

WELCOME HOME

Adaptability and sociability were central to the brief for this Victorian property to make it suit its gregarious owners, then interior designer Stephanie Dunning was tasked to evoke luxe schemes

WORDS RACHEL LEEDHAM **STYLING** VIVIENNE AYERS
PHOTOGRAPHY DAVIDE LOVATTI



SITTING ROOM
Small touches, such as the trimming on the blind and ottoman, increase the sense of sumptuousness.
Chesham fireplace.
Jamb. Duck feet lamp.
Porta Romana



SITTING ROOM
 Bespoke joinery frames the double entrance, which has pocket doors that slide into the wall. Walls in Oval Room Blue, Farrow & Ball

When Tom Cameron showed an advert for this rather grand Victorian house in Surrey to his wife Megan,

her first impressions were of a 'higgledy-piggledy old school' but closer inspection encouraged her to revise this opinion. 'The house is situated adjacent to a 20-acre forest, so you drive up through the woods,' she says. 'Peering through the gates we saw this magical, beautiful building. We fell in love with it on the spot.'

The house, which was built in 1863, probably as a shooting lodge, is steeped in character, although ill-conceived alterations meant that the layout was far from perfect. During the three years that the Camerons and their three young children occupied it before the renovation, they pinpointed the property's failings. 'An indoor pool had been added and it didn't connect well with the house,' says Tom. 'The other issue was that the building faced the wrong way, but we couldn't work out how to turn it around without destroying its character.'

The eureka moment came when the Camerons' architects, Hugh Petter and Paul Pizzo of Adam

Architecture, suggested demolishing the staircase in the historic part of the house to create an extension that linked all the different levels, so that the key spaces lead off from it in a Catherine wheel effect. The basement was extended to add an entertainment area to the existing family room, while above this, a large outdoor terrace was created to help reorient the house and connect it with the gardens.

Tom is the founder of a large corporate interior design practice and Megan used to work as a corporate interior designer, so it is little surprise that the pair had strong ideas about how they wanted their home to look. When they approached Stephanie Dunning of Dunning & Everard, it was very much in the spirit of a collaboration. 'We knew the sort of palette we wanted and also the style – not stiff and formal but in essence very beautiful. Tom coins it "Modern British",' says Megan.

Stephanie has taken Megan's love of blues and greens and translated them into layered rooms that combine different textures to create a sense of understated luxury. The greenish-blue sitting room, →

DINING ROOM
 The sideboard is a commissioned piece that is roomy enough to hold entertaining essentials.
Wall in Basalt, Little Greene.
Artwork. Dale Elliott.
Sideboard. Alter London

INSIDER INSIGHT

Interior designer Stephanie Dunning shares her style vision

GO-TO COLOURS Paint & Paper Library's Slate collection.

DECORATING TIP Ceilings can always be papered or painted in darker colours.

WHAT'S NEXT Designing technology-free spaces in homes – areas for mindfulness.

YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS Classic, intuitive, eclectic.

THE WORDS YOU LIVE BY Never give up and could always do better.

FAVOURITE INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT @Social_Pantry.

INSPIRATION



EXTERIOR

This louvred structure incorporates lighting, heating and speakers.

Camargue canopy, Renson Justiniano armchairs and Gocek sofas, Coco Wolf

a TV-free zone where the family read and play board games, features seating in soft velvets and tactile wools, while the dining room has dramatic blue-black walls. 'The colours were very important; we wanted the house to represent us a family,' says Megan.

Although they brought little in terms of furniture to the project, the couple own a considerable art collection, much of it by artists from their native South Africa. 'I've been collecting since I was a student. I started out with etchings from local markets,' says Tom. 'Stephanie produced an art inventory and reframed all the pieces. We were very impressed by how she made them appropriate to the house.'

Entertaining was another key part of the brief. 'We have a lot of family in the UK and we will often have 14 around the table for Sunday lunch, so flexibility was important,' says Tom. For example, Stephanie was tasked with creating storage in the family room to house trestle tables and chairs so that the Camerons can host up to 26 guests for a sit-down meal.

In the summer months, the family and their friends spill outdoors and this is when the newly designed

terraces, which incorporate dining and seating areas as well as an outdoor cooking space, really come into their own. Off the kitchen is a pavilion structure featuring electronic side panels and a louvred roof that closes at the touch of a button to provide a sheltered sitting area. It was commissioned by the couple's garden designer, Cherry Mills, who added a rendered wall incorporating a fireplace and storage niches. 'There's a wonderful interaction between the inside and the outside and if there's the odd shower, that's catered for,' explains Tom.

The renovations have given the owners a remarkably adaptable house that is in many ways in tune with their heritage. 'It has given our children as close as you can get to a South African lifestyle, with the forest and the outdoor areas so that we can barbecue all year round,' says Tom. 'And it seems to effortlessly absorb people – no matter how many guests you have round, you can always find a quiet corner.' 📸

■ Dunning & Everard, 01722 710608, dunningandeverard.com



KITCHEN
A blue island brings a bold contrast to the classic greys units.
Cabinetry, Mark Collins at Orca Design, Welles
bar stools, Swoon



DINING AREA
Modern, clean-lined pieces create a sophisticated look.
Cross extending table, Matthew Hilton for Case.
Beetle chairs, GamFratesi for Gubi at The Conran Shop



ENTRANCE HALL
An oversized globe lantern helps to emphasise the room's soaring ceiling.
Large Original globe, Jamb.
Seed Cloud installation (in stairwell), Ochre



INSPIRATION



MASTER BEDROOM
Silvery grasscloth adds subtle depth to the walls.
Walls in Vinyl Glam Grass, Phillip Jeffries. Lartigue chandelier, Porta Romana



MASTER BEDROOM
A working fire is the height of luxury.
Painting, *Saturn Blossom* by Jack Frame, Cube Gallery.
Crawford vanity table, Baker



MASTER BATHROOM
The bath on a plinth makes a grand statement.
Blind in Pavanne in Slate, James Hare. Large Zurich lantern in bronze, Vaughan