

Warmth & whimsy



AN ECLECTIC MIX OF LONDON CHARM AND SOUTH AFRICAN FLAIR GIVE THIS APARTMENT VIBRANCY, FRIVOLITY AND PLENTY OF PERSONALITY

Story BRITTANY SMITH Photography CHRIS WAKEFIELD



BACKGROUND (OPPOSITE) SOANE BRITAIN 'OLD FLAX' FABRIC IN CORAL
ACTUAL PAINT COLOURS MAY VARY ON APPLICATION

LIVING COLOUR Rosy hues welcome visitors into this apartment in north London. “The brief was to create a home that was playful, colourful and whimsical,” shares interior designer Sean Symington. From the door, finished in Edward Bulmer Paint Sang De Boeuf, to the Ian Mankin ‘Peony Ticking’ fabric on the blinds and curtain, the result is lots of fun. Antiques are a grounding force in the sitting room (opposite), where Sean’s dog Penny the cavapoochon sits on a velvet sofa. The 19th-century portrait was sourced from Vinterior. >

On any given day,

London's notoriously grey weather can put a dampener on even the most boisterous personality. But in the north of the city, one apartment in a block of Edwardian townhouses is filled with enough colour to lift anyone's spirits. When Sean Symington, director of Sean Symington Design, was first contacted by the owner in September 2021, he knew he wanted to pay homage to her South African background, love for Britain plus her bold personality. While a total redecoration was on the table, the bones of the two-bedroom, one-bathroom abode were strong. "She loved the unconventional character – the unevenness of the floor and lack of cornicing on the ceilings," says Sean. "We decided to play this up and work with this rather than fight against it by layering prints and colour throughout each room."

As such, reinventing and repurposing was key, with antiques showcased alongside bespoke items for a seamless blending of styles. "We loved the friction of clashing prints and varying eras of furniture," Sean explains. "A mid-century armchair next to a French antique makes us swoon! In addition to this, we had so much fun playing with colour and pattern which is threaded throughout the apartment."

With so many hues and patterns layered throughout, creating a common thread and sense of flow was pivotal. Sean did this by repeating tones, such as the terracotta on the front door, which also appears in the kitchen. Even within the same space, something as simple as adding a green chair with a pink cushion and a pink sofa with a green cushion, helps to create cohesion and calm. "The link of pinks and greens was important in order for the house to feel organised and considered," says Sean.

Patterns also play an important role. A pop of animal print in each room helps achieve a consistent personality while African rugs, which the owner had inherited, introduce her homeland into the scheme. For Sean, an awareness of scale helped to avoid the finished space being overwhelming. "Pairing a large print next to a small print creates visual interest without competing or clashing," he outlines.

After six months, the project was complete, with the apartment evoking a unique style Sean describes as "grandmillennial chic", which the owner adores. "It is smothered with pretty classic prints that are reminiscent of the past, yet it feels fresh and vibrant," he beams. "It truly reflects the owner's personal style."

KITCHEN Sean made a big impact in a compact space, custom painting the floor in a checkerboard pattern using Farrow & Ball's Mahogany and Pointing. The kitchen walls are the same shade of Edward Bulmer Paint as the front door while the brass 'Stella' pendant light by Pooky features in both spaces as well, creating consistency. The sink skirt and blind fabric is made from Pierre Frey 'Greuze'. The flounce of the florals next to the 'Iconic Leopard' Schumacher fabric on the dining chairs is delightful. >

BACKGROUND (THIS PAGE) LEE JOFA, TAPLOWPRINT, FABRIC IN JUNIPER/PETA, ELLIOTT CLARKE
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INSIDE STORY
Sean Symington, designer

What is your design ethos?

Sean: "More is more and less is a bore! I love a room that tells a story and reflects the personality of the person who lives there."

Biggest splurge?

"The camel painting by Studio Ham."

Does the owner have a favourite room?

"She loves and uses every room. She doesn't have a television and doesn't want to host guests ... this is why the second bedroom became a study. She enjoys reading in the sitting room or drinking a glass of wine in the bath."

Is this her forever home?

"This is her home but she is looking for a country place ... we can't wait to decorate!" >

DRAWING ROOM Bold and playful, with intricate and gilded details, this room perfectly balances the varied influences in the home. The 19th-century French mirror and marble fireplace, both from Vinterior, add grandeur while frivolous fun comes in the form of the animalistic Colefax & Fowler 'Wilde' fabric adorning the vintage armchair. Pink hues are the hero in this space with the sofa.com 'Snowdrop' sofa, in Watermelon velvet, the decorative antique plates, Fermoie-clad wall light shades and the Schumacher 'Cassis Floral' table skirt and cushion cover. >

