

Getting into character

Anna Campbell Jones has invited heart, humour and a host of colour into this stunning Victorian home

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Words **Natasha Radmehr**



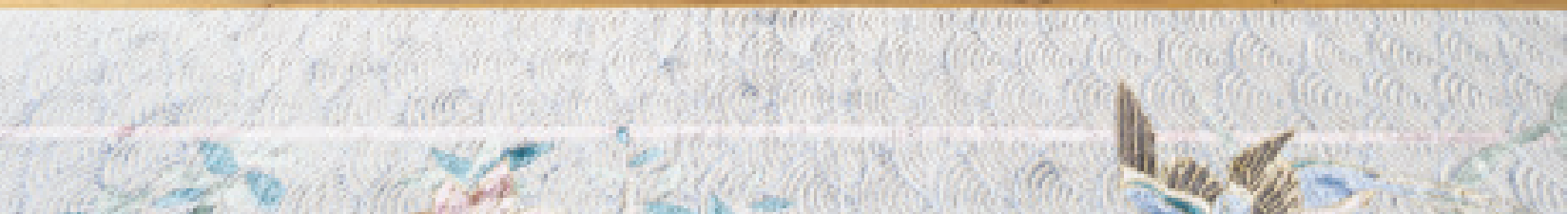


DETAILS

What A two-storey lower conversion in a Victorian terraced townhouse

Where Glasgow

Interior design Habitus Interior Design



There's a moment when friends come to stay at Kirsty Mac and her partner Billy's house where they realise there's a subversive surprise lurking in the seemingly elegant orchid-patterned wallpaper of the guest bedroom. If they look hard enough, that is. "We found this wallpaper in Timorous Beasties and really liked it because it had quite a sultry, boudoir feel that reminded us of one of our favourite hotels, Prestonfield House in Edinburgh," recalls Kirsty, a motivational coach. "Just as we were buying it, the woman in the shop said, 'I just want you to know that there's a threesome in the design of that wallpaper.' I told Anna about it and she said, 'Great. I can work with that.'"

The Anna she is referring to is Anna Campbell-Jones, the wildly talented interior designer (and founder of Habitus Design), broadcaster and all-round style maven. She first came to Kirsty and Billy's attention when they saw her on TV in her role as a judge on *Scotland's Home of the Year*. The couple had just bought a three-bedroom duplex conversion within a B-listed Victorian townhouse in the west end of Glasgow, formerly owned by the figurative sculptor Andy Scott. A treasure trove of intricately carved fire surrounds, wedding-cake cornicing and ornate wall panels, it possessed a striking beauty – but the décor and neutral palette didn't chime with their quirkier leanings. In Anna, they knew they had found someone who could fuse character with place. "And I was lured in by their pretty plasterwork and delightful personalities," laughs the interior designer.

Billy jokes that Kirsty's favourite colour "is colour", so it's surprising to learn they flirted with the idea of painting their lounge in Farrow & Ball's Railings, a deep, gothic charcoal. Kirsty was also tempted by the sugared almond pink of Peignoir. "But then we were looking at the plasterwork, the filigree and the Lincrusta frieze, and it just felt like the decoration on a Wedgwood vase," says Anna. So naturally, the room had to be blue. More ►

Previous spread and left "Inside of a Wedgwood vase" was the brief for the lounge. The sofas were left behind by the previous owner and reupholstered in teal velvet and coral fabrics. Anna also added deep buttoning to give them an entirely new look. **Top right** Wendy Morrison's Floral Waves rug is hand-knotted from wool and silk, and inspired by Japanese culture. **Right** As well as vintage furniture, the lounge contains a selection of contemporary pieces sourced from Tojo Design in Helensburgh, like this striped armchair in a custom colourway to match the room's palette. "I was going for pieces that are always going to look cool, but that aren't necessarily fashionable," says Anna



specifically: Barrington Blue. It bathes the lounge from corning to skirtings in a powdery almost-teal. “I knew early on that whatever colour we went for would be on absolutely everything,” says Anna. “I described it as putting a bomb inside a tin of paint.” It helps to enhance all the details and bring them all up to the same level, because even the wainscoting in here has twiddly bits.”

The lounge has vast walls, a soaring ceiling and generous bay windows, affording plenty of space for a few statement pieces that complement, rather than compete with, each other. Sweeping the floor is Wendy Morrison’s Floral Waves rug, a whimsical hand-knotted design layered with waves, flowers and exotic birds. Directly above is the only ceiling light with the diva-like presence to turn heads in a room like this. Achille Castiglioni’s Taraxacum 88 Suspension 1, a geometric aluminium pendant encircled by 120 lightbulbs (“This is the bigger of the two sizes it comes in,” smiles Anna, “Big, and f***ing big!”), is the kind of big light you actually want to switch on. It throws a generous glow on the talking-point fabrics: Osborne & Little ombre damask curtains (fastened by fabulous handmade Houlés Paris Duchesse tie-backs that resemble a stack of silky, tassel-fringed macarons), sherbet-hued cushions and a zippy coral couch. It’s an energising, eclectic combination. And it works.



