



MEET SOPHIE

My home...

ABOUT ME My name is Sophie Buckingham-Daley, 37, and I design and make enamel jewellery (sophie.buckingham.co.uk). I live here with my husband Alex, a project manager, and our daughter, Eve, five.

MY HOME A three-bedroom Art-Deco terraced house in Cardiff, built in 1925. We bought the property in September 2010 and moved in three months later.

WHEN I BOUGHT IT The house was dark, dingy and dated with no central heating and the ground floor was badly laid out.

AND NOW It's bright and breezy, with lots of colour. Our new extension has made it a much more family-friendly home, too. I've combined modern style with lots of upcycled furniture for a quirky, eclectic look, and have allowed the house's original period features to really stand out.

STYLE TIP Use old furniture in a new way, such as the sewing machine table that is now our desk.



FOR WHERE TO SHOP
GUIDE SEE PAGE 123

'I came round in the end'

It wasn't love at first sight for *Stylist at Home* Sophie, 37, from Cardiff, when she bought her 1920s home, but once she brightened its dark interior, she could appreciate its true character



BRIGHT & AIRY

'Extending across the back of the house has literally doubled our downstairs living space. Our new large kitchen-diner is perfect for family life'

STYLE TIP

'Jazz up a wooden dining table with colourful chairs'

STYLISH SECONDS

'I bought our dining table on eBay for just £60, while a mix of chairs from Marks & Spencer complete the colourful look'



When we first set eyes on the inside of this house I couldn't see its potential at all, despite its fabulous original features,' says Sophie of her three-bedroom home in Cardiff. 'I said I didn't want to live here despite liking the area and street, which was odd as I can normally see past this sort of thing.'

We hadn't planned on buying a house that needed lots of building work, but eventually I couldn't overlook the fact that this place had bags of character. The original parquet flooring, built-in cabinets and stained-glass windows really drew us in. Our previous house – a small, first-time buyer's terrace just a few streets away – sold in just two weeks, so we didn't have long to think about it. We just went for it! Now that all the work is done we know we made the right decision.

Making a home

This is the first place that Alex and I have bought together so it is really special for us. We've worked hard to make it our own, although we spent a bit more than we planned to after factoring the rewiring, extension and decorating into our budget. The house was very dark and dingy and it took a lot more effort to make it liveable than we'd first anticipated. It also took a little longer than planned – nearly three months – to complete the house but I think that the changes we've made have transformed it for the better.

As soon as we were given the keys, we started the building work but couldn't live there while it was going on. We did consider renting, but my mum and dad live just outside Cardiff and offered to >>

TIME TO RELAX

'The berry-coloured sofa from Marks & Spencer was a great find in the sale, while the pink Moroccan pouffe keeps the look relaxed - important in an open-plan area'



Make it

Sew a glam velvet bobble cushion
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6 We didn't have much furniture so we looked for bargain pieces in charity shops and car-boot sales, creating a quirky look

» put us up in their house. It was a great help and I don't think we would have pulled it off without their support. Plus there's nothing like a cooked dinner to come home to when you've been steaming wallpaper off all day!

First of all, we extended at the back to create a modern family kitchen-diner. The previous kitchen was incredibly narrow but the new open-plan layout, with smart units from Homebase, has created the relaxed feel we were after. Plus, a set of new skylights literally flood the area with light. We wanted to save money so we did a lot of the work ourselves. Alex dug the foundations and completed the bricklaying with the help of a young apprentice, before contractors came in to complete the job.

Making changes

Next on our priority list was having central heating installed throughout the house, and then we turned our attention to the two living rooms. They both had 1950s tiled fireplaces, which weren't in keeping with the house, so we ripped them out. We sourced a surround and fire to match the

age of the property for one of the living rooms and left the other one empty. It's now where Eve stores her toys and dolls. We also took out the old, bright purple bathroom and fitted a new one, before moving on to the decoration. This took us another two months and it was December before we could move in, but it was well worth the wait.

