

house fact file

**THE PROPERTY** A Grade II-listed 17th-century cottage in south-east London.

**BEDROOMS** Two.

**BATHROOMS** One.

**IMPROVEMENTS MADE**

Re-plumbed, re-wired, new floors, bathroom, kitchen, weatherboarding, roof and windows installed.

**BUYING PRICE** £430,000 in 2007.

**RENOVATION COSTS** £50,000.

**NOW WORTH** £695,000.



# History in the making

A 17th-century cottage proved to be the perfect canvas for Julie Hailey and David Ray

WORDS JULIE HAILEY PHOTOGRAPHS CAROLINE ARBER

Standing outside the home of interiors stylist Julie Hailey and developer David Ray, you would be forgiven for thinking you were deep in the countryside. With its white picket fence and painted weatherboarding, the cottage is tucked away down a small private road overlooking a duck pond. In fact they live in south-east London – only ten minutes by train to the centre of the capital. One of several cottages originally built to house the local mill's kiln workers, it is now an idyllic family home to Julie and David and their two sons, Harvey, 12, and Ned, 6.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Picture postcard it may be, but when Julie and David bought the cottage, it was in desperate need of attention. 'The location was perfect and we'd always dreamed of living in a cosy cottage, but didn't expect to find one in London,' explains Julie. 'The weatherboarding >>



**ABOVE** The weatherboarded cottage is painted in Off Black by Farrow & Ball (01202 876141, farrow-ball.com) and looks striking against the snow. Outdoor Christmas lights are used in the holly tree to add a festive look.

**LEFT** The huge snowman was a team effort! A simple holly wreath adds a festive finishing touch to the front door, which is painted in Sweet Cicely by Fired Earth (0845 366 0400, fireearth.com).





*Lessons learned*

'This sort of project is very much work in progress. Don't be scared to play around with colours; I'm forever changing my mind as it's important to get it right. We've also learnt that when restoring an older property, things take longer than you expect and it's not always straightforward. Furthermore, we realised that budgets will always escalate!'



The dining table is one of David's own creations. He takes commissions at [thewoodpigeon.com](http://thewoodpigeon.com).



**'Having captured our imagination, we could see the potential'**

was just adorable. The property is Grade II-listed but we didn't let that put us off, having tackled many projects before. It had been rented out for decades, as it was previously owned by a charity, so the decor was very bland and most of the original features had been removed over the years. However, having captured our imagination, we could see the potential; it was love at first sight!

**LABOUR OF LOVE**

David is very passionate when it comes to restoration so he took on most of the project himself; this was also really helpful financially, as it allowed the couple to keep a lot of the costs down. Although the cottage had lost a lot of its charm and the list of renovations was

**ABOVE** On removing a damp ceiling, David discovered the old timber ceiling joists, which he restored.

**TOP RIGHT** The slate flooring used downstairs is from Bluesky Stone Direct (0845 226 3193, [blueskystone.com](http://blueskystone.com)).

long, they wanted to restore the cosy elements, but were happy to add some contemporary touches, too. 'David likes to know that something has been done properly, so has tackled as much of the work himself as possible. Structurally we didn't need to do much, but the entire cottage needed a complete overhaul.'

When the hard graft was over, Julie and David decorated throughout in a neutral palette of soft greys and off-whites, which made the cottage much lighter. Next, they set about furnishing it >>







**LEFT** The 1950s red sofa was a favourite find from local shop, Bleu (020 7733 4999, bleufurniture.co.uk), where Julie also found the vintage coffee table and armchair.

**RIGHT** The bedroom ceiling was removed to create more room. The bed linen is from The Laundry (01594 840563, thelaundry.co.uk) and the pink throw is from Jan Constantine (01270 821194, janconstantine.com).

**BELOW** Limestone tiles were used to keep the bathroom light and airy. All the sanitaryware is from Bathstore (0800 023 2323, bathstore.com).

**Interior inspiration**  
*'We try to mix things together and not follow a particular style. It's a combination of things that can make an interior work. As a stylist, I'm always on the lookout for the next big thing.'*

with a mixture of old, vintage and new pieces, which they chose together.

**STYLE IDEAS**

David and Julie both enjoy sourcing items and have spent hours trawling antiques fairs and junk shops. 'We like to think the cottage has a contemporary element to it although I do love all things vintage,' says Julie. The wooden dresser in the dining room came from a cafe in Brixton that was about to be renovated, and Julie snapped up the dresser for £100. 'I painted it in French Grey - one of my favourite shades by Farrow & Ball. It's perfect for displaying our china and glass.'

The couple are often asked where items came from and this has inspired them to launch their online shop called The Wood Pigeon, where you'll find vintage interior pieces and can also commission David's own range of bespoke furniture. 'He made the dining table especially as we were struggling to find something we liked. We're really looking forward to Christmas lunch around it. I love the dining area because it's very cosy, especially during the winter months when we have the fire going; you just can't beat the smell of an open fire.'



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