

HOUSE of the MONTH

# A LITTLE CHAOS....

...is a good thing when it comes to creating a home, says interior designer Jo Berryman, who ranks colour and energy over perfection

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## Home profile THE OWNERS

Jo Berryman, an interior designer, her husband Philip Bergkvist, who runs Encycle, a digital animation studio, and daughters Nico, nine, and Romi, eight months, plus Dolly, the dachshund/shih tzu cross.

**THE PROPERTY** A five-storey townhouse in north London. The ground floor has a living room, office and a library nook. On the lower ground is the kitchen/family room/dining room, garden room and a WC. There's a mezzanine bathroom and master suite on the first floor. Nico's bedroom, a guest room and bathroom are on the second floor, plus a hamman and shower in the loft.

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## LIVING ROOM

'My motto is "Live vivid!", says Jo, 'because colour has a physical effect on how you feel.' This space has evolved with the curved Seventies sofa, re-covered in David Lynch-esque blue velvet. 'A room needs an innate dynamism, so I don't like things to be too built in,' says Jo. 'The bespoke sloping shelving means I can refresh the mood just by moving a few books around.'

**GET THE LOOK** The walls are painted in Charleston Gray, estate emulsion by Farrow & Ball. The ceramic figurines are by Pierre Williams. The sofa (re-upholstered in Lewis & Wood velvet) and table are from Alfies Antique Market. Find a mirror like this at Aldgate Home.





### FAMILY ROOM

The caramel Seventies armchair is 'very glam *Mad Men* whiskey in chunky tumblers', says Jo, yet also practical for family life. **GET THE LOOK** The leather armchair (part of a suite) is by William Andrus for Steelcase Sofas at [mid-centuryonline.com](http://mid-centuryonline.com). The coffee table is from Fears and Kahn.



### OFFICE

'When I was pregnant, this was my company HQ,' says Jo. 'Now I've got a base in town, it's great to reclaim the space.' The office overlooks the dining area below and is flooded with light from the glass extension. **GET THE LOOK** The painting is by Luke Hannam. This is the Leonardo table by Achille Castiglioni for Zanotta at The Conran Shop.

# 'IT'S A THRILLING, EXHILARATING MOMENT,'

says Jo Berryman. With eight-month-old Romy on her hip and nine-year-old Nico due home from school at any moment, she could be talking about motherhood, or even the last-minute preparations for her wedding. Which is in two days' time. In Ibiza. And she hasn't even started packing. But, actually, everything is cool in the Berryman-Bergkvist household.

The excitement the interior designer's talking about is of the creative kind. 'We all know the feeling of flux that gets ideas whizzing around – it's what excites me,' she says. 'In design, there's a constant tension between trying to impose order and just letting things flow.' It's a state familiar to artists, fashion designers and musicians (of which Jo knows a fair few) and one she strives to articulate in her work. 'I try to find the perfect balance between containment and chaos,' she says, smiling. 'It's an interesting law to apply – you get different results every time.'

When it comes to her clients, Jo often has to encourage them to step into the zone: 'I'll urge them to be bold, to live vividly and not be afraid of colour.' But on home turf, she lets the balance sway one way, then the other, switching around furniture and artwork and introducing fresh colours as she sees fit. **Livingetc** last visited this north London space in 2009, but the latest redesign sees an altogether deeper alchemy at work.

When Jo moved into the redbrick townhouse, it had two big benefits: its light and location – close to Nico's father, Coldplay bassist Guy Berryman, who Jo hadn't long split from. It felt like a homely, private oasis. 'I liked that it wasn't overlooked, with just a beautiful little church hall at the back,' says Jo. 'Of an afternoon, you could hear the tinkling of piano keys as girls practised their ballet steps or the mad clackety-clack of their tap shoes.'

