HOUSES

A classic and colourful Chelsea townhouse restored to its Georgian roots

A collaboration between Steph Hill Designs and Devereux Designs studios has resulted in a charming family house

By Arabella Bowes
17 January 2024

In the garden room, the two tiered table is from Robin Myerscough Studio. The walls are painted in a bespoke mix from Papers and Paints. The ottoman fabric is from Turnell & Gigon. Christopher Horwood

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Flick through any issue of *House & Garden* and you'll find that most great design projects are realised by a talented interior designer, an architect and a team of clever builders. It is much rarer to come across a project that has been collaborated on by two distinct interior design firms. Yet this Chelsea townhouse, worked on by Steph Hill Designs and Devereux Designs, is proof that a singular vision can be achieved from many minds.

'Honor and I met eight years ago,' explains Steph Hill, 'and I immediately thought she was completely brilliant. I persuaded her to come and collaborate on the project I was working on at the time. Since then, we've worked together whenever we can.' In the end, combining their visions for this Chelsea townhouse brought out the best in each studio. 'Our styles are different, but we come together well. Steph has that elegance and more classical influences,' says Honor Devereux. 'And Honor really brings out my colourful side,' adds Steph.

Those who have seen Honor's 2022 project, featured in *House & Garden,* will note just how different this house is. 'We had to make sure what we were doing was appropriate to the house,' she explains. 'That's always the aim of an interior designer. We wanted to bring back mouldings and the history of the house–to paint everything fluorescent pink would be very jarring.'

Steph had assistance from Rosanna at WSJ Gallery for the art curation. The dining table is by Alfred Newall, with chairs from Stockholm Modernity. Above the table, a pendant from Urban Electric hangs. Christopher Horwood

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One of the challenges this project presented was its heritage status. Grade II-listed, Steph and Honor had to be particularly sensitive when it came to renovating. To ensure they coloured firmly in between the lines of Georgian territory, Steph and Honor enlisted the help of architects Roberts and Treguer, as well as Uber Contracts. 'Both teams are phenomenal, with encyclopaedic knowledge of historic houses and building regulations,' says Honor. Putting their heads together, the teams figured out how to dig into the basement, sensitively add a roof terrace and lovingly restore the 'ever so slightly wonky' staircase, without losing any of the house's original beauty.

'At first, the client wasn't sure what he liked,' notes Steph. 'I knew he erred on the classical side because I met him at another project of mine which was very smart,' but beyond that it was a case of trying things out and learning on the job what he was after. Whilst he 'appreciates the timeless nature of a calming palette,' the pair nudged him to experiment with colour, encouraging him to look at wallpapers and bolder paint hues. Ultimately, it was longevity and sustainability the informed much of the design and palette. 'The client doesn't want to think about changing a thing for the next 20 years,' notes Steph. As Honor puts it, 'another family could come in and just enjoy the house. It won't jar with anyone.'

In the drawing room, which looks out over green space, two armchairs from Rose Uniacke provide comfortable seating. The footstool is by Max Rollitt and the curtains are bespoke by Vanderhurd. Christopher Horwood

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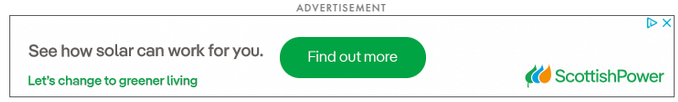

Though there was an undeniable synergy between client and designers, it wasn't all plain sailing when it came to sourcing reclaimed materials. Wanting to get ahead of the curve, Steph and Honor began hunting for the specific tiles they needed in the entrance hall around a year in advance. Due to the conservancy and planning stipulations, the tiles had to be a certain size, style and colour. 'We had the tiles stored somewhere and the week before the builders needed them, the storage company picked them up and the forklift truck dropped the palette and broke them all. We only had about six metres left of the 24 we needed. We didn't know whether to laugh or cry.' says Steph. 'Now half of the flooring in the entrance is from Spain and the other half is from France, so we had to hand lay the tiles in a very specific muddle so you couldn't see the colour difference,' Honor adds.

