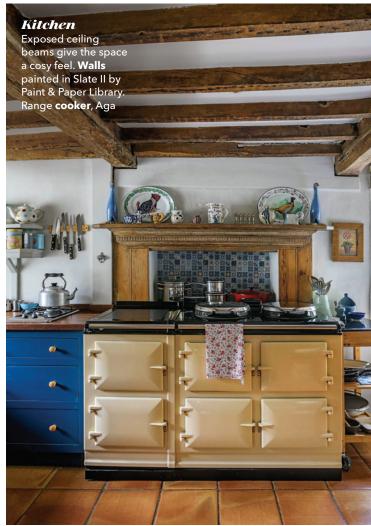




COUNTRY HOMES & INTERIORS





uirky proportions, nooks and crannies may give a cottage quaint appeal, but they don't always cut it for modern life - as Lucy and Chris Wright discovered when they bought this Hampshire hideaway. They loved the property and its position, but the layout was a different matter. After three years of making do, it was time for a change...

The couple moved to the village from London 15 years ago, looking for a better way of life for their children. 'We had friends in the area, and it was perfect because there were good schools nearby and it was commutable for Chris's job,' says Lucy. 'We rented until we found this cottage, which belonged to friends of my sister. The appeal was instant because it's so pretty. The cottage had been extended over the years - it's like a Tardis as it's bigger inside than it looks from the outside. We adored the original features such as the windows and beams, and the kitchen had a lovely cosy feel. The proportions of the rooms were good, too. We also liked that it was situated in a lovely village with a nice pub, a tennis club and lots of families around. It was in a conservation area, but it wasn't listed. It ticked all our boxes.'

Lucy and Chris decided to live in the house for a while until they figured out what they needed to do. Three years later, in search of inspiration, Lucy decided to do a one-day interior design course with Stephanie Dunning of Dunning



## AT HOME WITH...

Owners Lucy Wright and her husband Chris, a lawyer, live here with their son Jack, 21, and daughter Imogen, 19, who are both at university.

**House** A five-bedroom Victorian cottage. They moved in 12 years ago.

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Dunning & Everard



## **ON OUR DOORSTEP**

**Visit...** 'Mottisfont Abbey (nationaltrust.org.uk/mottisfont), a country house and estate set in beautiful gardens by the River Test. Visit in late May/early June when the world-famous historic walled rose gardens are in full bloom."

Shop at... 'Garden Inn (01264 811661) in Stockbridge. This small town is full of independent shops and, with gorgeous unusual flowers and fabulous vintage-style arrangements, this is one of my favourites. It's the perfect place if you are looking for inspiration for present shopping as it's always full of goodies for both the garden and home.'

Go for a meal at... 'The White Hart Inn (whitehartpentonmewsey. co.uk/) in Penton Mewsey, a family-run country pub serving fabulous food, particularly the Sunday roasts and the superb Friday evening fish and chips. It's dog friendly, too!'

& Everard. It helped her realise that there was too much work for her to do to the cottage on her own and she enlisted Stephanie's help to rework the ground floor.

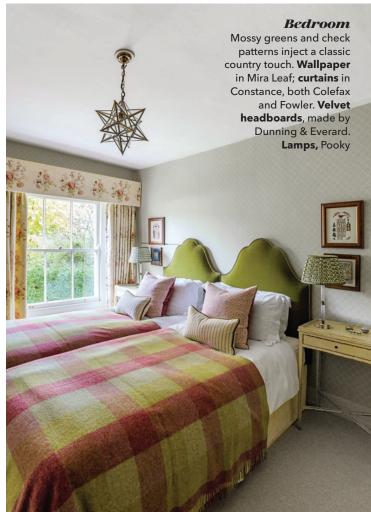
Stephanie was brought on board to make the most of the space and instantly came up with some clever ideas, including moving the staircase. You had to walk through an unused area to get to the stairs,' says Stephanie. 'By turning the staircase around, we gave the family another room, so they now use it as a TV room.'

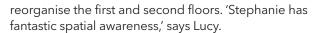
Stephanie also created a new link that connected the main cottage to the utility, wine store and study, and redesigned these rooms, knocking down walls and incorporating lots of cupboard space. She then redecorated all the ground floor, basing the choice of fabrics around Lucy's love of old French linens, faded florals and muted colours. Floor-length curtains add a soft elegance to the French doors in the hallway linking the main cottage to the utility and study, while the soothing neutral shades of the living room are warmed up with cosy-hued patterned fabrics. 'I was delighted with the end result downstairs,' says Lucy.

In 2018, Lucy decided she wanted to complete the renovations for the rest of the house. 'The children were now grown up, so it was a good opportunity to redo upstairs,' she says. 'It was a confined space and we wanted to make better use of it.' Stephanie was called in again to >

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'The house hadn't been divided up intelligently,' says Stephanie. 'There were five bedrooms and two inadequate bathrooms with little storage. We redesigned the whole of the rear first floor, knocking down all the walls at the back.'

One of the bedrooms was enlarged, making a single into a double; an extra shower room was created and the two bathrooms became one larger one; and another shower en suite was added.

Inspiration for the decor was taken from Pinterest and magazines, and Stephanie created an eclectic English cottage look. 'We interpret what the client likes and push the boundaries just that little bit more,' says Stephanie. Existing Colefax linen curtains in the guest room were the starting point for this scheme. Complementary moss green velvet headboards inject a sumptuous feel, while reframed samplers and floral prints add a period touch. Multi-hued Shetland wool throws pull the colour scheme together. Another guest room features a smoky green-blue palette, with a checked tweed headboard creating a cosy focal point.

'We were delighted with the end result,' says Lucy. 'The changes absolutely transformed the upstairs of the house. We couldn't believe how Stephanie managed to get so much into such a small space - the cottage feels so much bigger.'

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