

SWEET SENSATION

Fiona Harkin-Wood and her husband Sam have created an eclectic home in part of what was once a mansion belonging to the Tate family

FEATURE AMY MAYNARD | PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD GADSBY



INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Arts and Crafts terraced house

LOCATION East Sussex

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, cloakroom, four bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED 2014

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived in a top-floor flat in a period house in northwest London,' says Fiona.

KITCHEN-DINER

Black accessories and tiling are offset by bright white walls and woodwork.

Enamel and glass tableware, price on request, Marsha By The Sea. Kartell Papyrus chair in Orange, £238, Heal's

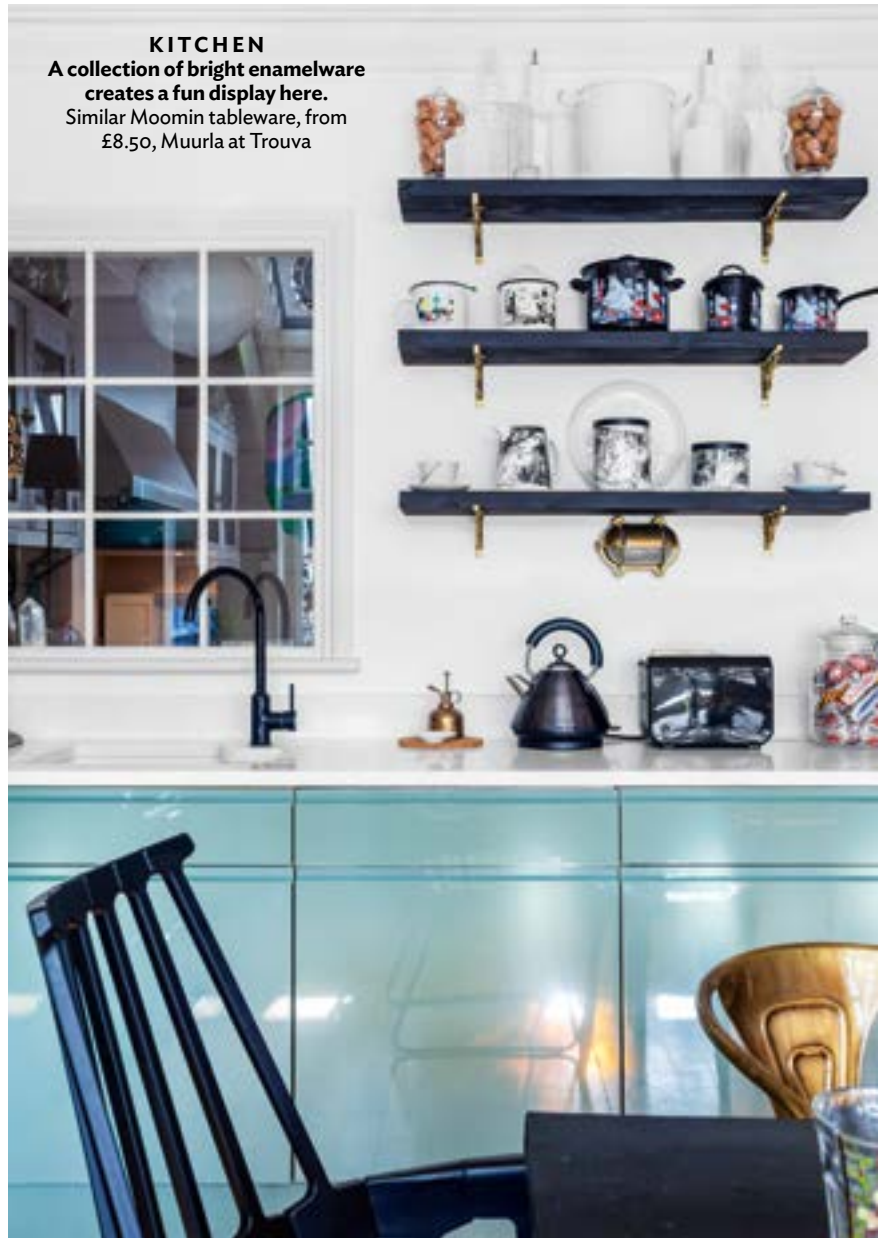
Fiona Harkin-Wood and her husband Sam were living in a flat in London when they decided they needed more space. Unfortunately, moving up the property ladder in the capital wasn't viable. 'We visited Rye one summer and felt at home there,' says Fiona, who then spotted an Arts and Crafts property for sale, designed by architect Horace Field and once owned by members of the Tate family, of Tate & Lyle. 'I came to see it with my mum and before I had even been upstairs, I knew I wanted to live in it,' she says.