That vibrant energy flows through to the kitchen. It’s next door to the lounge and was previously hemmed in by a lowered ceiling and a partition wall that ran to the back door of the property. This had served the double blow of creating a narrow, practically redundant corridor while squashing the kitchen into an odd wedge shape. Anna worked with Kelly Chan from Pocket Size Architecture on revising the layout and obtaining the necessary permission to knock the wall down, fold the corridor space into the kitchen and reinstate the original ceiling height. It made a radical difference, not only in gifting the kitchen a bigger footprint but in rationalising the home’s other ground-floor hallway, previously nicknamed “the problem child” because it didn’t seem to have a purpose before.

Billy says the kitchen is now his favourite room in the house, pointing to the custom-made coral pantry (crafted by Karrera Joiners, who was the main contractor, and nicknamed the “barntry” because it houses a small bar) and how it picks out the orange veining in the slick black marble island and the marmalade-coloured shades in David Hunt’s eye-catching Hyde pendant overhead. “It just all ties together so well,” he says.

Gloriously kitsch details pop up throughout the home; small reminders that even though the interior architecture means serious business, there’s always room for a sly wink and a sense ►



Splashes of orange enliven the more subdued palette in the kitchen. Through the window is a conservatory used as a home office. The door was previously the main entrance and led into a narrow corridor that took up valuable space. When the partition wall was removed, it made more sense for the home's main entrance to be the one that connects the building's communal hall with Kirsty and Billy's hall on the next page

A hallway that invites visitors to linger a while on the chaise longue, exquisitely upholstered in Pierre Frey's Le Jardin du Palais Velours fabric. Instead of crittall doors (which Anna says were "ridiculously expensive"), Karrera Joiners made the door leading to the kitchen from timber, painted black to achieve a similar aesthetic





of humour. Seletti's irreverent Toiletpaper barstools propped up at the kitchen island. A boob-shaped mirror in the pink guest bathroom, also Seletti ("They do a penis one too but I felt that would be a step too far," laughs Kirsty). Billy Connolly's Yo-Yo Man hanging above a glamorous chaise longue. These choices offer a glimpse of the owners' playful, tongue-in-cheek sensibilities. "Your home is kind of like your autobiography; it's showing people who you are," says Anna. "So the more honest and open you are, the more generous you are. It's not about showing off, but about welcoming people into your heart."

Even the rooms that appear more pared-back at first glance are packed full of character on closer inspection. Kirsty and Billy's

bedroom is dressed mostly in soft creams ("Quite against both of our initial instincts," says Anna), but these are not boring creams. These are Anna Campbell-Jones creams. There's the Restoration Elements' Oil Punk wallcovering, which looks like someone let a bunch of gold-dipped marbles loose on a sheet of paper; lace curtains that filter the golden sun; an Ikea wardrobe behind the bed fully clad in an ecru Bute Fabrics tweed. "Everything's working on different levels," says Anna. "We've got a bit of geometric, a bit of lace, some digital print. And then we realised we did need to add something else so we have these chairs by the window upholstered in a green and pink Iona Crawford fabric."

It's clear how much fun Anna had sourcing the ingredients ►

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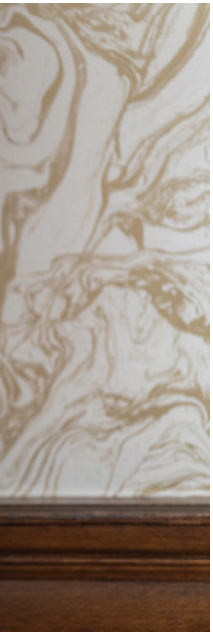


Opposite The guest bathroom packs a punch with pink walls and geometric floor tiles from Solus.
Above Timorous Beasties' Oriental Orchid wallpaper was the starting point for the guest bedroom. Avert your gaze if you don't want to see what's hiding behind the flowers

for this home, scouring vintage stores for furniture to sit alongside the newer pieces. She even made the hunt for radiators an unexpectedly rewarding one for Kirsty, taking her to Glasgow Architectural Salvage for a rummage (“Which I thought I would hate,” the owner confesses). They selected industrial, cast-iron designs with curved columns that were then spray painted a burnished copper. “You have to seize the opportunity to add something thrilling or beautiful,” says Anna. “If you’ve got to get new radiators, why not get sexy ones?”

Why not, indeed. It is the philosophy that Kirsty and Billy live by, and the one that prompted them to email Anna in the first place. They didn’t expect the interiors powerhouse off the telly with the bold lipstick and cool style would actually reply. But she did, and what a result. “What I loved most about working with Anna is that she understood who we were and then brought that to life,” says Kirsty. “Now we have the joy of coming home to a place that feels like ours. Not someone else’s: ours. That’s a gift.” ■





Far left A lush Persian landscape is depicted in Pierre Frey's Le Jardin du Palais Velours. **Left** The home is filled with jaw-dropping period details, such as this intricately carved wooden fireplace surround. This room, now Kirsty and Billy's bedroom, would have been used as a dining room originally. **Above** Chairs upholstered in an Iona Crawford fabric gather on a green Floor Story rug to bring a touch of colour to the mostly cream palette