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Though the tiles had caused 'heartache and headaches,' both designers and the client were still keen to use reclaimed materials where they could. Up on the roof terrace, the floorboards were salvaged from Brighton Pier. Once again, though, the team were presented with trouble. 'The boards arrived in absolute state, with one million nails jutting out, tar and chewing gum stuck all over them,' says Honor. Steph adds, 'I was on a rare girls weekend away in the south of France when the boards arrived and there's a running joke with this group that I either never make it on these trips or I have to go home early because of work. Honor Zoomed me to show me the delivery and we just looked at each other and said "well that's not right!" I turned to the girls I was with and said, "I'm sorry girls. I've got to go home!" The client was having a heart attack, I was having a heart attack, I may have even cried.' 'It's definitely not a cost or time saving exercise to use reclaimed materials,' says Honor, 'but the final effect is so much better.'

Despite the ups and downs experienced throughout the renovation, the client has not been put off doing yet another project. In fact, it seems to have spurred him on as he is now building the UK's first fully sustainable house down in West Sussex which Honor and Steph have been called upon to design. 'We've created a monster!' the pair joke.

Steph Hill Designs | *Devereux Designs*

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With help from Bert and May, Steph and Honor sourced the entrance hall tiles from across Europe. The artwork is from Wilson Stephens and Jones. The pendant is from Urban Electric.

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In the drawing room, the sofa is from Rose Uniacke. It sits on a bespoke rug from Vanderhurd. The antique wall clock is from Jamb.

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Seen from another angle, the drawing room is home to an antique table lamp from Robert Kime with a bespoke lampshade in a Soane fabric. The tray is from The Lacquer Company.

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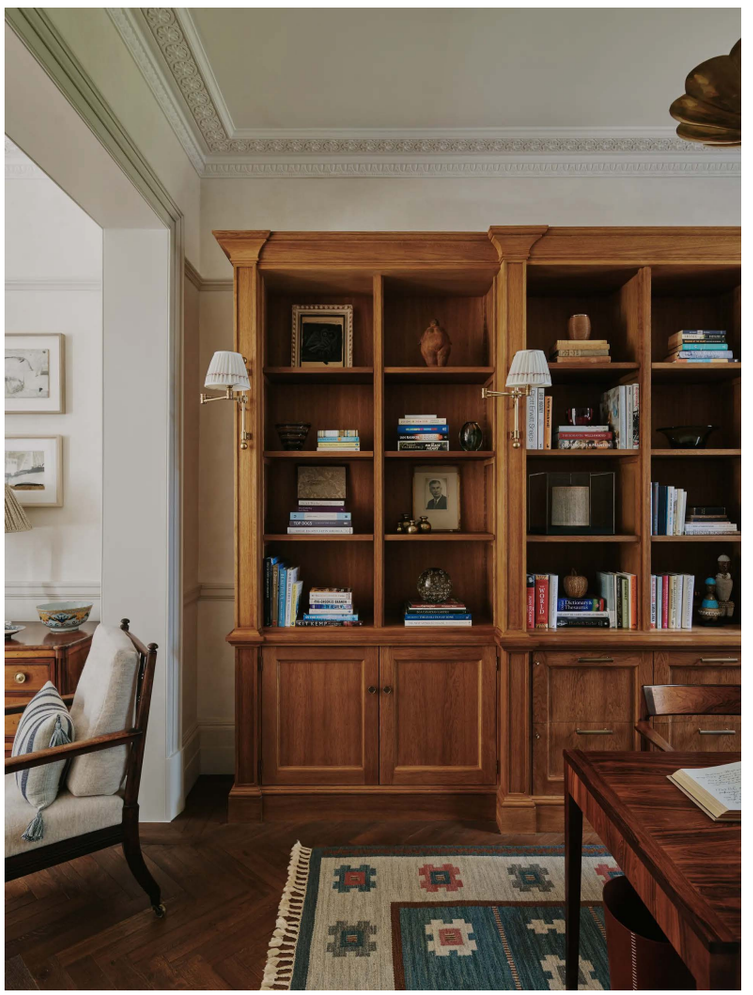

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A bespoke bookcase from Rupert Bevan lines the wall of the client's study. The wall lights are from Soane. Underfoot, a Swedish rug from Robert Stephenson.

