



The pink unit in Joanne Burgess's kitchen is French, c1880, while the canvas on the wall is from Lassco, taken from the side of an old French *camion* (truck). **RIGHT** The old club chairs are from Home Barn in Marlow, as is the round table which is a salvaged industrial cable reel.



GETTING INTO CHARACTER

Joanne Burgess has taken an unloved Georgian home and, with salvaged materials and bold textiles, transformed it into something that's both sympathetic and very 'now'

FEATURE KATIE PIKE PHOTOGRAPHS JAMES BALSTON



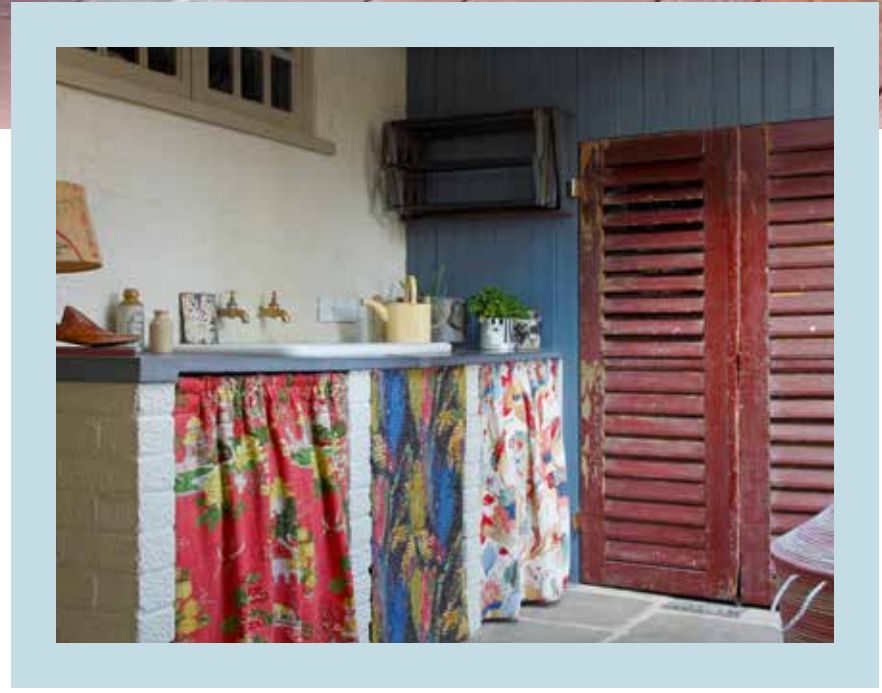
The kitchen floor is constructed from reclaimed terracotta roof tiles, while the island is part of an old dresser. **BELOW** The French shutters in the utility room are from The Vintage Look.



Joanne re-covered the chair in Mark Hearld's Doveflight from St Jude's. **BELOW** The zinc wall cupboard was a Fifties refrigeration unit bought from Home Barn and the wooden unit is a 19th-century French larder.

The Owners
Joanne Burgess lives here with her husband Nick, their nine-year-old son, Archie, and dog, Beryl. Joanne owns her own interior design and upholstery company, The Curious House (thecurioushouse.co.uk), while Nick works in the music industry.

The Property
The house is a Georgian terrace in Henley-on-Thames that has, at some point, been attached to a 16th-century barn. Downstairs there are two sitting rooms, a utility room, dining room and, in the old barn, a kitchen. Four bedrooms are spread over the top two floors.



There's no getting around it. Joanne and Nick Burgess's home is charmingly boho. Furniture and fabrics are mismatched, colours are bold and the stone floors look as if they have been in situ for centuries – like all the best outfits, it looks effortless. In reality though, the interior of the Georgian redbrick house in Henley is the result of a year-long renovation project that involved gutting everything and starting completely from scratch – all that remained were the walls. What makes the project so special is that Joanne was committed to seeking out salvaged

materials and wasn't afraid to use them creatively – reclaimed roof tiles cover the kitchen floor and gramophone horns are repurposed as pendant lights. Joanne describes the house as Tardis-like and indeed, its neat Georgian frontage belies the spacious interior – complete with two living rooms and a kitchen that's large enough to accommodate an extra sitting area. 'The character drew us to the house when we viewed it in January last year,' says Joanne. 'While we were living in London, we fell in love with the idyllic flint and timber houses of Oxfordshire, but found that these chocolate-box cottages were often small and dark on ▶





The juxtaposition of antique chairs and vibrant textiles creates a modern vibe.



the inside. This place was unusual in that it had a 16th-century barn moulded to the back of the house – because of this, it has a lovely flow and is much larger than you anticipate. The master bedroom, with its high ceiling and balcony, feels quite decadent.’ The fact that rats were jumping out of the walls didn’t put the couple off and, despite their nine-year-old son Archie’s initial reservations (on seeing the stairlift he quipped, ‘Of all the houses you could have bought you choose this dump!’), they knew that they could transform it into something lovely.

