

# JEWEL IN THE CROWN

A bold palette inspired by its owner's glittering creations unites the contrasting styles of a light, elegant sitting room and a dark, dramatic snug



## DESIGNER

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### Can you tell us about the project?

Situated in a Victorian terraced house in south London, this living room and snug originally formed an open-plan, double reception space. The project was quite unusual because my clients are both designers: Vanessa Chilton is co-founder of jewellery brand Robinson Pelham while her husband, Alex, is a web designer. This meant that they had a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve, making the process very much a collaborative one. The other unusual point is that I was called in to work only on this double room – it was refreshing because we could channel our energy into every single detail.

### What was your brief for the spaces?

My clients wanted to work on a yin and yang concept, playing on light and dark. It made sense that the back room, which has limited natural light, should become the darker space, with dramatic, near-black walls lined with bookshelves and a slightly 1970s feel, while the front is the elegant, light room. The owners wanted to be able to close off the snug area to have a children-free zone where they could entertain their friends with cocktails. They were also keen to re-use various pieces of furniture, including the two sofas, which we have reupholstered with velvet fabrics, a sofa table and a leather ottoman.

### Why did you choose the steel-framed wall of glass?

I love working with Crittall-style glazing: the profile of the frames is very slim and the detail is brilliant. The original plan was to have a solid wall incorporating the television, with two large, steel-framed doors on either side, but when the clients fell in love with the idea of a fully glazed wall, I suggested creating a bespoke chest to house the television. The partition enables them to shut themselves off from the main space but thanks to the glazing, the rooms work together beautifully.

### What were the key design concepts for the main living space?

The room has high ceilings and original cornicing and we wanted to enhance the sense of space and light with mirrored alcoves. Rather than panel the alcoves, we opted to have two huge framed mirrors made off site by my picture framer, so that the owners can take them with them if they decide to move. The mirror is patinated for a much subtler, bespoke effect than plain mirrored glass. The door is another key feature: I love fabric doors, as they look fantastic and are relatively easy to create. The sliding door was made on site and then sent to the upholsterer, where it was covered with turquoise silk with a studded







**ABOVE** A bespoke chest conceals the TV in the snug so that it doesn't intrude on the view to the living room. **BELOW** Jewel bright upholstery on the sofa is striking against the dark-painted bespoke joinery, which gives the air of a private members' club to the snug. **BOTTOM** Crittall-style glazing divides the rooms yet allows light to flow between the living room and snug.



pattern; on the other side, facing the hall, it is upholstered in faux white leather featuring a Hamsa sign, again created using studs.

## How did you decide on the palette for the rooms?

Vanessa works with very bold colours all day with her jewellery designs and she asked me to call in some of the brightest samples I could find, including neon pinks and oranges. She finally settled on a bold turquoise velvet, which we used to reupholster the corner sofa for the snug – it really pops against the near-black backdrop. To this, we added sharp chartreuse yellow cushions and these fabrics reappear in the living room to help tie the two spaces together. Similarly, we brought the turquoise through to the lighter space, albeit in subtler tones with an aqua-coloured rug and silk for the fabric-covered door. We also used soothing neutral hues to keep the main living space light. The artwork was created by the owners and pulls the palette together – it looks like a fabulous kaleidoscopic print but on closer examination it features images of all sorts of things that have personal significance to the family, from a rocking horse to a pair of skis.

## What was the thinking behind the joinery in the snug?

The idea was to create the feel of a library with bookshelves wrapping around two of the walls, so that the chimney breast and fireplace are incorporated into the joinery. The room is quite small and so where we didn't have the depth, we suggested creating slim picture shelves, rather than encroaching on the available space. The wall opposite the fireplace incorporates an open drinks cabinet featuring glass shelves.

## And the lighting scheme?

As well as pendants and table lamps, we have used a lot of LEDs, running tape lighting behind the alcove mirrors in the living room and around the joinery in the snug to illuminate the bookshelves. LED strips also illuminate the bar. Vanessa wanted the warmest light possible so we painted the casing of the LEDs with matt paint to achieve a warmer glow. All the lighting is on dimmer switches, enabling the owners to create any number of lighting schemes.

## WHERE TO BUY

**LIVING ROOM Bespoke ottoman**, Wimbledon Upholstery, 020 8543 2433. **Ottoman in Castellani in Chalk**, £115m; **Eberson Aqua rug** RUGDG0321, 250x350cm, £1,995; both Designers Guild, [designersguild.com](http://designersguild.com). **Sofa in Smooth in Chalk**, £36.50m, Kirkby Design, [kirkbydesign.com](http://kirkbydesign.com). **Claude loveseat** in Squirrel cotton matt velvet, £760, [Sofa.com](http://Sofa.com). **Blue cushion in Ocelot in Ice Blue**, £97m; **door in Akoya F6731-05**, £88m; both Osborne & Little, [osborneandlittle.com](http://osborneandlittle.com). **Curtains in Lindow in Ivory**, £20m, Clarke & Clarke, [clarke-clarke.co.uk](http://clarke-clarke.co.uk). **Perfume Bottle lamp** in Bay, £1,170; **10" slim straight oval shade**, £164; both Porta Romana, [portaromana.com](http://portaromana.com).

**Walls in Chalk**, Alterior Matt Emulsion, £36.50 for 2.5 litres, Eicó, [eico.co.uk](http://eico.co.uk). **SNUG Sofa in Cassia in Ocean**, £65m; **yellow cushions** in Torlonia in Chartreuse, £79m; both Designers Guild, [designersguild.com](http://designersguild.com). **Central two cushions on sofa in Semiramis 2555-04**, £119.80m, Sahco, [sahco.com](http://sahco.com). **Elca cushions**, £94.95 each, Tori Murphy, [torimurphy.com](http://torimurphy.com). **Bespoke TV chest**, Material Concepts, [materialconcepts.co.uk](http://materialconcepts.co.uk). **Flokati rug**, 170x240cm, £149.99, The Rug Seller, [therugseller.co.uk](http://therugseller.co.uk). **Walls in Acqua Viva**, Pure Flat Emulsion, £42.50 for 2.5 litres, Paint & Paper Library, [paintandpaperlibrary.com](http://paintandpaperlibrary.com). **Steel-framed glazed wall**, Govette, [govettewindows.com](http://govettewindows.com).