



Kerry Warren and her husband Andy share a deep-rooted attachment to antiques. As a child, Kerry was given a wonderful vintage dressing table, and Andy's childhood

was spent surrounded by antiques as his father was a dealer. 'His father's shop was in a converted stable block attached to their home and I used to love wandering around looking at everything whenever Andy and I visited,' recalls Kerry. His stock included vintage pieces as well as antiques, she explains, and it's a combination they have repeated throughout their home.

When the couple swapped their Victorian terrace in Brighton for a house in the Sussex countryside, a period property was a must. After visiting the village of Hurstpierpoint a few times they optimistically picked out the house they wanted to buy – daydreaming about living in one of the Victorian houses overlooking the green. 'They looked so elegant and an ideal size for our family of four,' says Kerry.

While they were renting nearby, their landlord put them in touch with one of the owners who was thinking of selling, and the couple jumped at the chance, ready to buy the house ▶

The 1790s mahogany bureau belonged to Andy's grandfather and the late 18th-century fireside footstool was his grandmother's. The gilt-framed mirror came from The Canterbury Auction Galleries and the chandelier was sourced from a French dealer by Andy's father years ago.

FACING PAGE The original Chesterfield sofa came from a friend and Kerry had it reupholstered. The grey Howard-style sofa came from i gigi; the house is a three-storey, semi-detached Victorian property in the charming village of Hurstpierpoint.



LOVE AND *Cherish*

Continuing the family passion for antiques, Kerry and Andy Warren's Victorian home is filled with inherited furniture and French vintage finds, complemented by floral paintings and pretty linens

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN PHOTOGRAPHS JAMES FRENCH
STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR

'When we were starting out, we didn't consider buying new furniture, as vintage pieces and antiques are beautifully crafted'



The floor-to-ceiling pine dresser was built for the house in the 1870s. The couple bought the French farmhouse table years ago, while the vintage Swedish bench is from Ardingly antiques fair.



without even seeing it. Fortunately, when they did view the house, the interiors exceeded their expectations. 'It felt like a comfortable and cosy family home, not sprawling, but with plenty of space and character,' Kerry says. They fell in love with the warmth of the stripped wood floors and original joinery, especially the pine kitchen dresser, which had been installed when the house was built.

Within eight weeks, the family had moved in. Since the house was structurally in good shape and they had no intention of extending, there was little to do. 'I'm a great believer in every room being used,' says Kerry, 'so if we'd made the kitchen bigger, I'm not sure I'd use my sitting room as much.' Rather than modernising or removing original features, the couple set about returning the house to its original state: missing spindles on the staircase were matched to the original design by a local craftsman; the guest bedroom uPVC window changed to a sash window as did the French doors



ABOVE FROM TOP The AGA is a focal point in the open-plan kitchen with its original brick floor. The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Wimborne White; Kerry (@thedecorativemum) in the kitchen.

to the garden. The original red brick floor was safely revived by a specialist who used a gentle acid wash. More recently, a plastic-clad 1960s extension to the study on the first floor was taken down. 'An awful white box' it was a blight on their home, blocking light from a neighbouring bedroom. 'Although we've lost space,' says Kerry, 'it's now a lovely home office.'

Kerry and Andy took their time decorating, focusing on one room at a time and when it came to furniture, they had already collected many antiques over the years. The French farmhouse dining table, Victorian side tables and a French chandelier had all been in their previous home.

'When we were starting out, we didn't consider buying new furniture, as vintage pieces and antiques are beautifully crafted and often cheaper – we bought our chandelier in the sitting room 20 years ago and it cost less than £50,' says Kerry. 'There's a joy in a piece that's dented or slightly scratched; it's part of its history.' ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The painting above the fireplace in the guest bedroom is of Kerry's wedding bouquet and is by Suzy Merrikin; the floral oil painting above the bedside table came from Ardingly Antiques & Interiors and it picks out the pinks in the room. The charcoal striped bed linen came from Toast; simple, matching built-in wardrobes in the master bedroom add to the room's air of serenity. The chandelier is Italian and came from Franklin's Antiques & Interiors; new tongue and groove panelling reference the bathroom's Victorian roots. The bath is painted in Farrow & Ball's London Stone. The corner shelf adds detail to the plain wall, as does the romantic floral print blind in Kate Forman's Christobel fabric in Duck Egg.



The couple have been fortunate to inherit antiques that spark happy memories: Andy's doctor grandfather used the late Georgian mahogany writer's bureau as a desk in the surgery he had in his front living room. It takes pride of place in the couple's sitting room now, along with Andy's grandmother's 18th-century footstool.

'We've also been given pieces as birthday presents or wedding gifts,' adds Kerry. 'Otherwise, we've saved up for what we've wanted.' One of the first purchases for the house was the 1870s mirror above the sitting room fireplace, which came from The Canterbury Auction Galleries. 'Andy's father would go every month and we'd ask him to send us the catalogue so we could put in our bids,' says Kerry.

Kerry says she's a bit of a romantic at heart and, living in a family of males, she craves a bit of prettiness. 'I'm drawn to 40s and 50s floral paintings and gilt-framed mirrors – these things are accessible from a price perspective and, unlike furniture, I can always find space for them.' Having studied textile design, she now advises on fabrics and colours for interiors projects and loves linens for the way they complement antiques, while bringing together modern elements, particularly in kitchens and bathrooms. 'Linen is lovely, it's not too formal and the prints have a washed-out finish that gives the fabric a lovely aged appearance.'

Kerry loves how the house has turned out. 'It's taken us years to collect all our lovely antiques and if we ever moved, they'd have to fit into a new house – our furniture is part of who we are.'

GRANT ROONEY PREMIUM / Alamy Stock Photo; Kathy deWitt / Alamy Stock Photo; ©Simon Upton / The Interior Archive



ABOVE

No.1 Lewes antiques shop.

BELOW Kerry's outside dining area sits in the side return with a lovely view of the garden beyond.

Kerry's Little Black Book of
FAVOURITE PLACES



• **V&A Museum**

'This is such an inspirational place for art and design. They have fantastic collections in fashion, jewellery, architecture, wallpaper, furniture – and many others – across all the eras. It's a place I return to again and again.' vam.ac.uk

• **Lewes antiques shops**

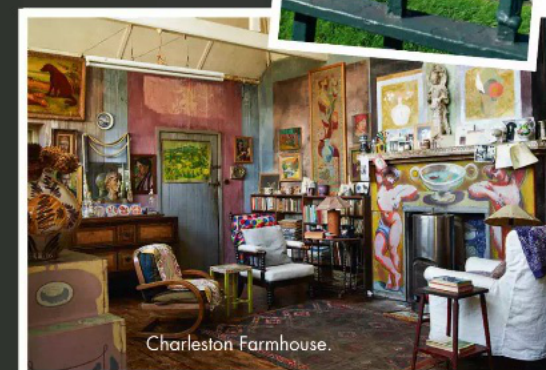
'We're very lucky to live near the historic town of Lewes, which has lots of antiques shops, a Sunday Vintage Market and the Lewes Flea Market in an old Methodist chapel. Gorringer's also holds monthly auctions.'

• **William Morris Gallery**

'The gallery is in a Georgian house in Walthamstow, London, which was once William Morris's family home. I love that he was a designer and craftsman – his use of pattern, detail and colour in textiles is just lovely.' wmgallery.org.uk

• **Charleston**

'The house is like it was in the 1950s when pioneering artists and writers, The Bloomsbury Group, lived here, renovating, designing and decorating rooms with the art and furniture they made. I love how they used colour and fabrics.' charleston.org.uk



Charleston Farmhouse.