

# Double vision

*Knocking two houses into one created the space Louise Winters needed for herself and her four teenage children*

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## KITCHEN

'The modern, clean, functional look is based on the kitchen we had in Hong Kong,' says Louise. 'White is a good choice because it doesn't fight with the bright colours in the rest of the room.'

Matt white handleless kitchen, City Kitchen Centre. Hereford Staggered Cluster light in Smoke, Fritz Fryer. Weathered oak counter stools, Cox & Cox, are similar

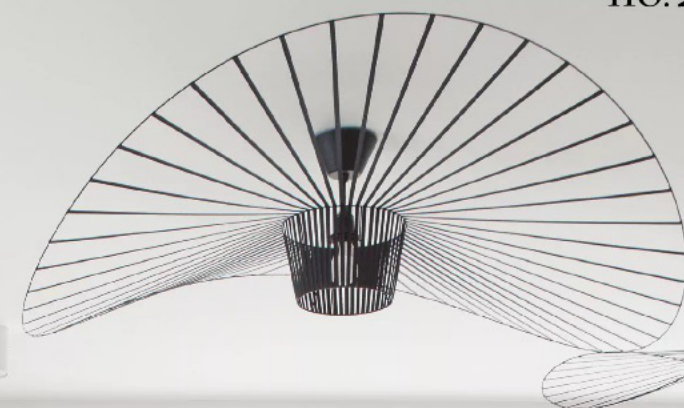
## HOME TRUTHS

### THE PROPERTY

Four-storey terraced townhouse

**ROOMS** Kitchen-dining-sitting room, games room, craft room, cinema room, boot room, utility room, cloakroom, seven bedrooms, seven bathrooms, dressing room

**LOCATION** Kent



## DINING AREA

The sweeping curved shapes in the pendant lights are echoed in the chairs and contrast with the room's rectangular table, artwork and rug, adding visual interest to the scheme.

Petite Friture Vertigo pendant light, Finnish Design Shop. ET634/LID dining table, Venjakob. Try Bobby chairs, Where Saints Go. For a rug like this, try Benuta. Artwork by James McQueen, Castle Fine Arts



'I'd never used wallpaper before but I was willing to be experimental and go for bold choices'



Louise and James Winters found themselves converting two townhouses into one large family home after the pandemic changed how the expat family lived. Their children, Harry, 17, and Lydia, 16, were boarders in the UK, while Ivy, 15, and Miles, 13, lived at home with the couple in Hong Kong.

'James and I had lived abroad for 24 years but when our two eldest began boarding school, it made sense to have a UK base nearby,' Louise explains. 'Although we both prefer the countryside, the upkeep of an old house and a large garden wasn't practical so I went looking for a low-maintenance, modern home.'

After Louise had settled on a terraced townhouse within walking distance of the town and school, the property unexpectedly became her permanent home with the children during the Covid pandemic while James

continued working in Hong Kong. 'When we realised we weren't going back and were going to stay in the UK, I needed to find a bigger house but I wasn't willing to give up the fantastic location,' explains Louise. 'Then 18 months later, the tenants next door decided to move on. That inspired me to ask the owners if they wanted to sell their house and we were able to buy it and convert both properties into one family home.'

Within six months, the sale had gone through and Louise had a design by architect John Trenaman from On Architecture. Now double the width, the new house has an open-plan kitchen/dining/sitting room leading to a garden twice the size, six en-suite bedrooms, a games room, cinema room – and even a craft room.

'The property is designed so that the ground floor and the top floor suite are my domain while the children



#### SITTING ROOM

'I love big art pieces with uplifting quotes,' says Louise. 'I'm also a fan of Andrew Martin furniture – the velvet tub chair is gorgeous.' Art by James McQueen, Castle Fine Art. White tiled table lamp, Mrs Robinson. Madison swivel chair; Sundance side table and (opposite) coffee table; Basil sofa and snuggler, all Andrew Martin. Thistle wallpaper, Kristjana S Williams Studio



#### CLOAKROOM

'The dramatic and fun wallpaper is great,' says Louise of the lively design featuring flowers, foliage and wildlife. 'My daughter says it's like a nightclub bathroom.'

Blomlegi Cave wallpaper – Space, Kristjana S Williams Studio, Michelle Shakallis Interiors. Creta Wall Slim concrete-effect tiles, Domus. The Arezzo Matt Black tap, Victorian Plumbing, is similar



have the use of the two middle floors, which is ideal when they have all their friends over,' explains Louise.

Built around 13 years ago, the townhouses are characterised by a modern style of architecture and Louise wanted the interiors to reflect this. She decided to bring in local interior designer, Michelle Shakallis, whose use of colour and fabrics chimed with her own ideas.

'Michelle was really personable and switched on so I knew I could work with her,' says Louise. 'I didn't want a flashy show home but a lovely welcoming, functional space as the reality is I live here with four teenagers and a dog! I'd been advised in my Hong Kong home to invest in lighting, which I've never regretted. I did the same here and wanted good-quality furniture and furnishings, too.'

Louise leans towards classic styles and prefers blues and silvers and textured finishes in fabrics and wallpaper

— above all, she wanted visitors to feel at ease. 'Interiors can't be too serious, particularly with teenagers around, so I loved the quirky animal and nature wallpaper patterns that Michelle suggested,' says Louise.

Wallpaper with tactile sisal and silk textures feature in bedrooms and woven fabric-effect tiles complement the florals in the couple's en-suite bathroom. Blue is a common thread along with fabric repeats in curtains, blinds and cushions in different colourways, art by the same artist and Andrew Martin furniture.

'Combining the two properties has been a big success and given us all the space we need without leaving the great location,' says Louise. 'Michelle made the house feel like a home, which we love, and one that I'm always excited to come back to — it's a feeling I've never had before.'

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#### MAIN BEDROOM

A wall opening is defined by textured wallpaper to separate the sleeping space from the dressing room area.

Colefax & Son Seagrass wallpaper 2032-08 in Blue, Michelle Shakallis Interiors. Wardrobes, Howdens; with solid oak handles, WoodlandByKat at Etsy. Karina bed in natural linen, Soho Home. Estee chandelier, Andrew Martin



#### MAIN EN SUITE

Floral tiles inspired by the trailing foliage of wisteria sit alongside a woven fabric-effect ceramic tile design and appeal to Louise's love of nature and textured finishes.

Living Arbour Wisteria tiles; Tileworks Maison Blanc matt glazed ceramic tiles, both Original Style. T39EL heated towel rail, Vola