

'This cottage is TELLING OUR STORY'

In the process of updating her 18th-century home, this owner found herself unexpectedly drawn to bright patterns and lively colours, bringing warmth and joy into the hubbub of their cosy family space

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HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Kelly Pike, a book publicist (folkpublicrelations.co.uk), her husband Henry, a solicitor, and children Rafferty, Liberty and Rufus

THE PROPERTY

A four-bedroom, 18th-century, Grade II-listed cottage in Bristol with a 1960s extension

KITCHEN

Homeowner Kelly (pictured) chose Little Greene's Hopper paint for the island and skirting, which coordinates perfectly with the Lucky Leaf wallpaper by Common Room. Victoria stools, Cult Furniture. Cobb pendant light, Original BTC

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It comes as no surprise that Kelly Pike, a book publicist, loves stories. Especially the ones that reach back in time – the kind you might hear, for example, when buying a period property, such as the Grade II-listed home she owns with her husband Henry. 'Local people have shared their childhood memories of this cottage and told us about a group of spinster ladies who lived here at one time, which I thought was lovely,' says Kelly. 'From the moment we moved in, I felt we needed to add our own story and had an urge to pour warmth and colour into rooms in a way I hadn't done in previous homes.'

Kelly and Henry's cottage is situated on the edge of Bristol, set within a village surrounded by farmland, yet walkable to the city centre. It offered the perfect solution to the couple's conflicting ideas about where to buy. 'I'm a city girl from a council estate in Basingstoke and Henry grew up in a nearby village,' Kelly explains. 'I didn't want to be in an isolated spot, and Henry was keen to give our kids the same experience he'd had of growing up in this area. We both fell in love with the location even before we fell in love with the cottage.'

To help sell the property, the interiors had been painted white, but the rooms were nevertheless tired. The cottage was built in 1744 and

because it's listed the couple weren't able to make any architectural changes. However, they were happy with the downstairs living space and the four good-sized bedrooms, which they'd struggled to find in other period properties. 'Of course, there are drawbacks,' admits Kelly. 'We don't have enough space to eat in the kitchen, but I felt we had a responsibility to love the cottage as it was in order to preserve the past.'

One necessary update was to change the ensuite and family bathroom. Since the couple weren't allowed to drill holes into the original wall without permission, they couldn't change the layout, but they were able to replace what was already there. 'While doing these projects, I noticed my decorating style had changed,' remarks Kelly. 'I found myself making bold decisions with colour and pattern, such as teaming a playful wallpaper with geometric tiles in our ensuite, which created a look I instantly loved.'

With the bathrooms finished, Kelly slowly began decorating during pockets of time between work and family life. Her overriding aim was to keep the cottage vibes without it looking twee. 'I like tension in my interiors,' she says, 'so I mixed together things you'd expect to see in



EXTERIOR

Opposite, top The picture-perfect cottage was built in 1744

HALLWAY

Opposite, below left and right Exposed stone walls, timber joinery and tiled floors evoke traditional country style.

DINING ROOM

This page Sandberg's Raphael Blue wallpaper is a cheerful backdrop for family meals, as well as Kelly's work calls. The bench seat is upholstered with Rapture & Wright's Moorish Maze

SHELVES

'I have so many books and couldn't wait to put them on display,' says book publicist Kelly about her shelving



a country cottage with unexpected contemporary elements, such as a vintage bench stool upholstered in a modern abstract print. I think an intentional clash makes interiors far more interesting.'

Other examples of this approach can be seen in a traditional display of wall plates featuring contemporary designs, an old fashioned bedstead styled with modern wall art, and blue joinery teamed with a 1940s floral wallpaper. 'Beautiful wallpapers featuring modern prints with a traditional vibe are my weakness. I especially love the ones by Cole & Son,' she says. 'My excuse is that a good quality brand is worth the money in a house with wonky walls!'

Kelly's colour palette leans into reddish browns and blues, and a variety of these tones appear throughout the cottage, with a pop of scarlet or orange to uplift and energise. This mix is perfectly illustrated in the colourful landing. 'In our previous home, we decorated these transitional spaces last and it meant that for ages the house never looked finished,' she recalls. 'So this time I prioritised the hall and landing and chose a vibrant wallpaper that makes me feel happy.'

When it came to furniture, Kelly felt the mid-century pieces they owned looked out of place in the old cottage, so she embarked on a mission to track down vintage items on Facebook Marketplace. Now, nearly all the furniture in the cottage is secondhand, including a wardrobe passed on from a grandmother: 'I love old pieces much more than new. The patina is the emblem of their use and holds all their stories.'

Kelly still has rooms to decorate, but she's delighted with the progress so far and pleased that the family has settled well into the village. 'My kids play cricket in the lane and buy eggs from the honesty box at the nearby farm – and I can still nip into the centre of Bristol on foot,' she concludes. 'As we've learned more about the history of our cottage, I've fallen more in love with living here. We're creating a home that reflects our lives. This is our story about *our* time living here.'



LIVING ROOM

Opposite and this page

Farrow & Ball's Lulworth Blue has been used to colour drench the walls, woodwork and fire surround. The La Dolce sofa from Loaf is one of the few pieces of furniture in the cottage. Bubble chandelier, Dowsing & Reynolds

GUEST BEDROOM

The wide vertical stripes of Sandberg's Magnus wallpaper create a striking backdrop



'GOOD-QUALITY WALLPAPER IS WORTH THE MONEY IN A HOUSE WITH WONKY WALLS'

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MAIN BEDROOM

A blue striped rug from Dunelm contrasts with the room's warm terracotta colours, and the throw at the end of the bed, from End Clothing, was inspired by American folk quilts. Josef Frank Eldblomman wallpaper, Svenskt Tenn



BATHROOMS

Left and this picture A bold use of colour and pattern includes the mix of Cole & Son's playful Frutto Proibito wallpaper with geometric tiles from Claybrook Studio



GARDEN

The rambling outside space is as charming and playful as the cottage's interior

