

Sociable end-of-terrace

'It's like waking up in a fancy holiday home'

By reinstating some walls and knocking down others, swapping rooms around and building a modest extension, **Victoria Eggs** has created a light, bright family space

Victoria Eggs and her husband Dan viewed 20 houses before they found the one, and spent another few years mulling over the changes they wanted to make to it before starting their reno project. The couple relocated to Kingston after 10 years of living in North London, where they used to visit nearby Richmond on the overground train. 'We liked the park and the river, but property there was way out of our budget,' says Victoria. 'We widened our search to Kingston, but the houses we saw were either too dark or had already been done up, until we found this end-of-terrace with a south-facing garden. Downstairs was mostly open plan and had been decorated in dark brown and, although it felt oppressive, there was lots of natural light, so we knew it could be even brighter with the right changes.'

They were drawn to the garden and additional space in the double-storey side extension, which had a large main bedroom



▲ The front door is the perfect welcome for guests, as it's in the family's favourite colour which features throughout their home



ISLAND LIFE

This island not only zones the kitchen, but also connects it to the social space – perfect for entertaining

► 'Urban & Grey sliding doors were key,' explains Victoria. 'They have a narrow profile so even when they're closed the garden feels like an extension of the room'

KITCHEN

'We went from a completely open-plan downstairs to an extended space that's still big and open, but feels tidier and more relaxing now that we've reinstated the wall in the front room and hallway,' says Victoria

OUR MUST HAVES Elmbridge kitchen in Navy, POA, Howdens, Ella metal bar stool in Grey velvet, £209, Atkin & Thyrne



COME ON IN...

WE ARE Victoria Eggs, 41, a textile designer at victoriaeggs.com, my husband, Dan, 39, a painter and decorator, and our daughter, Etta, five.

OUR HOME IS a three-bedroom, Victorian, end-of-terrace house in Kingston, Surrey. We moved here in October 2018.

FOR INSPIRATION I go to Peggy Jean, which is a riverside restaurant on a moored barge. I love the combination of gold lettering, scalloped pink parasols and blue decorating details.

MY TOP TIP The Google Lens app overlaid on a photo is good for finding cheaper alternatives to expensive brands as it does the searching for you. Decorating-wise, Dan prefers the quality and consistency of Johnstone Trade paint as it goes on easily, has a better finish, lasts longer and doesn't easily mark.

MY BEST IDEA We had a £3,000 quote to make our bedroom wardrobes bigger, so we did it ourselves and it cost around £150! We used MDF and IKEA doors and Dan did the alterations himself.

MY STYLE IS seasonal – for example, I'll swap the Autumn Garden cushions from my collection with my Wildlife in Spring designs when the seasons change, and I especially look forward to getting out my Christmas collection of tea towels, mugs and aprons.

GROUND FLOOR FIRST FLOOR



'We loved the idea of open-plan living with a seamless connection to the garden so we could be in the same space together but doing different things'

with an en-suite. The narrow downstairs utility was less impressive, though. 'It had been built alongside the outside wall but there was no internal access, so we had to go outside to go in and use the washing machine, which became annoying,' says Victoria.

ALL IN THE PLANNING

They did an initial redecoration of the house and sanded back the dark wood floorboards to make it their own. During lockdown, the couple began firming up ideas about how they could better use the space. They briefed local architect, Paul Crowther, who was recommended by a friend. 'We wanted to do this project once and do it right,' says Victoria. 'Paul knew the builder, Gray Alexander, and project-managed all the way through so the design was built exactly as we expected.'

The couple reinstated walls to separate the living room from the hallway and the back, and swapped Etta's small front bedroom with the bathroom at the back, knocking through the separate toilet. A priority was inside

▶ 'We built the joinery with the same Howden's Elbridge cupboards as the kitchen but in Dove Grey,' says Victoria. 'The desk area had been part of the old utility and doesn't take up a lot of room but we have loads of storage for Etta's toys and my work things'

▼ 'The "Yeah" artwork is a recent purchase – I came across the independent maker, Modo and Co, through Holly & Co's newsletter,' says Victoria. 'We wanted a positive word or phrase and chose the wood-mounted letters on gold leaf so it's completely bespoke for us'

WORK IT

To make an open-plan living area the hub of your home, add a desk as well so you don't feel cut off while you work



'I've bought so much artwork over the years and I love adding to my collection,' says Victoria. 'I might be drawn to a design as the colours are right for a room or it might make me smile'

KITCHEN-DINER

'This comfy, soft pink sofa with flecks of yellow, green and peach has all the colours we love,' says Victoria

OUR MUST HAVES Delta Coast 3-seater sofa with chaise in Amalfi Blush, from £3,290, King Living. Autumn Garden cushion cover, £25, Victoria Eggs. Wall painted in modern emulsion in India Yellow, £63 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. Ebbe Gehl 4-8 seater extending dining table, £999; Spindle dining chairs in Natural, £279 for 2; Soren office chair in Ivory/Natural, £449, all John Lewis & Partners



'We wanted to do this project once and do it right. The design was built exactly as we expected'

ARTFULLY DONE

To check that prints work together for a gallery wall, lay them all out on the floor in your chosen arrangement and take a photo for reference



'Friends ask if we'd change anything, and we wouldn't – it's like waking up in a fancy Airbnb and remembering it's our home'

access to the utility and adding a downstairs WC, plus a large kitchen, dining and living space with floor-to-ceiling sliding doors. 'I'm like a sunflower, I just need to be in the sun!' says Victoria. 'We loved the idea of open-plan living with a seamless connection to the garden so we could be in the same space together but doing different things.'

