

'I'm so glad I took a risk on a bold wallpaper'

Hannah Hooper stepped away from safe neutrals in her living room, choosing a statement wallpaper in blue and gold as the starting point for her scheme

BEFORE



STEP INSIDE...

WHO LIVES HERE? I'm Hannah Hooper @5bed_to_a_shed, 37, a beauty therapist, and my children, Ivy, eight, and Grace, five. We moved into our detached, 1970s house in Wantage, Oxfordshire in March 2019.

WHAT WAS UPDATED? I installed a wood burner, decorated, changed flooring, and brought in furniture and accessories.

WHY THE CHANGE? I didn't like the magnolia walls, the Artex ceiling, the orange pine joinery or terracotta floor tiles. A gas fire had an ugly surround that took up most of one wall. Basically, it was a dull room with zero character.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE? About three months in total because I did it in stages, so didn't do the work all at the same time.

TOTAL COST £3,630

Hannah Hooper was drawn to this 1970s house because of its size and large garden. 'We'd been living in a townhouse with a small section of outside decking, so there wasn't space for the girls to have a trampoline or a swing set,' she explains. 'I planned to convert the garage into my home beauty salon and modernise the rest of the house – including turning the living room into a grown-up space for having drinks with friends or watching TV in the evenings.'

THE PROJECT

The living room was at the front of the house and one of the last spaces to be updated. 'It was used for storage during the renovations,' says Hannah. 'It was a good size at 12 sq m, with a huge window and lots of light, and

Hannah wanted the flexibility of a modular sofa and chose one that unclicks to become individual chairs. The arched floor lamp is similar to a designer brand. 'I snapped this up from MADE although it needs a lot of space around it because the base is 40cm in diameter,' she says

Having a brightly-coloured sofa was what Hannah had always envisioned for the space, alongside her bold wallpaper

I was pleased the gas fire had been fitted into a chimney so I could install a wood burner.'

Hannah had turned the dining room on the other side of the chimney wall into a playroom. 'I'm not a fan of open-plan spaces, but I loved the idea of incorporating a double-sided stove, so the rooms weren't completely shut off from one another,' Hannah continues. 'I could have my posh living room on one side and the girls could have their own play space.'

My style tips

GIVE IT A GO I went bold and chose a daring wallpaper I loved but that only cost £7.99 a roll, so I could justify taking it down if I decided it didn't work. I recommend taking a risk with less expensive elements, like paint and wallpaper, as they're easy to change if you don't like the look

BE SHELFIE SAVVY A single item can look lost, so I group pieces together and often pick out colours from the room. It's also important to choose treasures with meaning that reflect the kind of person you are

ADD A MANTELPIECE I wanted a mantel in a warm wood tone that worked with the gold accents in the room and enough depth to display items. It had to be positioned at the right height so it didn't look lost – tumbling faux plants help bring it together

The round gold shelf with the clock, faux plant and decorative pots add details to the wall, which otherwise would have looked plain and boring when the white shutters were closed,' says Hannah

STYLISH SHUTTERS

New shutters have made a massive difference for Hannah, as they keep the room warm and private – there's no need for curtains!

An expansive plain wall in the living room didn't faze Hannah, who'd already decided to wallpaper. 'It's the perfect place for a bold pattern as you see it from the doorway,' she says. 'My goal was to find a stunning pattern that would create impact and a brightly coloured sofa to complement it.'

WHAT WE DID

Hannah hacked off the old fire surround, and the chimney was swept and a flue put in. A specialist fire company checked the hearth tiles and wood burner complied with building regulations. 'The open style makes a lovely feature and there's very little noise transference between rooms,' says Hannah.

Rather than remove the Artex, the builders plastered over the top and Hannah painted the ceiling grey to make the room feel cosier. She'd already chosen the wallpaper before she moved in. 'I was keen to try something different and I'm not one to procrastinate over a decision,' she says. 'I was immediately drawn to the eye-catching gold and blue leaves. It's an uplifting pattern that makes the room feel special.'

