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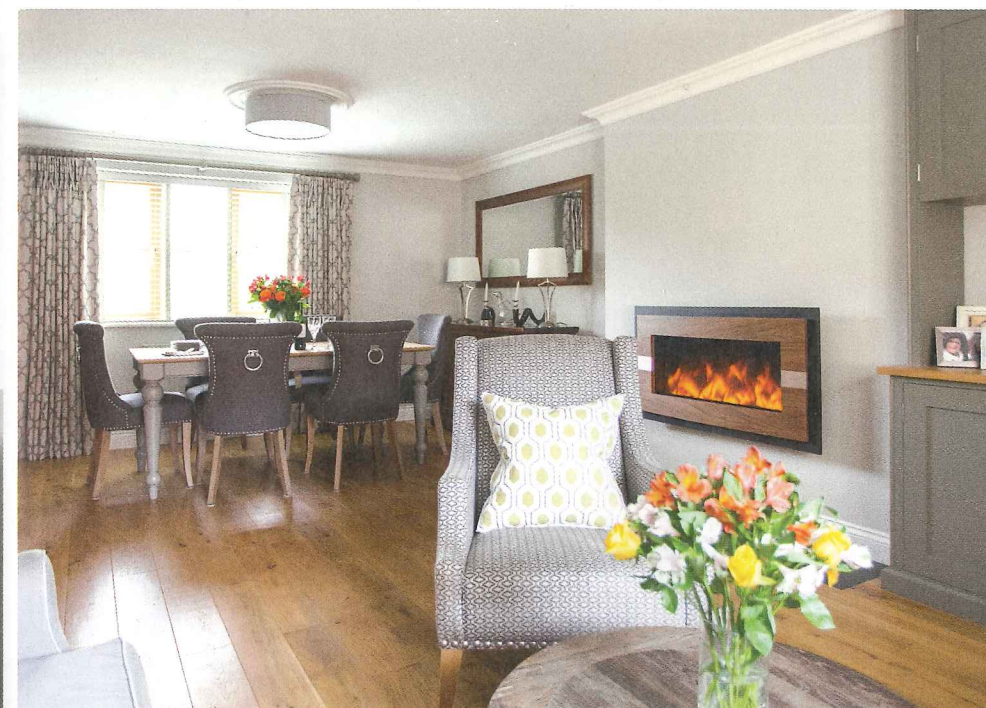
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I gave my new-build a homely makeover

Cathryn Boorman brought to life a modern, but very bland house in Taunton



▲ The mix of subtle patterns in the living dining area work well together, adding interest without being overpowering. The built-in electric fire creates a stunning focal point and replaced the existing fireplace, which Cathryn felt wasn't needed in the room

▲ The Tamarisk sofa and two armchairs were sourced by Mel Thorne who also designed and made the cushions in Kravet fabrics. The large acrylic painting was found at HomeSense. Mel also supplied the lamps for them and the coffee table, which reflects the pattern of the Robert Allan curtains, is from Oka – it was expensive, at £800, but Cathryn feels it was worth it, helping to create a cohesive look

one is her friend Mel Thorne who owns Country Knole Interiors of Taunton, the other is her brother-in-law Jamie Wilkie who used to work for an interior design company in Hong Kong. Her brother David also has a very good eye. Between them all they helped Cathryn transform her rather bland new home.

Cathryn had a few good ideas of her own and she could see how to divide her very large kitchen-breakfast room so a third of it could become an extra room beyond, now her study. And between Cathryn, Mel and Gary Harrison, the joiner Mel recommended, they came up with a room divider which also held much-needed shelving and storage. Mel designed the bespoke banquet seating against one wall making sure that it too had storage under the seats. Gary then built both items – the divider out of European oak to match the flooring, ▽



▲ Cathryn's brother David found a suitable style of dining table on the internet then Mel Thorne sourced it and the dining chairs. She suggested the chairs should have an added touch of silver, with the hooks and stud work, to match the grey tones of the armchairs. The curtains are in a Robert Allen fabric with an ivory interlining

REAL HOME

COME ON IN...



THE HOME

A four-bedroom detached village house in north Newton, bought in February 2015.

WHO LIVES HERE?

Cathryn Boorman, a property manager.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT LIVING HERE?

'The village has a great community which is lovely to be part of, it is well located and offers rural living but is not far from town and my parents are close by.'

DO YOU HAVE ANY TOP TIPS?

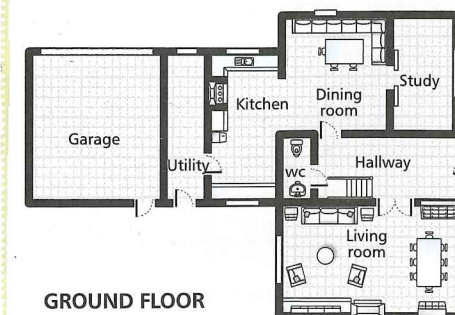
'Re-paint old furniture and change the handles to give a new look – be inventive around storage for maximum benefit. Also, talk to friends and family for advice and ideas as they know you best.'

