

Realhomes

This month's reader homes have lots of stunning rooms for you to take inspiration from. There's a beautiful Edwardian three-storey house that has been tastefully extended and renovated by Mircku and Matthew Bishop, see page 20. There's also a Grade II-listed property that has all the period charm you would expect, but with clever modern updates – read the Harrises' story on page 36. Plus there's a 1960s home that has been totally transformed inside and out, see page 28



The Bishops fell immediately in love with their five-bed semi in Bristol – read how they spent around £84,000 to extend and update it throughout, from page 20

TURN THE PAGE FOR AMAZING READER HOME PROJECTS

Right Repainting the exterior of the 1905-built semi was the last job to be done



FACT FILE

THE OWNERS

Mirkku Bishop, a graphic designer, and her husband Matthew, a copywriter, have lived here since 2007 with their children, Oskar, now six, and four-year-old Lili

THE PROPERTY

A three-storey, semi-detached Edwardian house with five bedrooms

THE LOCATION

Bristol

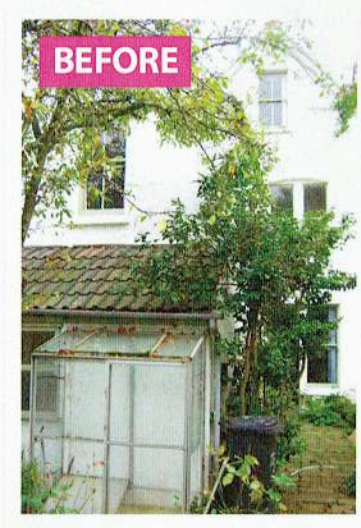
WHAT THEY SPENT

Around £84,000 on renovations and a rear kitchen extension

'We renovated our three-storey house from top to bottom'

Relocating from London to Bristol, Mirkku and Matthew Bishop renovated their period house and restored many of the beautiful original features

WORDS VICTORIA JENKINS PHOTOGRAPHS WILLIAM GODDARD



BEFORE



Above The old extension at the far end of the kitchen housed a WC, larder and scullery, with a lean-to greenhouse on the back of that

When Mirkku and Matthew Bishop went to view the Edwardian semi in Bristol that was to become their home, it was almost love at first sight. 'It had belonged to a well-known local artist and we liked the fact that it still had so many of its original period features, right down to the original brass carpet rods on the stairs,' says Mirkku. 'However, it was also rather damp and run-down, with

no central heating system, a tiny bathroom and a dated kitchen.

Despite this, the couple could see that it had the potential to become their perfect family home. They decided to put in an offer and this was duly accepted. 'We had decided to move away from London to live in Bristol, because Matthew has family in Devon, which isn't too far from here,' explains Mirkku. 'So we were delighted to find such a great family house – despite all the work it would need.' ▶

Above All the external glazed doors have been replaced with grey VELFAC doors with a slim 50mm frame for a uniformed contemporary style



In the kitchen-diner, Mirkku has paired a BJURSTA dining table with extendable leaves, from IKEA, with second-hand classic Number 7 chairs by designer Arne Jacobsen. The lampshade is also from IKEA, REGOLIT in the largest size, (dia.)60cm



Design idea
A modern rubber floor is a practical and hardwearing option. Water-resistant and easy to keep clean, even in a light colour as here, it is ideal for a kitchen or bathroom. The Bishops' supplier, Dalsouple, offers 80 colours and more than 30 different textures



Left Plain white tiles, from Fired Earth, in a classic brickbond pattern and the high-gloss white kitchen contrast with art bought locally to add colour



Run-down and inadequate in size, the original extension needed to be replaced



Above The new kitchen-diner extension features stylish units from IKEA fitted with American walnut worktops supplied by Norfolk Oak

Once the sale had gone through successfully, the Bishops decided to rent a house nearby while they planned and carried out the extensive renovation work. Apart from the much-needed modernisation of the interior, they also wanted to extend the rear of the house to create a big open-plan kitchen-diner, and so asked Bristol-based Dittrich Hudson Architects to come up with the design for this. There was an existing

extension at the far end of the kitchen, housing a WC, larder and scullery; the architect suggested demolishing these and instead adding a single-storey, flat-roofed extension with full-height glass doors leading out to the garden.