HIGHS & LOWS

The wallpaper proved tricky to hang as the walls weren't straight. The pattern meant not having any art or shelves here, too. 'They



The neutral glass and textured wood coffee table balances out the bold colours and nods to the nature themes in the room. The curves emulate the floor lamp and wall shelf



would draw the eye away, but the room was big enough for these things to go elsewhere,' Hannah explains.

Another sticking point was the terracotta floor tiles that ran throughout downstairs. Rather than the expense and upheaval of removing them, Hannah added layers of screed to smooth out the surface and then installed laminate planks over the top as an easier, cost-saving solution.

With the main work completed, Hannah spent time thinking about the best furniture layout before investing in some new additions. 'I needed to fit in my large arched floor lamp, a long sofa and other seating options so we weren't all sat in a straight line,' she says. 'A corner chair and an ottoman against the wall can be easily moved around - I found the ottoman in Homesense, which is almost a perfect colour match to the sofa.'

'I love the look of stacked wood and with a small budget I was creative with the shelves here and in the alcove,' says Hannah. 'Scaffold boards from a wood merchant were cut to size and the pipes are from Amazon - though you need a strong wall to support the weight.'



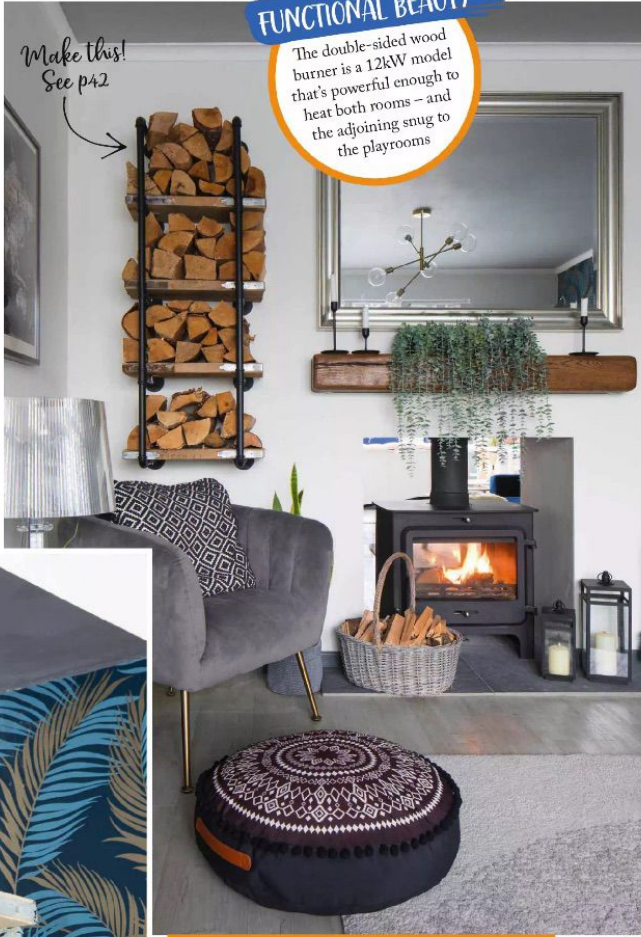
This side of the room is light and low key to contrast with the deep blue hues. 'My sister runs Job's of Oxted, a furniture shop, and gave me the grey velvet chair,' says Hannah. 'It's a good focal point and the tone ties in with the wood-effect flooring and ceiling painted in Dulux's Chic Shadow'

THE FINAL DETAILS

Hannah was clever with her budget - she's had the antique chest since she was sixteen and she fixed the gifted Kartell table lamp with a £1.50 fuse. 'I also like the price point of homewares at Dunelm, Homesense and IKEA, which seems to be a weekly shopping trip!' she says. 'I loved making this room work - seeing the wallpaper go up and the fireplace go in were my personal highlights of the makeover.' 🏡

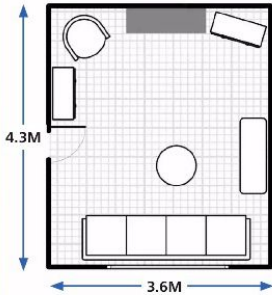
FUNCTIONAL BEAUTY

The double-sided wood burner is a 12kW model that's powerful enough to heat both rooms - and the adjoining snug to the playrooms



