

In the inviting snug, a bespoke oak ottoman in Jocasta Red from Colefax and Fowler is teamed with a blind in Wild Thing by Lewis & Wood.

RIGHT Cabinetry has been built into the hallway to create useful storage and seating.



# Abundant CHARM

Simple Georgian features have been mixed with playful fabrics and colours to create a fresh take on tradition in this South West London period cottage

FEATURE CLAIR WAYMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHY NICK SMITH



**A**BOVE The chair in the study is covered in Rajmata Tonal by Peter Dunham Textiles and the ottoman is covered in Luma by Penny Morrison. Both fabrics bring a subtle Indonesian feel to the room. The Swedish-style bookcase was made for the space.

**RIGHT** The David Seyfried armchairs in the formal sitting room are in Check Stripe by George Spencer Designs. Cushions are in Addis by Peter Dunham Textiles and Killi by Penny Morrison.

Stepping into the property for the first time, Soraya was drawn to the generous Georgian windows and plentiful light. "As soon as I saw the windows, I knew I wanted to live here. One of my favourite period features is the original window looking into the new extension [shown above]," she explains. "We also liked the idea of having both a cosy snug and more formal sitting room, perfect for entertaining or just relaxing."

Built in 1828 and recently modernised by a developer, the house's interior was bland when the couple first saw it. "However, we could see it had lovely bones, plus living in leafy South West London appealed to us," says Soraya, who, whilst she and Geoffrey were going through the buying process, fortuitously discovered interior designer Lisette Voûte. ▶



Lisette chose the bold Waltham Stripe from Colefax and Fowler for the David Seyfried sofa. The set of eight 1920s Swedish pressed botanicals, found in an antique shop, are a favourite of Soraya's.



*'There isn't a corner of the house that doesn't spark some joy. The details and layers are all so pleasing, plus there's a beautiful flow through the spaces'*

Before the couple had even officially bought the house, interior designer Lisette and her builder were able to have access to the property so they could draw up plans. Then, on the day Soraya and Geoffrey completed, in October 2017, they handed the keys to the builder who immediately started work, whilst they lived elsewhere.

"Soraya and Geoffrey really wanted to make specific changes to bring back the original charm and make it their own," Lisette says. "Being a Grade II listed house, the front hallway had to be tiled, but the developer who had previously updated the property had chosen modern ceramic tiles." Lisette soon replaced these with tumbled flagstone, more in keeping with the Georgian era of the property, and laid solid oak flooring throughout the rest of the house. "In a cottage, having two types of flooring helps to define zones and creates more of a sense of space," she explains.

Lisette completely transformed the cottage with a classic, sophisticated approach, making the most of the space. "The front hallway was disproportionately vast for a cottage and I felt there was unused space, so I put in a big wall of cupboards with a little bench seat," she explains. "To add character, I put simple Georgian-style wall panelling on the cupboard doors, which is echoed throughout the house to create consistency."

To make the most of the space downstairs, Lisette had the ingenious idea of putting up a stud wall to create an internal study between the hallway and formal sitting room. "Open-plan layouts are a popular choice, but in this type of house, by dividing rooms, you actually create more space, making them more functional," she explains.

The whole project took less than a year and was done in three distinct stages. The building work, including bathrooms, flooring and lighting, took three

ABOVE A bespoke Julian Chichester mirror is teamed with an Alderney fireplace from Chesneys in the dining room. The antique bobbin chairs are covered in Bukhara Oasis by Lewis & Wood. Lisette designed the dining table and had it made in oak. The walls are covered in silk. For similar try James Hare.



months, after which Soraya and Geoffrey moved in. They let most of their old furniture and accessories go, which meant Lisette could start with a clean slate. She sourced antiques and mixed them with bespoke furniture, made to the perfect dimensions, to maximise space and add character. All the new upholstery and furniture was installed in one day in spring 2018. "It was really wonderful coming home from work that day," says Soraya. "I felt like I was walking into the house we'd dreamt up when the estate agent first showed us around. There is not one thing I would change."

The third phase took place in late summer 2018, when a bespoke kitchen, with solid walnut interiors and a large built-in pantry cupboard, was made by Lisette's specialist joiner. Every centimetre of space has been used. A pale blue colour scheme and beautiful brass highlights complete it.

Last but not least, Lisette believes styling a room is an important part of the process. "Layering accessories creates an inviting, lived in, cosy feel," she says. With Soraya's help, Lisette sourced ornaments, artwork, table lamps and even coffee table books. With Indonesian roots, Soraya was keen to infuse the interiors with a subtle Eastern influence. "For most of my life, my home has been Jakarta [capital of Java], even though I studied in the UK and work as a fund manager in London now," she explains. "I wanted this house to be timeless, but also reflect all the ▶

**ABOVE** In the master bedroom, the James Hare silk wallcovering is teamed with curtains in Lindon Old Blue by Colefax and Fowler. The bespoke headboard is covered in Vintage Dew fabric by Mark Alexander.

**LEFT** Lisette found the lamp base in Belgium and had the shade made using Soma fabric from Mark Alexander. The antique sailor boy painting has been teamed with a modern landscape painting by Paul Bailey. The brass wall light is Ralph Lauren.





many colours and textures that I grew up with, such as the silk wallpaper in my childhood home.” Many of the fabrics in the cottage have a Javanese influence, including batik and ikat patterns. A lot of the dark furniture in the house is inspired by Indonesian teak pieces. “I love the wood carvings and unique joinery in Javanese houses, which is probably why I’m all for details,” she continues.

The finished interiors encapsulate a fresh take on tradition. “We’ve chosen furniture with cleaner, simpler lines, that aren’t ornate, to suit the cottagey feel,” Lisette says. “Our aim was to respect the history of the house whilst bringing it into the 21st century with a high-quality renovation,” Soraya adds.

At the start of the process, Geoffrey needed more convincing than Soraya, but he’s now a huge advocate of Lisette’s work. “We’re expecting a baby this year and plan to buy a house in the country, keeping the cottage as a London pied-à-terre. The first thing Geoffrey said was ‘we should check if Lisette is free’,” laughs Soraya.

“Lisette didn’t just make the house look beautiful, she thought of every practical detail, even down to the electrical plans and light switches,” Soraya says. “There isn’t a corner of the house that doesn’t spark some joy. The details and layers are all so pleasing, plus there’s a beautiful flow through the spaces. Nothing feels forced, everything has its place, and even though it’s a little cottage, it feels spacious. Honestly, I pinch myself that this house is really ours.” ■



**ABOVE LEFT** Marble tiles by Mandarin Stone are used on the walls in the guest bathroom. The paint on the bath panel is Lead IV by Paint & Paper Library.

**ABOVE** The scalloped headboard is in Bukhara Sugar Almond by Lewis & Wood and the walls are in Powder Puff by Zoffany. The room seen beyond is a dressing room.

**LEFT** China Cloud trim by Samuel & Sons contrasts with pale pink Dorset curtain fabric by Hodsoll McKenzie. The portrait by an Indonesian artist was sourced from 1stdibs.co.uk by Soraya.