

The sofas in the formal sitting room were commissioned by K&H Design and measured to fit the scale of the room perfectly. The designers also made sure that the cushions looked "well-loved and sat-upon" so that the sofas appeared to be well-established pieces. The occasional chairs are covered in a rich red fabric from Guy Goodfellow.

REGENCY *Retreat*

A sensitive blend of historic and contemporary pieces has made this extended period property a restful and much-loved family sanctuary

FEATURE SUZANNA LE GROVE PHOTOGRAPHS SIMON BROWN



‘The eclectic mix embellishes the original architecture of the house and makes the space feel natural and real to us’

ABOVE A neat path lined with yew trees leads to the entrance of the Georgian part of the house. Carolina and Paolo use the historic rooms here for formal entertaining. **ABOVE RIGHT** In the formal sitting room an imposing antique painting sourced from Brownrigg adds an air of grandeur. Red and gold details underline the smart mood. For a similar club fender, try Acres Farm.

For Carolina and Paolo Pasquali, the idea of transforming their expansive country retreat within an ambitious timescale – just five months – became even more challenging due to their desire to furnish the interior in a characterful style that would appear to have evolved over many years. As the decoration of the Georgian country house was to be different to that of their contemporary-style townhouses, they collaborated with Katie Glaister and Henry Miller-Robinson, co-founders of K&H Design, to source the perfect blend of classic and contemporary pieces.

The Oxfordshire property had been in Carolina and Paolo’s sights for years. “We have friends in the village and had known and loved this house since we were first married,” explains Carolina. “Back then, it was on the market, but, because we both worked and travelled extensively, we managed our temptation and did not make an offer.” When the property was for sale again five years later, the couple had two young

children and felt it would provide a much-needed weekend oasis from the frenetic pace of city living. “The house called to us. It is spacious yet manageable, incredibly peaceful and offers us such a fabulous contrast to our London life. It sits within an idyllic hamlet and the gardens are beautiful – structured in places and rambling in others, with prolific rose gardens and fruit trees,” Carolina says.

A former rectory, the Grade II listed house was sold by the church in 1960 to a family who sympathetically extended the property to almost double its original size. “Sadly, about 10 years ago the centre of the house was ravaged by fire,” Carolina explains. “However, on the positive side the resulting restoration work was carried out to such an exacting standard that its bones are now finer than when it was originally built.” Once the couple had exchanged contracts, things began to move fast. “We showed K&H Design the house and asked them to start work on the concept design,” Carolina continues. “Then, ▶

The soft white on the walls in the breakfast room is Silver White by Edward Bulmer Natural Paint. The dining table is the Draper’s Table by Rose Uniacke with woven seat chairs from Niels Otto Møller. “K&H introduced us to Astier de Villatte china, which we love as simple decoration in the glass-fronted cupboards,” says Carolina.



ABOVE K&H Design created the bespoke desk in the library by adding a leather-inset top to separately sourced legs. The chair is from Julian Chichester and the rug is from The Rug Company. The striking tone of Farrow and Ball's Stiffkey Blue gives the built-in bookcases a new lease of life. Lampshades from Samarkand Design, tie in with the warming accents of red and orange in the room.

upon completion in September, we gave them the keys on the proviso they completely redecorated and made the house ready for us to move into for Christmas."

Katie explains that a rigid schedule was put in place to achieve Carolina and Paolo's vision of an elegant yet comfortable interior within the given time frame. "Sanding and re-staining the floorboards was the critical element to the scheme," she says. "It needed to be done to create a sophisticated muted tone, which was key to the foundations of the design, but it probably put more pressure than anything on the deadline." Then all the walls were repainted in Edward Bulmer Natural Paint's historically inspired hues. The choice of colour palette was important to Carolina and Paolo, with a neutral backdrop judiciously used in both the original Georgian part of the house and the extension to sympathetically link the two halves.

The restrained palette is imbued with warmth and variety through accent colours and layers of tonal patterns. In several of the rooms, the core shades are intensified with stronger colour schemes, such as the

handsome blue theme of the downstairs library. "The house divides naturally," Katie explains. "The new wing has a fresher, contemporary take for the young family, whereas in the formal Georgian reception rooms we used a more classical palette."

Carolina and Paolo are discerning art collectors, which was pivotal to choosing the colour schemes. "Generally, the principle in every room has been to provide a sober and understated platform for the art and antiques that we curated," Henry explains. Alongside outstanding pieces of traditional and contemporary artwork, each scheme is imaginatively orchestrated with a cohesive blend of styles. Some of the rooms lean towards a relaxed yet pretty country style – such as the twin guest bedroom, where florals, stripes and check fabrics sit alongside furnishings with distressed patinas. Other rooms have a restrained, classic mood – as in the master bedroom, where sumptuous velvets and hand-woven silks are blended with understated linen to create an exquisitely contrasting yet harmonious effect. ▶