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

'My bedroom, but also my kitchen/diner as I love being in both spaces!'



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

For stockists see page 120

Feature Victoria Jenkins Photos William Goddard



Once Cathryn Boorman's two boys Alex, 22, and Rory, 20, had left home for further studies she decided it was time to leave the rural spot in Somerset where they had been living in an old railway cottage. 'I wanted more house and less land,' explains Cathryn. 'And I also wanted the life of a village around me.' Last year she found the perfect house in the same village near Taunton to which her parents had retired. Her dogs Jago, a black Labrador, and Ruby, a French mastiff, came too.

'I wanted a new-build as it wouldn't bring any problems,' she says. 'And it

would have good insulation and insurance. The four-bedroom house, built in 2013, had been standing empty for a while, but it was well built and the builder had used good quality fittings and a good finish,' she says. 'The downstairs flooring and banisters are all in oak, the kitchen worktops are granite and no expense had been spared on the bathroom fixtures and tiles.'

All the same Cathryn found it lacked both character and storage. 'There wasn't even so much as a built-in wardrobe!' she says. However, Cathryn is very fortunate in having two interior designers in her life,



◆ The Howdens maple kitchen was already installed by the builder Graham Phippen, but Cathryn bought the Cookmaster cooker and Rangemaster fridge freezer from Appliances Online then added the toughened glass, Abstract 13 splashback from Opticolour, a Bath company



◆ Granite worktops are a luxurious option, and complement the warm wood tones of Cathryn's maple kitchen cabinets

I'm very happy in my new home and with the help of Mel and my close family, I now feel it's very me.

◁ complete with sliding doors. 'The dividing wall doesn't just consist of shelves but a coat cupboard too which I particularly wanted,' says Cathryn. 'And the very end banquette seat moves forward to reveal a big deep area in the divider which holds all the Christmas decorations and wrapping paper, stuff that takes up a lot of room but which you only need to get at once a year.'

Cathryn also designed a new built-in cabinet along one wall of the living room to hold the TV unit and storage which Gary then made and painted.

Meanwhile Mel hunted out attractive cupboards and drawers for the other rooms. 'For instance my bathroom had just a couple of drawers beneath the sink – that was all,' says Cathryn. 'Then Mel found a lovely set of drawers that look as if they're antique French which have just the 'wow' factor I wanted.'

'There was a fireplace with a flue in the living room but I had already experienced open fires and wood-burners and knew the mess involved and the need for storing logs,' she continues. 'I also know how very hot a room can get with either of these two methods and this house is already well insulated. So I had the fireplace filled in and bought this large, flush built-in electric fire which I think looks very stylish.'

The living room was the only room that she had repainted, using Little Greene's French Grey as Mel thought this shade was best suited to the furniture.

Upstairs, Cathryn's bedroom had an alcove for a dressing area leading off it but no cupboards, so Gary then built a double wardrobe for her. 'Wardrobes can look very dull and I wanted mine to have the 'wow' factor,' she says. 'I'd spotted a lovely pattern which inspired my design, which Gary then sent to a glazier for the glass doors.'

