that little bit easier; they can also add significant value to your property and help wow prospective buyers when you come to sell.

But you don't need big funds or a big home to create a stylish and functional room that works equally well for cooking, dining and socialising. Here are a few examples from Elephant's books, with ideas to suit all sorts of different tastes and budgets.







1

In this Montpelier home, an extension has been built over the side return of the garden, creating a handy dining area out of a previously unused space. A roof lantern brings in additional light, and an arm-mounted wall-hung lamp can be positioned as needed over the table. The kitchen area mixes grey-green Shaker-style units with sleek orange-fronted wall cupboards, creating a quirky yet stylish look.

2

Grey cupboards with metal handles and sections of exposed wood add a raw, industrial edge to the kitchen of this St Werburghs terrace. The units are arranged around the edge of the room, leaving space for a large farmhouse table in the centre. Crisp white metro tiles provide a contrast with the more textured elements and complete the eye-catching look.



3

This Ashley Down home is proof that a handy dining area can be created in even the smallest of kitchens. Here, a salvaged school desk and church chair have been added to a nook beneath the window, forming the perfect spot to sit and contemplate the garden over breakfast or a cuppa. Wooden units and an exposed brick wall add warmth to the space, and a section of the pitched roof has been turned into a skylight to bring in extra light.

4

You don't need to knock down walls or build an expensive extension to create a dining area within your kitchen. In this Bishopston house, units have been placed along one wall only, leaving room for a dining table in the corner. Built-in benches maximise the use of space and allow the table to accommodate the whole family comfortably; cleverly, the seats lift up to reveal handy storage underneath. The kitchen cupboards are painted in a smart indigo blue and act as the perfect backdrop for an assortment of brightly coloured cushions and chairs, while open shelves provide an attractive way to display crockery and cookbooks.



3

See more  
of this  
home on  
page 28



4



5





5

The full width of this Montpelier town house has been used to create a large, light-filled kitchen-diner. Sleek white units bounce light around the room and contrast beautifully with the parquet floor, while intricately patterned Mediterranean-style tiles add a dash of personality. Patio doors provide direct access to the garden and allow for easy indoor-outdoor living.

6

A conservatory-style extension in glass and timber ensures the kitchen-diner of this Bishopston house feels fully connected to the garden outside. A breakfast bar is used to zone the cooking and dining areas, while bright blue doors add a twist to the traditional Shaker-style cupboards. A blue Aga and Belfast sink complete the characterful, rustic-contemporary look.



# before & after



## An eclectic mid-terrace makeover in Ashley Down

A top-to-bottom renovation has transformed this once empty Ashley Down house from dated to delightful. Downstairs, the living room, dining room and kitchen have been knocked through to create a sociable open-plan space, cleverly zoned with varying floor surfaces and a breakfast bar wrapped around a section of wall. White paint ensures the space feels flooded with natural light, and it's offset perfectly by the exposed brick

of the chimney breast and a colourful selection of plants and artwork. The furniture is a wonderful mix of old and new, and a variety of different textures and colours – a teal-green velvet sofa, a deep-pile Moroccan rug and a sheepskin covered rattan chair add warmth and interest. Copper and brass touches in the light fittings, mirror frames and kitchen-cabinet handles provide a common thread that runs through the different spaces.





Left: Before. Above: After

CONTINUED ↘





Before

The stylish eclecticism continues upstairs. The bathroom blends white metro tiles with unusual turquoise flooring, and a vintage smoked-glass pendant dangles above the sink. Touches of wood in the master bedroom create a warm, inviting feel, while the sleek white storage units contrast beautifully with another swathe of exposed brick. Even the hall and landing have been enlivened with a few unusual additions, including a pineapple-shaped lampshade and antique hooks sculpted to resemble peacocks.





After





## Ideas to borrow

- Consider exposing sections of brickwork. It's a great way to create a focal point and it adds a stylish, loft-like vibe
- Incorporate a statement sofa to give your living room the wow factor. If the budget won't stretch to new furniture, you can give existing pieces a new lease of life with made-to-measure covers in eye-catching fabrics
- Have fun with finishing touches. Small details such as door knobs and wall hooks can have a major impact on the overall scheme and allow for endless creativity

Right: Before. Below: After





# IOTA

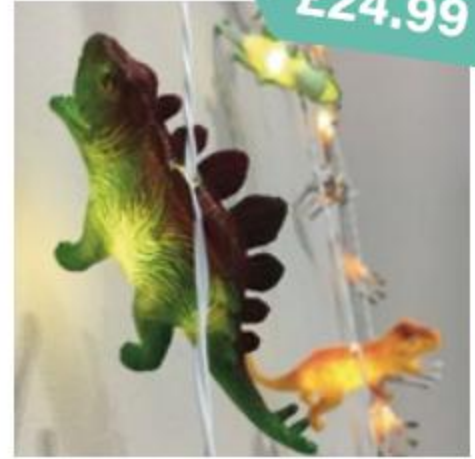
Gloucester Road interiors boutique Iota is the go-to place to find unusual, distinctive and affordable items to personalise your space. As it celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, founder Toby O'Connor-Morse picks out ten of his favourite pieces.

