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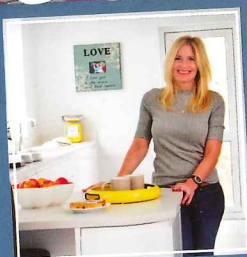
**BEFORE
& AFTER
KITCHEN &
BATHROOM
UPDATES**

54 PAGES OF

**Inspiring
real homes**

Packed with stylish touches
and clever tricks to steal

THE
Decorating issue



 Room makeovers from £50
 Springtime Scandi schemes
 Craft projects, recipes & more





STEP INSIDE

Cleverly upcycled features pepper the kitchen-diner, which features the grey palette that unfolds through the house. Patterned, textured fabrics bring extra personality

'I liked the warm family feel'

Mel Thorne could see a neglected house in Taunton just needed a little love and a lot of hard work to become a beautiful home

FEATURE VICTORIA JENKINS PHOTOGRAPHER WILLIAM GODDARD





HOUSE DETAILS

Homeowners Mel Thorne, owner of Country Knole Interiors, and her husband Mark, who works for the Environment Agency **Family** Bosley, 6, and Florey, 2 **Location** Taunton, Somerset **Property** Three-bedroom, 1930s semi-detached house

HOUSE VALUATION

Purchase price £220,000
Valued now at £275,000

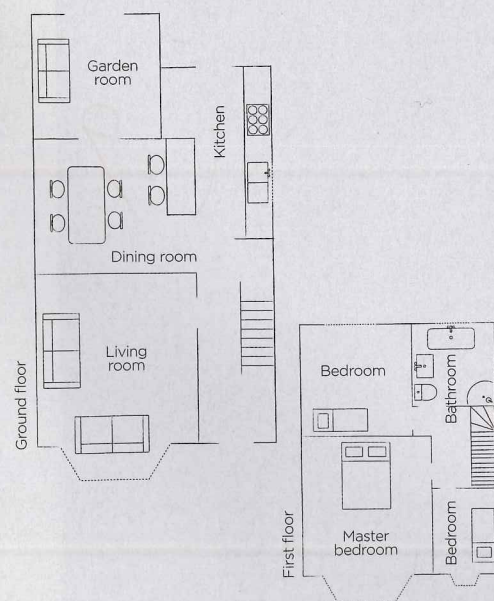
BUDGET BREAKDOWN

Kitchen £6,500 **Bedrooms** £3,500
Bathroom £2,700 **Flooring** £2,000
Redecoration £1,000 **Lighting** £1,500
Exterior £4,000 **Landscaping** £5,500