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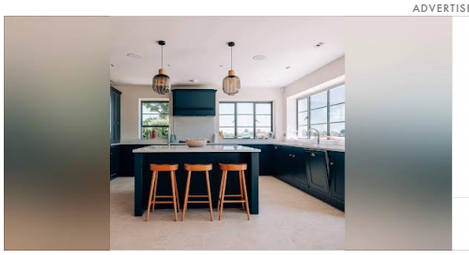

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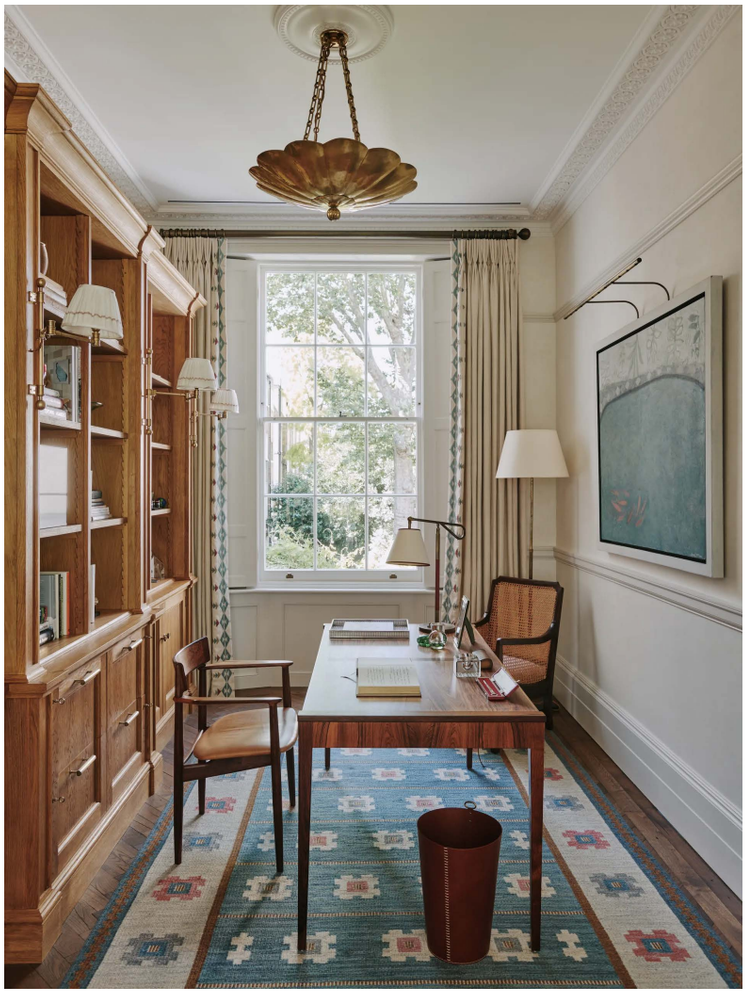

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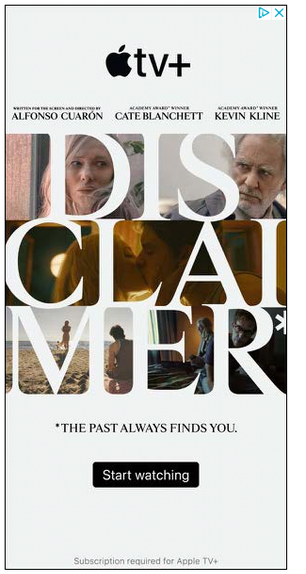
From another view, a pendant from Soane can be seen. The picture light is from TM Lighting. The desk light is from Studio Atkinson.



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In the dining room, the walls are painted in Little Greene's 'Sage Green'. The woven corner chair is from Quindry Antiques. Over the fireplace a painting by Katharine Edwards, sourced from Cricket Fine Art hangs.

Christopher Horwood

7/35

The client was keen to 'support one off companies with an impressive history' where possible and was particularly keen to use Christine from Vanderhurd. As a result, many of the carpets and curtains in the house are bespoke Vanderhurd. The walls are painted in a bespoke mix from Papers and Paints.