The purchase went through smoothly in 2014. 'We lived in the house for a year before we did anything to it,' says Fiona. 'The kitchen had strip lights, the wiring was all over the place and we kept finding dead mice. My mum helped us paint the walls white, but that was about it until we began renovating at the end of that year.'

Sadly for the couple, there was emotional turmoil looming. 'We both commuted to London for a year after the move but I was struggling to get pregnant and my mum was undergoing treatment for cancer, so I decided to take three months off, which also let me oversee the renovation of the house. Within a month, I was pregnant,' says Fiona.

'We called in a local building firm and redecorated the top two floors in late 2014, using my furniture-designer dad to do the joinery,' says Fiona. On the first floor, they knocked into two store cupboards to make a Victorian-style bathroom with beautiful monochrome tiling. They then turned the

KITCHEN
A collection of bright enamelware creates a fun display here. Similar Moomin tableware, from £8.50, Muurla at Trouva



SITTING ROOM

Rich jewel-blue tones create an opulent feel.

The Luna pendant light, £311.98, Clippings, is a good alternative. Cushions, from £41 each, Plinth Home at Marsha By The Sea



LANDING

Original windows and a sweeping staircase make this an impressive space.

Try the Ercol Originals Chairmakers chair, £905, Heal's. Contemporary wall light with ribbed Upton glass shade, £165, Fritz Fryer





MAIN BEDROOM
A stand-alone tub is the height of luxury. Bath, from a selection, The Albion Bath Company. Mirror, from a selection, Graham and Green

old bathroom into a spare room, giving it an exotic feel with patterned fabrics and wallpaper and a pretty gilded bamboo-effect chandelier. The main bedroom houses a copper-coloured freestanding bath and accessories in yellow, orange and gold.

On the top floor, space-fan Fiona has created a den for their son Buzz, now three, featuring stellar-themed artwork and fabrics. 'I'm an armchair astronomer and love retro-futuristic style,' she says.

The next stage saw the overhaul of the downstairs. The right-angled staircase creates a fabulous, cosy space in the sitting room and the couple have added a corner sofa, woodburner and bright blue rug, not to mention more space memorabilia.

Motherhood prompted Fiona to reassess her life and she decided commuting to London was no longer viable. So, using some of her late-mother's inheritance, she and Sam set up a business in her honour. The result is Marsha By The Sea, a lifestyle store. Above the shop is a two-bedroom holiday let, The Crow's Nest, decorated in Fiona's inimitable style.

Despite a stressful few years for Fiona, things are settling into a routine and the family are able to enjoy the rural idyll, including making the most of the sea by popping to the coastline only a short drive away. 'It's so therapeutic,' she says. ☺

DECORATING TIP *'Pick three colours and use them throughout your home. So even though each room can be different, there is something tying them together'*



GUEST BEDROOM
Touches of gold add glamour. Hexagonal Pavilion lantern light, £325, Oka. Birdbranch Stripe velvet fabric, £88m, Timorous Beasties



BATHROOM
This space was created from two store cupboards. Casino tiles, £49.80sq m, Fired Earth. Try the Burlington Edwardian basin and washstand, £351.90, Victorian Plumbing



BUZZ'S BEDROOM
Fiona hung curtain material just below the picture rails for a cocooning effect. Walls painted in India Yellow; ceiling in Hague Blue, both estate emulsion, £46.50 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

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