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AUGUST 2020

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DRAMA CLASS

Rich colours, bold art and sleek Italian furniture come together in a glamorous family home

WORDS JO LEEVERS PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES BALSTON



Natalya Nesterova is used to introducing luxurious finishes and dramatic touches into other people's projects, but the rich colour scheme she's threaded through her own home sprang from the house itself. 'When we pulled off the plasterboard covering up some of the original fireplaces, we discovered beautiful decorative tiles from the 1870s in shades of mustard and deep plum. So we chose mustard as the accent colour for the whole home,' she says with a smile.

But while Natalya, who runs Nesterova Interior Design, has used jewel shades as a way to unite the spaces of her Victorian London home, she hasn't held back on creating darker, moodier backdrops and adding sleek, contemporary furniture too. 'I like statements, whether that be large-format art, beautiful Italian seating or shots of bright colour,' she says.

Natalya's love of the brave and the bold also complements her husband Alessandro's style. 'As an architect, he naturally gravitates towards a rather more sober and serious look and likes neutral greys and blacks. But then I come in and add colour and some more adventurous touches to bring a bit of life. Together, we make the best team.'

There's also a skilled merging of old and new in this home. The beautiful Victorian fireplace tiles that Natalya and Alessandro uncovered in their bedroom and bathroom are now framed by surrounds in a more contemporary pattern. 'We used geometric panelling, so you get the contrast of old and new,' explains Natalya, who then added West Elm cupboards on either side of the fireplace with fronts in a similarly intricate pattern.

The couple maintained the original cornicing in the living room and dining area, but extended into the side return to create a larger kitchen that has contemporary rooflights. An internal window links the two ground-floor spaces, and supersized herringbone flooring runs from the hallway down into the living and dining room at the back of the house. The couple also extended into the loft, creating their son's bedroom, ▶

HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Natalya Nesterova, an interior designer, her husband Alessandro Mangiavacchi, an architect, and their son Dante, eight

THE PROPERTY

A three-bedroom Victorian townhouse in south-east London

PRICE

£860,000

WHAT IT'S WORTH NOW

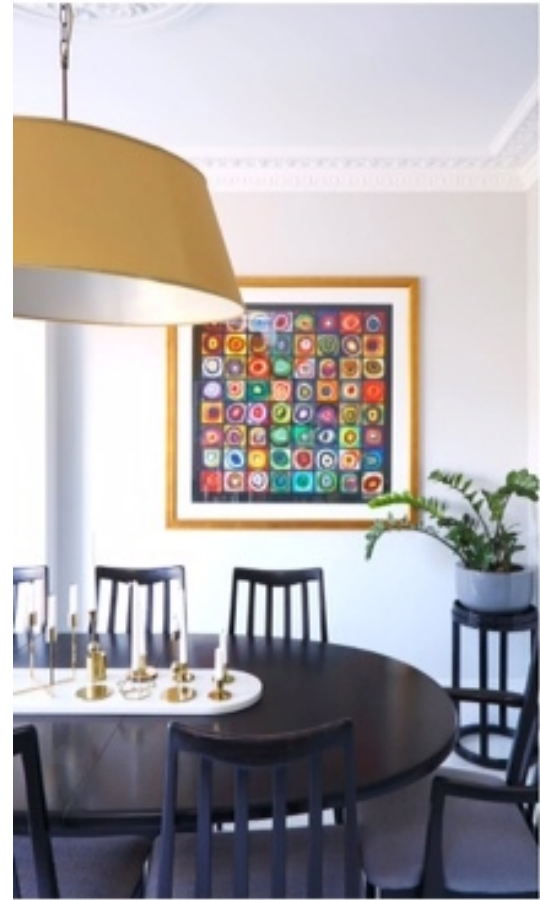
£1,300,000



EXTERIOR
Painted in Farrow & Ball's Babouche, the front door hints at the property's striking interior

LIVING AREA
Hits of yellow from the mustard-coloured TK Maxx cushions liven up a timeless Flexform sofa for a winning mix of designer and high street style





DINING AREA

A vintage G Plan dining set by Ercol bought on Ebay has been revived with a darker stain and fresh upholstery for the chairs.

LIVING ROOM

Natalya combined two Ikea lampshades to create a chic light fitting that fits perfectly in this elegant scheme

KITCHEN

This flowing space sees traditional curves set against crisp, contemporary cabinetry by Farnham Furnishers. The bar stools are from Cult Furniture

