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PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD KIELY



# MEDITERRANEAN STYLE IN A CITY APARTMENT

An earthy palette of soothing neutrals, wood tones and charcoal details – plus a few clever interior design tricks – have transformed a small, characterless space into a warm and cosy flat that’s designed to come alive when filled with friends and family

## KITCHEN/DINING AREA

Green foliage softens the clean lines of the kitchen, with plants hung from the ceiling as well as styled on top of the cooker hood. **Pendant light**, Tala. **Bar stools**, B&Q. **Picture shelves**, Ikea →



# 'A HOME NEEDS TO MAKE YOU FEEL SOMETHING,'



says interior designer Amélie Pellerin, who grew up in France, where eating together is the most important part of the day. 'I wanted mine to have the inviting feeling of warmth and happiness I enjoy when I'm sharing a meal with family and friends. The challenge was how to do this within the limitations of our rental flat – and persuading my husband Konstantinos that it could be done!'

Amélie met Konstantinos, who is Greek, in London, where she's lived for nine years. In December 2019, the couple were looking for a new-build flat as they wanted to rent somewhere with modern (and reliable) fixtures and fittings. On viewing this property, Konstantinos was put off by the bare white walls and rooms crammed with furniture, but Amélie was able to see beyond this and visualise the home they could create.

'I loved the big windows and the space, particularly the large kitchen/dining/living room,' she says. 'We couldn't change the beige carpet or wood laminate floor, but they're inoffensive and, along with the white decoration, provided a modern, neutral foundation to which we knew we would be able to add personality and character.'

So the couple moved into the Dalston flat with just a secondhand sofa and Amélie's beloved collection of plants, which she's cultivated over the years. As Amélie began thinking about the interiors, she used the same approach she takes with clients: 'I imagined coming into the flat as a guest – what would my journey be like? I planned this out by creating spaces within a space, using an arrangement of furniture, plants and lighting to draw people in. I could visualise hosting our friends at a beautiful wooden table, or lounging on the sofa.'

The flat's modern bones provided Amélie with a starting point. She echoed the clean lines with Nordic and mid-century design, warmed up with wooden textures, soft lighting and an earthy Mediterranean palette inspired by visits to Konstantinos's family in Greece. Key furniture pieces were a priority: a caramel leather sofa brings a time-worn welcoming charm and the six-seater dining table is perfect for hosting friends. 'I wanted a natural wood design with modern black legs and I needed a specific size,' says Amélie. 'I found Etsy to be a great place to source bespoke pieces at an affordable price.'

As the space is so limited, Amélie had to think creatively to ensure every piece of furniture earned its place. One of her inventive ideas was to turn Ikea cupboards into bench seating and storage, covering the surfaces in wood-effect vinyl. 'To achieve the right height for sitting at the table, I placed the whole unit on another length of the panelling and recessed it,' she says. 'Now it looks as if it was made to fit the space.'

This DIY project was so successful that Amélie continued the bench storage through to the living area, where it provides a surface for the TV and plants: 'The long unit draws the eye and creates the illusion of space and →



## BALCONY

One of the flat's biggest assets is the long glazed balcony, which offers uninterrupted London views. Plants and a bistro table ensure it is a welcoming space to sit →

## HOME PROFILE

### WHO LIVES HERE

Amélie Pellerin, a designer at Topology Interiors ([topologyinteriors.com](http://topologyinteriors.com)) and her husband Konstantinos Adraktas, a dentist

### THE PROPERTY

A two-bedroom, eighth-floor rented flat in a new-build block in east London

## DINING AREA

**Above** Amélie customised the storage unit with wood-effect vinyl to tie in with the wooden table and laminate flooring – the unit also doubles as extra seating. **Besta storage unit**, Ikea. **Table**, Etsy. **Vintage school chair**, Facebook Marketplace

'The CHARCOAL wall contrasts with the LEATHER and wood tones, gives the room DEPTH and makes it feel BIGGER'

#### LIVING ROOM

The charcoal wall, with artwork by Amélie, provides a contrasting backdrop for the caramel-coloured leather sofa. Amélie stained the coffee table a lighter brown to tie in with the room. Walls in Black 02, Lick. Sofa, find similar at The English Sofa Company. Floor lamp and coffee table, both La Redoute. Cushions, Zara Home. Vase, Connex →





### LIVING/DINING AREA

**Top left** Mango wood shelves create a point of interest with a curated collection of vases and candleholders. **Shelves,** Atkin & Thyme. **Vases and candleholders,** Nordic Nest, Connox and Zara Home

### GUEST BEDROOM

**Above left** Amélie painted the cupboards and walls in the same colour for a 'fitted furniture' feel. **Cupboards,** Ikea. **Mirror,** Maisons du Monde. **Cupboards and walls** in Beige 02, Lick

openness,' she says. 'I'm amazed how much bigger this room looks and feels now.' A similar built-in style was used in the guest bedroom/home office, where the couple needed storage for Amélie's interior design work samples and Konstantinos's musical instruments. Again, she used Ikea cupboards and painted them the same beige shade as the walls.

In the main bedroom, an organic limewash has been used on one wall. 'I started out with a rich terracotta but then decided I wanted the space to feel more calming,' explains Amélie. 'Limewash is a mineral powder mix with a beautiful textured finish that you notice as soon as you walk in the room.' Decoration has been left white elsewhere, except for the long charcoal wall in the living area. 'I needed something to contrast with the leather and wood tones. Rather than looking too bold, charcoal gives the room depth and makes the space feel bigger.'

Lighting was an important part of the design. 'It can completely change the tone of a room,' says Amélie, who has created considered table and floor lamp arrangements, as well as bespoke solutions that didn't need invasive electrical work. Plug-in lamps run on longer than usual cables, which Amélie has wired herself and hung from ceiling hooks or fixed to the wall. She favours warm white bulbs and plugs that can be controlled by a dimmer switch, while in the living area, amber bulbs in the table lamps create a warm glow like candlelight.

For now, Amélie is delighted with her flat, but she doesn't consider it finished. 'It will forever be evolving,' she says. 'I'm so pleased with how far I've been able to take the interiors in a rented apartment – the rooms feel so warm and inviting. But what pleases me most is when the table is set, the lights are low and guests arrive – then our home really comes alive.'

The EARTHY tones in this space make it feel CALMING'



### MAIN BEDROOM

**This page and opposite, top right** An organic limewash on the wall behind the bed works well with the textured accessories for an earthy feel. **Walls** in Coa limewash, Bauwerk; and Safe Play (developed in collaboration with Topology Interiors). **Coat Paints,** Etsy. **Stool,** Phool. **Bedlinen,** Muji →

'I'm so  
PLEASED  
with how far  
I've taken the  
interiors in  
a RENTED  
apartment'

## BATHROOM

Hedge tiles, stuck on with mounting tape, update the basin surround as well as adding colour and texture to the room. Artificial **hedge tiles**, The Outdoor Look **HB**