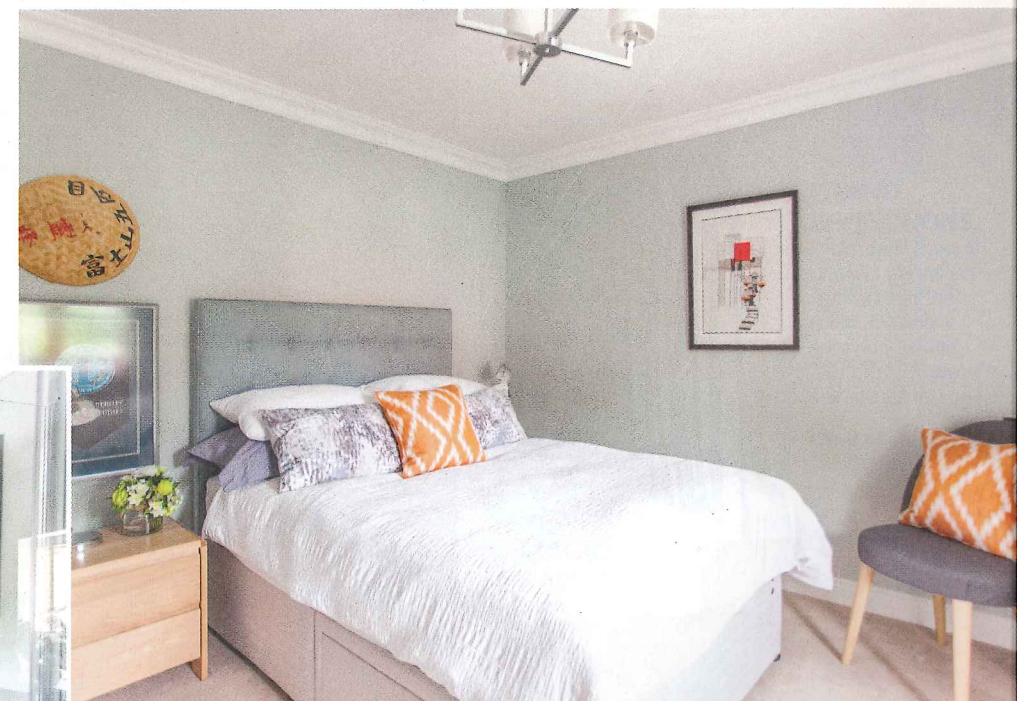


Good idea!

Make a mood board before you start furnishing or decorating. Cathryn went onto Pinterest and noted down the ideas. Then she sent them on to Mel for inspiration.

◆ Cathryn, Mel and Gary designed the room divider and integrated banquette seating with storage beneath and joiner Gary Harrison built both. The European oak divider has sliding doors, which Gary ensured were soft-close, and also features integral storage. Mel sourced the upholstered seating fabric, using a washable faux suede. The breakfast table was originally Cathryn's dining table but her brother David thought it would be more suitable in here. Mel also chose the grey dotted fabric for the breakfast room chairs then re-upholstered them, as well as designing and making the scatter cushions and the Roman blind from a Jane Churchill floral design fabric. The light fittings are from John Lewis

▼ Cathryn added to the existing bathroom with a large print she had seen in Stanley Market, Hong Kong, years ago which her aunt and uncle then bought and gave her as a wedding present. Mel supplied the mirrored cabinet and the laundry basket came from HomeSense. All the faux plants are from Ikea



◆ Jamie chose a new headboard for the Bensons bed in a blue to match both the wall paint and the Romo curtains which Mel had designed. Mel helped Cathryn choose the orange Sienna cushion fabric then had the cushions made to complement the blue bedding which Jamie and Cathryn had found in John Lewis. Mel also supplied the two chests of drawers and cupboard from the Capri Oak range

'Wardrobes can look very dull and I wanted mine to have the 'wow' factor.'



Good idea!

Opt for matching pendant and bedside lamp shades for a co-ordinated look in your guest bedroom.

Then came the tweaks. 'I had to buy a Cookmaster oven, a new Rangemaster fridge freezer and also a splashback as there was nothing on the wall behind the oven, not even tiles,' she says. 'Gary recommended a website where I found some amazing splashback designs and I bought a really amazing one in toughened glass – no-one can work out what the design is meant to represent. The reds in it go very well with the other red tones in the kitchen.'

