

'We did it all on a TIGHT BUDGET'

COLOUR MATCH

'Blue is the focal point, inspired by crockery and glass I inherited from my grandparents. I painted the pre-owned bench in a coordinating shade'

METAL TONES

'The copper shelves from Oliver Bonas are great for display and tie in with the cupboard handles'

IDEA TO STEAL

'Turn a simple bulb pendant into a feature by teaming it with a long flex'

COME ON IN!



ABOUT ME I'm Georgia Broome, 40, a PR consultant and upcycling blogger at homemadeproductions.co.uk. I live here with my husband James, 41, a software developer, and our daughters Olivia, nine, and Charlotte, seven.

MY HOME A three-bedroom 1950s semi-detached house in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, bought in April 2016.

WHEN WE MOVED IN It felt cold and run-down and the layout didn't make sense. The extension was poorly built and the loft conversion wasn't up to building regulations.

AND NOW We moved most of the walls and the space flows perfectly. It feels warm, our bills are low and our things have a new lease of life.

STYLE TIP Form a neutral backdrop to the schemes then add colour with furniture and furnishings.



Georgia Broome totally reworked an unwanted house, making it energy efficient and filling rooms with her upcycled creations

This is the first family home that we've owned,' says Georgia, 'as beforehand we lived in Toronto and Dubai for James' work, and we had rented.

As our eldest daughter approached school age, we decided to return to the UK and settled on Oxfordshire. We found a place to rent near Abingdon and began looking for a house to buy. I was craving somewhere we could renovate and make our own. I wasn't interested in this house at first because it had been empty for two years, and in the photos it looked awful. But after having offers refused on seven houses, I began to get desperate, and this was literally the last one on our list. As soon as I walked through the door and saw the gorgeous original 1950s parquet floor, I fell in love.

Changing the layout

The house had a lot of space but the layout didn't work for us – for instance, you had to walk through the living room to reach the kitchen. Before we made an offer, I redrew the floorplan using an online drawing tool. I was able to rub out the lines that marked the walls and identify what couldn't easily be moved, such as the stairs, load-bearing walls and chimney breasts. Then I redrew a different layout to see if we could fit in all the rooms that suited our family.

Our decisions, including a utility room, mud room and playroom, were influenced by how we'd lived in previous homes – in Dubai because it's so hot outside, and in Toronto because it's so cold in winter. We decided to convert the front half of the garage into a porch and the back half into the loo and utility; the playroom connects with the kitchen-diner. The living room is now separate from the >>



Make it!
PLANT HANGER

- 1 Buy a roll of Jersey Be Good yarn from Wool and the Gang in a colour that matches your scheme.
- 2 Cut eight lengths, around 2m each. Knot all the lengths together, leaving space below the big knot for the tassel.
- 3 Separate the lengths into pairs. Knot each pair about 2.5cm from the big knot; pull the knots tight.
- 4 Tape the four sections in a cross over the bottom a plant pot, with the main knot in the middle.
- 5 Take two neighbouring single lengths and knot them together. Continue until you reach the edge of the pot. Remove the tape.
- 6 Securely screw a hook into the ceiling. Hang your potted plant.

IDEA TO STEAL
'Liven up corners with real or faux foliage plants trailing from hanging pots'

OLD AND NEW
'We sanded and varnished the 1950s parquet wood floor and teamed it with concrete-effect tiles - it makes a great style statement'



RED ZONE
'The red colour-blocking, which includes the piano, complements the wood parquet and introduces warmth'



FRESHEN UP
'White Ikea wall units, worktop and tiles reflect light. Copper is naturally antibacterial, so it's ideal for the sink and handles'

'COLOUR-BLOCKING ACROSS WALLS, THE PIANO AND SIDEBORD HAS A CAMOUFLAGING EFFECT TO PARE BACK LARGE PIECES IN SMALLER ROOMS'

>> kitchen-diner at the back, because we'd lived in one huge open-plan space in Dubai and it had been too noisy. Upstairs, knocking through the loo and bathroom made our en suite, and we created a new family bathroom from the guest en suite. Updating the loft to meet building regulations gave James his office space.

Energy-efficient living
A high priority was to make our home energy efficient with a smart meter, new combi-boiler, radiators with thermostats, and A+ rated appliances. I sourced triple-glazed windows, doors and 'super' insulation for the loft. We laid Superfoil's

40mm insulation mat over the top of the rafters to keep the head height in the room. It's really effective as the house is cool in summer and warm in winter, but it took a chunk of our budget - all the roof tiles had to be removed and re-laid, plus we needed scaffolding.

Keeping costs down
It was really important to us from an ethical point of view that we recycled and reused as much as we could during the build, which also saved us money. I reduced skip hire costs by climbing into the skip every day and pulling out leftover pieces of plasterboard to reuse in the eaves of the loft. I distributed >>

WARM FEEL

'The pale champagne tones in our wedding photo above the bed inspired me to choose a warm wall colour, Farrow & Ball's Stiffkey Blue'

IDEA TO STEAL

'Search eBay for bargain buys like this £8 light shade'



'BE CREATIVE AND FIND WAYS TO REUSE OR UPCYCLE AS YOU END UP WITH A COMPLETELY UNIQUE PIECE'

» waste wood to neighbours who had woodburners. I made the budget stretch by sourcing all the trades and managing them on a day rate – with strict instructions to protect the parquet floor while they were at work!

