

A FRESH APPROACH

A luxe look reminiscent of a smart hotel is achieved in Stuart Cousins and Kevin Newitt's newly extended home

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH | STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR



LIVING AREA
The alcove shelving is painted to match the kitchen cupboards. Shelves in French Grey intelligent eggshell, £66 for 2.5ltr, Little Greene. Jarris cushions, £219 each, Missoni Home at Amara



KITCHEN-DINER
'The island is designed around a single slab of marble-effect quartz,' says Stuart. Shaker kitchen, £40,000, Simon Benjamin. Island in Royal Navy intelligent eggshell, £66 for 2.5ltr, Little Greene



KITCHEN-DINER
The staggered extension draws light from all directions, creating a variety of zones. Chichester table, £975, Neptune. Rothschild & Bickers pendants, £485 each, Eleni Shiarlis



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY 1950s detached house
LOCATION East Sussex
ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner/living area, utility room, study, cloakroom, three bedrooms (two en suite), two dressing rooms, bathroom
PURCHASED 2016
PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'A bungalow we'd renovated in West Sussex,' says Stuart.



Over the years Stuart Cousins and Kevin Newitt have enjoyed renovating various homes, but this large 1950s detached house created a new challenge. The project came about over brunch one day in Brighton. 'Kevin and I had moved to a village near here 15 years before,' Stuart says. 'But we really enjoyed the buzz of the city that day and I liked the idea of moving back to the area.'

After settling on nearby Hove, the couple found this property. 'I thought the interior was rather gloomy,' says Stuart, 'but we fell in love with the huge garden.'

The couple moved in in June 2016, landscaping the garden first and then waiting while they saved up to do the rest of the work. 'This five-bedroom house was a daunting project,' says Stuart. 'I decided that a classic look, with the feel of a smart boutique hotel, would sit well with the architecture and wouldn't date.'

He worked out a new layout, observing how the light fell throughout the day. A study, master bedroom and a hankering for a dressing room and bathroom each, meant losing two first floor bedrooms. Downstairs needed rethinking, too, to solve the problem of lack of light, so Stuart hired local architects, Morton Scarr to help.

'They produced a fantastic design for the new extension, creating distinct zones for the kitchen, dining and living areas with lots of glazing to give us natural light

SITTING ROOM
 'Our winter lounge has the feel of a traditional club,' says Stuart. 'Chocolate brown walls were a daring choice but look very effective.' Walls in Walnut matt emulsion, £38 for 2.5ltr, Neptune



DESIGN TIP 'Investing in a lighting designer was such a good decision and the results have been one of the success stories in our project'

SITTING ROOM
 'We already had this painting and knew the colours would work perfectly here,' says Stuart. McCow by Sam Fenner is similar, £150, Art Gallery. Zoe's side table, £140, igigi



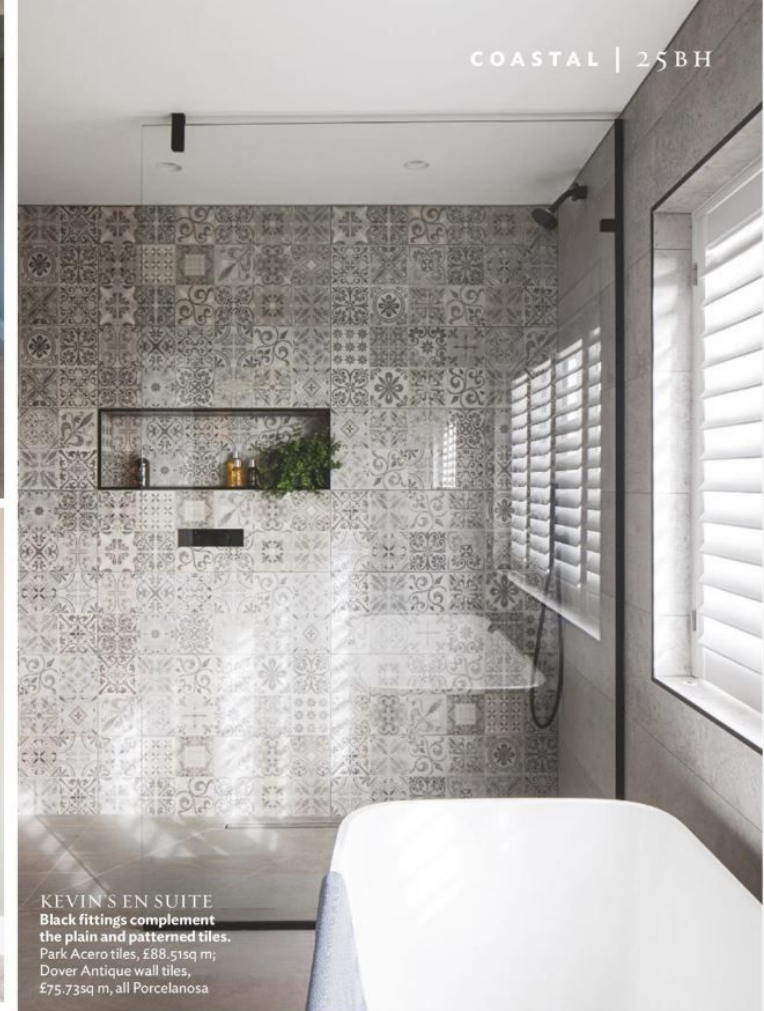
FOR STOCKISTS GO TO WHERE TO BUY



MASTER BEDROOM
 Well-planned lighting creates the feel of a luxury hotel room. Azumi Reader light, £150, Astro Lighting. Try Circle mirror, £100, John Lewis & Partners



KEVIN'S EN SUITE
 A 3D design tool was used to check how the layout worked. Vicenza Piccolo bath, £1,332, Leaneys of Lancing



KEVIN'S EN SUITE
 Black fittings complement the plain and patterned tiles. Park Acero tiles, £88.51sq m; Dover Antique wall tiles, £75.73sq m, all Porcelanosa

all day.' Lighting designer Eleni Shiarlis proved invaluable, helping the couple think about how they would use each room and display art and ornaments. By the time the builder Ross Murley from Minton Young started work in September 2018, Stuart had the design details nailed. 'I knew where the bed or the sofa would go and Eleni's plans detailed all the lights and switches in the right places,' he says. 'Kevin and I didn't know how the scheme would come together until we moved in, but the builders understood the need for the finer details and its end result is incredible.' The couple settled on a Shaker-style kitchen, and found local furniture maker Simon Benjamin to build it. 'He worked

off our plans and measured-up when the extension shell was finished,' says Stuart. Fitted elements, such as wardrobes and shelves were custom-made by Hixon Bespoke, while other pieces of furniture, like Neptune's dining table, chairs and stools, were repainted to match the new scheme: taupe neutrals with hints of warmth in dark blues and brown. 'I love Kelly Hoppen's calm and classic signature taupe as it works well with my tendency towards traditional styles, like our gentleman's club-inspired sitting room, and the marble and taps in my bathroom,' says Stuart. 'Two years of planning was worth it. Our home has a lovely warm and relaxing feel that's luxurious without being ostentatious.' 65