

# 'This upside-down house is full of colour'

With the living areas situated on the first floor to capture the views, Angela and Stuart Clarke's vibrant home has pattern and texture at its heart

Words JANE CRITTENDEN

Styling ALISON GIBB

Photography DOUGLAS GIBB

## Dining room

Totally transforming this previously plain room, the fun jungle print of Cole & Son's Savuti 1005 wallpaper is indicative of Angela's signature style, complemented by teal painted walls, emerald table legs and colourful Eames-style Eiffel chairs. 'As the connecting kitchen is a jewel tone, it got me thinking about a similar palette in here, so I picked out colours from the wallpaper,' she says



← Living room

Benefiting from light through the front window and rear French doors onto the balcony, this long first-floor room was tackled last to ensure it didn't feel too dark. The panelling in Farrow & Ball's Green Smoke is the perfect colour match to the Boråstapeter Nocturne wallpaper in Jade Green, while a La Redoute coffee table and cushions from Time & Tide and Voyage Maison add interest



Step inside...

Meet the owners

Angela Clarke (@the\_upside\_down\_house), a claims assessor, and husband Stuart, who works in HR, live here with daughters Olive, 7 and Iris, 5

House details

A four-bedroom detached house in Dunfermline, Scotland

When they bought it

2016



Angela

“I used a palette of mostly jewel tones, with vintage wood furniture to balance out the brightness”

Having mostly expressed her creative side through fashion, Angela Clarke had always been a fan of colour and pattern, but it was while on honeymoon in Italy and Croatia that her eyes were opened to the dopamine effect of bold interior design. ‘When I was younger, I’d dye my hair red or pink,’ she recalls. ‘But the Airbnbs we stayed in

really showed me how great interiors can have such a positive influence on how you feel. So when we moved here and had the girls, I couldn’t wait to create a vibrant home for them to enjoy.’

When Angela and husband Stuart decided to sell their previous home to buy a bigger house for their young family, they found a reasonably priced detached property in a semi-rural location, which →



**Wow-factor walls**

Although the hexagon shelving is decoration in itself, the living room's blank walls inspired Angela to add both wallpaper and MDF panelling made by husband Stuart, who followed a YouTube video to install it. 'It's a cheap, effective solution to achieve a grand look and bring character into a room,' she says. 'It's also a good way to incorporate a patterned wallpaper without overwhelming the space'

**Design details →**

At this end of the room, Angela has left floor space for the children to play, while a secondhand sideboard from a local charity shop stores their toys. Angela made the macramé plant hanger, the star is from Oliver Bonas and the lampshade was handmade by Clarabella Christie



had been built by the neighbours after they sold off part of their garden. 'The house was about 11 years old when we moved in, and nothing needed doing to it,' explains Angela. 'There was plenty of space and it felt like a proper family home. However, everywhere was painted white and there was none of the character I like in older properties. That said, I didn't mind at the time, because I was really excited to have a blank canvas to work with.'

Built in the early 2000s, the house has an unusual upside-down layout, with the front door opening into a

large hallway with bedrooms on both sides and a ground floor bathroom. Upstairs, the main living spaces, with an additional bedroom and another shower room, are filled with light and capture the countryside views.

Once they'd moved in, Angela looked at ways of adding character to the rooms by playing with pattern and colour, using her favourite pink and green shades in particular, while her daughters were also always in mind. As the project went on, I moved more towards green-blue tones and pink became more of an accent, as Stuart isn't a fan,' →



↑ Kitchen

Angela updated the original red units by continuing the colourful wallpaper through from the dining room and bringing in texture, using old brick slips by Matclad and scaffold-board worktops. 'Including reclaimed materials gives the room character and ties in with the railway-sleeper dining table,' she says. Engineered wood planks in Golden Antique Brown from Direct Flooring and the Cotswolds Company pantry cupboard, a bargain secondhand find on Ebay, complete the look

she says. 'Although there's colour everywhere, it's a tight palette, mostly in jewel tones, and the vintage wood furniture balances out the brightness.'