Inspired in part by the interiors she’d seen in New York’s East Village 20 years ago, which combined antique furniture with exposed pipework and industrial lighting, Joanne began to trawl salvage specialists. The existing floorboards were all rotten, so she sourced Georgian designs; reclaimed sanitaryware was found at Mongers; and lights were fashioned from unexpected vessels, such as vintage milk churns. ‘I love unusual things, pieces that make me think, “What can I do with that?”’ I bought a 1950s fridge unit from an antiques shop and didn’t know what to do with it, I just loved the look of it. Eventually I realised that I could turn it into a shelving unit in the kitchen.’ The house is a celebration of

LEFT, FROM TOP The 19th-century Russian art in the sitting room is from Liberty. The Georgian sofa was reupholstered by Joanne in vintage ikat fabric; the lampshade is from Rosi de Ruig – its base is an old milk churn. **RIGHT, FROM TOP** The emerald cinema seats were bought on eBay for the second sitting room. The cabinet is an old post office sorting unit from Home & Colonial. The 1880s butterfly taxidermy case is from Station Mill; the dining room fireplace was constructed from reclaimed bricks.

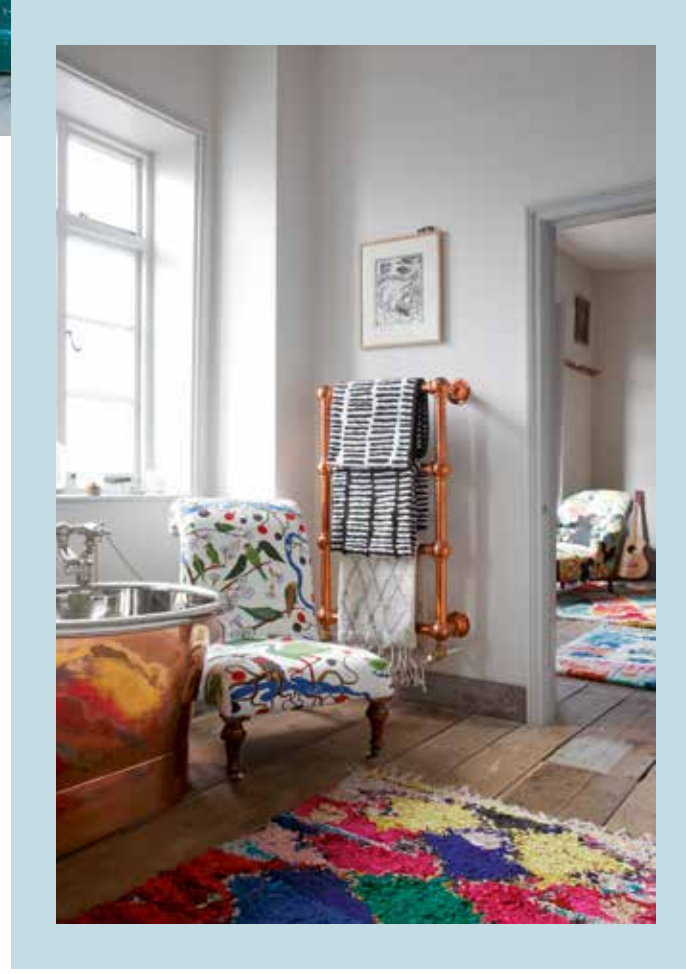
good design where, as much as possible, its bones are exposed. It’s listed, so there was only so much structural work they could do, but they did make the winning decision to make the barn ceiling visible – as well as more of its original beams.

What also sets the home apart is its standout fabrics, which cover everything from the 18th-century chaise longue in the master bedroom to the cupboards in the utility room. ‘I’ve always sought out old Liberty print textiles from eBay and I also like Morris & Co and Sanderson classics,’ says Joanne. ‘After Archie was born, I gave up my job in the music industry and started taking courses in upholstery. There are so many different techniques – each chair tends to be individual and every frame requires a distinct method.’ The juxtaposition of traditional antique chairs and vibrant textiles creates a modern vibe that’s in keeping with the ▶





THIS PAGE An Arts and Crafts bookcase has been used as a medicine cabinet; the terrace's smart Georgian frontage; a French chaise, upholstered in Josef Frank's Anakreon, is one of Joanne's favourite pieces. **LEFT** The three middle paintings in the bedroom are by Susanne Mason and are from Tiny Gallery; the radiator in the en suite is from Period House Store and the rug is from Morocco. Joanne reupholstered the chair in Frank's Gröna Fåglar fabric.



style of the house – where paint hues and quirky details are reminiscent of the smartest boutique hotels.

Craftsmanship is something that Joanne feels strongly about. So much so in fact that, after finishing work on the house, she was inspired to set up her own business combining her passions for seeking out beautiful pieces and reupholstering. 'Sourcing things for this house gave me such a creative buzz,' she says. 'I absolutely loved doing it. People would visit and ask if I was an interior designer, so I thought I'd give it a go and launch my own company, The Curious House, which focuses on creating interiors using bold fabrics and reclaimed materials.' And Joanne's tips for buying salvaged pieces? 'If you buy things all at once, it can look disjointed,' she says. 'Hold back and think, is it going to fit? Will it work? Start with one beautiful piece and then work around it, whether it's flooring or an old antique light fitting. It'll all come together.' As her home shows, patience definitely does pay off. 📌

