

‘I
THINK
WE
MIGHT
JUST
STAY
HERE’



This serial decorator couple built their forever home by creating a joyful space that balances period details, modern comfort and a connection to the creative, eclectic London neighbourhood they love

WORDS JANE CRITTENDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH
STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR



KITCHEN

This end of the kitchen was rebuilt when the side return was added.
Walls in Porcelain II, Paint & Paper Library. **Sofa**, Made. Nova **cushions**, Christina Lundsteen. Serge Mouille **wall light**, Lunara Lights. **Art** by Julia Burnett. For similar vintage **lab stools**, try Ember Home. **Handles**, Corston Architectural Detail

HOME
PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE
Shauna O'Handley,
a tech executive, and her
husband Adam Glabay,
a property developer

THE PROPERTY
A four-bedroom terraced
Victorian house in Dalston,
east London, which they
moved into in December 2020

KITCHEN

The cupboards are painted in
New Black by Paint & Paper
Library. **Dining chairs**, Maisons
du Monde. **Chris Moon**
artwork, Jealous Gallery



vibe we remember. It's an endlessly inspiring place to live – with London's best coffee!

Once they had bought the property, the couple started to make plans. These included extending the terrace into the side return and rebuilding the back section of the kitchen so they could add an extra room above for a home office, while knocking through two small front bedrooms to allow them to reinstate the primary bedroom and reconfiguring the loft room to bring in more light and add an ensuite.

'Our goal was to bring back the charm of the property by reinstating the period details that give Victorian houses their soul,' says Shauna. 'We revealed the original façade and fitted sash windows to establish the external character – from then on, all our decisions balanced architectural integrity with modern comforts.'

After slogging through the building work, the couple moved in with just one bedroom and one bathroom finished. Shauna was keen for the interiors to relate to their eclectic surroundings. 'We love the character of our local area, with its unique shops and independent cafés, so we wanted our home to reflect that charm – imperfect, inviting and full of personality,' she explains. 'The colour palette is dark and moody, light and tranquil, bold and understated. We've mixed investment pieces and budget items, as well as old and new furniture.'

An affordable velvet chaise is paired with a luxurious rug, while bright textiles from La Redoute and cushions from designer Christina Lundsteen add pops of colour. Rooms are decorated in layered blues with



LIVING

This page and opposite, top right The inky walls soften the high ceiling, creating a living space that feels cocooning. Adam reinstated the fireplace and chimney breast. **Walls** in Squid Ink, Paint & Paper Library. **Mirror**, Exclusive Mirrors. **Bubble chandelier**, Dowsing & Reynolds. **Chaise**, Beliani. **Rug**, Evelina Kroon for Layered from Finnish Design Shop. **Artwork**, Tim Nerheim-Chereck



For self-confessed serial renovators Shauna O'Handley and her husband Adam Glabay, doing up this house took a different turn once the project got underway. 'The timing collided with the second lockdown in the pandemic,' remembers Shauna. 'To stay safe, we didn't use many trades and instead took on a lot of the work ourselves. It was a steep learning curve but we found it unexpectedly rewarding to have a direct hand in bringing our vision to life. We feel more connection to this house than we did with the others.'

Since moving from their native Canada to London in the early 2000s, Shauna and

Adam had renovated eight properties – including one complete self build – when they felt the itch to move on to their next project. Adam found the Victorian terrace in Dalston, east London, where a pebbledash façade, uPVC windows and a plastic porch were completely out of step with the other period houses on the street.

'We're drawn to the unloved and forgotten,' Shauna explains. 'To two Canadians who grew up in 1970s suburbia, Victorian properties have a certain magic, and east London, where we bought our first flat, has stayed close to our hearts. While it's different to how it was 24 years ago, it has kept the creative, eclectic, independent



HALLWAY

An oak herringbone floor from Halo Floors runs through to the front sitting room to bring authenticity back to the period property. **Walls** in Porcelain II, Paint & Paper Library

a punch of patterned wallpaper here and there for depth and interest. 'Our base colours are neutrals from Paint & Paper Library's Porcelain range with graduating blue undertones,' Shauna says. 'For the first time, we tried a dramatic colour, choosing velvety Squid Ink in the sitting room because it's such a grand space – it was an instant success.' In the kitchen, black base cupboards have been paired with floor-to-ceiling cupboards painted in Porcelain II for a monochromatic look. All of the joinery was designed and built by Adam. 'He really put his heart and soul into our home. The quality he achieved and care he took may have meant it took a little longer, but he did an incredible job.'

Inspiration for the kitchen's clean lines, natural materials and muted tones came from a restaurant in Copenhagen. 'I came across Restaurant 108 while researching a trip, which ended up being cancelled because of the pandemic. Sadly, we were never able to go because it didn't reopen.'

The couple's travels have also led to various pieces of art around their home – a picture of a house surrounded by snow is a nostalgic nod to Canada; a vibrant abstract captures the energy of a trip to Tel Aviv. 'Adam and I don't think about art in terms of aesthetic or colour schemes,' adds Shauna. 'We're drawn to what we buy because it marks a moment in time; it captures how we felt, where we were and what we learned about ourselves. Whether or not it fits into a design scheme is less important – the connection is what matters.'

This nostalgic ethos also applies to their beloved collection of vintage, thrift shop and eBay furniture, some of which they've had to keep in storage due to their many house moves. 'We found furnishing was about rediscovering what we already owned rather than buying new,' says Shauna. 'Our vintage finds have a story and feel personal to our home. This has been a project of love, learning and connection. Every corner holds a piece of our journey, so this house truly feels like home. For the first time in a long time, I think we might just stay here.'

'WE'VE MIXED INVESTMENT PIECES AND BUDGET ITEMS'



MAIN BEDROOM

This picture and below
Adam designed and made the wardrobes, which are painted in Little Greene's Hopper. **Paradisa wallpaper**, House of Hackney. **Mirror**, Cox & Cox. **Armchair**, Furniture123. **Cushions**, Christina Lundsteen. **Morandi cone wall light**, Lightzey



BATHROOM

Above Elongated tiles add width to the space. **Opal Sky wall tile** is similar, Porcelain Superstore. **Shower curtain**, Ferm Living. **Le Jardin Secret wallpaper**, Mind the Gap. **Mirror**, Cult Furniture. **Wall lights**, Astro



‘THIS HAS BEEN A PROJECT OF LOVE,
LEARNING AND CONNECTION’

GUEST BATHROOM

Above and above right Velvet curtains, wall panelling and a freestanding bath from Sanctuary Bathrooms give the guest space a touch of luxury. **Walls** in Plaster V and **panelling** in Moleskin, both Paint & Paper Library. **Mirror**, Amara. **Curtains**, La Redoute. Cosmic Terrazzo Beige **tiles** are similar, Stone Superstore. **Artwork** by Emma Haworth

GUEST BEDROOM

Right Shauna and Adam remodelled the loft and lowered ceilings in rooms below to create more height. **Walls** in Porcelain IV, Paint & Paper Library. Nymane **wall lights**, Ikea. Artemis blush velvet **cushion** is similar, House of Hackney

