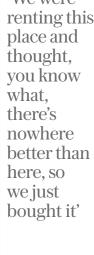
## Interiors

place and thought, you know what, there's nowhere here, so wejust





# The London town house with a dose of New York glamour

What happens when an American designer settles in a Grade II listed Knightsbridge house? Sparks fly. By Jessica Doyle

hen designer Diane Kordas and 🔥 American Diane her husband first moved to Kordas intended V V London from New York, they planned to be in the UK for around three years. The vertex of the short term, yet still resides in three years. Twenty-seven years later, bowever they are still here in the very however, they are still here, in the very however, they are still here, in the very 27 years later same Knightsbridge house that they initially rented when they arrived, now

with two grown-up daughters and three "My husband, who works in finance, had the opportunity to come here for work, and I was very clear: three years," says Kordas. "We didn't know anybody at first, which was a little hard, but then we slowly built up a circle of friends. I wanted to acclimatise myself while we were here and really make it my homeand then we decided we didn't want to leave. We were renting this house and thought maybe we should buy, so we looked around for another home, and then we thought, you know what, there's nothing better than here."

Luckily, the owner was happy to sell,

what they wanted. have this beautiful architecture laundry room and a spare bedroom. choices. "In our old apartment,

so they settled in and made plans to renovate when they could afford to do Budget notwithstanding, renovating

the house, which is Grade II listed, posed some challenges: at first they wanted to extend the kitchen on the ground floor further into the garden and add a bar on the floor above, but they were not permitted to. "It can be challenging when you really want something and it's not within the boundaries, but I respect that now," says Kordas. "This is what I love about England: you everywhere, and there's a symmetry." So instead, they settled on extending the basement to create a TV room, a Decoratively, the novel experience of living in a town house, after the lateral apartment they had had in New York, offered Kordas the opportunity to be more experimental with her design

## GET THE LOOK: HOW TO MIX CALM AND COOL

### Keep walls neutral,

and add pops of colour Kordas's interior is far from minimalist, but it is based on an understated pale, soothing wall to a minimum, but personality comes in the

form of accent colours - for example in the burnt-orange chaise

Introduce some animal motifs

colours. Pattern is kept | little glamour, and is not longue in the living | horn-shape posts on her | Having favourite things

blue chairs in the dining room

background with mainly | A dash of animal print is

a shortcut to adding a necessarily brash or garish. As well as her own-design blankets, Kordas has added subtle animal motifs to the

collected, and the zebra-print benches in the dining room, living room and bedroom.

"I never really thought of it as a theme; I've just bought things that I've liked," she says. "If you're true to yourself and your taste it just works"





room and the electric- bed, ornaments she has and pictures of family A Big softie: adding cushions invokes a feeling of calm surfaces and hard edges about a bar that makes

your home, but shelves can easily become overwhelmed and cluttered. Limit your display to a few pieces there are clear surfaces | Kordas's mirrored coffee too, to give the eye a rest | table to add some edge Bring in comforting

textures A room filled with shiny

and friends on display | does not invoke a feeling | everybody gather of calm. Choose rounded round, even if you're not furniture and textured | drinking alcohol," says upholstery to soften the Kordas. If you don't have look, and load up with space for a dedicated bar blankets and cushions; room, a cocktail cabinet then juxtapose a

> Throw in a cocktail cabinet

"There's something

makes a good per shelf, and make sure | glamorous piece such as | alternative. By day, it's a beautiful piece of furniture, but come cocktail hour, with the doors open to reveal shelves of glasses and

bottles, it brings an

instant party feel







≺ The living room

picked up on the family's travels



everything had to flow, because we atmosphere, particularly when she is 'When I'm

was all on the same floor, whereas here to feel that what is around me isn't clut-Working, I

I was able to make each room a little tered or chaotic," she says. "Everything need to feel

as the basement rooms, the house is She enlisted the help of interior that what is

room on the first, and two floors of spaces, but rather for his glamorous, isn't chaotic

going up and down all the time, it gives would say to him, 'Clean it up!' But he Seem clean

were walking from room to room and it designing. "When I'm working, I need

arranged with a kitchen and dining designer Hubert Zandberg - who is not

room on the ground floor, a large living normally known for creating quiet

bedrooms and bathrooms above. "Living high-impact interiors. "Hubert does

on different floors, although you're like pattern on pattern," says Kordas. "I

you a little more privacy; you can go pushes me, which is really good, and he into the living room and shut it off, open my mind, so we were able to mix

which was a new experience for me." all these different styles together." They

at Parsons School of Design in New the years, finding interesting antiques

York, launched a fine jewellery brand in and vintage pieces or re-covering sofas

2000, which has attracted a starry fan and armchairs when Kordas wants to

base that includes Scarlett Johansson,
Taylor Swift and Gwyneth Paltrow.

give a room a new look.
What they have achieved is a balance

Recently, she branched out into of relaxed, peaceful rooms with

animal-themed blankets. While she is a moments of high glamour. There is the

fan of colour, at home she prefers her odd piece of furniture with zingy

rooms to have a more soothing upholstery; brightly coloured artworks

Kordas, who trained in textile design have continued to work together over

different to the other," she says. As well has to seem clean and quiet."

the fact that a town affords privacy for all inhabitants – including dogs



the odd piece of furniture with zingy upholstery injects a dose of high glamou



Kordas to feature



and statement objects such as the was so true. I remember coming back 'My home is chandelier in the dining room and the here when I'd had radiation treatments; custom-designed bar cabinet in the I would crawl into the upstairs bedroom a gathering living room. Animal motifs are a to sleep, and I would feel calm and recurring theme in her work, and they comforted. I'd rest, then I'd get up and appear subtly throughout her home, continue my day." too, in hide rugs, zebra prints and ornaments picked up on her travels.

Her home became her sanctuary and retreat during her toughest time, but

Her office - which was created, along over a decade on, it now also plays a key Want people with an extra bedroom, a few years after role as a welcoming space for family and the first renovation, when an extra floor friends to drop in. was added at the top of the house – is a True to her American roots, Kordas here to lesson in combining drama with loves to entertain, so it was important understatement, with its rich, that her home should not only have a chocolate-brown walls: "They almost relaxed ambience, but also be well

look like they're lined with suede; it's set up for parties. The living room and dining room are, she says, her The calm, comforting nature of her "fun" places: "These rooms are for home became vitally important to entertaining, so they can become a little Kordas when she had treatment for more chaotic, which I love. I don't know breast cancer 12 years ago. "It came out how many times we've had dinner of left field," she says. "And when I was parties that have started out with eight recovering, a good friend said to me at people and have ended up with 18, the time, your home has to be your safe which my table does not fit, so we've place after having breast cancer, and it just had to do whatever we can."

Her circle of friends reads like the social pages of a fashion magazine: at the launch of her blanket collection earlier this year, which was co-hosted by her close friend Kelly Hoppen, guests included swimwear designer Melissa Odabash, fashion editor and designer Kim Hersov, cook Lorraine Pascale and model Yasmin Le Bon. After almost 30 years in the same house, her neighbours, too, have become close friends. "When you

leave your home country, your friends become like family - those relationships are even more important," she says. "I don't know if I would appreciate that so much if I was still in America. "I love to travel, but my home stabilises me. It has many different facets: when I come in and close the door, I feel safe, but also it's a gathering place for family and friends, it's a connection between all of us. I just want people to come here and feel

happy – it's my happy place."

soothing for me," she says.