The biggest challenge was teaching myself how to draw plans for the electrics, and finding a tiler capable of blending the new kitchen floor tiles with the original dining room parquet – so many said that it couldn't be done.

Dealing with disaster

We hit a wall just as our rental contract came to an end. We thought the house would be habitable enough to move into – but the loft stairs hadn't been fitted, there was carpentry to be done, the electrics and plumbing weren't »

**TILE STYLE**

'Floor-to-ceiling tiling is very French. To break the grey, I added a strip of white where the basin and bath sit'

**CHANCE FIND**

'This dressing table was up for grabs outside a house in Toronto – I love the shell handles. The faux ivy plant is from Amazon'



IDEA TO STEAL
'Build a stud wall to create a discreet walk-in wardrobe and standout headboard at the same time'

TRICK THE EYE
'Boråstapeter Vildtuta wallpaper adds depth to the narrow room. The Punk Royale poster is from Desenio'

NOSTALGIC TOUCH

'I've had this desk since I was a child and I updated it by painting it blue to go with the scheme'



'WALLPAPERING A FEATURE, SUCH AS A HEADBOARD, IS A REALLY COST-EFFECTIVE WAY OF USING A STATEMENT DESIGN. I USED ONE ROLL FOR THIS'

» finished – and the builders disappeared. It was awful and we frantically searched for replacements and somewhere else to live. Fortunately, my aunt knew a builder delayed on another project who could start straight away and we got the house finished a few months later.

Recycling and upcycling

Most of our belongings came with us and I like that they tell a story – a framed London bus blind notes the routes we used to travel to work, and the old French school posters remind me of my

childhood in France. The dining table and bed came from Dubai and we brought the Ikea sofa back from Toronto. The rest is mainly pre-owned furniture from charity shops and eBay, which I upcycled. I love the patina and heritage of these old pieces, and it's a green and sustainable way to shop. I also sourced end-of-line tiles, and used the Minerva kitchen worktop offcuts for the pantry shelves and a small tabletop.

After decorating all the rooms in my favourite beige and grey duo, which I'd tried and tested in previous homes, »



Do it! SMARTEN UP YOUR GARDEN

- 1 Decking zones the garden and can be an affordable update. Or add a hard-standing surface – great for kids to play out on and protects your lawn on damp days.
- 2 Build a pergola to extend your entertaining space. Accessorise with string lights, hanging pendants and lanterns on side tables.
- 3 Add outdoor shelves to display plants and attach solar lights.
- 4 Arrange a variety of outdoor seating with cushions and include an outdoor rug to bring the inside, outside – much like having a living room in your garden.

IKEA HACK

'I customised the Ikea bed with this pretty Clark & Clark wallpaper to blend in with the wall'

Where to buy Georgia's style

★ **IKEA** Great for functional furniture, which Georgia often 'hacks' to adapt and update – see her online tutorials at homemadeproductions.co.uk.

★ **MAISONS DU MONDE** Gorgeous selection of French-influenced homeware for those on a budget.

★ **CHARITY SHOPS** For a few pounds you might find a pretty vase, crockery or a painting that you're unlikely to

see in anyone else's home. Go to the bigger stores for furniture.

★ **FACEBOOK MARKETPLACE** Perfect for seeking out pre-loved bargains that are local to where you live, so you don't have to wait or pay for delivery.

★ **EBAY** Before you buy new, search for the same item here, as you might find what you're looking for second-hand but in excellent condition.



INSPIRED LIVING

'I loved our Toronto garden – it prompted me to design the deck and pergola. The indoor-outdoor rug, made from recycled plastic, is from Fab Hab on Amazon'

COLOUR POPS

'I use these Tolix chairs inside and out. Yellow adds splashes of colour to the space'



IDEA TO STEAL

'Use outdoor rugs and cushions to add colour and cosiness'

'RAISING AND COVERING PART OF THE DECK HELPS TO ZONE THE AREA AND MAKES IT FEEL MORE LIKE A SEPARATE LIVING ROOM'

» I gradually added colour. Blue became the thread, inspired by a collection of china and glass I inherited from grandparents.

Finishing touches

I experimented with upcycling craft projects, like the hanging plant holders using yarn made from T-shirt offcuts, and I share this know-how on my blog, homemadeproductions.co.uk. The deck and pergola were our final project. Now, in summer when the back doors are open, it's like the house doubles in size.

It's strange to think this was the house no one wanted. We're really proud of what we've achieved on our budget. We have all the benefits of living in a new-build within the bones of a 1950s house.'

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN PHOTOGRAPHS JAMES FRENCH STYLING MARSHA TAYLOR



Find more clever ideas to style up your home by going to pinterest.com/styleathomemag

3 of the best METAL BENCHES

Sociable seating for indoors and out



SWEET SEAT
Indu bench, £100, Habitat

RED HOT
Brusen three-seater sofa, £175, Ikea

STYLISH STRING
Zanzibar two-seater bench, £150, Next Home