

LIVING ROOM DESIGN IDEAS

Use these stunning living rooms to inspire your perfect space



ECLECTIC STYLE

Becky has decorated the room with a vintage feel, using rich navy as a starting point. **Walls** painted in Breton Blue, Dulux. For a similar vintage leather **sofa**, try Rose & Grey. **Footstool** and **cabinet**, Ebay. Newgate world **map**, John Lewis. For a similar **chandelier**, try the Milnsbridge from Laura Ashley

ELEGANT LIVING ROOM MAKEOVER

Becky Auden used her interior design know-how to create a stylish family space decorated in rich jewel tones

WORDS **BECKY CLARKE** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHAEL SMITH**

When we moved into our home in 2007, it had been rented out for 25 years and the central heating didn't work properly, the bathroom was hideous, the kitchen was in a state of disrepair, and the décor was shabby,' recalls Becky. 'I was six

months pregnant at the time, so as soon as we had the keys, Andrew and I replaced the heating system, kitchen and bathroom. In addition, the living room was recarpeted and blinds hung, while a lick of paint made it feel much brighter.'

With two young daughters, and Becky working as an interior designer and stylist, the couple were kept busy over the next few years, so little was done to the family home. 'The living room is a great size and perfect for the girls to play in, but it was a bit bland and that bothered me – I spend my life creating beautiful rooms for other people, yet my own living space lacked character,' she adds.

Around a year ago, they fitted bespoke units either side of the fireplace, which immediately made it look better. 'We designed them on the Jali website, which meant we could get exactly what we wanted – perfect shelf heights to fit speakers and a record player, a cupboard to hide the TV electrics, as well as lots of storage for books and display space,' says Becky. 'I've used Jali many times for my work and knew the products would be lovely.'

Despite finding it easy to see what to do with other people's homes, Becky found it harder to finalise ideas for her own space. 'I wasn't in any rush and knew the living room scheme would one day be inspired by something,' she says. Thankfully, that eureka moment happened when she used a navy paint while designing a photoshoot. 'It was rich and dramatic, and I loved how the contrast with white woodwork gave a sharp and crisp finish,' she adds. 'I started a Pinterest board, gathering images of rooms with dark

'I love that it is bright and practical during the day and cosy in the evening'



THE OWNERS

Becky Auden (above), an interior designer and stylist, lives here with her husband Andrew, a product manager, and their two children, Lucy and Polly, plus cats Hector and Sidney

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom, 1930s detached house in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire

BECKY LOVES

Wanaka in New Zealand
Strong, milky tea
Anthropologie homeware
Chocolate Oranges
Giraffes
Her old Land Rover Freelander
English murder-mystery stories

TOTAL PROJECT COST

£2,419



ORIGINAL SPACE

The property had previously been rented out, and the living room was dated

BEFORE



walls. It was a big leap to change the paint from stone to navy, but as I'm always encouraging people to commit to a scheme and go for it, I decided it was time to listen to my own advice. So I bit the bullet and painted the walls myself over two mornings, and it looked amazing.'

Next, Becky added stylish touches with accessories and furnishings. With skills ranging from upholstering and sewing to upcycling, she enjoyed the challenge of making the room come together without breaking the bank. She searched Ebay and found an old footstool for £12 and a chair for £8. Both were tired-looking, so she made covers for them. 'I used a velvet remnant for the stool, and a playful fox fabric for the chair, which is the perfect size for my daughters,' she says. 'My beloved chaise was last re-covered a decade ago, and I gave that a new look with crushed dove grey velvet – it has a quiet opulence that I think is beautiful.'

When standing back and looking at the room, Becky decided that the space next to the sofa felt empty. She liked the idea of filling it with a mid-height piece for interest and

wanted a design that was different to the other furniture in the room. 'I came across the perfect glass-fronted wall cabinet on Ebay and bought it for £50,' she says. 'It was the right size and the finish of papered backboard was lovely. It's supposed to be hung on a wall, so to make it look more balanced, I added little wooden legs to give it a floor-standing look. It now holds a mix of things, from childhood books to conkers collected by the girls and my wedding tiara.'

The wall above the sofa lacked decoration and, having seen a canvas map by Newgate in the past, Becky knew that the colours would be a welcome addition to the room. She picked up its brighter hues with more crushed velvet fabrics and geometric-print cottons, which she made into cushion covers. 'I thought that the cushions would be the finishing touch, but then there was a big expanse of floor in the centre of the room that looked empty,' she says. 'I knew it would look better with a rug, but despite spending hours searching the internet, I failed to find anything right. Most rugs are rectangular and too small, but I needed it to be



‘The design was an organic process, with each decision leading to the next, rather than making all the choices at the start’

FOCAL POINT

Left The fireplace was transformed with white paint and an insert filled with logs. Bespoke alcove units, Jali. For a similar sofa, try the Richardson by Sofa Workshop. **Rug** made from Dakota brown carpet, Carpetright. **Cushion covers** made from fabrics by Harlequin and Prestigious

UPCYCLED FURNITURE

Right Becky re-covered a pink Drayton chair, bought for £8 on Ebay, with Scion’s Mr Fox fabric. It’s the perfect size for her daughters



three square metres to be in proportion.’ With a pile of shoot props in the house, Becky tried out a jute rug in the room; she loved the colour but it was too small and the surface was uncomfortable. Instead, she found a deep loop wool carpet with a mottled colour reminiscent of jute that could be cut to the right size, then edged it with jute webbing. ‘It took me an afternoon to hand-stitch the top of the tape, but the result is lovely,’ she adds. ‘It’s soft to sit on, adds texture to the scheme, and brings it together visually.’

