

The

ENGLISH HOME

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SUMMER LIVING

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GLOBAL AGENDA

Decorating to create a holiday mood at home





Pattern play

Creating a home for her young family, Anna Cross has infused this Victorian townhouse with calming yet playful schemes filled with prints and colour

FEATURE CHARLOTTE DUNFORD PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER

DeVOL kitchen cabinets in Trinity Blue and walls in Fired Earth's Summer Lichen create a serene feeling in the kitchen, while a blind in Felicity Pink by Colefax and Fowler softens the scheme. The bar stools are from Paolo Moschino.



In the sitting room, a Fairfax sofa and Pollyanna armchairs, both by Kingcome, are arranged around a Rockford coffee table from Vaughan Designs. The shape of the Scallop rug from Jennifer Manners is cleverly mirrored in the Soane Britain ceiling light.



'I wanted it to feel homely. Colour and pattern are a part of that for me, and with children, pattern can be much more forgiving'

ABOVE LEFT An Oak Leaf chandelier from Cox London hangs above the grand piano in the sitting room. The cream Ponza wool rug is from Tim Page. ABOVE RIGHT Light streams through the Crittall doors in the lower ground floor living area. A Rose Uniacke sofa provides the perfect place to sit and admire the garden. The engineered oak flooring is by Trunk.

There was no doubt in Anna Cross's mind that her next home would be situated in the peaceful, leafy streets of West London. "I was born around here and I've lived here for the last 10 years, so it's home to me," she says. Surrounded by scenic green spaces, within walking distance of her son's nursery and with a welcoming "community feel", yet in close proximity to the bustle of Central London, it was the perfect place to settle down and raise her growing family.

Anna and her husband previously lived in a smaller, Georgian, terraced house which, while adored by the couple, was not fit for raising children. "We loved it, but for a family, it was really badly set up. It had the principal bedroom at the top and the other bedrooms in the basement," she says. With a clear checklist in

mind, including a separate study for Anna's husband, a musician, to work in, and an open-plan area incorporating the living space, kitchen and garden, the couple began their search. "We had quite specific ideas of what we wanted, so it took us a while to find the right house," Anna adds. Luckily, their search proved fruitful.

The 19th-century Victorian townhouse provided them with everything they had been hoping for, but it would require some work. "The house had been rented before, so it wasn't in the best shape; we knew it was going to be a bit of a project," remembers Anna. For assistance with the renovation she turned to interior designer Jess Lavers, known for her characterful schemes that champion craftsmanship and sustainability. "Jess had worked with my sister ▶



'The decoration is inspired by my grandparents – their house was full of colour but in a soothing way, with eau de Nil, peach and pale blue'

ABOVE LEFT A Beata Heuman Dodo Egg lantern adds a whimsical touch to the main bathroom. The bath is from Bette and the blind is in Punch Paisley by Neisha Crosland for Christopher Farr. ABOVE RIGHT A considered mix of pattern has been used in the guest bedroom, including Thibaut's Julian Blue wallpaper, Mahala Textiles' Ikat Stripe on the headboard and a Blue Calaloo box-pleat lampshade and valance from Alice Palmer & Co.

several pieces of furniture from her grandparents caused Anna to consider the future and the importance of being eco-aware. "I thought about furniture as being quite a lifelong thing; pieces that could be kept for ages and passed down to children," she explains. "There are some that I always loved from my grandparents' house and it's really nice now to have them in our home to enjoy."

Jess's expert knowledge and network of contacts proved invaluable when it came to sourcing, and a strong focus was placed on artisanal British products that utilised environmentally friendly materials and techniques. Anna's dream of having a deVOL kitchen was realised and Jess worked closely with several British makers, one of whom was furniture maker Barney Lee, who crafted the dining table from a single piece of sustainably sourced ash timber, designed to develop a unique patina with many years of wear.

A love of entertaining also guided the design of the house. "We have the upstairs living area, and

it was suggested, at one point, that maybe that could be a dining room, but we very much wanted the kitchen and the dining area to be right next to each other because we cook a lot and that's the way that we entertain," says Anna. The upstairs space remains a sitting room and has been decorated in a more sophisticated manner, ideal for the couple and their friends to retreat to after an evening of wining and dining.

The transformation of the house, which ended up taking two years, has been a long, but rewarding journey. With a second child on the way, Anna is looking forward to enjoying the home for many more years to come. "The downstairs area is exactly what we wanted and it makes life so enjoyable. Our son can play in one corner while we cook, or in summer we can open the doors and he can play in the garden and we can be right there," says Anna. "We definitely planned it so that we can stay here as long as possible." ■