• £30.00



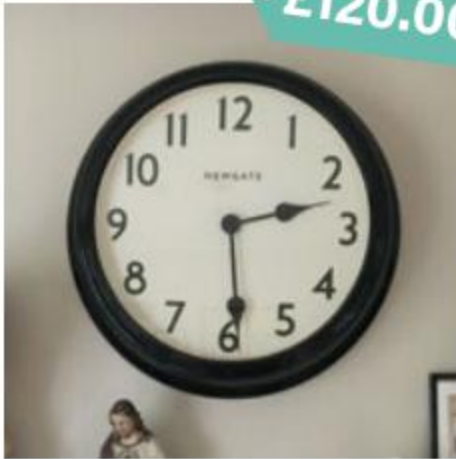
Poster of Temple Meads station

• £24.99



Dinosaur lights

• £120.00



Newgate clock

• £34.00



Origami bear light

• £8.99



Black and white planter

• £9.99



Apothecary candles

• £62.00



VITA lampshades

• £18.00



Succulent plants  
& Urban Botanics book

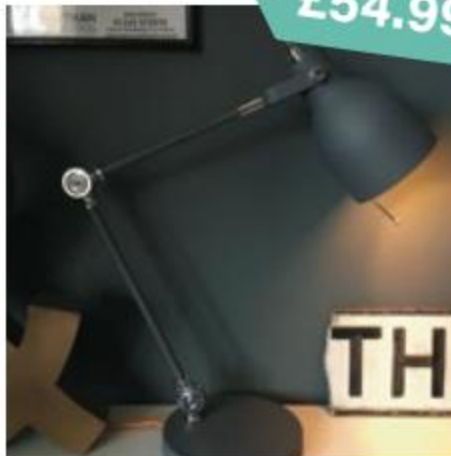
FROM  
£4.50

• £29.99



Zebra head

• £54.99



Desk lamp

**Visit Iota**  
167 Gloucester  
Road, Bristol  
BS7 8BE  
0117 924 4911  
[iotabristol.com](http://iotabristol.com)





## Rustic French charm in the heart of Montpellier

There's a touch of provençal chic about this stylish Montpellier home. Throughout, it's decorated in mediterranean blues and yellows, often offset by fresh white floorboards and sophisticated grey walls. Rustic wooden furniture and unvarnished doors give the feel of a French farmhouse, as do the wooden worktops, Belfast-style sink and slate-look floors in the kitchen – though they're often mixed with sleeker pieces, including a moulded orange Eames chair and a contemporary monochrome rug.

Stand-out spaces include the dining room, where a pair of low-hanging pendant lights creates a focal point above the table, and the master bedroom, whose indigo-blue walls and oversized floor-standing mirror provide an eye-catching yet cosy look. Also particularly beautiful is the bathroom, where a clawfoot tub is offset by contemporary chrome fittings and a salvaged sage-green cupboard has been repurposed as a stand for the sink.















The mediterranean feel continues in the garden thanks to wooden decking, white-painted walls and a trellis covered in climbing plants. Cleverly, shelves have been incorporated into the wall to provide an unusual way of displaying potted plants and herb boxes.





### **Ideas to borrow**

- Don't be afraid to mix pieces from different styles and eras to create a unique and characterful look
- Make a statement with lighting. An unusual lamp or an oversized pendant can have as much impact as any piece of furniture
- Think of your garden as another room in your house. By applying the same care and attention as you would to the interior, you can create wonderful spots for alfresco dining, lounging and entertaining















# FOCUS ON HOUSE PLANTS

House plants are most definitely back in fashion, and with good reason. Not only do they look good, they can also have a highly positive impact on our health and well-being. **Tya Shannon**, owner of Bristol plant shop Wild Leaf, explains more and picks out some of her favourite easy-care varieties.

**H**ouse plants are a great way to add style to your home, whether you're preparing it for sale or staying put. Well-chosen greenery in a decorative pot adds instant glamour, as well as providing an important year-round connection with nature and improving indoor air quality. There's also something very rewarding and meditative about caring for plants – and they make a great investment because like furniture and art, they can move house with you!

Most homes contain several different habitats: a humid bathroom, a warm and sunny south-facing windowsill, and a cool shady bedroom. Finding the right varieties for these spots is the first rule of successful house plant ownership, so here's a selection of my favourite low-maintenance options for each area.







### The shady spot

As a very general rule, plants with large, dark green leaves are adapted to life under a canopy of trees, as they need a big surface area and lots of chlorophyll to capture sufficient light – think ferns and broad-leafed tropicals. If there's enough natural light in a room to read a book, these plants will thrive. They also like a bright spot, but most won't tolerate direct sun.



### The sunny spot

South- and west-facing windows receive the most direct sunlight. While many house plants will appreciate these positions in winter, only certain varieties can thrive in bright summer sunshine.



### The bathroom

Plants from rainforest habitats do very well in bathrooms as their large, flat leaves lose moisture quickly in dry air, though they can thrive in other rooms if misted regularly. Shade-loving plants are ideal for shady bathrooms as their natural habitats tend to be damp; sun-loving plants are usually from arid desert habitats, but some will live happily in a humid room if their soil is allowed to dry out before watering.

#### SANSEVIERIA



**Sansevieria** ('mother in law's tongue') is a slow-growing succulent plant that enjoys a shady spot. It can go weeks without water, so it's perfect for those who travel. Sansevieria plants are a particularly good choice for bedrooms, as they absorb CO2 at night.

#### SCHEFFLERA AMATE



**Schefflera amate** ('umbrella tree') is the ultimate glossy tropical. Unlike smaller-leafed umbrella plants which crave sunlight, it thrives in a shady spot. A weekly water and some liquid feed over summer are all that's required for vigorous growth.

#### CODIAEUM MRS ICETON



**Codiaeum Mrs Iceton** ('croton petra') is a woody tropical shrub with multi-coloured leaves. A few hours of direct sun each day are needed to bring out the beautiful red hues. It loves warmth and humidity, so it's ideal for a sunny bathroom or windowsill.

#### ASPLENIUM NIDUS



**Asplenium nidus** ('bird's nest fern'), like rainforest cacti, is adapted to life in the canopy. One of the hardier ferns to keep indoors, it's more tolerant of dry air and soil than ground-dwelling ferns. It prefers a bright, humid spot, ideally with some morning or evening sunshine.





#### PHILODENDRON SCANDENS



**Philodendron scandens** (also known as heartleaf philodendron) is a trailing or climbing plant that can grow very long even when kept in a small pot. It prefers to dry out before being watered, so a fortnightly watering is usually enough.