In all, it took around two weeks to complete the room, but spread out over a much longer period. ‘It was an organic process with each decision leading to the next rather than making all the choices at the start,’ explains Becky. ‘It’s the way I often work as it allows you to stay open-minded to ideas as they crop up and go with the flow. I’m delighted with how the room has changed – I love that it is bright and practical during the day, and unbelievably cosy in the evening, making it a true family space. It may have taken a long time to finally get it right, but it was worth the wait.’

THE COSTS

Furniture
£1,488

Fabrics
£381

Carpet
£315

Accessories
£185

Paint
£50

TOTAL
£2,419

LUXURY LIVING ROOMS

Whatever your personal style or type of home, allow your living room to become a place to relax and express yourself

GREY GLAMOUR

Interior designer Caz Oliver knocked down a wall to link the living and dining rooms of the duplex apartment in an Edwardian house in London where she lives with husband Richard. She painted the walls in Farrow & Ball's Down Pipe, giving the larger space an intimate feel. For similar sofas, try the Chill in Tobacco and Graphite from Heal's. PS 2014 rug, Ikea. For a similar coffee table, try the Kilo from Habitat



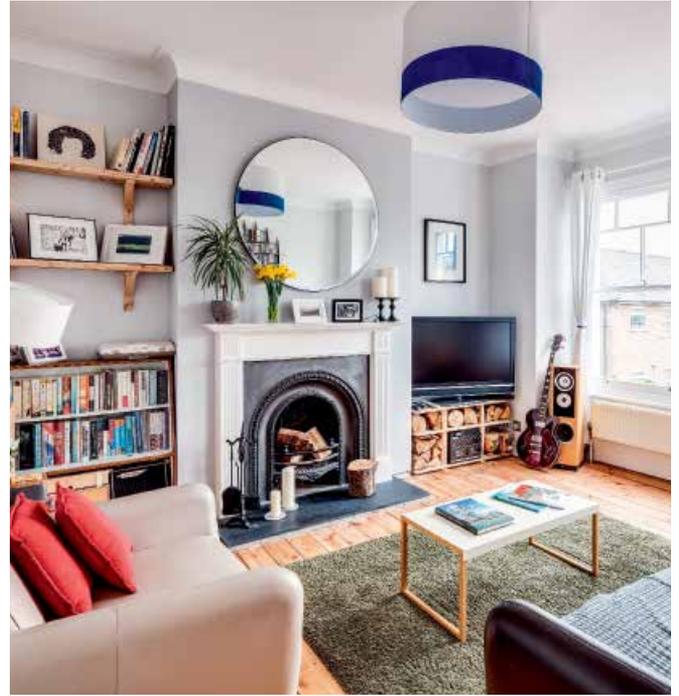


STATEMENT SHADE

Fi Duke opted for a fun light fitting in the living room of her period terraced home in Chelmsford. Dark grey walls provide the perfect backdrop for it. Palm 'hairy' light shade and Madison Grey wall paint, both Abigail Ahern. For a similar olive green sofa, try the Fargo from BoConcept. Radius coffee table, Habitat. Alhedé rug and Stave mirror, Ikea. Green Mongolian faux-fur cushion, Wilko. Fiat cushion, TK Maxx



POP CULTURE Custom artwork from Spluegen Gallery makes a focal point in this old chapel in County Durham, converted by architect Stefan Camenzine and brother-in-law Rob Broomby. Flatbed trolley coffee table, Andy Thornton. For similar sofas, try Ikea. Easel floor lamp, Next. Burma Teak woodstain, Sadolin



COMBINED LOOKS Architect Peter Merrett and his wife Eleanor wanted a Victorian-meets-Scandi feel in their maisonette in south-east London. Walls painted in Lead II from Paint & Paper Library. Reclaimed fireplace and surround, Junction Emporium. Circular mirror, Mrs Robinson. Furniture, Habitat. Rug and lightshade, Ikea



OPEN-PLAN FEEL Painting above the picture rail emphasises the height of the ceilings in the living area of John and Julie Rignell's period apartment in Hove. 1930s Cocktail cabinet, Jeroen Markies. Mistral sofa, Heal's



COLOUR CONTRAST Black and white is used to striking effect in Jemma Paugh's converted schoolhouse flat in Clapham. Shutters, Shutterly Fabulous. Ebony-stained engineered oak flooring, GJP Flooring. Rug, Ikea. For a similar sofa, try Habitat

PHOTOGRAPHS: PAGE 58 DAVID WOOLLEY, PAGE 59 RACHEL SMITH, PAGE 60 TOP LEFT CHRIS HUMPHREY, TOP RIGHT SIMON MAXWELL, BOTTOM RIGHT DARREN CHUNG, BOTTOM LEFT BRUCE HEMMING