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ELLE DECORATION

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HOME
JULY 2021

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FAVOURITE
ROOM

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SUMMER OF LOVE

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Growing up

Moving from a small flat in Marylebone to a towering townhouse in Notting Hill has given one London family the space to expand their tastes and horizons

Words **CLARE SARTIN**

Photography **MICHAEL SINCLAIR**

Living room The clients' dream sofa – a yellow 'Chester Moon' by Paola Navone for Baxter – takes centre stage in this light and bright space. Next to it is a Gisela Stiegler floor lamp, which is carved from polystyrene packaging, bought at Marion Friedmann Gallery. An 'Alpaca' rug from The Rug Company helps to soften the salvaged Viennese parquet floor, sourced by Retrouvius, and the travertine coffee table, another find by the London studio ►

W

e wanted something grown-up,' said the owners of this historic London townhouse, pointing to the grand French tapestry, dating back to the 1780s, that hangs by the front door. Spotted on their first shopping trip with Maria Speake, co-founder of interior design, architecture and salvage firm Retrouvius, this piece was something of a surprise choice.

'It's funny. If you think of it in terms of fashion, it's like how in the back of your mind you may have always had a fancy for a pair of Louboutin shoes – something that is slightly out of character but aspirational. I think the tapestry might be a bit like that,' says Maria. 'It represents a touch of richness, age, warmth and texture.' All the things that London-based Retrouvius is renowned for bringing to its projects.

Here, the studio's considered use of vintage and reclaimed pieces makes an impression from the moment you step inside the house. There is immaculate salvaged parquet flooring and pre-loved furniture, specially picked to add layers to this home's character. Even the burnished gold of the Boffi kitchen screams sophistication. 'They wanted something with a stronger identity,' adds Maria, who recalls visiting the family in their previous property, a small 100-square-metre flat in Marylebone, where a clean-lined, white Scandinavian aesthetic ruled.

Hints of that affinity with the pared-back style is evident in the living room, situated on the second floor of this towering home. This is where the clients' dream sofa – a 'Chester Moon' by Paola Navone for Baxter, upholstered in a joyfully sunny yellow – takes centre stage. Retrouvius redesigned the whole space, moving the entrance and introducing an internal window to show off this prized purchase to best effect.

Clever layout changes were also made in the main bedroom. A dressing room has been removed to create a seamless transition into the en-suite bathroom and the door has been raised to the height of the ceiling to add a sense of grandeur. That same wow factor is in vast supply on the children's floor above, where a double-height artist's window ensures the three bedrooms and communal homework area stay light and bright.

Overlooking this space is the final bedroom, untouched since crime novelist and playwright Charles Langbridge Morgan (a blue English Heritage plaque hangs on the exterior) used it as his study some 70 or more years ago. Covered in wood panelling like 'the back of a pirate ship' – as the clients' son describes it – it's a tangible link to the history of this home but not its final treasure. Climb one more flight of stairs (there is a lift!) and you come to the roof terrace. An explosion of lush greenery right in the heart of the capital, this private oasis offers views of landmarks from The Shard to the London Eye.

The project, which started in the spring of 2018 and finished just before the first lockdown last year, has been a long one. 'We almost lost track of the number of phases to it,' laughs Maria. But that time has been a gift, allowing this home's transformation to be gradual and considered – a seamless blend of the modern and the more 'grown-up'. retrovius.com

Living room The artwork above the sofa (left) is by Juliana Dorso.

A 'Meltingpot Multichrome' side table by Dirk Vander Kooij (opposite), available at Rossana Orlandi, sits between a pair of mid-century lounge chairs, reupholstered in a fun dog fabric. The pendant light is the 'Cloud Softlight Mobile' by Stephanie Forsythe and Todd MacAllen for Molo ▶





Snug Reupholstered in Romo fabric, the sofa is a vintage find by Retrouvius, as are the two yellow armchairs. The coffee table, with its supple leather base, was bought from Quindry and the wall tapestry is a mid-century piece sourced from 1st Dibs
Dining room Situated right beside the front door, which is concealed behind curtains, is this 18th-century French verdure (or garden) tapestry, that set the colour scheme for the rest of the ground floor. It was sourced by Retrouvius, as were the dining chairs and the stone-topped table ▶









Salvaged parquet flooring and pre-loved pieces add layers to this home's character

Kitchen Boffi units in a burnished gold finish and 1970s Czech pendant lights, sourced by Retrouvius, give this space a luxurious feel. Dirk Vander Kooij designed the recycled plastic 'Chubby' bar stools – available at Rossana Orlandi. *A Swirl of Thoughts* by Lebanese artist Mazen Khaddaj hangs on the wall, which is painted in 'Moss' by Francesca's Paints

Garden Two 'Crinoline' chairs by Patricia Urquiola for B&B Italia occupy a quiet spot on a patio >





En suite Green and pink marble adds drama to the shower area
Main bedroom 'Nikita' velvet by Lewis & Wood has been used by Retrouvius to reupholster the headboard of the 'Mah Jong' bed by Hans Hopfer and Marco Fumagalli for Roche Bobois. The 'Lix' floor lamp is from Caravane, as is the bedspread ►



NO ORDINARY DAY



A private oasis in the centre of the capital, this roof terrace offers vast city views

Kids' floor The three children's bedrooms are all situated off this incredible double-height space. A metal table from Anthropologie serves as a homework area beneath the textile wallhanging by Catalan artist Josep Grau-Garriga. On the mezzanine above is a freestanding tub, offering amazing views of London. **Roof terrace** A 'Canasta '13' lounger by Patricia Urquiola for B&B Italia is surrounded by lush foliage in this private oasis. **See Stockists page for details** [10](#)