#### HOYA CARNOSA TRICOLOR



**Hoya carnosa tricolor** is a variety of wax plant with pink stems and white and pink variegation on the leaves. This stunning-looking trailing plant loves very bright light and direct sun. It's also fond of warmth and humidity and so would suit a bright bathroom. It doesn't like to be over-watered, so wait until the leaves pucker slightly.



#### PACHIRA AQUATICA



**Pachira aquatica** ('braided money tree') can be found in swamps in Central and South America, and it makes a fantastic indoor tree for a bright bathroom. Give the pot a good soak once a week, with some liquid feed in summer, and you'll be rewarded with vigorous growth.



#### RHIPSALIS



**Rhipsalis** and other rainforest cacti (for example lepidismium and schlumbergera) come in a variety of unusual shapes, often with a trailing form. Their natural habitat is the jungle canopy, where they experience a warm wet season and a cooler dry season. Because they don't object to drying out occasionally, they make very robust and adaptable house plants.

Tya and her staff love helping customers find the right plants for their homes. They also stock a range of planters and baskets, and provide styling advice.

### Wild Leaf

63A Overton Rd  
Bristol BS6 5AG

0117 329 4299

[wildleafbristol.co.uk](http://wildleafbristol.co.uk)



# STYLISH SMALL- SPACE LIVING IN CLIFTON

A photograph of a minimalist interior space. In the foreground, a dark wooden table with a curved top and four legs is partially visible. Two wooden chairs with a spindle back design are tucked under the table. On the table, there is a framed abstract painting with a dark, textured surface. The background is a plain white wall, and the floor is made of light-colored wood planks.

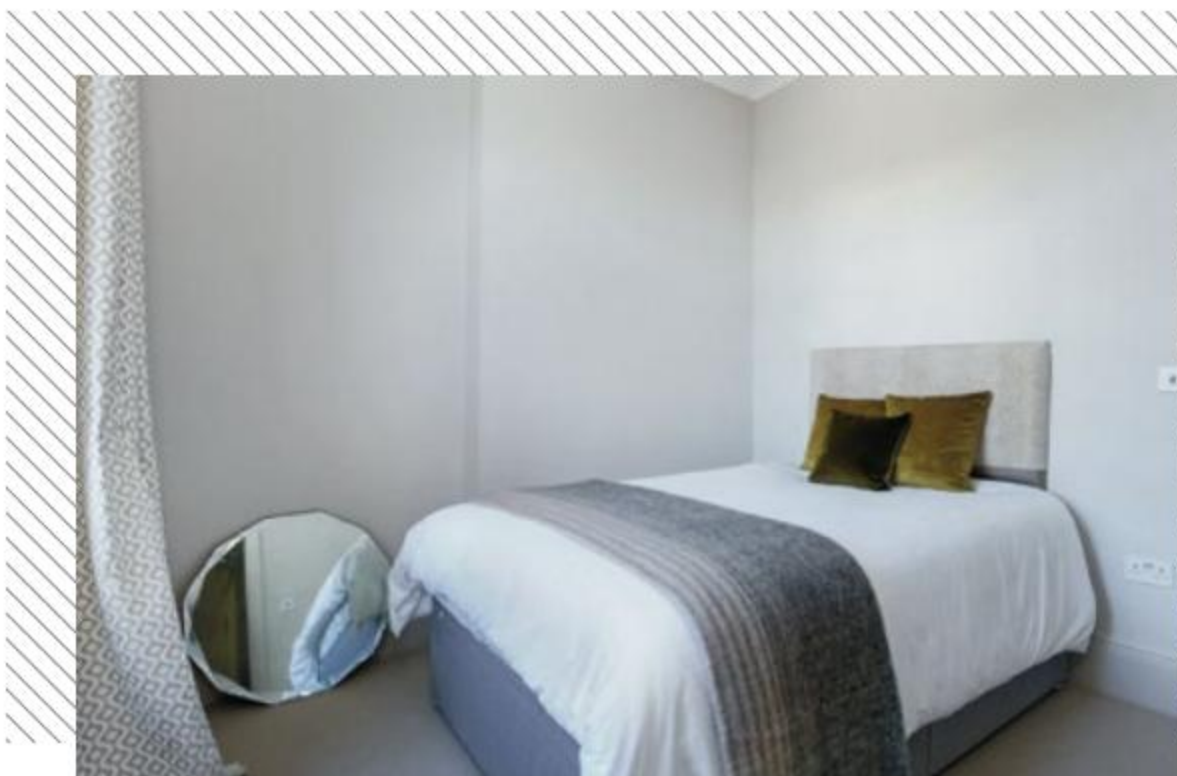
**This bijou flat is  
a master-class in  
compact living**

Set on the hall floor of a Victorian town house, it consists only of a bedroom, a bathroom and a combined kitchen and living room, yet the vibe throughout is bright and spacious.













White walls, grey kitchen units, marble worktops and sleek wooden floorboards create an airy Scandinavian look and place the focus firmly on the sweeping view outside the window. Snuggly cushions, sheepskins and rugs add layers of texture and warmth, preventing the interior from feeling stark and impersonal.



Furniture has been kept to a minimum to avoid clutter, and the pieces which have been chosen often perform a dual purpose. White-painted covers hide ugly radiators while also providing a shelf for lamps and plants, and an oversized mirror behind the sofa creates a focal point at the same time as bouncing natural light around the room. The overall result is a stylish and inviting space that looks and feels much larger than it actually is.

#### Ideas to borrow

- Create an illusion of space by sticking to pale walls and floors, then add texture with soft furnishings and rugs
- Use carefully positioned mirrors to maximise light and brighten dark corners. Shiny surfaces such as pale marble and metal can have a similar effect
- Artwork and mirrors don't need to be hung on walls and can look just as striking standing on floors, tables, shelves and sideboards. This also avoids the need to drill any holes – ideal if you're renting or like to change things around







## A colourful yet elegant family home in Bishopston

This Victorian terrace is peppered with pops of cheerful colour, from the burnt-orange cushions in the kitchen-diner to the mustard-yellow and blue accents in the master bedroom. But throughout, these vibrant shades are paired with understated walls in blue and grey, ensuring the overall feel is smart and sophisticated. This is particularly true of the bathroom, where white metro tiles, dark charcoal-coloured walls and black fixtures combine to form a striking, on-trend look.