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In the downstairs cloakroom, the panelling is painted in 'Tingry' from Edward Bulmer. The wallpaper is from Marthe Armitage.

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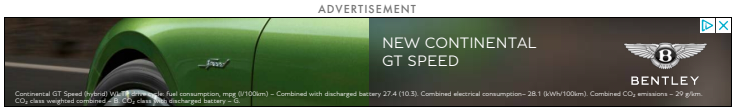

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The seat cushion is in a Howe fabric.

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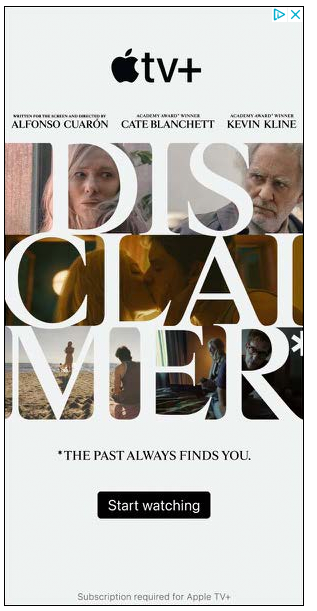
The kitchen is from Blakes London, with ironmongery from Devol. The table in the window is from Robert



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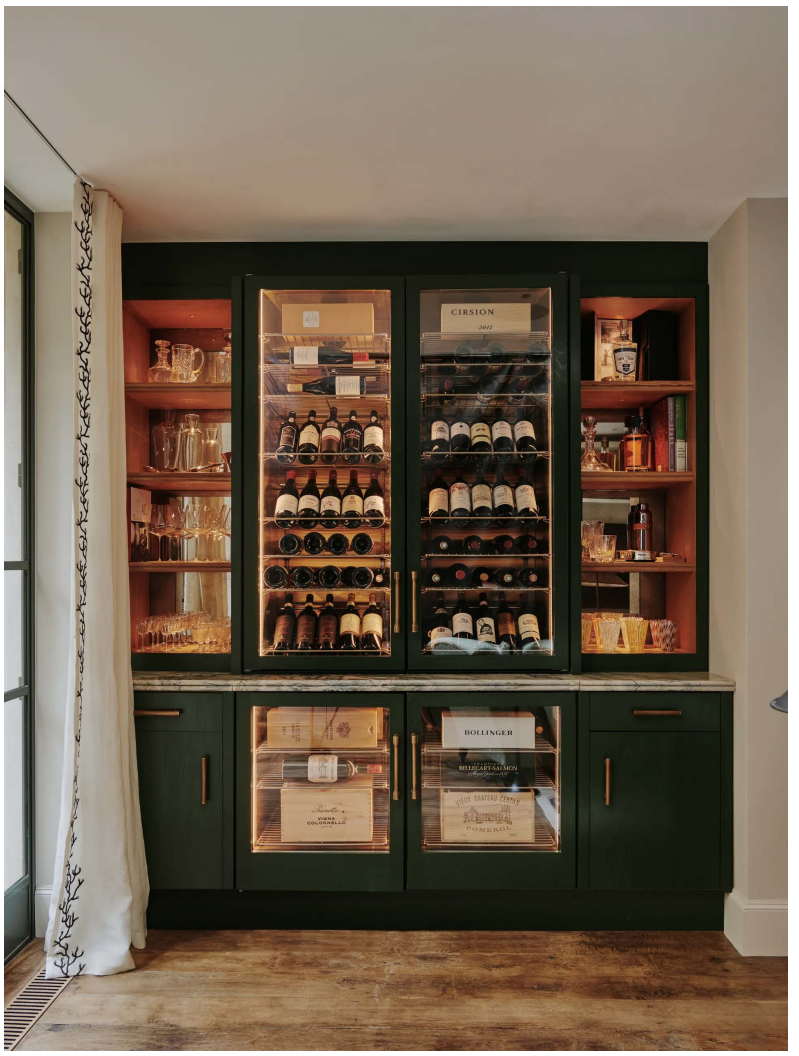
The wall plate is by Claudia Rankin, the small bird artwork is by Hugo Guinness. Both were sourced at Wilson Stephens and Jones.