GUEST BEDROOM

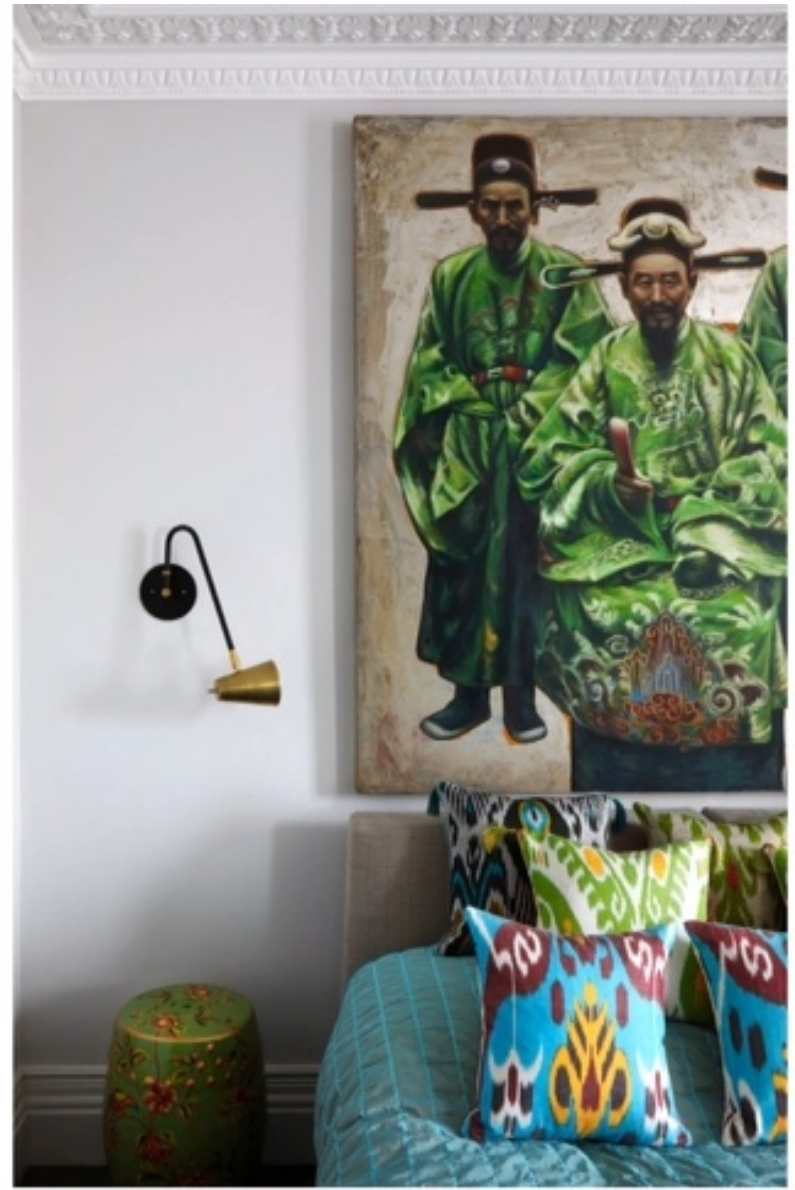
Vibrant shades in an artwork by Marcel Renaud from John-Richard are reflected in a throw from Uzbekistan, colourful scatter cushions and an ornate side table

BATHROOM

Marble floor tiles from Topps Tiles set a luxurious note, complemented by a Lusso Stone bath and bespoke storage

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE

WHERE TO BUY PAGE



'I like statements, whether that be Italian seating, large-format art or shots of colour'



an office, and a shower room. Natalya made a point of using local tradespeople and suppliers, as she had already built up a good relationship with them. However, she says, it's crucial to keep communicating at all stages of a renovation or build. 'It's all too easy to assume that what you have in mind is clear from the first conversation, but I always get each tradesperson to confirm in writing exactly what they're doing before work starts,' she explains. 'Even if they think you're being pedantic, it benefits both sides in the long run.'

As the work here continued, their budget for furniture and fittings started to shrink, so Natalya came up with some creative, good value solutions. Raised beds in the garden were edged with sections of fence panels, and a plain console in the hallway was customised with doors from Superfront.

Then there's the centrepiece light in the living room, which is formed from two Ikea paper shades to make a more substantial pendant. 'All my dream light fittings or chandeliers were too expensive, but I did like the floaty shape of this simple Ikea design,' she says. 'To make it less flimsy I simply put



two together and fluffed them up. The effect is impressive – and nobody guesses where it's from until I tell them!'

But usually, understated furniture by Italian brands such as B&B Italia, Flexform and Minotti are Natalya's favourites. 'The quality is excellent and the shapes are timeless. I think it's worth paying more for pieces like a sofa that you'll see and use every day,' she explains.

The finishing touches in this home include artworks that add colour and provide a constant source of inspiration. While Natalya loves visiting events such as the Affordable Art Fair to see work by up- and-coming artists, it's a simple montage of family photographs that takes pride of place in the family's extension, hanging above the sofa. 'I put together pictures of us that were taken on holiday or remind us of special times. It's relaxing to be able to look at these images of family life – especially when work gets hectic for us both. They create a positive atmosphere,' she says. 'It's good to remember that, however beautiful the objects in your home, it is the people who live in it who are most important.'

For inspiration, go to nesterovainteriors.com