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# HOUSE & GARDEN

## Decorating know-how

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NEUTRALS

## THE CHIC MIDWINTER

OUTSTANDING INTERIORS IN LONDON,  
PARIS, MOROCCO AND DORSET

## DESIGNER

# Tamsin Saunders

The interior designer discusses her influences and how her studio, Home & Found, reconfigured the space in a renovated Victorian mews in Kensington

TEXT ROSE DAHLSEN | PHOTOGRAPHS DAVIDE LOVATTI

‘I encourage my clients to take risks, avoid the ubiquitous and embrace colour and texture,’ says Tamsin Saunders. ‘My first love is painting and my father and grandfather were both architects, so colour and design have always been key.’ This approach has helped Tamsin evolve from her previous role, running a restaurant PR and marketing company, to having input into the look of her clients’ establishments and helping them to create spaces with personality. Along the way, she extended and refurbished a series of houses for her family. One day, a neighbour peered through Tamsin’s window and she liked what she saw: ‘She asked me to design her house and became my first client.’ Tamsin then set up her own interior-design studio, Home & Found.

Eight years later, despite having had no formal training, Tamsin has worked on numerous houses around London and in the country. She insists that she takes a different approach to every project, depending on the building and needs of the client. However, she is a natural treasure hunter, with a skill for sourcing antiques, art and vintage pieces, which helps her to create layers in an interior. ‘Recently, I went to Kettle’s Yard in Cambridge for the first time and it felt like coming home,’ she says. ‘That is the kind of feel that I want to create.’ [homeandfound.com](http://homeandfound.com) ▷



TOP Tamsin in the sitting area of the Victorian mews house in Kensington. ABOVE LEFT A vintage rug by the Swedish textile artist Berit Koenig covers the reclaimed parquet wood flooring; the Fifties floor lamp beside the sofa is another example of mid-century Scandinavian design. ABOVE RIGHT The bespoke oak-lined kitchen units make the most of every inch of the limited space. They are painted in a custom blue-grey colour with a honed granite worktop

## PROJECT

The refurbishment of this Victorian house in Kensington involved stripping pebbledash from the exterior and re-pointing the brickwork. 'It went from being the ugliest house in the mews to the loveliest,' Tamsin says. Inside, the house was 'an Eighties nightmare with everything original stripped out – except for the spiral staircase, which had been painted a bright turquoise'.

The building's slender proportions meant storage was vital for the owner, who has two grown-up daughters. In the sitting area, Tamsin installed a faux chimney breast with a reclaimed fireplace and created pull-out storage for the owner's DVDs behind the chimney breast; on the opposite wall, panelling conceals a drinks cupboard. A projector and speakers are hidden in a unit on the ceiling, with a screen that unfurls from behind new cornicing. Panelling in the main bedroom disguises the wardrobes.

The open-plan ground floor now has defined kitchen, dining and sitting areas. A large window, running the length of the external wall, has been installed in the kitchen, which overlooks a courtyard. In the dining area, a banquette seat is covered in vegetable-dyed linen from Howe. The flooring is made from reclaimed parquet, with a vintage rug by Judith Johansson that reminds Tamsin of the colours of Cornwall.

She also introduced the owner to the work of the St Ives School, which can be seen in the sitting area, with its sofas that echo the curved shape of the window. 'A painting can be the linchpin for an entire room,' says Tamsin.

The addition of floor-to-ceiling french doors creates a view of the roof garden from the main bedroom, which Tamsin has decorated with blue, green and orange fabrics from Bennison. In the spare room, a Swedish antique chest of drawers stands between two cast-iron beds.

'I aim to create joyful and pared-back homes that are fresh, personal, interesting, warm and welcoming,' says Tamsin. 'Special, but not precious.'

## IN BRIEF

**SHE SAYS:** 'Detail, detail, detail. Starting right at the beginning and refurbishing a house from scratch ensures I get the structure, flow and lighting right and that all the space is used efficiently.'

**THEY SAY:** 'Tamsin is a hugely talented and original designer. She has a talent for discovering beautiful artefacts. Working with these as a focal point, she creates completely harmonious interiors.'

*Georgina Hamilton, Hamilton Weston Wallpapers*

**HOUSE & GARDEN SAYS:** 'Tamsin has a clear vision of what will work in a room. Her knowledge of the art world and love of antiques mean her projects are crafted with a curious, intelligent eye.'

*Arts editor Emily Tobin*



**SPARE ROOM** The wallpaper is Marthe Armitage's 'Chestnut'.  
**MAIN BEDROOM** Works by Laurence Scarfe hang on the wall.  
**DINING AREA** The oak chairs are by Hans J Wegner



## Address book



### FABRICS

'I recently bought this Chinese printed fabric (top) from Noel Chapman of Bleu Anglais, who specializes in antique and vintage indigo textiles.'  
*Instagram: @bleuanglais*

### LIGHTING

'I source vintage lighting and have shades made to fit for a more unusual effect. I've just commissioned a Rosi de Ruig shade (above) for an Italian lamp base that I found in a market.'  
*rosideruig.co.uk*

### ANTIQUES

'I go to markets and antique shops all the time. I found a beautiful nineteenth-century rush-seated oak chair under a pile of stuff in Chequers Antiques in Petworth.'  
*01798-343813*

### SPECIALISTS

'The first thing I do when I go into someone's house is walk to the other side to see the garden. How wonderful it would be to look out onto a garden designed by Tom Stuart-Smith every day.'  
*tomstuartsmith.co.uk*

### ARTISTS

'Celia Paul at Marlborough Fine Art; Sarah Gillespie at Beaux Arts London; Scottish artists at Open Eye Gallery; Norman Ackroyd at Eames Fine Art; and all at Jenna Burlingham Fine Art' □