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this picture The open, winding staircase channels light through the centre of the house. The painting is by German artist Sybille Berger



A twist ON TRADITION

The classic Victorian facade of Anne Lise Kjaer's terraced London home conceals an unexpectedly light and airy interior with an intriguing staircase as its centrepiece **Words** Emily Peck **Photography** Lykke Foged

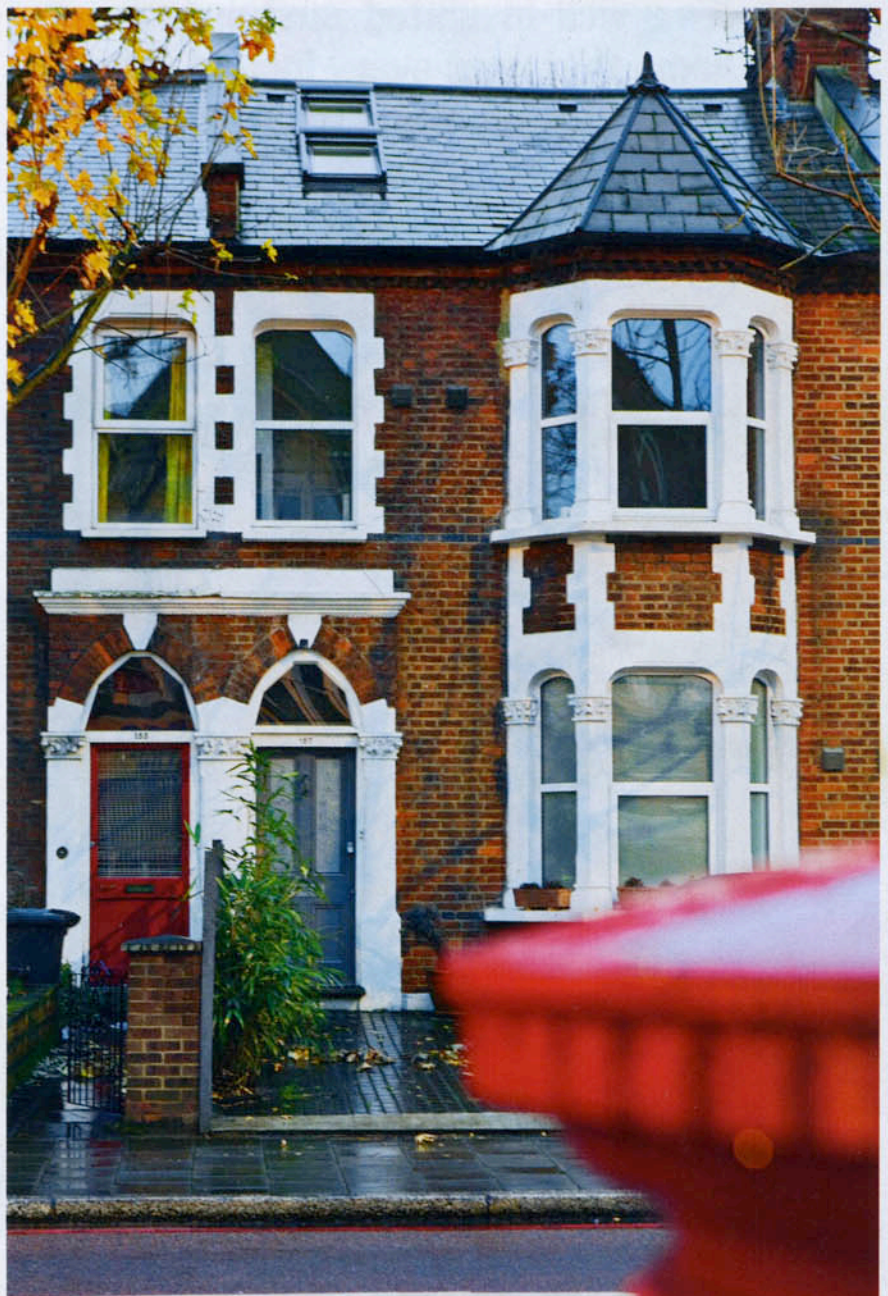
Danish-born Anne Lise Kjaer describes the renovation of her London home as something of a patchwork project 'getting more ambitious and adding new pieces along the way'. The results, however, are anything but patchy and it's a delight to discover the sleek slice of Scandinavia she's created inside. It's a far cry from what you'd expect to see behind the traditional facade. Anne Lise has given her home an unusual, pared-back feel, by adding a new staircase and extending into the loft to maximise the space.

