

THE GOOD LIFE

A former kiln worker's cottage proved the ideal canvas for Julie Hailey and David Ray's creativity

FEATURE NORMAN CHESHIRE PHOTOGRAPHY CAROLINE ARBER

HOME TRUTHS

✿ **THE OWNERS** Julie Hailey an interiors stylist, her husband David Ray who works in shop fitting and property development, their sons Harvey and Ned, Woody the sausage dog, and cats Ted and Archie
 ✿ **THEIR HOME** A Grade II listed weatherboarded cottage
 ✿ **LOCATION** London
 ✿ **ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen-diner, two bedrooms, bathroom
 ✿ **PURCHASED** 2007
 ✿ **PREVIOUS PROPERTY** 'Our last home was an Edwardian property situated just down the road,' says Julie.

LIVING ROOM
 The vintage 1950s red sofa was found in a local interiors shop. Armchairs and glass coffee table, price on application, Bleu. Slate flooring, price on application, Bluesky Stone. Walls painted in Oak Apple matt emulsion, £25 for 2.5 litres, Fired Earth. Cushions, from a selection at Ed



DINING ROOM
 A wooden dresser is perfect for displaying the couple's collection of china and glass and it doubles up as storage space, too. Dresser painted in French Gray eggshell £43.50 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Dining table, made by David Ray, The Wood Pigeon. Walls painted in Malm, £25 for 2.5 litres, Fired Earth



KITCHEN
 A simple monochrome scheme and sleek appliances bring a stylish look to the cottage kitchen. Smeg fridge freezer, £1,149, John Lewis. Walls painted in Quartz, £25 for 2.5 litres; white ceramic wall tiles, £39.69 per sq m, both Fired Earth



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 and overlooking a duck

pond. In fact, Julie and David are only 10 minutes' drive from centre of London. One of several cottages originally built to house the local mill's kiln workers, it is now the perfect family home for raising the couple's two boys, Harvey and Ned.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Picture postcard it may be now, but when Julie and David bought the cottage, it was in desperate need of attention. 'The location was perfect; we'd always dreamt of living in a cosy cottage but just didn't expect to find one like this in London,' says Julie. 'The property is Grade II listed but we didn't let that put us off, having tackled a few renovation projects before. It had been rented out for decades as it had been previously owned by a charity so the decor was very bland. Also, most of the original features had been removed over the years so that inside it felt dark and dingy. However, it captured our imagination and we could really see the potential here.'

LABOUR OF LOVE

David is very passionate when it comes to restoration and wanted to take on most of the project himself. This had the added benefit of keeping some of the ▶



MASTER BEDROOM
A vibrant throw on a simple wrought-iron bedstead takes centre stage here. Vintage purple hand-stitched quilt from a selection, ED Warehouse. Walls painted in **Hardwick White** estate emulsion, £28.50 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



BATHROOM
David created a light trough in the ceiling, surrounded by waterproof light fittings. Pool II jet whirlpool bath 1700 x 700mm, £700, Bathstore. Tap and shower fittings, price on application, Hudson Reed. Waterproof light fittings, price on application, EncapSulite

DESIGN ADVICE

'Don't be scared to play around with colours. I'm forever changing my mind as it's important to get it right. Now I tend to stick to off-whites and greys'

building costs down. Although the cottage had lost some of its charm over the years and would clearly require a lot of work to restore it, they were able to see past the recent neglect and wanted to recapture the style of the cosy cottage, adding their own contemporary touches along the way. 'David generally likes to know that something has been done properly,' explains Julie, 'so where possible, he prefers to tackle as much of the work himself.'

Structurally the cottage was in good order, but the couple were faced with the tasks of rewiring, putting in new plumbing and replacing the exterior weatherboards. With the hard graft under their belt, they turned their attention to the decor, deciding on a neutral palette with shades of grey and off-white making the cottage lighter. 'We like to mix old with new,' says Julie, 'it's the combination of different styles that can make an interior work.'

IN THE MIX

The couple has incorporated a cool contemporary element. 'We love all things vintage and we try to mix different things together and not follow any particular style,' explains Julie. 'We both enjoy nothing more than sourcing items, spending endless hours trawling through antiques fairs and junk shops. I suppose as a stylist I'm always on the lookout for the next big thing.' Their laid-back style has recently inspired the duo to launch an online business featuring several vintage interior pieces as well as a selection of David's bespoke furniture.

With the restoration work behind them, the couple are finally reaping the fruits of their labour. 'We love living in the area and just want to enjoy the cottage,' says Julie. 'We've moved a few times over the past decade, always renovating as we go, so it's time to just let the dust settle.' And the family certainly feel very settled in the little oasis that they have found. 'The area has a lovely village feel, with friendly independent shops and a good family pub,' explains Julie. 'We never worry about the boys going out to play and we can walk to school. I think we'll be more than content to stay put for quite a while.' 25

LESSONS LEARNT

'We've learnt that restoring such an old property is not always straightforward and things often take longer than you expect. Beware of escalating budgets!'



BEDROOM
Pastel blues and bold reds anchor this room, while exposed rafters add a sense of height. British Isles wall hanging, £194.50; Love throw, £45.50; cushion, £69.50, all Jan Constantine. Blue polka dot duvet cover, £40, Cath Kidston