

The

ENGLISH HOME



Best of British

Celebrating the essence of English style

September 2019 | Issue 175 | £4.50 | UK Edition

CREATIVE BRITAIN

Celebrating Great British brands & home-grown talent

DREAM HOMES
Elegant townhouse
Georgian-style new build
Cottage renovation

DECORATIVE LIGHTING
Jewellery for interiors

At home with
MONTY DON

PERIOD STYLE
Lady Mary's bedroom
Mrs Patmore's kitchen
Lord Grantham's study

COLOUR LOVE

The timeless allure of duck egg, aqua & teal



Robert designed the layout of the kitchen with cabinetry by Harvey Jones, which he had painted in French Grey by Little Greene, along with the walls, panelling and Venetian blinds. "It's a soft grey which is never dull, no matter what the light," he says. The flagstone floor is by Artisans of Devizes.



Fine & dandy

The interior of a neglected Regency townhouse has been lovingly restored in keeping with its splendid facade

FEATURE & STYLING SARA EMSLIE PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL



ABOVE LEFT The walls of both the entrance hall and the drawing room are painted in Stone I by Paint & Paper Library. In the entrance hall, an antique bleached-oak mirror hangs above a console table designed by Robert. An antique French lantern lights the space from above. **LEFT** The beautifully proportioned facade, with its ornate iron balconies, creamy stucco and columns at the door, perfectly exemplifies late-Regency style.

The eminent architectural and art historian Nikolaus Pevsner describes the temple-fronted terrace in which Robert Moore's house sits as one of London's finest. Pevsner – although German born – was an Anglophile and author of the *Pevsner Architectural Guides*, a series of 46 books written over 20 years, cataloguing towns and cities in Great Britain and Ireland, describing in detail the style of each area and individual streets of architectural merit. This terrace was built in late-Regency style with classic stucco frontages combined with yellow London stock bricks – a perfectly balanced row of elegant townhouses in a leafy pocket of South London. Tapering columns frame the doors, delicate iron balconies punctuate the facade and classic arched windows look out over traditional deep front gardens, as they have done for almost 180 years.

Interior designer Robert lives here with his partner Jonathan Beak and their Jack Russell, Lucy. "We adore this house for many reasons," he explains. "Its elegant

facade and proportions completely won us over. Also, having a front garden with a lawn in the middle of town is all very grown up!"

The back garden was also a major attraction. The couple's previous home – a loft apartment in a nineteenth-century former tea warehouse where they had lived for 11 years – could scarcely have been more different. "It was a lovely apartment but without any external space," remembers Robert. "We had been craving a roof terrace or courtyard garden for quite some time." They now have the perfect inner-city oasis – a considered contemporary design that demonstrates a similar balance of scale and symmetry to the house itself and is accessed by French windows Robert added.

With a planting scheme of pleached hornbeams and quintessential English favourites such as climbing roses, foxgloves and hydrangeas in a calm, serene palette of white and green, this horticultural haven is perfect for al fresco entertaining and very much exemplifies the attention to detail demonstrated

throughout the house. Glorious displays of floral blooms in all sizes and styles are dotted around every room – from a grand centrepiece of orchids in the drawing room to tiny posies of fragrant orange roses and seasonal English sweet peas in the bedrooms. "Flowers make a room," Robert adds, "I love going to Covent Garden Flower Market and feel lucky that it is so local to us. It is virtually my second home."

Before any of this could come into being, there were significant renovations to be tackled. Prior to Robert and Jonathan purchasing the property, it had been in the same hands for over 40 years, with very few improvements made along the way. "We understand that it had actually been two flats at one point, and owned by a housing association – it even still had two separate gas meters," Robert says.

"The house was not listed so we could make all the changes we wanted without having to gain Listed Building Consent," he continues. This was indeed fortunate, bearing in mind they were renovating ▶

ABOVE LEFT Robert created an opening between the drawing room and library to give a sense of space and light. Mirrored panels either side of the fireplace in the drawing room add depth and light.