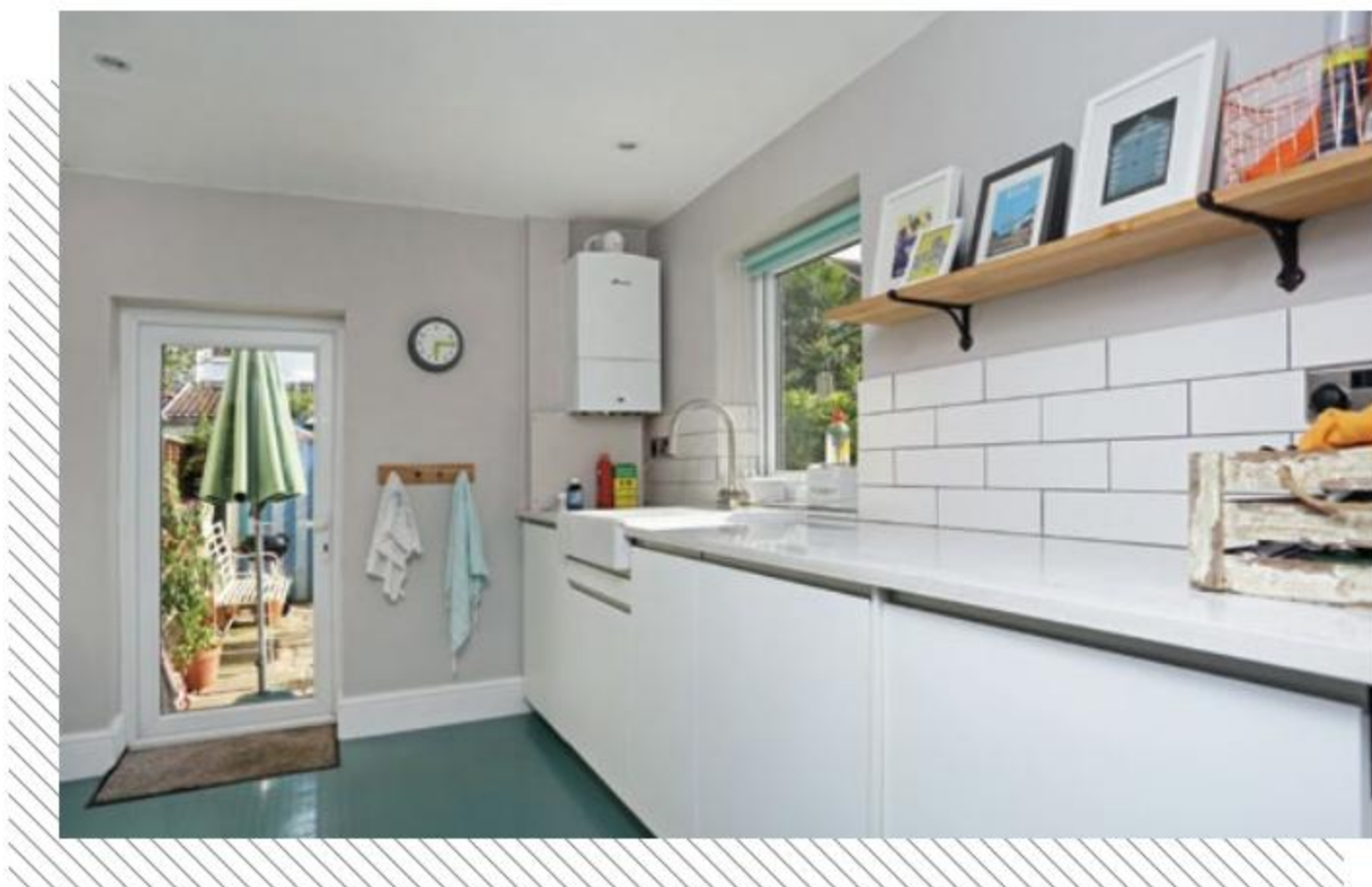
The house has also been cleverly reconfigured to suit modern living without losing any of its period

character. The loft has been converted into an additional bedroom and the bathroom moved upstairs, creating space for a handy utility room on the ground floor.

The wall between the living room and kitchen has also been knocked through to form a large open-plan space, although a half-height section remains to differentiate between the different zones and provide a cosy feel. What's more, there's plenty of useful storage to hide away family clutter, including built-in cupboards in the living-room alcoves and bench-style seats with lift-up lids around the dining table.











### Ideas to borrow

- Use accessories to experiment with colour. It's a great way to dip your toe in the water, and it means you can easily change the look in the future
- If you're short on storage, consider dual-purpose furniture. There are plenty of ottomans, beds and even tables which incorporate hidden space on the market nowadays
- Be creative with bathroom fittings. There are all sorts of alternatives to traditional chrome, from brass to matte black to salvaged iron



# Focus on... USING COLOUR

Colour can transform the look and feel of a room, and the hues we choose for our homes have a major impact on our mood – some are uplifting and energising, others calming and serene. These creative schemes show how you can use colour to set the tone of the spaces you spend time in, whether you want to incorporate bright, statement-making shades or stick to elegant neutrals.

