

**SITTING ROOM** Punchy patterns and textural shapes give furniture characterful appeal. Rubic wall light and shade; Bamboozle table lamp, all Pooky. Roman blind in Oswin Stripe fabric, Romo





# BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL

Set on a leafy cobbled lane in a friendly community, Alexandra Rishworth's Cotswolds home offers her the perfect country bolthole





Alexandra Rishworth was looking for a home in the West Country, close to her father and sister, where she could escape from London at the weekends. And it was a house in Tetbury that most appealed. With its pubs and restaurants, the charming market town would keep her London-born-

and-bred partner happy, while offering the peace and community that Alexandra craved. 'The house was in perfectly good condition when I bought it, although a little tired,' Alexandra explains. She wanted the décor to be much more vibrant. Her London home is calm and soothing, a little 'vanilla' she feels, and she wanted her country bolthole to be the opposite. 'I wanted it to be fun and somewhere to entertain,' she says.

Alexandra was delighted to find local interior designer, Sean Symington, who understood her requirements. 'I found choosing paint colours very hard. Sean also introduced me to colour and pattern, with GP&J Baker and Schumacher fabrics and wallpapers. I wanted the interior to be bold but not too bright, so it was a hard balance to strike. The whole journey was a real education actually.'

Sean started Alexandra's project by opening up the interior spaces, removing a few of the internal doors and replacing some with Crittall options to allow more light to flow. He also installed tongue-and-groove panelling in both bathrooms and the kitchen. 'This was very cost effective compared to the expense of tiling and gives the house a lovely country feel,' says Alexandra. Other additions were attractive window seats in the sitting room, the master bedroom and the shower room, with contrast piping to add to the vibrant result.

'We stripped out all the carpets, replacing them with attractive large scale herringbone oak parquet downstairs,' Alexandra recalls. 'Upstairs, again we removed all the carpets and replaced them with sisal, with a thick underlay which makes it feel more luxurious underfoot and is also important for warmth.'

The kitchen and bathrooms received the most radical treatment. 'I researched these rooms very thoroughly, looking at magazines and Instagram,' Alexandra shares. 'I sent Sean loads of ideas that I had saved, and we put a bold scheme

together for both bathrooms and the kitchen.' Budget constraints limited the kitchen alterations a little, and Alexandra kept the existing hob and oven, 'I would love an Aga,' she admits. 'But the expense felt hard to justify for a part-time home.'

Family heirlooms can be found throughout the house. 'It was really important for me to find a country escape where I could transport my mum's beautiful antiques where they wouldn't look out of place, and I could continue to feel her around me,' Alexandra comments. 'She was the most incredible person and would have loved Tetbury.'

The whole area is steeped in history; Tetbury is on the site of an ancient hillfort, built around an Anglo-Saxon monastery that dates back to 681. It became an important market town for Cotswolds wool and yarn in the Middle Ages and continues to prosper today. There is an abundance of independent, specialist shops and of course lots of antiques shops to enjoy and explore. King Charles's favourite Highgrove residence is nearby, so there are many long-standing royal connections in the area.

There is a small garden at the back which Alexandra is yet to tackle. 'I am really looking forward to it though; my mum was a very keen and knowledgeable gardener, and I am delighted that I am going to be able to retrieve some cuttings and specimens from her garden and replant them here as a wonderful way to keep her memory alive.'

## AT HOME WITH

**OWNER** Alexandra Rishworth works in finance and divides her time between her base in London, which she shares with her partner, and her cottage in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, to which they both love to escape at weekends.

**HOUSE** A Grade II listed, three bedroom, 18th-century cottage.



**SITTING ROOM** 'The bamboo drinks trolley belonged to my boyfriend's late father and works so well here in our country home,' says Alexandra. **Sofa**, sofa.com; upholstered in Dusty Rose cotton matt velvet







**KITCHEN** Alexandra kept the existing cabinetry and limestone flooring, but painted the **cabinets** in Red Earth by Farrow & Ball and added aged brass handles. **Splashback** painted in Stoney Ground, Farrow & Ball

**EXTERIOR** Alexandra's home sits in a row of weaver's cottages on a charming set of cobbled mediaeval steps. It was in great condition but needed a décor update, which she did with help from local interior designer Sean





**KITCHEN** 'We used wall lights and kept the ceiling lights minimal because my boyfriend is 6ft 4in. We didn't want the already cottagey ceilings of the house to come down any lower!' **Wall lights**, Vaughan. **Lampshades**, Pooky



A photograph of a window seat in a bedroom. The window is a white-framed double-hung style with six panes. It is flanked by floor-length curtains with a red and beige damask pattern. Below the window is a built-in window seat with a matching damask fabric cushion. Three pillows are arranged on the seat: two large ones with a colorful bird and floral pattern, and a smaller rectangular one with a blue and white damask pattern. The floor is covered in a light-colored, textured carpet.

**MAIN BEDROOM** Sean has used the same fabric for the curtains, an upholstered curtain rail and the window seat, for a feeling of cosiness and continuity. **Curtains** in Pollen Trail, GP&J Baker



‘We added so many beautiful details, such as the contrast piping on the cushions and upholstery, which isn’t immediately obvious but ultimately adds to the vibrant result’



**MAIN BEDROOM** A beautiful cocktail of contrasting colours and patterns sits at the head of the bed. Bespoke **headboard** upholstered in Pollen Trail, GP&J Baker, edged with a light blue piping



**BATHROOM** The bath was painted in a warming shade, complimenting the bold wallpaper. Madame Ziggie wallpaper, Ottoline. Millbrook bath, The Cast Iron Bath Company; painted in Fruit Fool, Farrow & Ball



## ALEXANDRA'S COUNTRY LIFE

**SIMPLE PLEASURES** 'I always feel a sense of calm when I'm in Tetbury, it's so quiet at night and you get to wake up to amazing birdsong each morning.'

**WHERE TO VISIT** 'Westonbirt Arboretum ([forestryengland.uk/westonbirt-the-national-arboretum](http://forestryengland.uk/westonbirt-the-national-arboretum)) is a wonderful tree garden with a treetop walkway and has over 2,000 different species from around the world.'

**SHOP AT** 'Martin & Malthouse ([martinandmalthouse.co.uk](http://martinandmalthouse.co.uk)) which stocks a tasty selection of baked goods, local cheeses, meats and fine wines too.'

**GO FOR A MEAL AT** 'Lola and Co Tapas ([lolaandco.co.uk](http://lolaandco.co.uk)) for traditional Spanish tapas and Mediterranean dishes in a charmingly cosy setting.'







FEATURE ALISON GIBB PHOTOGRAPHS CHRIS WAKEFIELD

**BEDROOM** The bespoke **headboard** is upholstered in Marwell in Aqua/Red, GP&J Baker. The soft plum ceramic base of the bedside **light** is from India Jane, topped with a Phoebe Bluebell **shade** by Patton House

**BEDROOM** The spare bedroom doubles up as a study and includes a built-in desk. Rushmere **wallpaper** in Aqua, Colefax & Fowler. Sean got the bamboo **chairs** at auction and they were **painted** in Fruit Fool, Farrow & Ball