ABOVE The library walls are painted in 7-085 from Papers and Paints by Patrick Baty – a rich teal in contrast to the pale tones of the drawing room. A seventeenth-century French tapestry hangs above the sofa.

Above the library fireplace is a portrait of Lord North, the tenth English Prime Minister. The parcel-gilt *fauteuil* chairs were bought at an antique fair and have been covered in herringbone fabric by Romo.





'I believe the key to getting these houses right in terms of layout is to really think about how you are going to use them'

ABOVE The dining chairs in the breakfast room were purchased from The Conran Shop and sit nicely alongside the original Biedermeier dining table. The artwork is a signed piece of 1980s advertising for a music event designed by artist Nigel Waymouth.

RIGHT Robert in the garden. The garage that cuts across the garden was white and unsightly. "I ordered reclaimed building materials to re clad the garage. I found the oak boarding at a saw mill and some old tiles with lichen for the roof, all via SalvoWeb," he says.

a neglected period townhouse that had not been touched in virtually half a century.

It took the charismatic designer just four months to turn things around. The intensive schedule included completely replumbing and rewiring, removing the basement floor to install underfloor heating and a French limestone flagstone floor, digging out one of the front wells to create a utility room, opening up the entrance hall to the drawing room and the drawing room to the library, creating a master bedroom and ensuite by sacrificing one of the smaller bedrooms, and dedicating the top floor to two office spaces, one for each of them. "We also moved the kitchen in the basement from the smaller back room to the larger front room," says Robert.

The property is now a welcoming and harmonious home that clearly satisfies Robert's desire to combine intricate design ideas with practicality to ensure it works on all levels. "I believe the key to getting these houses right, in terms of layout, is to really think about how you are going to use them. You live on the stairs, more or less, so you need to be practical. We opted for a basement-kitchen layout and have ended up using all four levels every day." ▶





ABOVE An ikat fabric by Bernard Thorp is a chic choice in the master bedroom. The walls are in grass cloth by Ralph Lauren. **RIGHT** The master en-suite bathroom is painted in Basalt by Little Greene. The 1950s Venetian mirror is paired with Empire sconces from Ebury Trading.

A closer look at the interiors reveals Robert's meticulous attention to detail. The original floorboards were hand-sanded to remove the layers of dirt without eroding the soft undulations created by almost two centuries of footsteps. Throughout there is evidence of the extensive research Robert carried out to find craftspeople capable of reinstating all the internal architectural details such as the architraves, cornicing and skirting boards that had been lost along the way. When it came to the design, the couple turned to their existing collection of art and antiques for inspiration, including some exquisite Biedermeier furniture pieces and a pair of nineteenth-century parcel-gilt *fauteuil* chairs. ▶





ABOVE & RIGHT The curtains and headboards in the guest bedroom are in Lillies by Nicky Haslam, whilst the walls are painted in Stone III, by Paint & Paper Library. Robert had pelmet boxes created in plaster to conceal the curtain rails. An antique gilt table lamp sits on the bedside table in the guest room and a framed piece of de Gournay silk wallpaper serves as a focal point between the two beds.

Robert was keen to have a sense of continuity throughout the house so he used various tones of blue in the decoration on every level of the house – some paler and some stronger – to create differing dramatic tones throughout. This is most notable in the library where the walls and woodwork are all painted in teal blue to create a room that could be enjoyed in both summer and winter, whilst providing a fitting backdrop to showcase the elaborate seventeenth-century French tapestry the couple already owned. “It is fun moving and creating a new look with what you already have. You suddenly start looking at paintings and artwork with fresh eyes,” he says.

Robert is keen to point out that, whilst historical references are a key influence in his interior design ideas, he enjoys reusing them for today’s way of living. “Antiques are great for adding character, history and decoration, whether for a period look or something more modern,” he says. And rightly so, as behind that fine Regency facade lies an equally fine period interior, expertly designed by its current custodians to be perfectly suited to modern London life. ■