As you enter her home, which she shares with husband Harald, an architect from Norway, and son Vicente (14), a refreshing light bounces off the crisp white walls and bleached floorboards. 'White plays an important role in my home and helps each room flow on harmoniously,' says Anne Lise. 'It's a great foundation colour that sets off art really well. The builders painted everything white – even things they shouldn't have painted!'

Anne Lise runs her own business from home, working as a global futurologist for clients such as Sony, Dulux, Ikea and Herman Miller, helping them to track trends and plan for the future. 'I provide my clients →



left Anne Lise had the whole house painted white – as a perfect backdrop for art and her work
right The traditional red-brick exterior belies the light, modern finish inside



below The original pine floorboards have been stripped, treated with lye and finished with white oil, while second-hand furniture, such as the paper drawer sourced from an office supplier in London's King's Cross, has been given a coat of

white paint. The painting over the fireplace is by Persian artist Koushna Navabi. The miniature Arne Jacobsen Seven and Ant chairs on the mantelpiece were a gift from Anne Donnerup whose company makes them

with relevant trend and consumer insights so they can decode the complexity of society and provide a clear and empowering message,' says Anne Lise. 'Colour plays an important part in my work, so a neutral backdrop at home is essential as it's not distracting.'

The house is a total contrast to the dark, cornice-encrusted home that Anne Lise first laid eyes on in 2006. 'When I pulled up outside and saw it was positioned on a main road I thought, "No way can I live here";' she says. But what immediately struck her was the property's size and the fact that you could see straight through to the garden from the front door. She knew that she could create a perfect home here; a well-insulated, sustainable home that uses every inch of space; where 'Scandi meets old English'. 'I thought the 400 square-foot living room would make an ideal work/meeting room and living space, too,' she adds.

With the help of an architect, Anne Lise drew up plans to open up the first floor, adding skylights to the back bedroom and a mezzanine sleeping area, which she calls a mini loft. She then added a main loft extension at the top of the house. 'I was moving in and ripping out things while the previous owner was still packing his bags,' she laughs. 'Everything needed to be replumbed and rewired for my must-have audio system.'

A long living room and galley kitchen occupy the full length of the ground floor, which opens out on to a south-west facing garden. The kitchen was the first room to be remodelled. 'I stripped out everything and added new high-gloss units and mirrored tiles to extend the feeling of space,' she says. 'But, once it was finished and I was sitting at the table, I realised I couldn't see out up to the sky, so I went online and ordered some full-height folding doors. With hindsight I should have extended to the side as we use this space a lot, especially when my "bonus children" – Aurora who's 21, Petra who is 19 and Alfred aged 15, who became my family when I married Harald – come from Norway to stay.'

The new living room, previously a formal living/dining room, is a versatile space for work and play. During →

It's a well-insulated, sustainable home that uses every inch of space; where Scandi meets Old English



right Anne Lise collects quirky objets d'art, such as the palmistry hand and phrenology head, to complement the white-themed decor of her rooms





'I stripped out everything and



the week, Anne Lise uses this room as a meeting area for clients – the flush-fitted cupboards open up to reveal three workstations with a computer in each. 'When I have a project on, I line up about 20 chairs and a projector for clients,' she explains. 'But then in the evening it's a family room, where we watch films, play Wii and hang out.'

As you walk up the main staircase you're greeted by Vicente's bedroom with the mini loft extension, where three skylights are fitted with solar-operated blinds, and the family bathroom. 'I removed some water tanks and created what we call in Denmark a hems – an open sleeping area,' explains Anne Lise. 'The children stay up there when they're visiting.'