1. The use of indoor plants and a green sofa help seamlessly link the garden to create a fantastic al-fresco living space in this Belmont Road house. The use of different coloured lampshades are used to divide the modern, open-plan living space into separate areas. A timeless red rug set in the clean, modern design gives texture and depth for a personal touch in this home.
2. Choosing colours can be a painstaking and intimidating process, deliberating over how bold to go in order to produce the desired feel for a room. If you're not sure how bold to go, you can create a calm, bright and inviting space with cool greys, blues and neutrals. Then, add colourful accents through furniture and fabrics to maintain a warm and cosy ambiance.
3. For a striking yet sophisticated look, how about embracing a darker side of décor with moody blue-grey walls? They add a cosy and cocooning feel to this Bishopston living room, creating a space that's ideal for evening entertaining and relaxation. White woodwork and pops of mustard yellow provide contrast and prevent the scheme from looking gloomy.
4. Clever use of colour is also on display in the dining room of this family home. Here, sky blue, orange and sunshine yellow come together to create a look that's vibrant and cheerful without being overwhelming – the perfect balance for a space which sits at the heart of family life. Keeping the ceiling white and restricting colour to the section of wall beneath the picture rail ensures the room feels airy and bright.











5



6



7





5. If you find it hard to mix different colours, try sticking to a simple palette of two contrasting hues. This not only produces eye-catching results, it also makes choosing accessories much easier as you have a clear visual guide to work towards. The duck-egg blue and mustard-yellow scheme in the living room of this Ashley Down house is a great example and extends to everything from the walls to the soft furnishings to the lighting. Patterned wallpaper, cushions and lampshades add visual interest, creating a fresh, modern look.
6. Of course, you don't need to go all out and repaint entire rooms to create an interesting effect. A striped carpet has been used to add a splash of colour to the staircase of this Bishopston home, making a statement feature from a part of the house that's often treated as an afterthought.
7. Take inspiration from this Horfield house and create a striking yet easy-to-adapt bathroom by pairing a timeless suite with swathes of colourful tiles. The deep sea-blue colour adds a dash of fresh coastal chic and works beautifully against the plain white walls.
8. Kitchen cabinets are another great vehicle for adding colour to your home. Chalk paint makes it easy to repaint existing door and drawer fronts in whatever shade you fancy, giving your kitchen an instant and inexpensive facelift. In this St Andrews property, indigo blue has been used to create eye-catching units that are offset beautifully by wooden worktops, round wooden handles and crisp white walls.









## A fresh, cottage-like feel in Bishopston

There's an air of country charm about this gabled red-brick abode. Throughout, fresh white walls and wooden floorboards are paired with vintage furniture, pretty fabrics and pops of duck-egg blue. Wooden shutters enhance the cosy

feel, as do the wood-burner and the exposed-brick hearth in the dining room. Even the kitchen has a gently rustic air thanks to soft grey and blue Shaker-style units, wooden worktops, a Belfast sink and a wall-hung plate rack.











But the star feature lies outside: a rambling, sun-drenched garden that encompasses outdoor seating, a long lawn, vegetable patches and apple trees. Lounge here awhile and you'd be forgiven for thinking you were in rural Somerset rather than the beating heart of Bristol.



## Ideas to borrow

- Don't be afraid to mix and match kitchen-unit colours. Here, the doors along one side of the room are painted in a muted duck-egg blue and those along the other in a soft dove grey, creating interest and preventing the galley-style layout from looking dark and narrow
- Consider shutters as an alternative to curtains and blinds. They look fantastic, they allow you to control levels of light and privacy, and they're often highly valued by potential buyers
- For a pretty yet eye-catching colour scheme, try duck-egg blue and coral red, or yellow and grey. These pairings always look good and work in all sorts of different settings, from traditional to contemporary















## A personality-packed home in St Andrews

This Victorian villa has real flair. The walls throughout are white and grey, but every room bursts with colour thanks to vibrant artwork, funky lamps and cushions in every shade of the rainbow. The furniture is an eclectic selection of vintage, mid-century modern and contemporary, and encompasses timeless design icons such as Ray and Charles Eames' leather lounge chair and footstool, first designed back in 1956 and just as stylish today.

At the heart of the house is a large kitchen and living space, whose sleek grey units, white lampshades and column-style radiators lend a bright, airy feel. It leads onto a snug dining area created from the old lean-to, where dark floral-patterned wallpaper and an eye-catching light installation create a decadent feel that's ideal for evening entertaining. Quirky wallpaper is also used to add interest to the study – in this case, a monochrome picture-