'We didn't want to lose any of our garden because we wanted plenty of space for the children to play,' says Mirkku. 'So the new extension was to be built pretty much in the footprint of

the old one, taking up no more of the precious outside space.'

With the plans for the renovation finalised and planning permission granted, the couple appointed their building team, taking a neighbours' recommendation, and the work began. The first thing to be tackled was the insulation throughout the house, because this hadn't been upgraded for many years. The process involved

'With the white walls and units, and the two sets of large glass doors, the new kitchen-diner is an extremely light room'

lifting every floorboard and laying new insulation in the cavity. 'As the carpets came up, we discovered newspapers from the 1940s underneath, obviously used in the past to prevent draughts,' says Mirkku. 'We also began removing the old wallpaper – in some rooms we

found this was five layers thick, so it was really hard work.'

After all the initial preparation, the builders turned their attention to the kitchen extension. 'It was assumed that the three small rooms being demolished to make way for the new extension

would have existing foundations,' says Mirkku. 'But as they didn't, new ones had to be dug. This meant that delays began to set in and costs to mount.'

Another big cost was rewiring and re-plumbing the whole house, and having gas central heating installed, ▶

Above Mirkku chose a Smeg range cooker and matching extractor hood for her ideal family kitchen

Right Thick white paint covered the original marble fireplace in the living room. This has been painstakingly removed to restore it to its natural state



Above In the living room, the small side table is by Eileen Gray; the wicker chairs, bought second hand, are a classic Bauhaus design; and the rug is from Habitat

'We had initially decided to re-plaster just three rooms, but then realised we should do the whole house for a better finish'

with a new boiler and water tank, but this was all necessary work to bring the property up to date.

As the external walls of the extension finally took shape, the internal wall between the living and dining rooms was knocked down to create a large open-plan living space next to the kitchen. French doors were added at the side and matching full-height sliding

doors at the rear. The Bishops chose a design with especially slim frames.

White IKEA units with American walnut worktops, from Norfolk Oak, were then fitted in the new kitchen. Mirrku chose a light-coloured rubber floor, from Dalsouple, because it was the most practical option. 'With the white walls and units, and the two sets of large glass doors, the new kitchen-

diner is now a lovely light room,' says Mirrku. 'However, I wish now that I'd had a bigger window put in over the sink, as it wouldn't have been too much more expensive.'

Upstairs, the bathroom and separate toilet on the first floor were knocked into one, to create a good-sized family bathroom. Mirrku wanted new white sanitaryware, as it is contemporary but



Design idea
Storage can become a design statement in its own right. This 606 Universal Shelving System was designed in 1960 by Dieter Rams; in off-white or black coated metal, from (W)65.5x(D)16cm, to hold 62 CDs or 43 DVDs, £43, Vitsoe



Left The metal-framed sofa is from the early 1970s and was designed by architect Ron Herron. The floorboards are original and were sanded and stained during the renovation, DIY by the Bishops



timeless. 'I didn't want anything to date quickly,' she explains.

The second floor, with two equally proportioned bedrooms, was perfect for the children. Mirrku and Matthew also had a shower room installed where there had previously been storage space, with a new window to bring in plenty of light. 'We also laid the same rubber floor as in the kitchen in the new shower room. It's hardwearing and practical for wet areas,' says Mirrku.

The couple decided to strip the original floorboards wherever possible,

sanding and staining those in the living room and painting those in the bedrooms in a hardwearing white floor paint. They then painted the bedroom walls white, too, adding splashes of colour with rugs and accessories. The living room was also painted white and metal shelves were fitted the full height of one wall to house all the family's books and music.

They did as much work as they could themselves to keep down the costs, including all this interior painting from top to bottom. 'We had initially decided

to re-plaster just three rooms, but then realised we should do the whole house for a better finish,' says Mirrku. 'However, this meant each wall had to be given three coats of paint, because the new plaster turned out to be very absorbent. So the redecorating developed into a major DIY project, given the height of the ceilings and the sheer scale of the house; it is three floors and five bedrooms.