Initially, says Jo, 'I just wanted to get in here, do a decorative overhaul and add the glass conservatory. It's only in the last two years, in light of my expanding family, that the time felt right to do more structural work.' Jo collaborated with friend and architect Takero Shimazaki ([t-sa.co.uk](http://t-sa.co.uk)) to create two further extensions at the top and bottom of the house: a loft space and a garden room. 'Now the house has two very contemporary architectural insertions at either end, with intriguing Victorian rooms sandwiched in-between. It makes for a very beautiful, interesting home,' she says.

The south London-based architect helped move the project beyond the conventional Victorian 'up and out' extensions. 'Shimazaki understands small spaces and how to extract as much potential as possible from quirky nooks and crannies,' explains Jo. As a result, the house abounds in surprising 'pockets, tiers and platforms', which reveal themselves as you progress up to the top. The ground floor has a wood balconied library space inserted into a turn in the stairs, while the loft extension room is more of a sun deck than spare room.

'Shimazaki's approach worked as a natural counterbalance to my propensity towards bolder motifs and colours,' says Jo, who found herself gently drawn towards earthy and elemental touches for this remodel: solid fumed oak, *égloimise* (gilded) glass and gleaming base metals and stone. The centrepiece of the kitchen is a monolithic island of golden streaked onyx. 'Not everyone's go-to surface for a kitchen,' Jo jokes.

This gold-standard kitchen actually had a decidedly un-Zen inspiration. 'You'll laugh, but Carmela Soprano was my muse,' admits Jo. 'I adore her! I reckon if Carmela lived in NW3 – and had taste – this is where she'd be cooking pasta *al forno*.'

Colour – Jo's most constant style companion – is threaded through the house. 'None of us could really exist in a house made up of perfect, white glossy surfaces,' she says. 'We need colour to add energy and, sometimes, even a degree of disorder.' For Jo, this comes back to the notion of creative chaos. 'It's similar to the Eastern principle of *wabi sabi*,' she says, 'because there's true beauty in imperfection.'

To prove her point, Jo glances up at the huge photograph in the dining room, a vivid vision of a forest, with huge leaves and serpentine branches crisscrossed in an organic mishmash. 'You only have to look at nature to see beauty isn't about bland symmetry,' she says. 'It's about a moment of freedom and flow. Capturing the imperfectly beautiful – that's what I'm aiming for.' See more of Jo Berryman Studio's work at [joberryman.com](http://joberryman.com)



### DINING ROOM

This space is part of the double-height glazed extension at the back of the house – its cantilevered doors are draped in English lace. 'Yes, we forfeited a bit of the garden, but it's more than made up for in terms of extra space and light,' says Jo. The room is slightly raised, creating 'a theatrical dining platform – which is a lot of fun.'

**GET THE LOOK** The dining tables and chairs are by Hans J Wegner for Carl Hansen & Son. The lace panels are from Within4Walls. The forest photograph is by Jack Burton, Jo's sister's boyfriend.





## KITCHEN

Eglomisé mirrors and gold fittings create a glam backdrop for Jo's 'pièce de résistance' – the onyx island. 'It's monumental, elemental, exquisite. And the pair of mini "full-moon" lights are the perfect addition,' says Jo.

**GET THE LOOK** The kitchen is by Jo Berryman Studio, with the églomisé splashback and kick boards by Dominic Schuster and the white Ball pendant lamps by Michael Anastassiades. The Shear wall light is by Bert Frank. The Boucherie sign was bought at the Yvonne flea market in Paris. The range cooker is by Mercury. The framed artwork, above, includes photographs by Jack Burton.

'PHILIP  
JOKES I  
CHOSE THIS  
ISLAND  
BECAUSE ITS  
COLOURS  
ARE THE  
SAME AS  
DOLLY'S  
COAT. HE  
COULD BE  
RIGHT!'