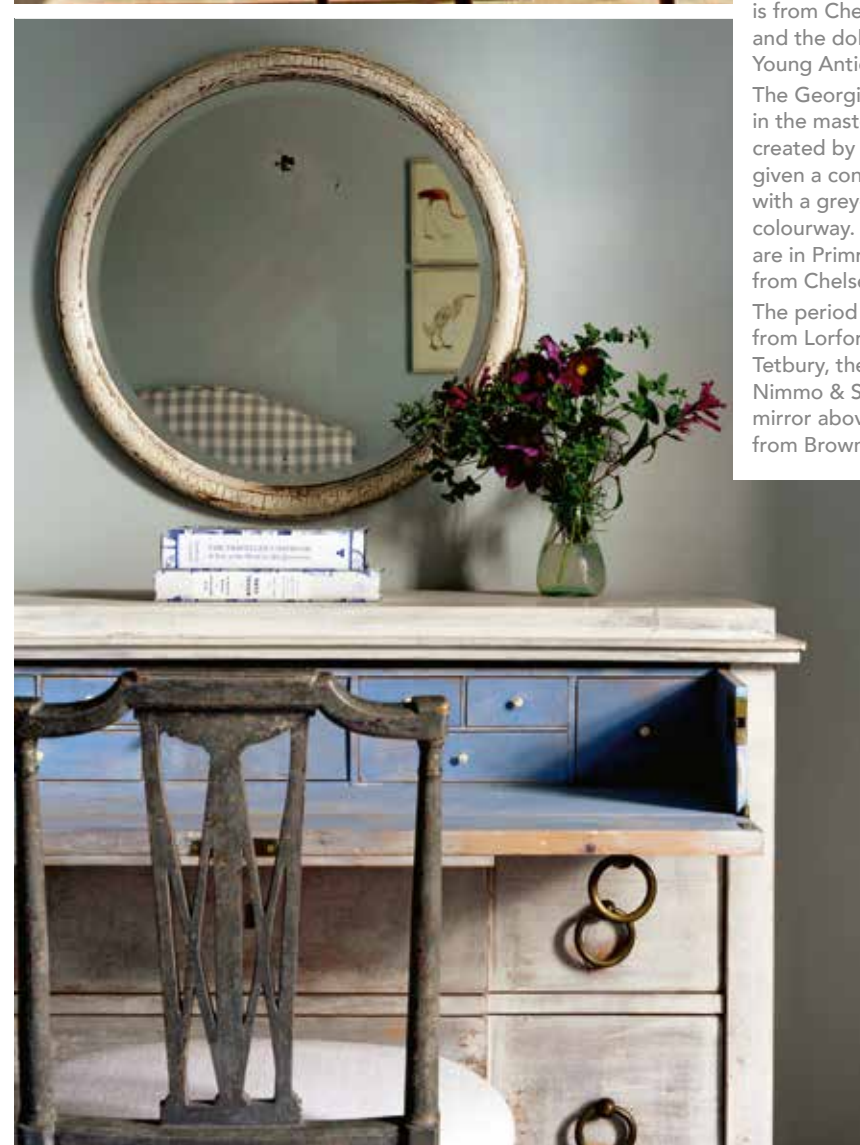
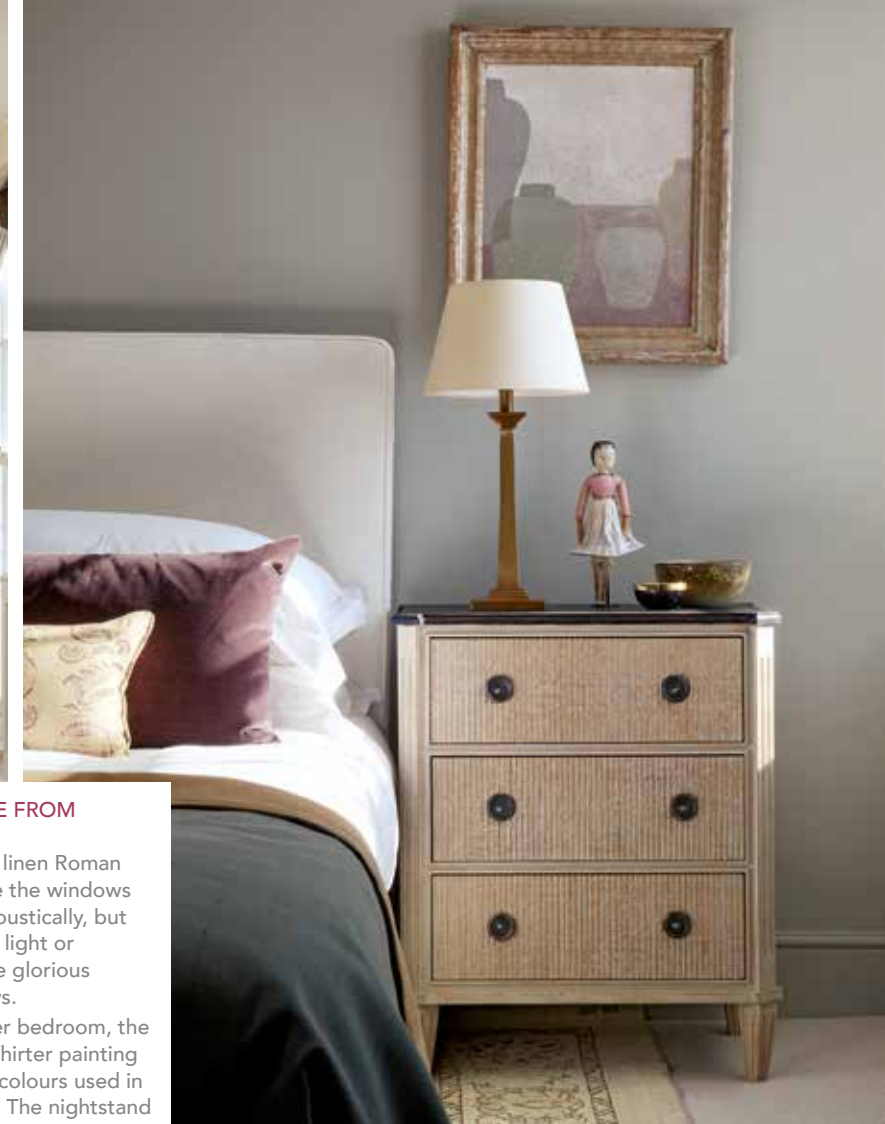
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