'We uncovered all sorts of treasures during the work,' she adds. 'The Edwardian tiles in the porch had

Above For daughter Lili's room, Mirrku made curtains in a fabric from Marimekko. The bed-linen is from The White Company



Mirkku made bedroom curtains and pillowcases in a Marimekko fabric bought in Finland. The walls are painted in Dulux's Shadow Dream



Above The family bathroom's grey ceramic floor tiles and white brick-shaped tiles on the back wall are from Fired Earth; the rest of the walls are painted in Heron from Dulux

been covered in pink paint and the marble fireplace in the sitting room had been painted over, too, in a thick white. Luckily, we were able to carefully remove all this and restore these features back to their former glory. We still have the original door handles and my neighbour tells me the stair rail is made of very rare wood. And we found the stained glass now in our front door panel just lying in the attic.'

The family was finally able to move into their new house in late summer 2008. 'Overall, the work took twice as long as expected - from September 2007 to the following August,' says Mirkku. 'We also spent twice as much as we had planned, due to unforeseen

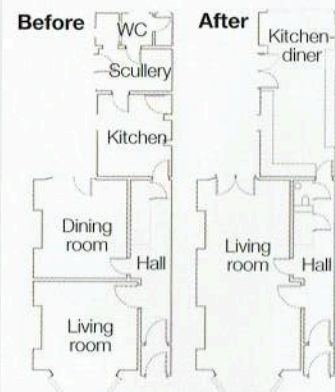
costs such as creating the foundations before the new extension could be constructed and all that decorating. It was definitely worth it, though.'

Although the main project was complete, there was still more to do in the weeks after the family moved. 'Some of the doors and windows needed an extra coat of paint, as did the front of the house,' says Mirkku, 'and we still need a new stair carpet. But, despite the hard work, blowing our budget so badly and it all taking twice as long as we had originally thought, we are just delighted with our home.'

CONTACTS
Architect Dittrich Hudson Architects:
 0117 973 0682 www.dittrich-hudson.co.uk

PLANS

Ground floor

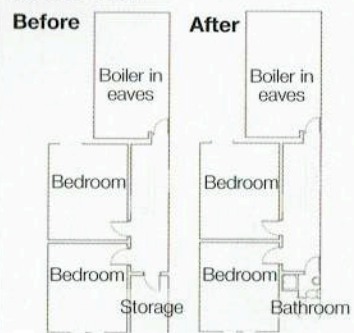


The ground floor was remodelled to create an open plan with a new extension for the kitchen-diner, and the entire house was given a makeover inside and out

