

This life



OPPOSITE:
The Union Jack rug
on the wall is by
Vivienne Westwood
for The Rug Company
THIS PAGE, FROM
TOP LEFT: Joanna
found the kitchen's
'boucherie' sign in a
Paris flea market; her
dog, Dolly; Joanna's
shoe collection; her
bedroom opens on to
a small lounge, with
a bath as a focal
point; her company,
Matrushka, is named
after her Russian dolls



Create, collect & customise

From upcycling to revisiting a project after it's completed, interior designer Joanna Berryman believes design is a constantly evolving process. And that's something her home showcases

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& JESS REFTEL EVAN

I launched my interior design company, Matrushka, named after the Russian stacking dolls, from my lounge. The start-up costs were relatively small and over the years I managed to save enough to set up an office in Kensal Road, north-west London. I love seeing clients get fired up. From concept, to actually implementing the idea, it fills me with so much pride.

My signature style is edgy glamour. I'm fond of using reclaimed objects and upcycling. It's a huge part of what we do as a company – resurrecting old bits of furniture and giving them a new lease of life. I like unlikely mixes, for instance, industrial concrete floors with a French gilt sofa clad in beautiful rose fabric.

I love scouring Kempton or Ardingly markets for antiques. You can find amazing bargains around the UK, but I'll happily travel to find treasures. Paris is a huge source of inspiration and Brussels has wonderful flea markets and curiosity shops.

Creating children's spaces is really fun. I recently completed a lavish nursery for a family in Putney. I used Sandberg wallpaper with lovely muted stripes and childish motifs. I stay away from cutesy and fluffy, making it a room the child can grow into. And I try to use wipeable wall surfaces or have a blackboard wall to encourage creativity. One of my favourite fabric suppliers is Bennison, a great old-school English company. It does wonderful >>





FROM TOP: Joanna spends most of her time in the retro kitchen; her bed combines opulence with rock and roll; she relaxes by walking her dog, Dolly; she believes candles and exotic scents can transform a space



deckchair stripes and stunning florid roses – quintessentially English, but with a quirk.

A lot of what I do is encouraging people to be a little bit braver.

I meet with clients to get an idea of their vision. Then I come up with sketches and mood boards. Because I source everything, or have pieces made, I have built up great connections with suppliers, builders and craftsmen. Designing a home can take up to eight months and, in some cases, the job is ongoing – I am constantly supplying new furniture, or moving pieces around.

I will always be associated with my ex, Guy [Berryman, Coldplay bassist], but that's not a bad thing.

Despite the divorce, we are still very much in each other's lives. Our relationship is less about the marriage and more about the fact we produced this beautiful little girl, Nico [five].

Guy and I were together for about six years before we got married in 2004. I was with him when Coldplay were gigging round Camden. It was overwhelming to see

the transition. You can't help but get wrapped up in the excitement. I don't think we ever really expected the fame they have achieved, but then they're famous as a collective. Guy and I actually had a pretty normal life. But the long periods apart, while he was touring, were tough.

I suffered periods of real insecurity.

You can't help it when your loved one is on stage being adored by thousands. Naively, I read horrible online forums where people would call me fat, unglamorous and question why Guy was with me. It was hard not to read them. Some days I'd make myself so miserable. Guy was wonderful, but in the end it got to me.

We were apart a lot in the early stages of my pregnancy.

It was a hard time. I gave birth to Nico, my boutique, Jezebell, closed and Guy and I separated, all within a few months. It was a difficult decision so soon after Nico was born, but it was as good as divorce can be. First and foremost, Guy and I have a solid friendship.

I was born in Hong Kong and moved to the UK when I was eight, following my parents' divorce.

It was quite harrowing, but it's amazing how resilient you are as a child. At 11, I was sent to boarding school. Not having grown up with a family of siblings, I loved being surrounded by people my age. It was tough for my mum, Monette, though. She was in a new relationship and had just had my sister, Aisha. In the nicest possible way, she needed me out of the way. Of course, I wasn't really aware of that at the time.

My mother is the most formidable Filipino woman.

She was never the most maternal person, but she made up for it by being über glamorous and über fabulous. We were in Hong Kong in the Eighties, after all! It was all about Dior, Chanel and red lipstick. I was a little in awe of her. I know she ignited my passion for travel and fashion.

Boarding school forced me to create my own space. You can't help but want a little bit

of yourself in that environment. Having moved around a lot as a kid, it was also the most stable I'd ever been, so it helped me form an identity for the first time.

Before interior design, I owned a fashion boutique, Jezebell.

It was a beautiful store and we had a wonderful collection of things. I really wanted it to work, but we opened at the wrong time and in the wrong location, in Marylebone, central London. Debts mounted up and we had to close the store in 2007.

For anyone who has been through something traumatic like a separation, it's important to focus on the positive.

You can't assume that, because this horrible thing has happened, the rest of your life will continue in the same vein. I relied heavily on really good friendships, and I've learned to stop thinking too far ahead and be more content in the here and now.

I am much better about looking after myself now.

I've been practising yoga since my mid-twenties. I also love essential oils and unwinding in a bath of fleur d'orange. I'm a firm believer that scent can completely change the way you feel about your home.

I love having my own space. I've been in a relationship for two years. It's serious, but I certainly have no desire to get married again. I like a man who respects my situation, and my boyfriend does. He has also never tried to usurp the position of Nico's daddy. We all understand and respect our roles. It just works.

I don't have any regrets, otherwise I honestly don't think I would be doing what I'm doing.

I'm very proud of my relationship with Guy. It's pretty grown-up. Having been through a divorce as a child, I knew how I *didn't* want it to unfold. Nico really has the best of both of us. I'm aware I've lived a pretty full life, but I'm ready for more. ■
For more information on Matrushka, visit matrushka.co.uk