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The bespoke wine unit was made by Rupert Bevan.

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The timber flooring is solid oak, sourced from a chateau in the depths of France. 'It's the part of the house that everyone looks at and says, "wow,"' says Honor.

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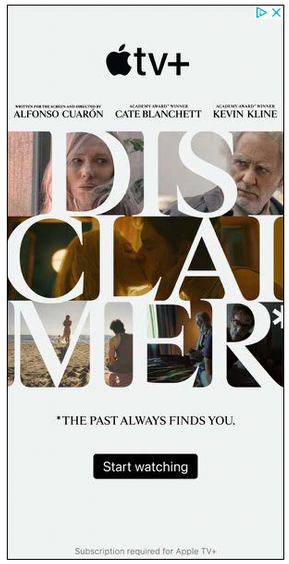
In the garden room, the armchairs are upholstered in a Schuyler Samperton fabric.



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The green jugs are from Sibyl Colefax, the table lamp is by Collier Webb.

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Designed by Marian Boswall Studio, the garden is a place for relaxing and entertaining.

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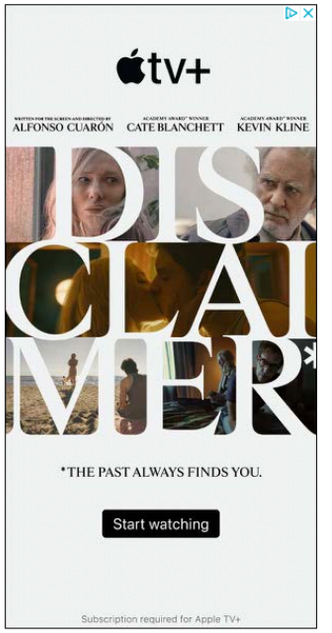

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The seat cushions have been made up in a fabric by Zac and Fox at George Spencer Designs.

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In the bathroom, the vanity unit is from Water Monopoly. The wall lights are Soane.

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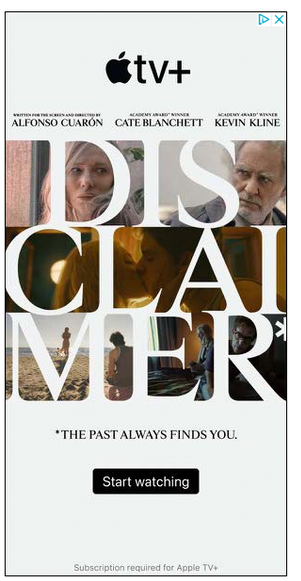
In the blue bedroom, the bedside tables are from Max Rollitt, the curtains are from Robert Kime and the wallpaper is by Adelphi.



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A lamp from Tarquin Bilgen sits on the chest of drawers sit. The woven bin is from Foster and Gane.

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In the primary bedroom, the pendant is from Cox London.

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With wallpaper by Zuber, Steph and Honor have brought texture to a pared back room. The faux bamboo chair is from Quindry.

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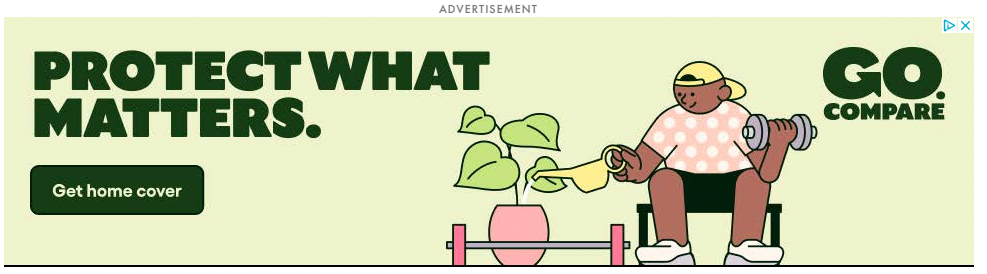

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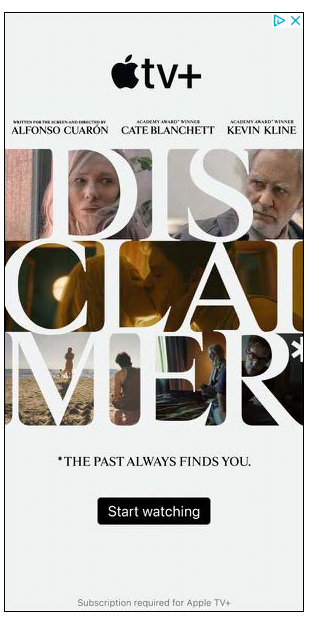

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The antique bedside table is from Blanchard Antiques. The headboard fabric is from Vanderhurd.