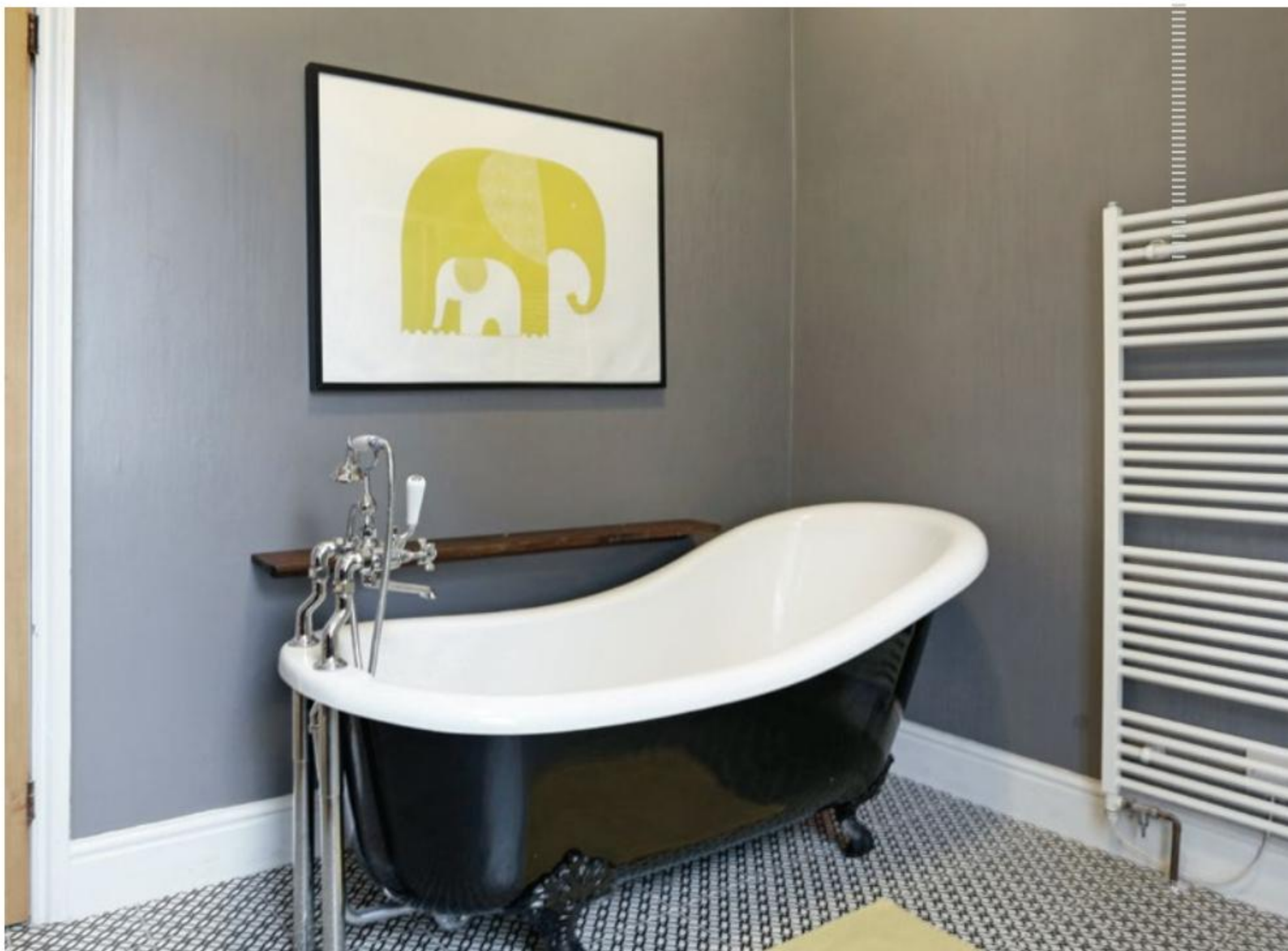






frame design adorned with treasured family photos and children's artwork.

Despite the modern additions, the house has lost none of its Victorian charm – original cornicing, floor tiles and stained-glass windows have been retained and repaired, and the love and care which have gone into the building's restoration are clear to see.







### Ideas to borrow

- Invest in statement furniture which will last for decades to come. Contemporary pieces designed by the likes of Charles and Ray Eames, Harry Bertoia and Verner Panton are perennially popular and will only increase in value as the years progress
- Have fun experimenting with innovative wallpapers. There are all sorts of designs on the market nowadays, from eye-catching plant motifs to trompe l'oeil effects designed to resemble tiles, brickwork and more
- Don't be afraid to pair highly contemporary furniture and fittings with opulent period features. It creates a striking contrast that showcases the building's history









# The benefits of staging your property

**Robert Shaw from property-staging company Refine Property explains the advantages of dressing your home for sale and shares his top tips for impressing potential buyers.**

Property staging is the norm in many parts of the world – you wouldn't think of putting an unstaged house on the market in the US, for example – but it's still a relatively unknown concept in much of the UK.

My eyes were opened to its potential a few years ago, when my family and I were struggling to sell a newly renovated investment flat. I couldn't understand why it was attracting so little interest: the price was reasonable, it was full of beautiful features, and the location off Park Street was much in demand. At the same time we were in the process of doing up another flat to live in ourselves and, after the sale

of our previous home went through much quicker than expected, we ended up temporarily residing in the unsold property. We received three asking-price offers the day we moved in, and I realised that adding furniture, artwork and soft furnishings to the previously empty space had been key.

That provided the idea for our company, and we set up Refine Property to offer similar services to the rest of the Bristol market. Buyers are rarely able to visualise what

a property might look like when furnished, particularly in a city like ours where so many old buildings have been split into flats that have unusual layouts. We understand that investing money on a place that you're trying to sell may seem counter-intuitive, but the return is often more than 100%. Staged properties usually sell in half the time of their unstaged neighbours, and we can invoice on completion so that you don't spend anything upfront.

Whether you're trying to shift a development project or you want to encourage higher offers for your own home, here are my top tips on dressing a property for sale.







Before staging



After staging





After staging



Before staging

### Choose colours carefully

Stick to on-trend colours but avoid anything too daring – after all, you're trying to appeal to as many buyers as possible. Grey is a good choice as it's less stark than white but still gives a room the feel of a blank canvas. You can then add colour through soft furnishings and artwork.

A word of warning: greys are very difficult to match! If you're painting a wall grey, don't attempt to find a carpet in the same shade. Instead, opt for contrasting flooring such as wooden boards or light beige carpet.

### De-clutter and clean

Make sure your home is free of clutter and clean thoroughly before viewings. It may sound obvious, but you'd be surprised how often this is overlooked! We accumulate a lot of stuff over the years and it can distract buyers. Too many personal trinkets and pictures prevent people from being able to visualise themselves living in a property, and they can mask a room's potential. A de-cluttered home may seem sparse to you, but potential buyers will see serene living space.

### Think about the windows

Let in as much light as you can by cleaning windows (inside and out!), rolling up blinds and replacing very heavy curtains. Natural light is often the first thing people notice when they walk into a room.

### Cover up ugly radiators

If your radiators are beautiful columns or are hidden behind furniture then disregard this tip. If not, it's worth investing in covers. They not only hide large, cheap radiators – a distraction not an attraction – they also act as a focal point and look beautiful when decorated with candles and plants. They can even act as a mantel for artwork or mirrors without eating into valuable floor space.

### Pay attention to smells!

Buy a fragrance diffuser for the hallway to create a welcoming first impression. And it almost goes without saying, but avoid cooking strong-smelling food before a viewing!