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## Home truths

**JO, WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SCENT?** Copal incense (designed to purify the energy of spaces). **YOUR HANDBAG ESSENTIALS INCLUDE...** My iPhone 6 Plus, fine liner, house keys, Laura Mercier, lip HydraTint in Berry, Kiehl's Muskeau de toilette spray, Bose noise-cancelling headphones and a Nuk pacifier for Romy. **AND YOUR DESERT ISLAND DISC?** Yo-Yo Ma playing Bach's Cello Suites would be uplifting. **HOW DO YOU RELAX?** Climbing trees and doing *décapage* with Nico. **ON SUNDAY MORNINGS YOU'LL BE FOUND...** Up bright and early, walking Dolly on Hampstead Heath, rain or shine. **FAVOURITE COLOUR AT THE MOMENT?** Yves Klein Blue (as seen on the sofas).

## GARDEN ROOM

'This is the only space, where we can shut the door and feel completely cosseted,' says Jo. 'Using a large-scale wallpaper pattern in a confined space feels super-indulgent. It also puts me in mind of cowhides, but it's actually hand-painted on to Japanese rice paper – that makes it more of an artistic, vegan cowhide. I guess...'  
**GET THE LOOK** *The Ink Blot* wallpaper is by Porter & Teleo. The sofa is by Ligne Roset. The table was an eBay find.



## HALLWAY ↑

The period features look as if they were dipped in blue frosted-icing and contrast with the vermilion runner. Beyond lies a library – one of the many 'pockets of space' inserted into the build. 'With a Victorian house, you need to be creative, opening it up wherever possible,' says Jo. **GET THE LOOK** This is St Giles Blue estate emulsion by Farrow & Ball. The chandelier is by CTO Lighting. The terrarium is from Hermetica London.

## MASTER SUITE

'I wanted to strike a balance between decadence and robustness in here. This is a grown-up space and I've used art as a strong element to cut up the walls.' **GET THE LOOK** The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Teresa's Green estate emulsion. The artwork is Bill Holding's rework of Peter Saville's Unknown Pleasures album cover for Joy Division. The boat sculpture is by Andrew Hewish.

## MASTER SUITE

'The woodwork shade is surprisingly soporific and works well with the smoky wallpaper and darker, drama-laden touches, such as the wall lamps,' says Jo. 'I like proper fabrics and textures: I'm not a froufrou girl.' **GET THE LOOK** The headboard is upholstered in a Romo tweed. The wallpaper is by Zoffany. The bedside table is from Circus. The Shear wall light is by Bert Frank. Jo made the cushions with Pierre Frey's Venus cotton in Nuage.

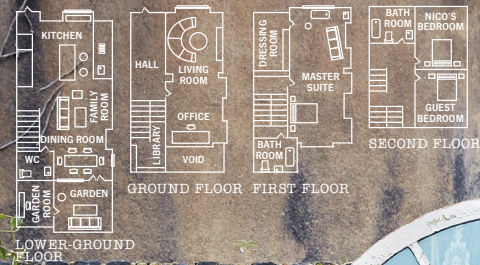
## MASTER SUITE

'I thought, "Forget having a poky en suite, let's really go to town with a decadent dressing and bathing space". But it also works as a parlour – an extra living room where Romy and Nico hang out with us.' **GET THE LOOK** The bathtub is from The Albion Bath Company. The chandelier is from Sweetpea & Willow. The sofa is from Circus. This is the Gold Rings rug by David Rockwell for The Rug Company.



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## The blueprint



## COURTYARD

'This is a townhouse courtyard' in Zone 2 and it's not pretending to be anything more," says Jo. "I think it works because I've approached it as simply another space in the home. The fibreglass Chesterfield gets piled with cushions when the sun's out."

**GET THE LOOK** The sofa was made by Gray Concrete.

## Livingetc loves

**ITS RICH, VELVET TONES**

and aged mirror glass – old-school textures given a fresh setting.

**THE RANCH STYLE** in the garden room – very desert-motel chic.

**THE SEVENTIES ONYX**, gold and brass feeling glam all over again.

**THE DOUBLE-HEIGHT DINING SPACE** that centres the house's layout and throws light into every corner.

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