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In the en suite bathroom, the wall lights from Waterworks. The taps are from Drummonds.

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27/35

The bath is from Devon & Devon. The bath taps are from Drummonds.

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In another bedroom, the curtains are from Vanderhurd. The wallpaper is in a bespoke colourway from Nicole Fabre Designs.

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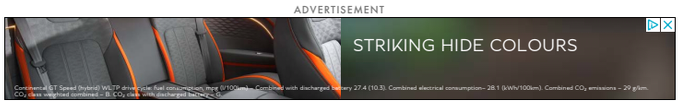

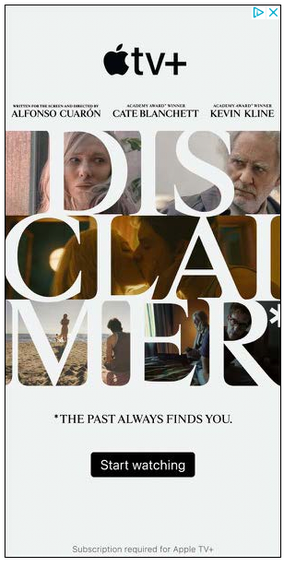

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The carpet is from Tim Page. The curtain poles are Mckinney & Co.

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In a charming wallpapered bedroom, the headboard is from Galbraith and Paul. The lampshade fabric is from Kathryn Ireland.

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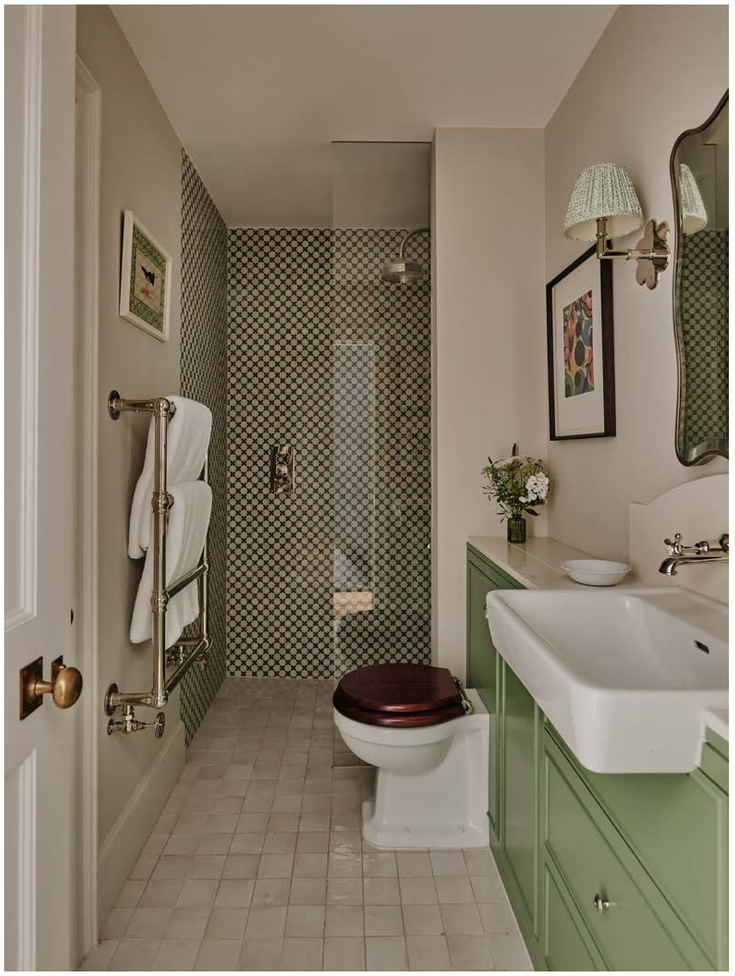
The zellige tiles are ‘Bles’ from Ann Sacks. The vanity unit is painted in Edward Bulmer's ‘Invisible Green’.



