

Laid back:
The kitchen

THE HOUSE OF FUN

Oliver Stallwood meets an interior designer with an eclectic sense of style

HOW many houses have a sense of humour? This charming mews on a cobbled street in Belsize Park does, says high-profile interior designer Jo Berryman, who may well be one of the most enthusiastic people in property.

'For me it feels harmonious, edgy, super-functional; but an uplifting and fun home,' she says excitedly. 'The house has a sense of humour – you don't need to be so serious. Lighten up, everybody.'

So, what do we have? The mews has apparently had a turbulent life – most seem to – having gone from being a twee inner-city abode, to being ultra modernised and masculinised, to a few years ago being bought by Kate and Fraser Anderson, who have a son, Fergus, and a daughter, Niamh.

The property had been made all sharp angles and straight edges,

seemingly at odds with its quaint and comfortable sanctuary feel in the heart of London. Now it features swinging chairs, art walls, blotting paper wallpaper, intriguing art, bedrooms that convert to playrooms, and quirky touches everywhere – this is a building that has rediscovered its fun side. Kate says: 'We wanted to add some colour, life and warmth to what was a white box.' Before they renovated it was a sea of magnolia, with slabs of frosted glass – it was 'bad Noughties', says Jo.

Marrying the overly contemporary interior with the classical feel of the rest of the building comes naturally to Jo. She calls her style a 'future classic aesthetic'. 'I like traditional pieces interspersed with modern, with lots of colour. I'm not afraid to use it. A lot of people shy away from colour in their homes, but I encourage it. It's a great way to spruce up a place.'

Her vision for the house was

inspired by Wes Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, which she had seen prior to the job. 'I had just seen the film and fell in love with it. It seemed like an appropriate way to infuse and add colour to their home, but in a subdued fashion. They wanted colour, and there is something about that off-kilter muted pallet Wes does well, that I thought would work.'

The house itself is best described as 'upside down' – the living area is all upstairs, whereas the bedrooms are in the basement. The two children's bedrooms were opened up into one space and now have a concertina partition so that the room can serve as both a giant playroom and still two sleeping areas. Jo lightened both the downstairs and upstairs, while introducing colour.

'Our priority was to turn two impractical and under-used lower ground-floor rooms into two rooms for the children and a spare room,' explains Kate. The

kitchen, which is backed by a glass wall with floating rectangular planters, has a laid-back, calming feel and is the main hub of the house. It features bold blotting paper wallpaper by US company Porter Teleo and the turquoise chairs give it a pop edge.

One of the unique features Jo installed, which reflects her approach to making each home bespoke, is the art wall. 'It's inspired by Gaudi,' she says. 'Either it was going to look amazing or sh*tte, so I'm pleased they bought it and it worked so well.'

It is dotted with antlers, artworks by Alastair Mackie and knick knacks. 'That was quite risqué, but it worked and they love it. It's a great way to personalise a house.'

She continues: 'I don't do this tone-on-tone matching everything. Each home is very bespoke and you are investing a lot of time in these people's stories and it has to reflect that. I like it to be a theatre of their life – it is, there is a lot

happening in life and you have to support that.'

While loved by the family, the antlers are not appreciated by everyone. Kate says: 'The antlers are however causing an unexpected problem. They are situated at the top of the living-room wall, very close to a glass roof and birds keep bombing the glass with clods of earth in the late afternoon – this never happened before the antlers were installed!'

One of the standout rooms is actually the main bathroom. Jo has installed a hanging rattan swing chair in the room, so it becomes a space to relax and even socialise.

'We also love our bathroom,' says Kate. 'It is another example of a room which works in different ways. It is a very calming room in which to have a bath, until one of the children wants to come in for a swing, that is.'

So, are they happy? Of course they are. 'The house works so much better now when people come to stay or just pop over,' adds Kate. 'But it is also a relaxing and fun house to be in when it is just the four of us.'

■ joberryman.com



BEFORE AND AFTER...

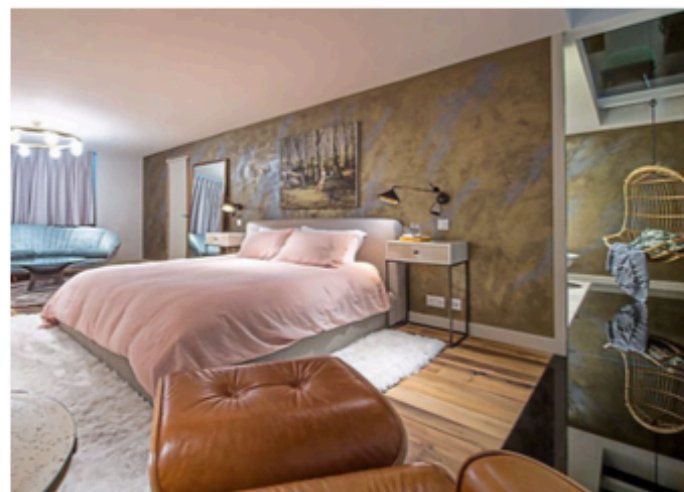


Adding pops of colour instantly revives a room



Mix traditional and modern pieces and introduce yet more colour

Picture perfect:
Jo used art to
personalise the house



Bed down: The bedrooms are located in the basement of the house



Eat in: Colours are bold and fun



Typically bespoke: The furnishings



Chill out: Bedrooms also convert to play areas to add humour

GET THE LOOK... ECLECTIC VIBE



1 Dulux Endurance Lost Lake £17 for 2.5l, homebase.co.uk **2** Mercutio wallpaper £20 a roll, grahambrown.com **3** Stellar base gloss table £299, dwell.co.uk **4** Pendant lamp £41.95, lampandlight.co.uk **5** Galet Nobu pebble washbasin £149, tikamoon.co.uk