First floor



Second floor

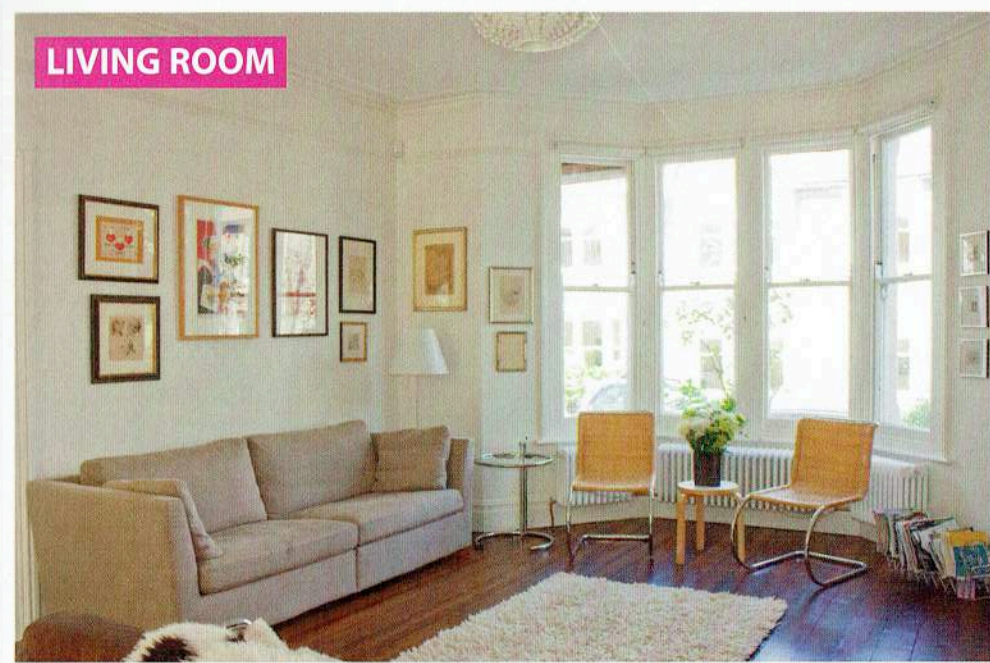


COSTS

- KITCHEN EXTENSION** £20,000
- KITCHEN FLOORING, UNITS & APPLIANCES** £7,000
- RE-PLUMBING AND REWIRING** £30,000
- BATHROOMS, WINDOWS, STRUCTURAL WORK & FINISHES** £27,000

TOTAL £84,000

LIVING ROOM



Eileen Gray cocktail table in chrome with a smoked glass top, adjustable (H)63-73x (dia.)50cm, £129, Interior Addict

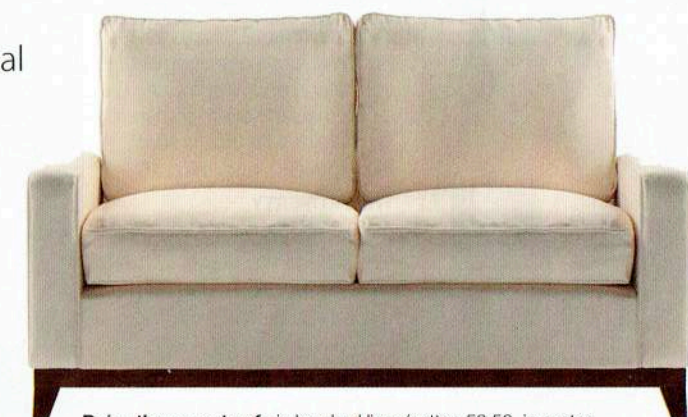


Black-and-white art print from a series of six by MisseMai Prints, The Old Oak's Last Dream, (H)35x (W)50cm, £145 unframed, Bodie and Fou. For frame, try John Lewis, £29

HOMEOWNER'S STYLE



Choose elegant but practical pieces for a contemporary look like Mirkku Bishop's



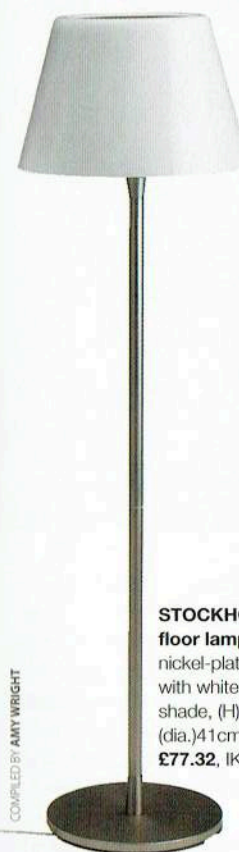
Daisy three-seat sofa in brushed linen/cotton 50:50, in oyster, (H)90x(W)201x(D)94cm, £1,050, Sofa.com



Delta chair in recycled leather on a chrome-finished frame, in natural, also available in black, (H)78x(W)57x (D)58cm, £47.50, John Lewis



Acova four-column horizontal radiator in white, (H)30x(W)150cm, £218.86, B&Q



STOCKHOLM floor lamp in nickel-plated steel with white glass shade, (H)146x (dia.)41cm, £77.32, IKEA



Sawyer textured cushion in white, 100 per cent cotton, 50x50cm, £25, Habitat



Magazine rack, in chrome £19.50, Graham and Green