TOTAL SPEND

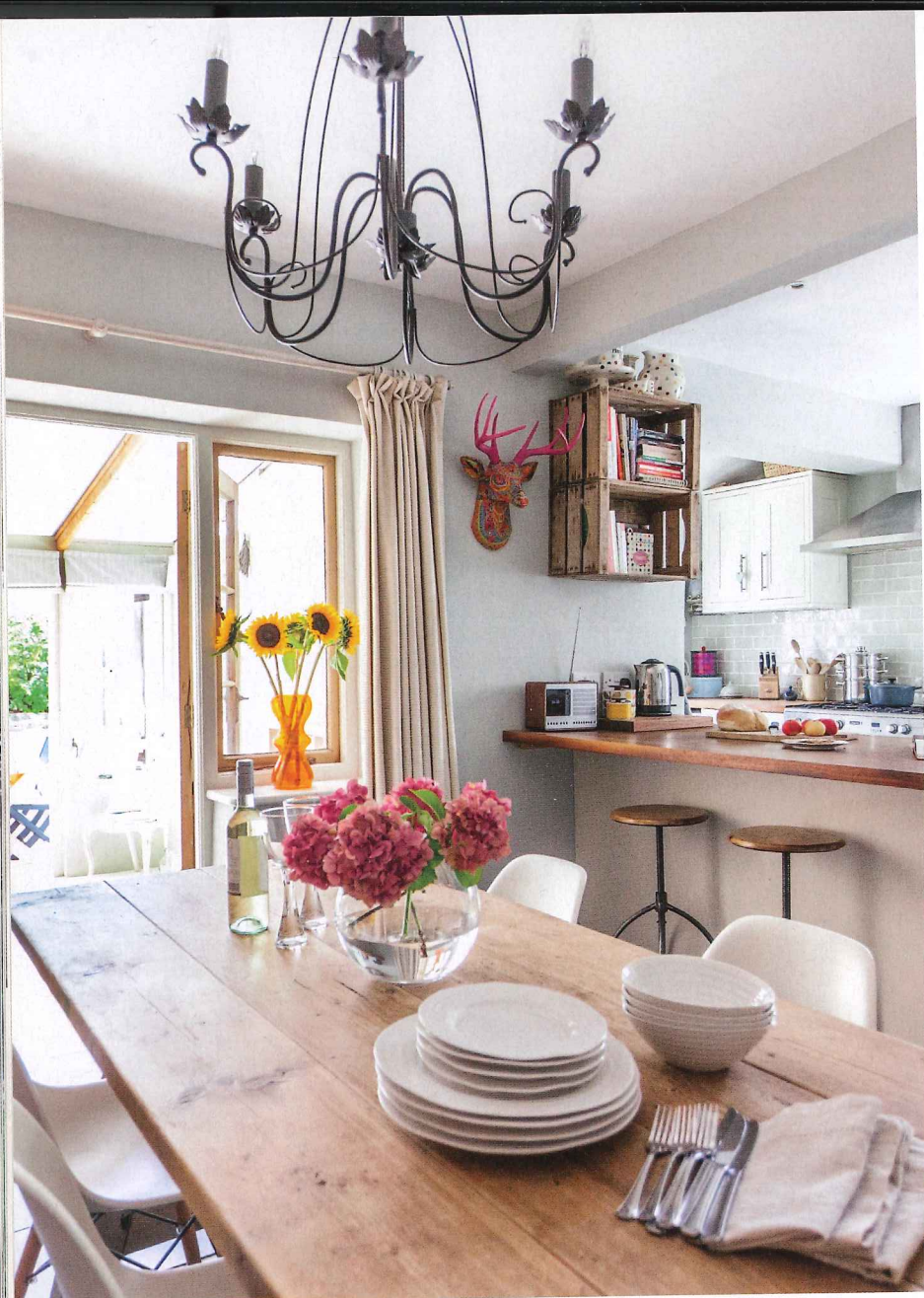
£26,700

THE FLOORPLAN



SHOP THIS ROOM

For a similar dining table, try Bordeaux trestle table, £480, Style Our Home. Eames-inspired chairs, £59 each, Cult Furniture. For a similar chandelier, try Audrey five-light black pendant, £38.99, Homebase



↑ **RAW MATERIALS**
The reclaimed dining table pairs well with the industrial-style bar stools

→ **OUTSIDE INSIDE**
Leading to the new decking, the garden room has become a truly inviting retreat

→ **RUSTIC FEATURES**
The exposed brickwork harmonises beautifully with the newly painted fireplace surround

Moving from Windsor to Taunton was the start of a whole new life for Mel Thorne, her husband Mark and their toddler Bosley. Mark was to begin a new job with the Environment Agency and Mel had just bought an interior design business based in the area – Country Knole Interiors. There were two other big persuaders: returning to be near family and friends, and Mel's father Rick was a dab hand at DIY and only too willing to help them renovate. When Mel first spotted the Thirties semi-detached house on the estate agency's website she was not too impressed, but when she went to take a look around she realised it was exactly what she was looking for. 'I really liked its spaciousness and warm family feeling,' she says, 'but it clearly needed updating.' There were different floor levels between the hall, dining room and kitchen, which had a cramped galley layout. Damaged Thirties tiled fireplaces were



SHOP THIS ROOM

For a similar distressed chair, try Avignon, £126, Maisons du Monde. For similar blinds, try New Haven blackout Roman blinds, from £30, Dunelm. For a similar table lamp, try Pedro 5 grey, £37.95, Lampandlight.co.uk

still in place and there was wood-chip wallpaper nearly everywhere. The gas pipe also stopped short in the hall and water pressure was low. 'Little did we know that after moving in we'd begin two-and-a-half years of building work,' Mel remembers. The first rooms they tackled were the kitchen and dining room, where Mark and his brother Chris removed two walls: one to create a large kitchen-diner and another to incorporate the old scullery. They then levelled the varying floors throughout the downstairs and blocked up the scullery window. 'Our builder Brian completely replastered the new kitchen-diner and we extended the gas pipe into it,' she says. 'He also replaced the water mains.' Mel's father laid a new black slate floor and fitted kitchen cabinets from Wickes, along with dark walnut surfaces from Worktop Express: 'I wanted full stave worktops with broad planks, not the usual narrow type,' says Mel. The space is now gently zoned by a breakfast bar, and features a charming

