

DREAMING OF THE SEA

First-time renovators have transformed a run-down 1930s flat in Sussex into a sophisticated home

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HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Suzette Simon, 60, who is retired, and her husband, Mark Haythorne, 59, an estate manager

THE PROPERTY

A three-bedroom 1930s flat in Worthing, West Sussex

PRICE £340,000

MONEY SPENT £58,000

WHAT IT'S WORTH
NOW £480,000



SUN ROOM

Suzette enjoys a coffee in her favourite room, which has panoramic sea views. White-painted tongue-and-groove walls and white wicker chairs keep the look light and bright. The coffee chest came from her father and has been given a distressed effect with Annie Sloan chalk paint, which emphasises the detail

KITCHEN

Scaffolding board shelves with solid black brackets from Ben Simpson Furniture lend an industrial touch, which is enhanced by the dark grout used with the white Metro tiles from Topps Tiles. The Kartell Masters bar stools are from Heal's and provide a contrast to the white handleless units from Howdens ▶





When Suzette Simon first arranged a viewing for her flat, she already knew she wanted to live there, having patiently waited five years for a property like it to come on to the market. As she entered the hallway, she headed straight for the sun room with its huge south-facing window overlooking Worthing seafont.

'I said to my husband Mark, this is going to be my room,' recalls Suzette. 'I could already see myself sitting there with my coffee, listening to the radio and looking out at the view.'

The couple had moved from their home in Bromley, Kent, to the coast in February 2011, after deciding to rent a flat to see if a life by the sea was for them. Back then, they were both still commuting to London – Suzette working as a manager for a 24-hour emergency response unit and Mark as an estate manager. 'We decided quite quickly that we wanted to stay in Worthing,' says Suzette. 'And we had our eye on this beautiful Art Deco apartment block, set back from the front but with unobstructed sea views. I was adamant about living there and was prepared to wait for the right flat to come along.'

In October 2015, a property materialised, albeit a dated one. A tense few months ensued, as the couple had their offer turned down and thought they had lost the flat, but then the owner came back to them after the sale fell through. Suzette and Mark were delighted and picked up the keys the following May. ►



LIVING ROOM

Builder Paul Roe made the bespoke cupboards and shelves to fit the alcoves either side of the fireplace. Tektura wallpaper, which has a concrete-effect, was used on the wall behind them. Discreet LED strips run along the shelves, providing ambient light in the evening. The vintage French mirror, from antiques shop Reginald Ballum in Worthing, has been positioned to reflect the view of the sea.

DINING ROOM

The soft-taupe scheme creates a relaxed feel in this elegant entertaining space, where bold Eichholtz Maritime pendant lights, available from Houseology, take centre stage. The rectory oak table and button-back dining chairs were supplied by Lynsey Jane Designs.





GUEST BEDROOM

A serene scheme of pale blues and creams provides a low-key coastal feel. The pictures, bed and side tables came from the couple's previous home. Suzette stores toys and games for visiting grandchildren in the large white storage basket at the end of the bed, above which hangs a Fouesnant

wicker pendant lampshade from Maisons du Monde
MAIN BEDROOM
An RV Astley Esta Biscuit Shagreen dressing table from Lynsey Jane Designs fits perfectly with the luxurious Art Deco-inspired look. Silver cushions and a gold throw complement the bespoke headboard upholstered in a silver crushed velvet

BATHROOM

Dark tiles are textured so they reflect the light. For similar, try the Waterfall Tiles in black from Walls & Floors. The Novum vanity unit is from Parker Bathrooms
FOR STORE DETAILS SEE WHERE TO BUY PAGE

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Straightaway, Mark enlisted Paul Roe, a builder he knew through work, who was able to gut the flat and deal with the fungus on the bathroom ceiling, the ancient electrics and plumbing. Suzette's sister then recommended interior designer Lynsey Evans.

'Mark and I were keen to have a fresh start with new furniture and we didn't want to make any mistakes,' says Suzette. 'We knew we'd be at work most of the time and needed people around us we could trust. Paul and Lynsey were brilliant; they were both really thorough and easy to deal with.'

All four sat down together and worked through the changes the couple wanted to make. The long, narrow hallway that runs through the middle of the flat was one of Suzette's biggest concerns as it was dark and enclosed. Enlarging the dining room and kitchen doorways from single to double openings and removing the doors have eased the problem, while a dark grey ceiling, fitted with a row of large drum ceiling lights, offers a contemporary look. 'Now the hallway is one of the best features,' says Suzette.

Every room was stripped back and modernised with new plumbing, wiring, lighting and storage, and a new bathroom, cloakroom and kitchen were installed. 'The floor-to-ceiling kitchen cupboards have plenty of storage and Mark had the brilliant idea to widen the door opening so we can see the sea from the breakfast bar,' says Suzette.

Planning the interiors in tandem with the builder had its advantages: extra beams were installed for the heavy-duty mariner pendants in the dining room and the huge vintage mirror on the living room wall, which needed four men to carry it up to the flat! However, one of the biggest challenges was removing the rubbish from the renovation. Suzette was concerned that a skip in her parking space might be an inconvenience to neighbours, so instead she hired a local man with a van to walk up and down the four flights of stairs each day to remove the rubbish by hand. 'It cost me a fortune, as he charged by the day!' laughs Suzette.

The building work was finished by September and by then Lynsey had come up with moodboards for each room. Suzette admits she didn't know exactly how she wanted the flat to look – only how she wanted the rooms to feel. 'I definitely didn't want a beach theme, but I liked the coastal hints in the neutral colour scheme and the nod to Art Deco glamour that Lynsey came up with,' she says.

'We enjoy entertaining, so the dining room needed to be relaxed and sociable, whereas I wanted our bedroom to feel special,' she explains. 'The spaces needed to relate to one another, but not necessarily have the same colour scheme. Mark and I were unsure at first on the big, bold style statements – such as the dining table and chairs and oversized lighting – as we thought anything big would make the rooms look smaller, but Lynsey has a real eye for proportion and we're glad we trusted her judgement.'

The project took six months to finish, and now she's retired Suzette is taking full advantage of their new home. 'I absolutely love living here. I wake up every morning with a smile on my face,' she says. 'My sun room is my favourite place to sit, as I knew it would be. At any time of the year and in any weather, there's always a beautiful view to admire.'

COASTAL APARTMENT