The relaxed linen Roman blinds frame the windows and help acoustically, but do not steal light or interrupt the glorious garden views.

In the master bedroom, the James McWhirter painting reflects the colours used in the scheme. The nightstand is from Chelsea Textiles and the doll from Robert Young Antiques.

The Georgian-style pelmet in the master bedroom was created by K&H Design and given a contemporary feel with a grey-and-white colourway. The curtains are in Primrose & Carnation from Chelsea Textiles.

The period bureau came from Lorforde's Antiques in Tetbury, the chair is from Nimmo & Spooner and the mirror above the desk is from Brownrigg.



As the grand master bedroom, used by Carolina's parents, has a low ceiling, the carpet was replaced with wood flooring from Chris Holt Flooring to enhance the feeling of space. The top side of bedspread is Ralph Lauren's Aquitaine Sheer and the reverse de Le Cuona's Heritage Pearl.



'It needed to be a relaxing home for all generations'

"The eclectic mix embellishes the original architecture of the house and makes the space feel natural and real to us," Carolina says. "As we were escaping London at weekends, we wanted to feel we were coming to our country house but that it wasn't too stuffy; with two young children, it needed to be a relaxing home for all generations."

With the short deadline, lead times for sourcing and altering items were demanding. "For example, in the breakfast room we decided to use the highly collectible Niels Otto Møller dining chairs," Henry explains. "The first challenge was finding 14 chairs that were the same. The second challenge was the fact that mid-century dining chairs are typically 3cm lower than today's dining chairs. We paired these chairs with an extra-long version of the Rose Uniacke Draper's Table and gave the manufacturer only just enough time to reduce the height of the table too." ▶

LEFT This reading corner is a light and bright spot year round. For maximum comfort, K&H Design had the occasional chair made bespoke to the height of the client. The recessed bookshelves are painted in Edward Bulmer Natural Paint's Drab Green to contrast with Farrow & Ball's Shadow White on the walls.



ABOVE This guest bedroom was designed with bachelor guests in mind and has a contemporary mood.

The bench is from Chelsea Textiles and is upholstered in Neapolitan fabric by John Boyd Textiles and the headboard is in Craigie Hill Silver by The Isle Mill.

RIGHT The walls in this guest bedroom are in Ariel Blue by Edward Bulmer Natural Paint and are teamed with cushions by Hodson McKenzie and headboards covered in fabric by Ian Mankin. The lampshade and bird pictures above it are both from Oka.

Whether they were ensuring sofa and armchair dimensions were tailored exactly to their clients' size or changing the colour of a Chelsea Textiles fabric in a matter of days, Katie and Henry were determined not to let the time frame detract from achieving the right look. "We succeeded in our mission but it is never something we would recommend. Nonetheless, there was a real energy throughout this project and it was great fun," says Henry. As time goes on, the family will add to the interiors, but many of the treasures sourced by Katie and Henry already have sentimental significance thanks to their eye for detail: "I particularly love the Folk Art Dala horse and doll they sourced from Robert Young Antiques for my bedroom - I feel those could have travelled with me since childhood," says Carolina.

Since the project's completion, the family have used the house exactly as they imagined, with just one unexpected surprise, as Carolina explains. "Perhaps the one space that Katie and Henry encouraged us to use more than we thought we would is the bar," she explains. "Located at the heart of the house, through a simple makeover this space has become a modern-day butler's pantry by day and a cocktail bar by night." It is this perfect understanding between client and designer that has resulted in a cherished country home that combines contemporary functionality with grand Georgian form. ■