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The bathroom wall lights are from Soane.

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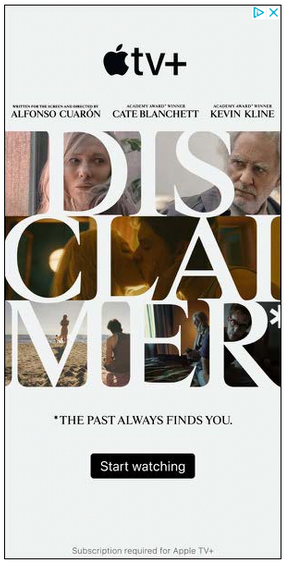

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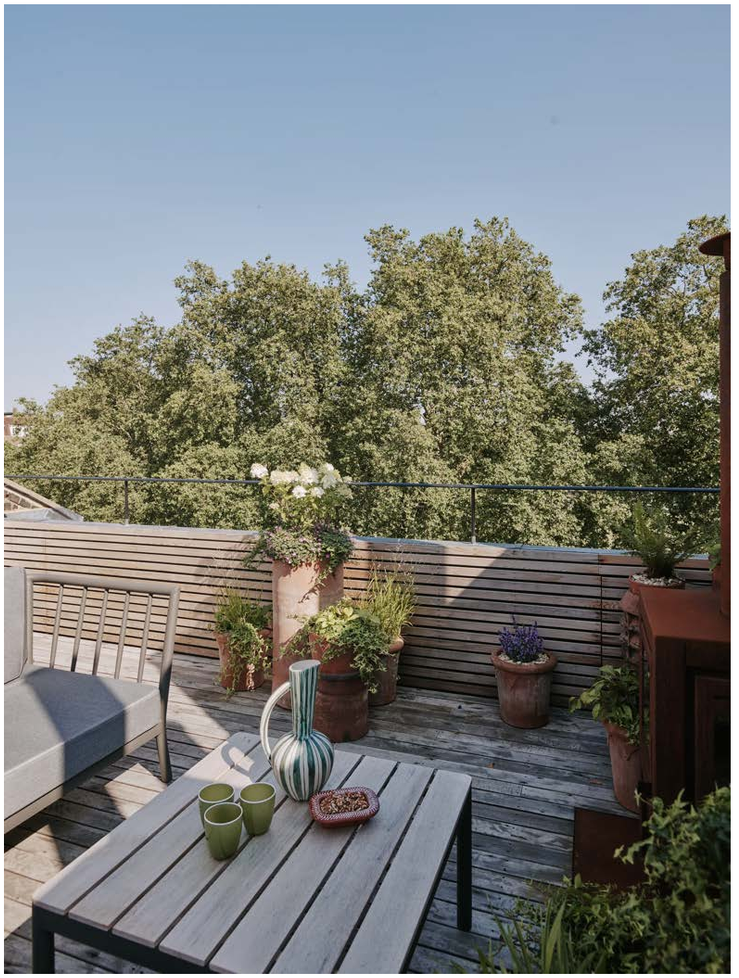
The tiled splashback is from Balineum. The wall lights are from Jamb.



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Landscape design by Marian Boswall Studio.

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The pots hung on the wall are from Nkuku, the stove is from Morely Stoves.

Bella is *House & Garden*'s Commerce Editor and in-house shopping expert. She joined the magazine back in 2021, after graduating with a degree in English Literature from the University of Leeds. A staunch believer that leopard print is a neutral, she gained a keen editorial eye early in her career,... Read more

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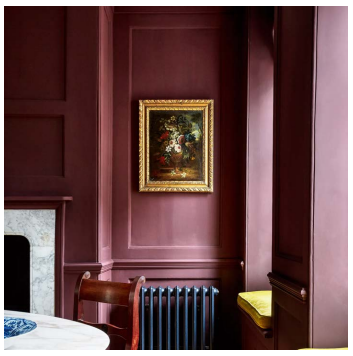

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