Before staging



After staging



### Add plants and flowers

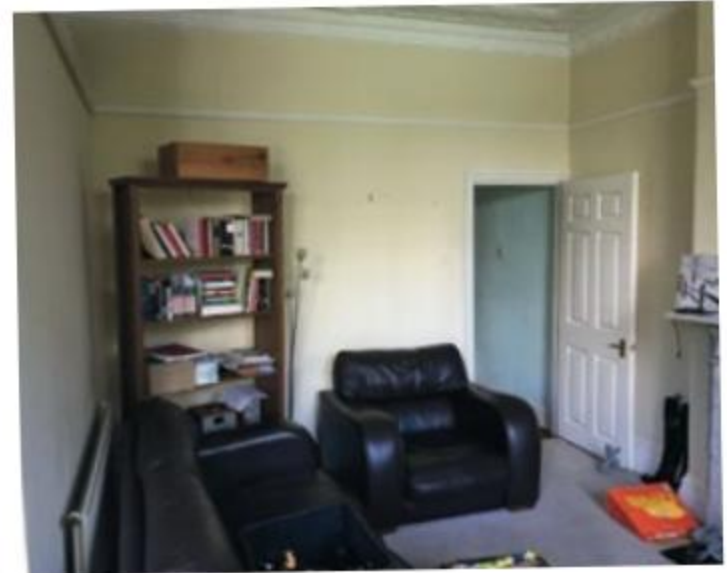
Bring greenery and colour into your home with plants and flowers. They add beauty and interest to a room and make a property feel warm and welcoming.

### Mow the lawn

If you have outside space then make sure it's looking its best. Mow the lawn, remove weeds and paint tired-looking fences and walls. This is particularly key when it comes to front gardens, as curb appeal is all-important.

### Use all areas smartly

Make sure you show off the potential of every area in your home and demonstrate that even awkward corners can have a use. Place a desk or armchair into an alcove to create a cosy spot for working or reading, add storage and boot racks to hallways, and put beds in box rooms to prove that they fit. Most importantly, showcase open-plan areas by demonstrating that they have space for a dining table as well as kitchen units or sofas and chairs. If you're stuck for ideas, go online to find inspiration for tricky nooks.



*Before staging*



Find out how Refine  
Property can help you  
**[refineproperty.com](https://refineproperty.com)**  
07946 417866

*After staging*





## MEET THE TEAM

# HANNAH ROCHE

A definite perk to our job is seeing how people use their homes as a creative outlet. Since joining the team at and relocating to Bristol, I've noticed an artistic streak that runs through the city. Its residents like to speak through art, and many of our vendors give free expression to an imaginative talent in their homes.

When we receive the finished photographs for a new instruction all the team enjoy flicking through the images, and we are inspired by new and unusual ideas. Whilst the general advice in decorating a property for sale is often to go neutral to appeal to the masses, in Bristol it seems the attraction is to the vivid and bold.


My own ideas on the interior-décor 'rules' have been challenged and changed by our vendors - such as how the use of dark wall colours, including black, can create a sophisticated look, or how bright wall tiles can be used in an open-plan living space and not just a kitchen or bathroom. Another had used colour on the ceiling which didn't close-up the space but gave an elegant finish to the room. So whilst it's important to listen to advice when selling a property there is definitely a place for the pieces and colours that you really like too.

One recent image sticks in my mind. It shows a small flat above a shop in the hub of Montpelier - a good first buy, painted in neutral colours with comfortable sofas, that attracted many viewings and a quick sale. Its appeal is captured in a shot taken of the living room where through the window the opposite building's wall can be seen and the tall letters painted by a street artist are cut short to read 'Montp'. There are other images that don't make it to the website such as the art outside the building with birds flying up the wall. I like it because it captures a part of Bristol that shows that colour is always better than a bland, concrete wall and that independence is accepted.

I think the city's culture sways people towards style - something that is inherently personal, and individualism above all is appreciated here. It really is an interesting city to be an estate agent as our enthusiasm for property is often matched by the residents.

**Hannah**  
Office Coordinator



elephant 







# before & after



## An elegant transformation in Bishopston

Once packed with colour and pattern, this Victorian home is now an elegant haven dressed in a sophisticated palette of greys, blues and creams. In the living room, soothing shades and a graceful button-back sofa serve to highlight the many period features, which include a beautiful fireplace inset with ornate tiles. The refined feel continues in the kitchen, where pale woodwork, stone flooring and black granite worktops draw the eye to the flower-filled garden outside; and in the master bedroom, which is dressed in taupes and sumptuous grey velvet.

The muted palette is offset by flashes of exuberance, including a colourful striped carpet on the stairs (see page 34) and a wall papered in a pretty toile de jouy pattern in the second bedroom. There's also a slightly more contemporary air in the loft conversion at the very top of the house, where a sleek grey and white scheme creates a minimalist yet inviting feel. A vintage leather Eames chair sits beneath tall skylights, providing the perfect spot to unwind and gaze over the city rooftops.



Left: Before. Main: After





After







Before

## ***Ideas to borrow***

- If you're lucky enough to have a house full of beautiful period features, try using them as a starting point for your scheme and decorate with colours and textures that show them off to the full
- Mix different fabrics to create an inviting, textural feel. Here, velvet upholstery sits alongside woollen throws and crisp white cotton
- If you're converting your loft, think about ways to work with the sloping ceilings rather than against them. Here they're turned into a feature thanks to clever windows, and the furniture is positioned to maximise the use of space



Sophie

Ruby

Oscar

Stuart





roperty renovation can be stressful and rewarding in equal measure. There's certainly no shortage of challenges along the way, but get it right and you'll end up with a beautiful home that's tailored to your tastes, your needs and your lifestyle.

It's a journey that Bristol couple Stuart and Sophie Johnstone have recently undertaken, transforming a tired Victorian town house in Redland into a stylish and contemporary family home for themselves and their two children. Here, they tell us more about the highs and lows they faced, and share a few words of wisdom for anyone about to embark on their own renovation project.