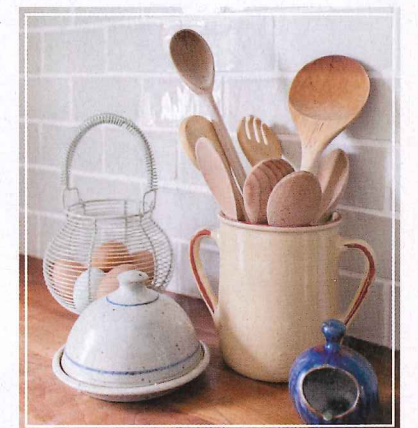


IDEAS TO STEAL

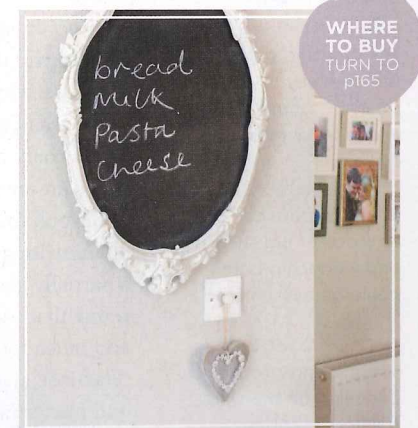
Be inspired by three of Mel's creative touches for your home



↑ **COORDINATE YOUR BLOOMS**
Use flower arrangements to strengthen an accent hue



↑ **ADD EARTHENWARE**
Handmade pottery brings gentle texture to a neutral kitchen



↑ **FRAME A SHOPPING LIST**
Make a feature of a chalk board by placing in a decorative surround

WHERE TO BUY
TURN TO
p165

SHOP THIS ROOM

Sienna double bed, £1,249, Feather & Black. For similar bedside tables, try butlers tray table, £35, Tesco. For similar lamps, try Earl, £70.75, Wayfair. For similar pom-pom cushions, try Voyage Maison iris, £65.99, Turnbull & Thomas



↑ CHARMING DETAILS

Textures and pattern are both key to the neutral scheme of the elegant master suite

➤ FRESH NEW LOOK

Bosley's room had to be stripped of old shelving and woodchip before it could be redecorated

➔ CALM COLOURS

Tongue-and-groove panelling on the walls, painted in Zoffany's harbour grey, is a soft, feminine choice

chimney breast and fireplace. Strengthening the characterful theme of the room is the vintage furniture, which Mel painted in the same hue as the walls, so the exposed bricks could become the main centrepiece.

Beyond the kitchen was an uninviting garden room; a partially glazed wooden frame that was cold in winter and much too hot in summer. 'Dad insulated it by boarding and plastering the walls, and we installed film within the Perspex roof, to reflect the heat,' says Mel. Roman blinds now provide a softer alternative to wooden or plastic shutters. In the living room,

Rick took out the damaged original fireplace and replaced it with a more attractive surround, which Mel had found on eBay and then painted.

'I also laid a slate-tiled hearth and exposed the brickwork inside,' she recalls. Beautiful built-in cupboards, made by Mel's dad, flank the fireplace, complemented by thick, floating shelves in the same shade on the wall above.

