



ELENA ROMANOVA  
interiors

## Elena Romanova Interiors Feature

I am really excited to see one of my favourite London projects being featured in the August issue of 25 Beautiful Homes, it has been a true labour of love.

I would like to thank all of my loyal suppliers without whom none of this would have been possible, amazing Sharon Parsons, who wrote the feature and talented Richard Gadsby, who did the photoshoot (my second project with Richard and hopefully more to come).

I also want to send a massive thank you to my wonderful clients who proved once again that the most successful projects are the ones where we trust and respect each other and the client feels confident to allow the designer to take the lead.

25 BEAUTIFUL  
HOMES



# DREAM COME TRUE

David Finlayson and Allan Malvar had always been interested in a house just around the corner from their own – now it's their forever home

**FEATURE** SHARON PARSONS | **PHOTOGRAPHY** RICHARD GADSBY



**FORMAL SITTING ROOM**

This is a quietly sophisticated space for entertaining or reading, and effectively combines furnishings from different eras. Custom-made sofas, Lougin'; in Ampara Viridian, £50m, Designers Guild. Cali modern oak drinks cabinets, £2,225 each, Pavilion Broadway. Lexington coffee table, from £2,980, Tom Faulkner

**GARDEN**

Similar materials and tonal finishes help link this to the kitchen. Courtyard designed by Karen Rogers of KR Garden Design



L16

R118





## HOME TRUTHS

### THE PROPERTY

Victorian terrace built in 1885

**LOCATION** South London

**ROOMS** Family room/  
library, kitchen, formal  
sitting room, study, two  
cloakrooms, gym, utility room,  
media room, six bedrooms  
(four en suite), bathroom

**PURCHASED** 2016

**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**

"We lived in a smaller terrace in  
the neighbourhood," says David.

## KITCHEN

This space is flooded with light thanks to the vast skylight and floor-to-ceiling glass doors. Bespoke units in Thistle and island in Dewberry, Tom Howley. Elstead Provence 1 Light pendants in polished nickel, £222 each, Olivia's. Nordic Sea tableware by Broste Copenhagen, from £6.50, Nordic Nest



P 117

P 117

**T**he neglected Victorian house overlooking a leafy London park had long intrigued David Finlayson and his husband Allan Malvar who had lived nearby for 15 years. 'We were looking for somewhere with more space for our young family,' David explains. 'When it went up for sale, we didn't hesitate... but it was a probate property which went to 20 sealed bids, and we weren't successful.'

Though disappointed, they didn't quite give up. 'We felt instinctively the house was meant to be ours,' says David. 'So, when the estate agent called us eight months later to say the original sale had fallen through, we moved heaven and earth to make it happen!'

Nevertheless, their purchase was not for the faint-hearted. 'The house was in a dismal state,' says

David. 'There was incredibly tired decor, a smell of nicotine, which seemed embedded in the walls, and various structural problems – every time you flushed the loo, the house seemed to shudder! Outside, the garden was so overgrown we couldn't even access it.'

David and Allan, together with their daughter Ava and son Leo (now 10 and nine), lived in the house for a year before decamping to a flat while work took place. 'We worked with our architect to achieve everything we wanted,' David says. 'Interestingly, as almost all of the original features had been stripped out, we felt more confident about doing our own thing without feeling guilty about making radical changes to an older property.'

While the period façade of the house remained, inside walls were taken down and rooms reconfigured;

#### DINING AREA

**Banquette seating caters for a crowd and the durable faux leather makes it very family-friendly, too.**

Banquette designed by Elena Romanova; made by Loungin'; covered in Laser II PU leather in Nightshadow, £34m, Kirkby Design

#### FAMILY ROOM/LIBRARY

**The blue is fresh but it also gives the space a feeling of luxury.**

Juno armchair in Turmeric easy velvet, £399, Swoon. Andromeda antique brass chandelier, £1,962, Heathfield & Co. Custom-made rug, Stepevi





### MAIN BEDROOM

The bespoke fitted wardrobes have been painted in the same colour as the walls to maximise the sense of space. Walls and wardrobes in Lamp Room Gray estate emulsion, £52 for 2.5ltr; estate eggshell, £70 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball. Duke cocktail chair, £399, Swoon. Velvet throw in Midnight Blue, £229, Heal's



< P 120

P 122 >

the basement ceiling was raised to incorporate new living spaces; an office 'pod' was installed on the flat roof of the existing rear extension, and practical as well as luxurious fixtures and fittings were installed.

Outside, a courtyard garden was created. 'The plan was to make it feel like an extension of the house,' says David. 'That was achieved with a design that uses similar materials and huge floor-to-ceiling glass dividing the two, so both aspects seem to merge together.'

When it came to the decor, the couple worked with Elena Romanova Interiors. 'We'd never used a design service before, and it proved a great move,' David says. 'Elena encouraged us to be far more adventurous and try things we might not have considered before.' Elena says: 'The aim was to honour the origins of the house, while

creating a timeless design that was neither stuffy nor generic. I wanted to be sensitive to David and Allan's tastes, while bringing in new ideas and perspectives.'

There is a confident juxtaposition of antique, mid-century and contemporary, along with an extensive art collection, heirlooms and treasured pieces. 'We've showcased everything against a neutral background for a sense of calm, but offset the scheme with dramatic injections of colour, pattern and texture,' says Elena.

The result is a home that ticks everything requested by a design-conscious couple who are determined their home should be a relaxed, happy retreat for their growing family. 'We were right to trust our instincts,' says David. 'We felt this house could offer us everything we needed – and that has turned out to be the case.' 45

#### BEDROOM

**'Never underestimate the power of a great wallcovering,' says Elena, who has chosen this opulent design for one of the guest bedrooms.** Butterflies & Dragonflies wallpaper in SKU103/15067, £101 a roll, Cole & Son. West Elm's mid-century bedside table in Pebble, £359, is an alternative

#### BATHROOM

**Classic marble with luxury fittings creates a hotel-spa look.** Alsace honed marble herringbone mosaic tiles, from £144.47sq m, Mandarin Stone. Try the Charlotte large vanity unit in Dark Pewter, from £1,325, Harvey George. Art deco style wall light in polished nickel, €559, Casa Lumi







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