**What made you fall in love with the property? Could you instantly see its potential?**

"We were looking for a three- or four-bedroom house in Redland, Cotham or Bishopston, with a kitchen-diner and no work needed. After looking for over a year, we'd viewed somewhere in the region of 50 properties, had a dozen offers rejected, and spent so much time on Rightmove that it had begun to feel like a second job!

"On the day we went to view the house, we ended up arriving for our appointment a little early. It sits just by Redland Green, and our son Oscar was busy hunting for conkers while we waited for the estate agent. It was probably at that moment, before we'd even set foot through the door, that I began to see ourselves living there. But when we looked around inside, Sophie's very first reaction was 'no way'! We both loved the location, but neither of us wanted to take on a renovation project. In the end, we just couldn't resist."

**What state was the house in?**

"It had been lived in but it had been poorly maintained in recent years. There were patches of damp in many of the rooms, the kitchen and bathrooms needed replacing, and the central heating and electrics were very outdated."

**What was your vision for the project?**

"We wanted to create a family home with a big kitchen-diner and a play space for Oscar and Ruby, as both of us were fed up of tripping over Lego (although this still happens!).

"With a different property I would have loved an ultra-modern, minimalist look, but faced with two children and a Victorian terrace, we decided to opt for a more traditional style. Our only compromise was the kitchen, where we felt a contemporary scheme wouldn't be out of place."



INSET - BEFORE. BELOW - AFTER.







INSET - BEFORE. TOP - AFTER.

### What work have you carried out?

"Structurally, the house is largely the same as it was when we bought it, although we knocked through the wall between the kitchen and dining room to make a bigger space. The house is on split levels, so we raised the floor in what was the old kitchen (now the dining area) to lessen the drop between the two areas.

"We also fitted new electrics and plumbing, and reconditioned the windows with double-glazed panels. Upstairs, we added an en suite bathroom and walk-in wardrobe by knocking an extra doorway into what would have been the nursery adjacent to the master bedroom, and on the top floor we removed some 1960s partitioning that had been installed when the house was divided into separate flats.

"We initially wanted someone else to manage the project and contacted several building companies, but as the cost steadily climbed we decided that the only way we could afford what we wanted was to handle the work ourselves. We planned to do the

whole thing in six months as, having worked on similar projects in the past, I know how hard it is to motivate yourself to carry on after you've moved in. We were very determined to get it done within that time-frame."

### What were the highs and lows along the way?

"The best part of any renovation project is the sense of achievement. Yes, it was hard work and there were many challenges, especially keeping everything running on time. When a plastering company phoned to say they couldn't do the work they'd been scheduled for, we had to find a replacement at short notice. He ended up being very difficult to work with, and if we hadn't been on such a tight schedule I would have held out for someone better. But I think sometimes you just have to bite your tongue and know it's all about the bigger picture."











INSET - BEFORE. ABOVE - AFTER.



### **What's your favourite space in the finished house?**

"The kitchen. We spend so much time in there, often all doing different things. This morning, for example, Oscar was playing with his Lego on the floor, I was writing, and Sophie was cooking breakfast (we take it in turns to cook at the weekend, in case you're wondering!). And when we look out of the window we can gaze out over Bristol, past the Wills Memorial Building and over to the Dundry Hills. In fact last night there were hot-air balloons floating past, and it doesn't get any more Bristolian than that! Gert lush!"

### **Do you have any future plans for the property?**

"There are always things to do in an old house, but we're happy with how it is now. There is scope to renovate the basement, but I doubt if we ever will.

We have plenty of space and it's actually really useful as storage. Perhaps when the children are teenagers."

### **What advice would you give to people about to start their own renovation project?**

"I'm not sure I know enough to start dispensing advice, but don't feel too daunted; even in the middle of the renovation it wasn't as bad as I expected. Having the budget to live elsewhere while the work was carried out certainly made it much more bearable. It's also worth remembering that a lot of the big 'wow-factor' jobs (decorating, kitchen fitting) happen right at the end, so it can seem for a long time that no progress is being made and it's never going to end. But it does, and now the work is behind us I'm really glad we did it. We've got the house we always wanted in a location we both love!"



MEET THE TEAM  
ALYS DAVIES


**T**he journey continues... Having been with elephant for over three years, I am constantly amazed by the ever-changing adaptations and interpretations of what a home really is. No matter how big or small, new or old a property is, what makes it unique is the individual living in it.

Having come from an interiors background, I have always loved seeing how people bring to life their own visions of home. The great thing about our job is that we get to witness first-hand how people push the boundaries and adapt what could appear on the outside to be a very uniform and traditional property into something unexpected. More importantly, we have the pleasure of coming along for the journey as they move from one home to the next (and sometimes the next after that!). The relationships we build along the way are by far the part of my role that I enjoy most, and I feel privileged to have become friends with some people over a very short period of time.

This Look Book shows how so many Bristol properties have been lovingly restored and transformed by their owners. It also gives an insight into the challenges that many people choose to take on, and how creativity and vision can turn a daunting project into a dream home. The places featured include some of my favourite instructions, and I hope they will be an inspiration to many.

*Alys*

Property Consultant  
and Operations

 elephant homes











ELEPHANT CLIFTON

Elephant Clifton opens autumn 2018! Please get in touch for advice on buying and selling in Clifton, Redland, Cotham, Hotwells, Harbourside, Clifton Wood, Sneyd Park, Westbury Park, Henleaze, Westbury on Trym, Stoke Bishop and Leigh Woods



**Elephant Bishopston**

2 The Promenade,  
Gloucester Road,  
Bristol, BS7 8AL  
0117 3700556  
bishopston@elephantlovesbristol.co.uk

**Elephant Clifton**

37 Princess Victoria St,  
Bristol, BS8 4BX  
0117 3700 557  
clifton@elephantlovesbristol.co.uk  
elephantlovesbristol.co.uk

**elephant**   
ESTATE AGENTS