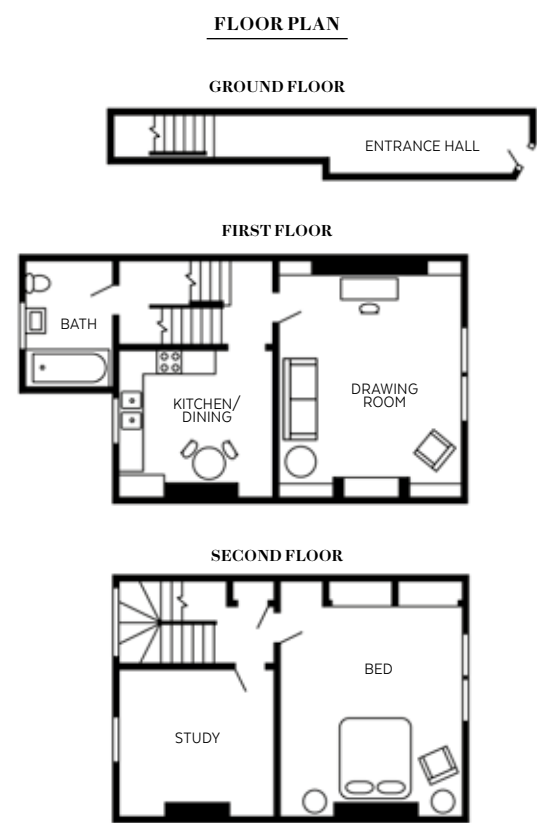




“WE REALLY *pushed the boundaries* WITH THE OWNER IN CREATING AN *eclectic AND deeply personal* INTERIOR” SEAN

BATHROOM Skirting the sink in a coordinating print to the wallpaper, Soane’s ‘Etched Pineapple’ in Watermelon, was a perfect alternative to replacing the washbasin. **STUDY** Warm hues paint a rich picture in the bedroom-turned-study. Farrow & Ball’s India Yellow complements the camel painting by Studio Ham. Camilla Hampton shelves finished in Ral Cranberry are matched with the ‘Vaughan’ lampshade while the antique desk from Vinterior adds gravitas. **BEDROOM** Serene green envelops with the Morris & Co ‘Boughs’ wallpaper, Nicholas Haslam ‘Balcony Stripe’ fabric on the half tester bed, ‘Green Callaloo’ lampshade from Alice Palmer and a Penny Morrison green palm tree plate on the wall.

**WE LOVE...
*decorative skirts***
“We opted to use skirts under sinks and console tables in order to add warmth and whimsy to the rooms,” shares Sean. “We didn’t want the expense of replacing the washbasin in the bathroom, so skirting it in a coordinating print to the wallpaper was the right idea. It’s bespoke, homey and bohemian.” For similar, visit elliottclarke.com.au or head to soane.co.uk >



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Source book
 Design: Sean Symington
 Design, seansymington.com.

HALLWAY “The hallway was so narrow and had a massive radiator,” says Sean. “We loved the idea of building a shelf and skirting the bottom of it in order to conceal the radiator and make the hall feel furnished.” The console, made bespoke using Camilla Hampton ‘Coco’ moulding painted in Farrow & Ball London Clay, is complete with Soane ‘Coral Chestnut’ fabric. South African motifs abound in this entrance, from the rug that the owner inherited in her homeland to the impressive gallery wall, filled with prints of native animals by Robert Jacob Gordon.



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GET *the* LOOK

1. Scallop plate in Pink, \$250/17-piece dining set, In The Round House.
2. Italian Mid-century brass mirror, \$1950, The Vault Sydney.
3. E F Chapman ‘Moravian Star’ pendant, from \$2024, The Montauk Lighting Co.
4. Spode ‘Blue Italian’ dinner plate, \$79.95, David Jones.
5. Kayla Bay ‘Natural Jasmine’ jute rug, \$699/320cm x 230cm, Temple & Webster.
6. Dulux Wash & Wear Low Sheen paint in Annular, \$112.50/4L.
7. Dulux Wash & Wear Low Sheen paint in Corn Kernel, \$112.50/4L.
8. Giraffe botanic antique art print, \$129/50cm x 70cm (unframed), Art House Co.
9. Scallop rattan lampshade in Natural, \$519/set of 2, Notbrand.
10. Schumacher ‘Tiger Palm’ fabric in Delft, \$405/m, The Fabric Editors.
11. Keys Road Designs ‘Wesley’ rattan dining chair, \$1129/set of 2, Temple & Webster.
12. ‘Quietude Candles’ Brielle’ pillar candle, \$60, Hardtofind.
13. ‘Ariana’ ginger jar, \$119.95, C’est Bien Collection.
14. Ceramic jug, \$32.95, Alfresco Emporium.
15. ‘Luigi’ patchwork cushion in Cherry, \$95/50cm x 50cm, Sage x Clare.