



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Clever illumination and styling has enabled Laura and Eric de Winter's treasured finds to take centre stage in their newly renovated home

FEATURE SERENA FOKSCHANER | PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES BALSTON



SITTING ROOM
Metallics add depth in an expanse of white. Luna round mirror, £125, John Lewis, would be effective here. Anemone textured globe table lamp, from £1,071, Best & Lloyd



INSPIRING

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Period townhouse

LOCATION Central London

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, office, snug, cloakroom, three bedrooms, two bathrooms (one en suite)

PURCHASED 2014





DINING ROOM
An antique table is turned into a contemporary piece of furniture with the addition of a thick glass top.
 Custom-made cupboards, Juliette Byrne. Try The Rug Company for unusual contemporary designs, price on request



KITCHEN
A wood peninsula brings warmth to the sleek, white cabinets.
 Cabinetry, price on application, Baulthaup. Oliver bar stools, £149 for two; Portmeirion bowl by Sophie Conran, from £22; both John Lewis, would all work well here

A collection of fine Persian glass, a sculpture of a Hindu goddess and tribal jewellery displayed in a Perspex box – these rare and curious pieces inhabit Laura de Winter's sitting room. As she flicks a switch, objects are cast in streams of light and she smiles. In her previous house, a practical family

home dominated by four sons, her treasures were hidden from view. 'Prized antiques lurked in corners and paintings hung in dark corridors, because we were far too busy to think about displaying anything properly,' explains Laura.

Then, two years ago, with the last of the children having moved out, Laura and

her husband, Eric, decided to downsize and quickly found a property that they both felt had potential. It was a narrow London house with a bleak interior, but Laura felt it could be the perfect backdrop for her eclectic finds if its renovation was handled well, so that's when she commissioned interior designer Juliette Byrne. 'I went with Juliette

because she's known for her skill of putting unusual pieces together,' explains Laura. 'We culled our collection so that only the best was kept, then Juliette took over and transformed the space completely. Now, every artwork is imaginatively integrated into our home.'

Although showing off her ornaments was a priority, Laura was adamant that the home

should not feel cluttered. To this end, the walls are mostly white with the addition of warm wooden touches. The house soon took on a relaxed air that lent itself to ornate affects that don't overwhelm the sense of calm. For instance, on one landing, a bespoke metal balustrade features a charming design of bulrushes and dragonflies, while a bench

upholstered with a Missoni Home print, brings welcome colour and decoration. Lighting designed by Sally Storey was also meticulously plotted to show off Laura's finds. 'It's as if we live in a jewellery box at night,' says Laura. 'My treasures light up!'

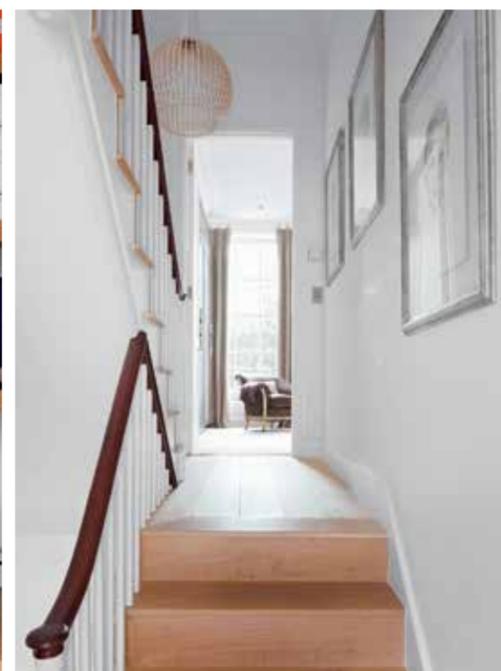
Decor aside, there was some structural work to be done. In the sitting room, a pillar



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OFFICE
The storage files coordinate with the orange display case featuring a miniature Bugatti.
 The Holding Company has similar orange boxes, from £18.95 each



HALL
Built-in shelves create extra storage.
 Alba armoire, from £3,495, Pinch Design. U620 bench in oak, £1,496, Benchmark, is comparable

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MASTER BEDROOM
 Warm tones are countered by crisp white bedding and ultra-modern lighting. Jade Trident bedside lamps with shades, £995 each, Louise Bradley. Bespoke picture frames, Haviland Designs, price on application

was removed to create one big space. Reserved for entertaining, the front section, with its heirloom armchairs reupholstered in a lustrous weave and a restored David Hicks table, is more formal than the family area at the rear. Here, a low-slung sofa and ottoman make an ideal place for relaxing in front of the TV. Instead of conventional built-in

storage, floating shelves link the two areas, from which there is tantalising glimpse of the garden through the double-height window.

Floating steps lead down to the basement, which has been transformed from a dingy space into a cosy yet contemporary room, where the couple sit at night. The ceiling here was raised, and a dining table with a glass top,

plus freestanding cupboards faced with antique glass, help enhance the airy feel.

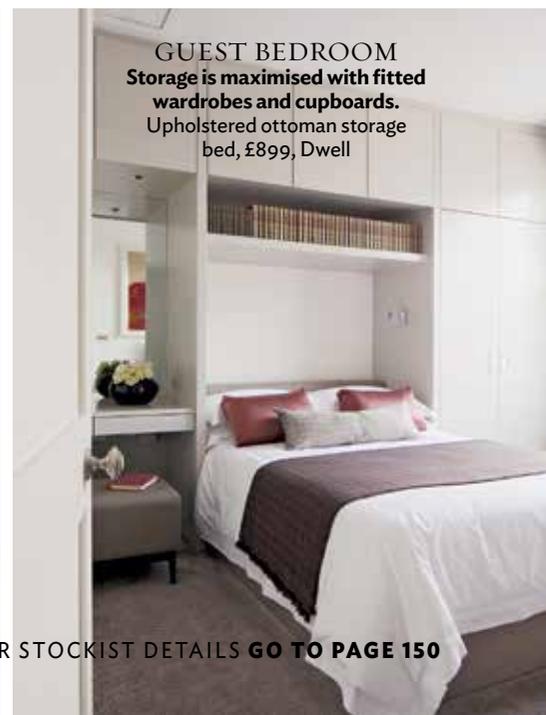
'It was amazing to be able to start afresh,' says Laura. 'It never ceases to surprise me that my unusual collection of artefacts sits so beautifully in our new, sophisticated urban interior. Everything suddenly has a stylish home of its own, and so do we.' 25



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BATHROOM
 This simple, minimalist design has a sense of drama. Grissini pendant light, £619, John Cullen. Cruze freestanding bath taps with shower mixer, £200, VictorianPlumbing.com, is a match



GUEST BEDROOM
 Storage is maximised with fitted wardrobes and cupboards. Upholstered ottoman storage bed, £899, Dwell