Vibrant wallpaper was high on Angela's wish list, with a jungle theme running through the kitchen, dining room, playroom and the couple's bedroom. 'I found a pretty Swedish floral wallpaper for the living room and Stuart fitted wood panelling below, so the space has a more grown-up feel,' she adds.

One of the biggest challenges was working around the existing gloss-red kitchen, which wasn't to the couple's

taste, but they felt it was in too good a condition to replace. 'There was also a breakfast bar facing the wall, which we never used as the dining table was just a few steps away in the dining room,' says Angela. 'So we took it out and put a lovely oak pantry cupboard I found on Ebay in its place.'

Angela used reclaimed materials and bought secondhand furniture where possible, replacing the plain grey laminate worktops with scaffold boards adapted into rustic-style surfaces, while a local tradesperson fitted reclaimed brick slips on the walls. 'Older pieces just have more character – they're sturdier and better-priced than →



Hallway

Angela chose Boråstapeter Hoppmossa wallpaper in white and green, complemented by woodwork painted in Farrow & Ball's Green Smoke. 'My favourite piece is this upcycled clay-mould chest of drawers, which I found on Facebook Marketplace but looks like something from Anthropologie,' she says



Angela

“A house filled with new things doesn't have the same charm for me; I like that older pieces can be reimaged”



new', she says. 'Plus, a house that's filled with new things doesn't have the same charm for me. I like that pieces can be reimagined and have a story behind them.'

Angela also customised furniture where she could, like the dressing table that she painted blue and added pink stencil detailing to. 'The en suite basin mounted onto a shelf is an idea she saw in a shop, so the couple chose a slab of wood with a rustic finish from a local wood merchant and asked their plumber to fit a basin on top. Finally, the dining table was made from old railway sleepers with steel legs, which Angela chose to have powder-coated in a green shade to match the wallpaper. →

'My interiors are perhaps a little bit more out there than most people's, as I like unique and quirky designs,' she says. 'For a treat, I go to Anthropologie in Edinburgh, as I love their eclectic homewares, and particularly the artist collaborations. I also like Urban Outfitters, so I was really pleased when I found a dressing table stool in the sale.'

Angela likes to support local makers too, attending her friend Clarabella Christie's sewing classes and buying her clothes, lampshades and cushions, as she loves the bold colours and geometric prints. More recently, Angela's been doing Molly Mahon's online block printing course. 'I've made cushions and want to make block-printed fabrics →

↑ **Main bedroom**

Inspired by the limewash walls in their honeymoon apartment in Italy, Angela used Pure & Original's Fresco lime paint for a textured look, while reclaimed wood panelling gives the room a cosy cabin feel. A refurbished radiator tones in with the upcycled bedside tables in Annie Sloan's Florence chalk paint

↗ **En suite**

Craig & Rose Artisan Aged copper-effect paint patinas over time, 'and now has a green colour tone to it that works well with the Matrix shower tiles,' says Angela. A simple round basin is mounted on a piece of real wood to continue the rustic vibe, with a splashback in aged Archivo Zahra tiles from Topps Tiles



of my own', she says. 'I also do macramé and sell my work – including bespoke orders – through Instagram and at craft fairs.'

'There are still a couple of rooms to finish, but the family home is almost complete, and there's a satisfaction in what they've achieved. I really love the creative process

and decorating, but with young kids in the house, walls get scuffed, so for me that's a good excuse to try something different!' Angela admits. 'We've created a home the way we like it – there's a collective sense of contentment, and I hope the girls look back and remember it as a fun place to grow up!'



**Iris's bedroom**

Angela painted the flowers using a stencil and Crown's Mustard Jar and Peek-a-Boo Blue shades from B&Q. 'I used a cicut machine to cut out the shapes in paper and drew around the template.' The wardrobe is painted in Crown's Velvetine while the Satin Lining pink ceiling was prompted by the Ikea Busunge bed



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