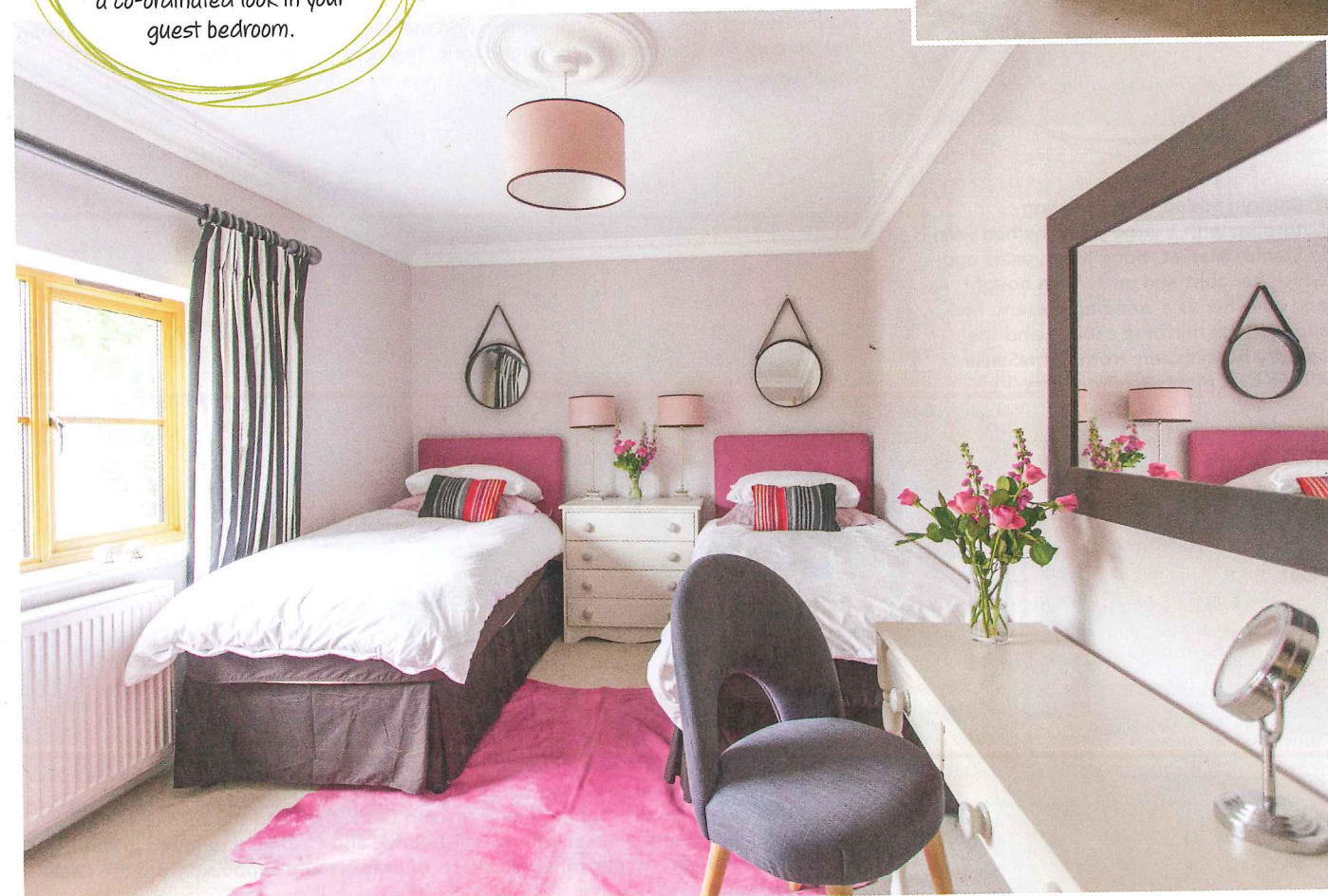
Cathryn has also recycled her existing set of kitchen chairs by re-covering them to match their new surroundings. 'They were in a faux leather before but Mel

✦ Gary Harrison made the wardrobe and added the oak knobs from an offcut. The glass doors were inspired by a pattern found on Pinterest, and made by a glazier

✦ Cathryn wanted black and white curtains in this bedroom as she had seen some on Pinterest. Jamie thought that bright pink would complement them so he and David gave her a pink cowhide rug from a Bangkok boutique. They also helped her choose new headboards from Bensons and metal lamp bases at John Lewis. The small mirrors and cushions are from Dunelm



Cathryn wanted a silver theme in this bedroom so two walls are covered in a Ryecote wallpaper by GP & J Baker, with a delicate silver pattern. Jamie helped her choose the bed from Bensons and found the twin silver-based lamps from the Old Creamery of Taunton, as well as the light fitting from Illuminations of Taunton. Mel sourced the chests, desk and chair and the bed cushions are from Notonthehighstreet. Mel made the curtains in a velvet by Wemyss. The furry throw is from Tamarisk



Everything was here except enough storage, so Mel Thorne found a chest of drawers in an antique French-style plus the voile curtain for privacy



suggested I use a grey dotted fabric for the modern look I wanted.'

'As for my Robert Allen curtains in the living-dining room, the fabric has something slightly Oriental about it and Mel chose it to go with my Chinese furniture in there, some handed down from my parents who spent years in Hong Kong. And in my guest bedroom I have a fabulous

bright pink rug that formed the theme for the décor. It was a gift from David and Jamie from a Bangkok boutique.'

She finishes: 'I'm very happy in my new home and with the help of Mel and my close family who advised on just about all the materials, colour schemes, furniture and light fittings, I now feel it's very me.' YH

5 IDEAS TO STEAL

SPECIAL OCCASION

If you've got a plain grey table, the charcoal and silver tones add a plush element without looking out of place.

Chair, £396, Houseology



MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

Choose a decorative coffee table with a print that can also be matched to soft furnishings.

Coffee table, £149, M&S

CUT SOME SHAPES

Add geometric print cushions for a punch of colour interesting angles which are a great way of breaking up a block colour on the sofa.

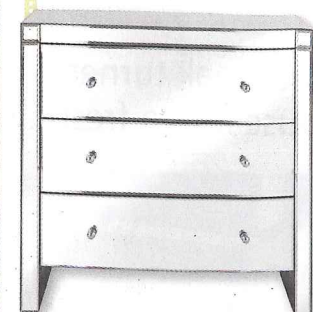
Cushion, £9.99, HomeSense



GRAND REFLECTIONS

A mirrored chest of drawers will reflect light around the room, making it seem bigger and also provide valuable storage space.

Chest of drawers, £399, Very



MAGIC CARPET RIDE

Opt for a tonal rug to in a bright hue to create a vibrant centrepiece.

Rug, from £39.99, The Rug Seller