Adding an armchair and an ottoman means Hannah can easily rejig the layout when her friends come over for some drinks, rather than having everyone sat in a line

ROOM PLAN



THE DETAILS

Wallpaper	£32
Wood burner	£1,615
Sofa	£1,099
Ottoman	£99
Coffee table	£85
Floor lamp	£180
Ceiling light	£120
Flooring	£400
TOTAL	£3,630

SHOPPING LIST

For similar, try Grand Bahama Tropical Leaf wallpaper in Teal and Gold, £12 per roll, for similar, try 2-tier Golden iron circle shelving, £15, both B&Q. Ekol Clarity double-sided wood burner, from £1,949, Direct Stoves. For similar, try Model 03 3 seater sofa in Kingfisher Velvet, £2,159, Swyft. GFW Secreto teal ottoman, £105, Wilko. Grey velvet chair, £299, Job's of Oxted. For similar, try Lawndale pedestal coffee table, £315.99, Wayfair. For similar, try Habitat Wilderness large arc floor lamp, £140, Argos. For similar, try Endon Studio 5 semi flush ceiling light, £68.60, Moonlight Design. Kartell Bougie table lamp in Crystal, £338, John Lewis & Partners. For similar, try Moroccan Black leather pouffe, £55, Boho Sahara. Bold And Noble World in Slate map art, £35, Yard Gallery. LG Houseys Bleached Pine floor plank, £23.90 per sq m, Flooring Village

MULTI-PURPOSE

A vintage wooden chest is a flexible storage option that can be pulled out and used as a coffee table, or pushed to the side and used to display accessories



DIY my style

Industrial shelves

Make practical log storage a stylish feature in its own right with this rustic shelving unit made from scaffold poles and boards, like **Hannah's**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL
ADVANCED

- 1 Use an angle grinder with a metal cutting blade fitted to cut a 5m-long x 33mm-deep aluminium alloy scaffold pole into two 1m lengths, and ten 24cm lengths.
- 2 With the scaffold pole cut to length, it's time to assemble all the pieces. For the shelves, you will need four 90° elbow joints, six long tee joints and ten wall plates. Make sure you use fittings that are 33.7mm-deep to fit the scaffold pole. First, loosen all the hex screws on the fittings using an 8mm hex or Allen key so the scaffold pole can easily fit inside.
- 3 Slide three long tee joints onto each of the 1m-long poles at 30cm intervals. Make sure the joints are at the same position on both poles to ensure your shelves will sit straight and level. Use a hex key to tighten the screws.
- 4 Place a 90° elbow joint on the top and bottom ends of the two 1m-long scaffold poles. Slide the 24cm lengths of scaffold pole into the other ends of the elbow joints and the long tee joints and secure in place by tightening all the hex screws.
- 5 Next, attach the wall plates to the other end of each of the 24cm scaffold poles and tighten the hex screws. Apply two coats of matte black spray paint to each of your two newly created scaffold pole brackets, allowing the paint to dry thoroughly between coats.
- 6 Now, the first scaffold pole bracket can be mounted on the wall. Get someone to hold the bracket in place for you so you can get a feel for where is best to mount it. Once you're happy with the position, mark the wall through the holes in the wall plates with a pencil. These will be the marks you need to drill to add the appropriate Rawl plugs and screws.
- 7 Using a drill with the appropriate bit for your wall, drill where you marked for the holes. With the holes drilled, add a Rawl plug to each hole. These will hold the screws in place.
- 8 Use 7.5mm multi-fix screws to attach the wall plates to the wall. Use a spirit level to make sure it is straight. Repeat steps 7-9 for the second scaffold pole bracket, once again ensuring it is level with the first bracket. You should position the two brackets approximately 30cm apart.
- 9 Use a jigsaw to cut a 2.4m x 225mm scaffold plank into four 50cm lengths to create the shelf boards for your storage unit. Sit the shelf boards across the two scaffold pole brackets to create four shelves, then add your firewood to finish.

TOP TIP

If you have plasterboard walls, the shelves will need to be secured to the wooden studs

