

KITCHEN

Ana gave the space a sleek makeover, painting over the floor and varnished pine units a pale pink and adding handles that echo the jewel shades of the dining room beyond.

Handles, Haute Déco. Cabinets and floor in SC662; walls and ceiling in Traffic Green, both Papers and Paints

PHOTOGRAPHY Patrick Williamson

STYLING Jennifer Haslam/Celia Campbell

WORDS Jo Leavers

box of treasures

Each of the rooms in Ana Engelhorn's London home comes perfectly wrapped in jewel shades



DINING ROOM

'I've always associated green with English interiors,' says Ana. Here, she's combined a deep shade with vibrant fuchsia velvet.

Platner table for Knoll; Series 430 chair by Verner Panton for Verpan, both The Conran Shop. Recycled glass bottle chandelier, Luzio. Floral arrangement, Nikki Tibbles Wild At Heart. Decanter; glasses, Tom Dixon at Heal's. Honeycomb balls, Peach Blossom

Golden ferns, paper stars and armfuls of winter foliage are all that’s needed to add a festive air to Ana Engelhorn’s London home. Her Georgian house is already laden with atmosphere, with rooms decorated in jewel shades and chandeliers that cast iridescent flecks of light on to the ceilings.

But when Ana, an interior designer, her husband Carlos Rubia Simón, a marketing manager, and their children Lola, 10, and Charlie, two, moved into this tall townhouse, it was wall-to-wall beige. ‘In theory, it was decorated to be a clean slate, so that anyone could come in and like it. In my case, I didn’t like the decor but loved the location and architecture – and could envisage plenty of ways to make it less dreary,’ she says.

The family moved to London from Barcelona and rent this home, but this didn’t deter Ana from carrying out a comprehensive transformation. First, she pulled up a few corners of the cream fitted carpets to see what condition the floorboards were in. ‘I just thought, we’re in this 1800s building – imagine what they could look like?’ Luckily, they were a nice surprise. ‘We had to replace a couple of boards, but on the whole they were in good shape,’ she says.

The oak boards immediately gave the rooms a more interesting texture and hinted at a more authentic character for the house. ‘Under one floorboard we even found a bell pull cord that would have summoned servants many years ago. It felt as though we were peeling back the layers of the house’s history,’ Ana remembers.

Next up, Ana negotiated repainting the walls throughout in the strong colours she’s found herself drawn to since moving to London. ‘Perhaps it is to counter the greyskies,’ she muses. Now, the bold shades are central to this home’s personality.

In the hallway, she settled on a sunshiny yellow. ‘It feels inviting when you walk in,’ she says. In the living room, she opted for a green

that’s soothing rather than sober, mixing it with hot pinks and deeper blues, while a separate sitting room is wrapped in a warm red, the paint taken over the fireplace surround for an all-enveloping effect.

Ana grew up in Switzerland and is interested in how colours have different associations for different people. ‘I’ve researched colour psychology, but I think that your own character, including your cultural background, also plays a big part,’ she says. ‘Red is supposed to be fiery and emotional, but I find the shade in our sitting room very calming. It’s where I go for some quiet contemplation.’

Next, she revamped the lighting, as the house had been fitted with new-build-bland downlighters. She already owned the standout chandelier constructed from vintage bottles hanging over the dining table, but the sparkling number in the living room was bought recently in London. ‘Lighting must be functional, but it can also be decorative – the two aspects are not mutually exclusive,’ she says.

When it came to the art, Ana had plenty of ideas. She grew up going to galleries and art fairs with her parents. ‘I was dragged along when I was little then, when I was older, I appreciated being able to accompany them,’ she says. For this home, she deliberately chose works that surprise or stir the imagination. ‘Putting contemporary art in a period setting is very much my style. It’s a way to instantly create balance and a sense of dynamism.’

So in the living room, a hyper-real steed by Miguel Macaya stands serenely at one end, while a sculpture by Alicia Martin lets loose a cascade of old library books at the other. Likewise, furniture from different eras is brought together in unexpectedly beautiful arrangements: a modern sofa works next to Italian chairs from the Fifties reupholstered in deep velvet, all positioned beneath a 19th-century chandelier.

The jewel shades and luxe textures of this house make it particularly atmospheric during the run up to Christmas and when they get their tree, it’ll be real, smelling of pine needles. ‘I’m Swiss, I could never go faux!’ Ana exclaims in mock horror. She hasn’t quite decided on the scheme for her tree yet. But it hardly matters in this home, where luminous colours and gleam aren’t just for Christmas.

See more of Ana’s work at anaengelhorn.com

LIVING ROOM

‘Colour is central to my style as it has such a personal associations for each of us,’ says Ana. Velvet upholstery adds depth and intensity to her choice of shades.