Bargain hunting

We went for an off-white shade for the walls to keep the house looking spacious and so that we could get used to the new proportions before adding our favourite colours. I chose teal for the chimney breast in the living room and a fab green shade for the kitchen - it shows off the painting that had once belonged to Alex's parents.

We didn't have much furniture so we bought it from car-boot sales and secondhand shops - I have also found amazing bits and pieces in charity shops, such as the British Heart Foundation and on eBay. For instance, I bought an old sewing machine table »

SIDE SHOW

'The vintage sideboard cost just £45 from a charity shop. I use it to display a variety of accessories - it's one of my favourite pieces'



FOCAL POINT

'We've made a feature of the fireplace by painting it in 1829 Natural Teal Chalky Emulsion by Craig & Rose; the rest of the room is a neutral shade'

GREAT IDEA

'Small leather pouffes can double up as an extra seat for kids'

WORK SPACE

'This old sewing table, found on eBay, fits the alcove in our sitting room perfectly and blends in with our eclectic look'

Do it

Upcycle old pieces of furniture
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Get Sophie's style in 3 BUYS



- 1 **STRIKING SHADE** Teal Touch matt emulsion, £24.29 for 2.5ltr, Dulux
- 2 **NATURE'S WAY** Hare artwork, £35, Lizzes Beautiful Art at Etsy
- 3 **EXOTIC TASTE** Leather pouffe in Pink, £99, Moroccan Bazaar

Stylists at Home



BEVERLEY SAYS:

Sophie's house looks and feels really welcoming. I love her sewing table - it's a great vintage buy that's been brought bang up to date.



MIXING IT UP

'The wrought-iron bed and wooden furniture make for a great combination of old and new'

Buy it
Choose from
10 bright
duvet sets
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PRETTY DISPLAY

'I love finding one-off pieces, such as this dressing table, which came from a charity shop'

6 *This house is already full of personality, thanks to its period features – we just added our own ideas here and there* 9

» for £80 – it makes a great alternative to a conventional desk. We use the funky 1960s hairdresser's chair, which was from my dad's salon, at the desk so we have kept a great memento from the family business, too.

Defining spaces

In the newly extended kitchen-diner, we added seagrass matting on the floor, but elsewhere the original parquet was sanded and waxed to bring it back to life. We kept the front living room as our place to relax and watch TV, while the back of the house seems to be the place where everyone congregates, whether we're entertaining or Eve is playing while I'm working. It's lovely to be able to have such a sociable area.

Upstairs, apart from replacing the bathroom and sanding the floors, it was just a matter of a lick of paint to bring everything up to scratch. We thought carefully about the furniture and added extra storage in Eve's room.

Our bedroom is more of a mix: my style is quite eclectic and I take inspiration

from shops such as Anthropologie and Liberty, as well as browsing flea markets and antiques stores.

Personal style

I think that by abandoning the interior design rule book, you're more likely to furnish your house so that it says something about you. As a designer-maker I'm surrounded by gorgeous products, but if I limited myself to just one style or colour when it came to buying things for my home, I'd find it really restricting and I wouldn't buy half the things I love. I also never try to match anything, whether I'm looking for furniture or accessories.

The great thing about the house is that it's already so full of personality thanks to existing period features – it was just a matter of adding our own stamp with quirky touches here and there.

I like to think we've successfully managed to make the most of our house's character while at the same time creating a great backdrop for our quirky furniture. Plus, there's now lots more space to add bits and pieces to for years to come.'

Stylists at Home



JOSIE SAYS:

- Sophie has created a look that's filled with individuality and is much kinder to the environment, thanks to her secondhand buys. •

WORDS & STYLING NICOLA WILKES
PHOTOGRAPHS GWENAN MURPHY



COLOUR SPLASH

'Eve's bedroom is painted in Marshmallow by Wickes and is finished off with a patterned rug from Ikea'

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