Paul came back with a few design options and surprised the couple with a layout they weren't expecting but loved, which involved cutting the utility room in half so the remaining part could become usable space inside the house. 'To do this, we knocked down the wall and a defunct chimney, which

then created a workspace and access into a smaller utility – it was the perfect solution,' Victoria explains. 'The new extension with its pitched roof links up here with the old kitchen. It's only about 4m x 4m but now we have one large room, and it's made a massive difference to how we live.'

BEST-LAID PLANS

The building work wasn't without its challenges. Shared drainage meant digging six-foot trenches in the garden and moving the manhole away from the extension foundations. Relocating the bathroom pipework was tricky too. 'We moved in with family, but it was worth the effort and money because it's made Etta's room feel like a proper bedroom,' says Victoria. 'She's so proud, it's the first thing she wants to show visitors when they come over.'

Victoria put together moodboards to ensure her home had a cohesive look, adding photos of 'spa-throoms' with terrazzo and

LIVING ROOM

'We reinstated the wall and were drawn to Dulux's Copper Blush as Dan happened to use it in a client project and we both really liked it,' says Victoria. 'The tone picks out the lighter colours in the exposed brick and goes well with the two sofas we already had in yellow and grey-blue'

OUR MUST-HAVES Zinc four-seater sofa in Grey, £899, DFS. Nalani cushion, £17, furl. Wildlife in Spring cushion cover, £25, Victoria Eggs. Mila traditional rug in Pink, from £69, Dunelm

pink tiles, and a navy, yellow, pink scheme for the open-plan kitchen. 'Our family colour is pink – even before we had Etta, we both wore pink – so there are touches throughout,' she says. 'I also like colour-blocking and bold colours – some of my design collections are in bright reds and blues.'

The couple tested paint samples and picked two key colours for the dining area and front living room – Farrow & Ball's India Yellow and Dulux's Copper Blush.

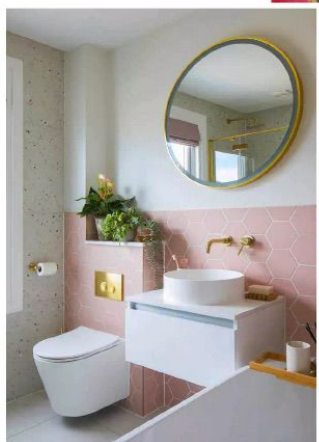
'By coincidence, we found a pale pink sofa for the kitchen with flecks of these colours, so we could have gone either way with the paint in here,' she says. 'But we settled on yellow, ►

◀ 'I had my eye on the antique gold palm leaf table lamp from McGowan Rutherford for a long time and, when we finished this room, it needed something eye-catching and interesting in the corner, so this was the perfect solution,' says Victoria. 'The trio of graphic prints from a secondhand shop in Margate are of places we've visited and feature the same copper colour as the wall'

BATHROOM

'The terrazzo tiles are one of my favourite things,' says Victoria. 'They have flecks of pink, gold, brown and grey so the challenge was to find the right shade of pink for the wall tiles and grey for the floor'

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Azzo White terrazzo 60cm x 60cm wall & floor **tile**, £44.97 per sq m, Tiles Direct. Hayek Hex Blush **tiles**, £69.60 per sq m, Claybrook Studio. Arezzo Brushed Brass 600mm round LED illuminated anti-fog bathroom **mirror**, £279.95, Victorian Plumbing. Horizon Como 600mm 1-drawer wall hung countertop **vanity unit** with worktop in White, £220.99, Ergonomic Designs



► 'The Miller bunk has a fun castle design and is from Home Detail. Dan made some adjustments and built it without the bottom bed'



'Our family colour is pink – even before we had Etta, we both wore pink – so there are touches throughout'

as Copper Blush looks great with the exposed brick fireplace in the living room.'

Victoria and Dan had some furniture and went hunting for a dining table, bar stools and bedside cupboards. 'I often have a clear visual of what I want but I can't always find it,' she says. 'That's why our bedside tables were a recent purchase. I knew I wanted floating dark wood with a touch of gold and eventually found them from Swoon.'

Despite taking five years to create their dream home, it means the couple have no regrets. 'Friends ask if we'd change anything, and we wouldn't – it's like waking up in a fancy Airbnb and then remembering it's our home,' says Victoria. 'We've got everything we wanted, and it was worth waiting for.'

ETTA'S BEDROOM

'Dan used a scallop stencil template from Create Cuts on Etsy for the curved shape, using a Johnstone's trade paint colour-matched to the pink of the drawers,' says Victoria

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try textured weave recycled polyester pair blackout lined eyelet **curtains** in Rose Pink, from £50; ANYDAY Hem 3-drawer **chest** in Blush, £399, both John Lewis & Partners. For similar, try Gold monstera leaf **curtain holdbacks**, £14.95 for 2, Melody Maison. Frances rattan double **wardrobe** with 1 drawer in White, £369.99, daals



'I fell in love with the Fresco floating bedside tables from Swoon as they work well when space is limited,' says Victoria



'Our bedside tables were a fairly recent purchase. I knew I wanted floating dark wood with a touch of gold and eventually found them for a price I could justify'

GO FOR BOLD

To use a strong colour without overpowering a room, paint the ceiling rather than the walls, and bring it down to the picture rail to make the space feel cosier too

MAIN BEDROOM

► The G Plan chest of drawers bought many years ago is a quality build in a style that won't date

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Birds Flying South **print**, from £15, Fyl. For similar, try Ghlin Gold effect plug-in **wall light**, £17, Trade Point. For similar, try Clara cotton velvet **cushion cover** in Dusky Pink, from £14, Dunelm. For similar, try waffle honeycomb **throw** in Blush Pink, from £9.99, The Range