Painting, Miguel Macaya. Vintage coffee table; Italian Fifties chair, both Gallery 25. Lamp, Augustus Brandt. Chiltern sofa in Navy, The Conran Shop. Antique chandelier, similar from The Hoarde. Walls in Highland Green by Dulux



home profile

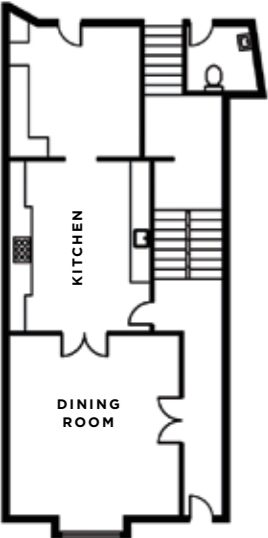
THE OWNER

Ana Engelhorn, an interior designer. She lives here with her husband Carlos Rubia Simón, a marketing manager, and their children Lola, 10, and Charlie, two.

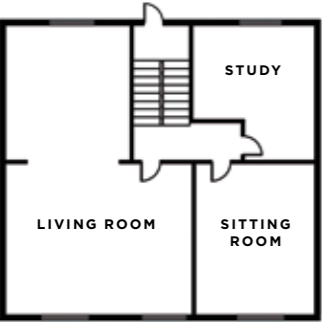
THE PROPERTY

A Georgian townhouse in southwest London. The dining room and kitchen and a WC are on the ground floor. The living room, a sitting room and study are on the first floor. On the two upper floors are the master suite with dressing room, three bedrooms (one en suite), a bathroom and a WC. A guest bedroom, shower room and utility spaces are on the lower ground floor.

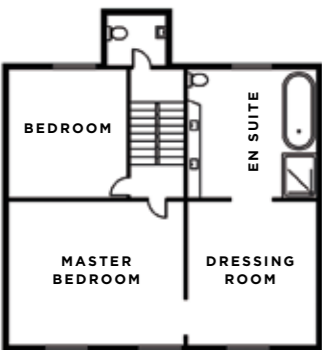
PLAN



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

ENTRANCE HALL

'This shade of yellow is so inviting,' says Ana. Delicate foliage adds a subtly festive touch to the staircase.

Walls in Soane Yellow by Papers and Paints. **Stairs** in Highland Green by Dulux. Asparagus **ferns**, Nikki Tibbles Wild At Heart. **Star**, Ginger Ray

LIVING ROOM

The cascade of books artwork above the fireplace is a much smaller version of an iconic one the artist created in Madrid, using 5,000 volumes. The chandelier and its cord are hung, rather than fixed into the ceiling. 'It'll be easier to take with us when we move on and I rather like the look of the old-school cord looping down,' says Ana.

Chiltern **sofa** and **footstool** in Navy, The Conran Shop. **Cushion**, Designers Guild. Books **artwork**, Alicia Martin. Fan **decorations**, Ginger Ray. **Curtains** in Leith by Mulberry Home. Pink **sofa** and **ottoman**, Att Pynta. **Cushion**, Heal's. The timber side **table** was sourced in the Swiss Alps; Nkuku sells similar. **Artwork**, Lidia Masllorens. **Chandelier** and **chair**, as before

SITTING ROOM

This is where Ana heads for calm during the pre-Christmas storm. 'If the family is watching TV, my red room is where I can relax and read,' she says.

Walls in Philharmonic by Papers and Paints. Antique Venini **sconces**, Gallery 25. **Painting**, Miguel Macaya. **Candlesticks** and **candles**, Pentreath & Hall. **Vases**, Heal's

MASTER BEDROOM

Pretty meets punchy in this serene sleep zone, with trad floral curtains set against an enveloping blue paint shade.

Bed, Hästens. **Walls** in Celestial Blue, Dulux. **Throw**, Heal's. **Ikat cushion**, Pentreath & Hall



home truths

AT CHRISTMAS WE'LL BE EATING...

Turkey, ever since my brother-in-law gave me an amazing recipe that works like a charm.

AND I'LL BE WEARING...

Something that 'gives' a little. Nothing worse than feeling uncomfortable after dinner.

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FILM?

Drei Haselnüsse Für Aschenbrödel - a 1973 Czech/East German version of Cinderella that's been shown on TV every year in Switzerland since I was a child.

TIP FOR FINDING INTERESTING ART?

Try art shows that are curated abroad to lead you to different styles. I often buy in Spain.

EASY WAY TO TRANSFORM A HOME?

Move everything around, from paintings to furniture. You will see everything in a new light.