As for the bathroom, when the Thornes moved in, the scheme was a symphony

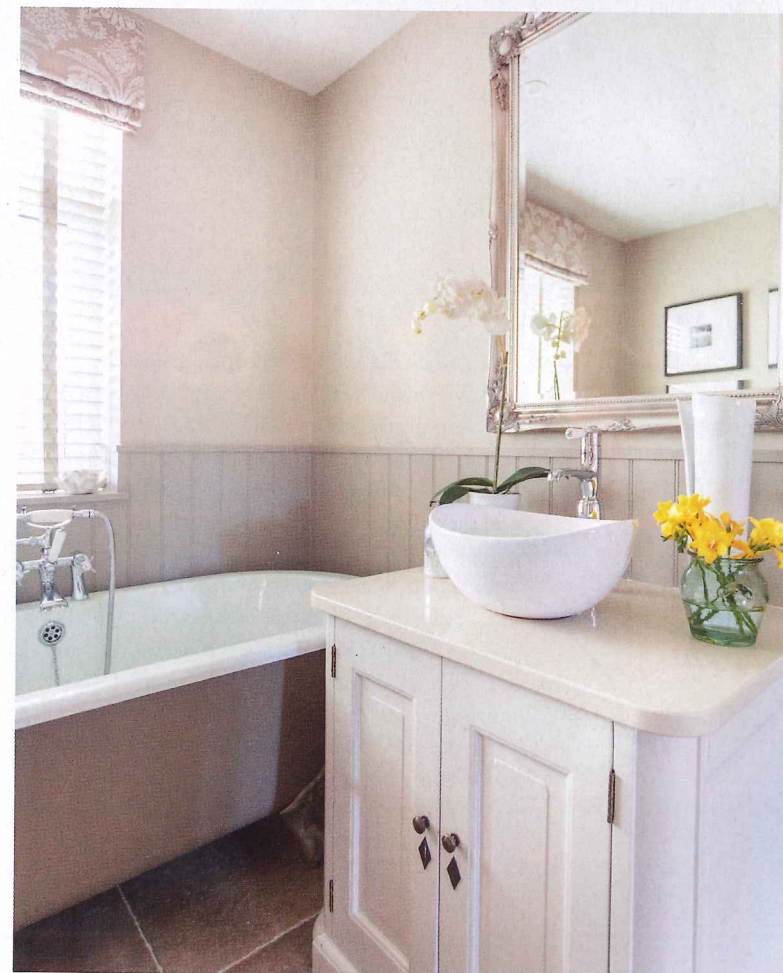
of black-and-white tiles from the Eighties. 'Dad gutted it and I asked the builder to block up one window and make the main one smaller, as they

“
No room has been left untouched”

were restricting the layout,' says Mel. 'That way I was able to make space for a big new shower, as well as a large tub.' The final elements were the new tongue-and-groove panels and tiled floor and walls, plus a statement sink atop a chunky vanity unit – ideal for hiding all the family's toiletries.

'No room has been left untouched,' she continues. 'In two bedrooms we put in new, attractive fireplaces, and in Bosley's room we rehoused the boiler in a purpose-built floor-to-ceiling cupboard. We also stripped out all the unwanted shelving and yet more wood-chip.'

In the master suite, a gathered bedspread and iridescent wallpaper combine to create an elegant, considered scheme. However, decorating it wasn't all plain sailing. 'We had just finished the whole space when some delivery men came in and ▶





↑ ROOM TO GROW

Mel enjoys hosting dinner parties on the new decking, which is lit by delicate lanterns by night and leads on to the lawn and borders

accidentally ripped the wallpaper,' grimaces Mel. Meanwhile, builder Brian was busy outside, replacing the cracked roof tiles, fixing leaky flashing on the chimney and replacing all of the 80-year-old gutters. He also painted the exterior of the house, and they all worked on the landscaping. 'The garden room now leads on to decking and we replaced the fencing, too,' says. 'It's a lovely place to entertain in the summer, especially as Mark and the children like to grow sunflowers every year.'

Looking back on the last two years, Mel wonders how they managed it all. 'It took a long time to complete and there came a point when I gazed around and wondered if we'd ever get there. Everything was in a mess, wires were hanging down and there were holes in the floor that made walking around precarious, especially with a toddler.'

However, thanks to the 'Thornes' good eye for design and DIY skills, the Thirties house has started a new life – just like its owners. **GH**



ONE SIMPLE CHANGE

Make your outdoor space infinitely more inviting by styling a bench with a soft seat pad and sumptuous cushions. Choose a palette that is inspired by your home's interior, so the garden is subtly linked with the inside. If you're stitching the cushions from scratch, it's wise to choose oilcloth so they are shower-proof (try Only Oilcloths). For ready-made versions, Tonder & Tonder have a beautiful selection of 50cm cushion covers, priced £40.