



# A potted history

This 17th-century kiln worker's cottage in Dulwich, south east London, proved to be the perfect canvas for couple Julie Hailey and David Ray's creative ambitions

FEATURE DES CHESHIRE PHOTOGRAPHS CAROLINE ARBER



This page The black leather cinema seats are from Castle Gibson and the steel chairs were picked up from Sunbury Antiques Market at Kempton Park Left The cottage's pretty front door is painted in Fired Earth's 'Duck Egg Blue'



Standing outside interiors stylist Julie Hailey and developer David Ray's home, you would be forgiven for thinking you were deep in the heart of the countryside. With its white picket fence and painted weatherboarding, the cottage is tucked away down a small private road, surrounded by green playing fields and overlooking a duck pond.

In fact, they live in Dulwich, south east London – only 10 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 in which to raise the couple's two boys, Harvey, 10, and Ned, four.

#### Listed building

Picture postcard it may be, but when David and Julie bought the cottage it was in desperate need of attention – just the kind of challenge the couple were after. Previous owners had removed most of the original features and added an ugly single-storey rear extension; the entire facade was rotten, as were the windows. 'The cottage is grade II listed,' says Julie 'but we didn't let that put us off



and we couldn't wait to get stuck into the project.' Luckily, the planners were very accommodating, and keen for them to remove the old extension with its hideous 1960s décor. The couple set about replacing it with a slick contemporary structure which would house the new kitchen/diner and bathroom. 'They liked the fact that old and new would work together in this way,' Julie adds.

David carried out the lion's share of the work

Above left **The Cow Parsley wallpaper from Cole & Son adds a sense of glamour in the kitchen/diner**

Above right **Stainless steel SMEG appliances and polished concrete units suit the modern extension**

Above **Julie with her sons**



David made the dining table from reclaimed oak sleepers, with metal scaffold poles for legs. He takes commissions for such pieces, too, contact [juliehailey@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:juliehailey@hotmail.co.uk)



himself to cut back on cost. 'He's brilliant with all the details and we work well together, combining our ideas', says Julie. 'Over the years we've also built up a good team of workmen, so we'll call upon the usual plumber, tiler and electrician and we now have a fantastic roofer who carried out all the lead work on the new rear extension. It's so important to use people you can trust.'

### Sympathetic treatment

The cottage has been lovingly restored throughout, with no expense spared on the finish. The old, original part of the property, which is where the cosy snug room with its wood-burning stove is to be found, retains its period looks.

In contrast, the new extension is light and airy, with floor to ceiling steel and glass doors that look out onto a lush tropical garden. In the kitchen/diner, Julie was keen to add an industrial look to the space. 'I'm not a great lover of fitted kitchens', she admits, 'so I commissioned a set of concrete units. They were custom-built in the garden and painstakingly polished. They were ridiculously heavy and took several burly blokes to lift them in.' The stainless steel appliances keep the modern



theme running, while the flock wallpaper combined with the chandeliers soften the look.

The couple delight in using unusual objects for storage in their home. Polished metal lockers, for example, are used as a wardrobe in the main bedroom. 'It took three of us to carry them up the stairs', recalls David, 'you can imagine the language!' Another good buy is Julie's shoe rack, originally a contraption used to dry fruit.

It's been two and a half years since the couple

Above left **The African mask is a memento from Gambia** Above right **This old school locker, repurposed into a book rack, is from Ben and Anna Southgate's furniture shop in Ezra Street, London** Above **The hand-cut Normandy Terracotta flooring in the snug is from Elon Tiles**



Although it never tells the right time, the oversized station master's clock, bought from Sunbury Antiques Market, presides over the snug, which is kept toasty by a wood burner



This page David made the couple's bed out of metal scaffold poles Right Julie bought the bunkbeds from Bump, and the bedlinen is by Lisa Stickley Below right is by Lisa Stickley Below right Cath Kidston's 'Cowboy' wallpaper adds a retro feel to the boys' room



completed the renovation, and despite taking a professional interest in any new properties coming onto the market, they have no plans to move on. 'We do have to pinch ourselves sometimes. We consider ourselves very lucky to be living here,' says Julie. 'Over the centuries the cottage has been the subject of many paintings, and even today, passers-by stop and take photographs!' David agrees, 'We get a lot of people telling us that we've done a lovely job in renovating the cottage, which is so gratifying.'

*Julie and David will be opening their home to the public as part of the Open House London Festival from 8th-17th May. For more information visit [dulwichfestival.co.uk](http://dulwichfestival.co.uk)*



## GET THE LOOK



- 1 'Teresa' 6-arm chandelier, £176, John Lewis. 08456 049 049; [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)
- 2 Original Art Nouveau Duchess radiator painted in Black Satin, from £300, The Old Radiator Company. 01233 850 082; [theoldradiatorcompany.co.uk](http://theoldradiatorcompany.co.uk)
- 3 New vintage stage lighting on tripod base, £390, The Old Cinema. 020 8995 4166; [theoldcinema.co.uk](http://theoldcinema.co.uk)
- 4 E Line 100cm range cooker, £1,899, Britannia. 0800 073 1003; [britannialiving.co.uk](http://britannialiving.co.uk)
- 5 'Starry Skies' and 'Hellebore' ½ pint mug, £15.95 each, Emma Bridgewater. 020 7371 5489; [emmabridgewater.co.uk](http://emmabridgewater.co.uk)