Turn down the landing and up a few more steps and you'll find the modestly furnished master bedroom and a family living room. A new staircase was fitted leading to a new top-floor extension, which Anne Lise uses as an office. Nine skylights and a wall of glass blocks →

*above and right
The original kitchen was ripped out to make way for the new sleek, white units. The kitchen floor was so uneven that the builders used 50 sacks of sand to level it*

added new high-gloss units and mirrored tiles to extend the feeling of space'







left A purpose-built bookcase, which houses the family's extensive collection of books, spans an entire wall of the family living room on the first floor. The glass panel above the door adds light and mirrors the height of the bookcase

ensure that her workspace is filled with light. 'The staircase was a difficult project,' says Anne Lise. 'I initially ordered a closed staircase and the measurements were wrong. Although it cost me the £700 deposit, it was a blessing in disguise as I ended up hiring a different company to fit an open staircase, which works so much better.'

When it comes to fixtures and furniture, Anne Lise believes in what she calls democratic design. 'Every piece should be functional and appeal to your emotions,' she says, leaning back on her Arne Jacobsen Oxford chair. 'It's all very well having something that's beautiful and high quality, but if the children can't move freely on or around it then there's no point in it.'

Anne Lise also consulted a Feng Shui expert to help with the energy flow in her home. 'I was intrigued by his advice, so I used black mosaic tiles behind the cooker, as apparently it's not good to have a mirror near fire,' she says. 'I also used textiles to cover hard doorways and placed a heavy cotton drape in front of the entrance hall to shut off the house from the main →

left The roll-top bath was saved from the original house and painted black to match the mosaic floor tiles

below In the master bedroom, Anne Lise chose the green Thirties throw for the colour's calming and balancing properties; the pretty artworks above the fireplace are by Danish artist Nina Saunders



this picture The skylights in the extended loft make the most of the natural light

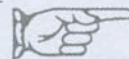


above Glass blocks at the top of the stairs keep Anne Lise's office bright and airy



road.' It was just after she'd finished renovating that Anne Lise met her husband Harald at her architect's birthday party. 'It was love at first sight and four weeks later he asked me to marry him,' she smiles. 'It felt right. He liked the house, so I didn't have to discuss anything with him! He's since designed the shelves in the office and living room – that's the advantage of living with an architect. We both feel completely comfortable with our home, so perhaps the Feng Shui really did work!' **GD**

If you want a striking armchair to brighten up your living area, find the latest designs on p83



Money matters

House purchase £490,000; structural engineer, building work and architectural drawings £54,000; doors and windows £10,000; joinery and decoration £20,000; staircase £5,000; bathroom and wet room £8,000; kitchen £12,000; underfloor heating £10,000; electrics and plumbing £25,000; furniture £5,000; garden and garden studio £21,000; total cost £180,000; current estimated value £799,000

Suppliers

Structure Underfloor heating Devi (0845 434 9991; devi.co.uk) Windows Velux (01592 778 225; velux.co.uk) Staircase Fitted by EA Higginson (020 8200 4848; higginson.co.uk)

Fixtures and fittings Lye on floorboards and white oil Wooden Flooring Sales (0844 588 5000; woodenflooringsales.com) Kitchen units Ikea (0845 358 3363; ikea.co.uk) Urban slate kitchen flooring and mosaic tiles in master bathroom Fired Earth (0845 366 0400; fireearth.com) Cooker Smeg (0844 557 9907; smeguk.com) Black mosaic splashback tiles in kitchen Topps Tiles (0800 023 4703; toppstiles.co.uk) Solid pine plank flooring in bedroom, office and living area Travis Perkins (travisperkins.co.uk) Roll-top bath For similar, try Fired Earth (as before) Bathroom fittings Chris Stevens (020 7272 1228) Glass blocks For similar, try Simply Glass Blocks (0161 368 3626; simplyglassblocks.co.uk)

Furniture White leather sofas and armchair in living room Ikea (as before) Rug in living room Muji (020 7437 7503; muji.co.uk) Leather ottoman in living room, oak table in kitchen and Arne Jacobsen Oxford chair Aria (020 7704 6222; ariashop.co.uk) Kitchen chairs By Charles and Ray Eames at The Conran Shop (0844 848 4000; theconranshop.co.uk) Light fitting in living room Skandium (020 7935 2077; skandium.com) Arne Jacobsen miniature chairs 1:6 Design (danishminiatures.com)