

tones flow around the cabinets in high gloss green from floor to ceiling, with a mix of brass, copper, and black. The space is filled with a mix of patterns and textures, from the woven rug to the patterned cushions. The overall aesthetic is a blend of modern and vintage, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere.

ENGLISH HOME

# All in THE DETAIL

An uplifting, contemporary mix of colour and pattern has brought literary agent Madeleine Milburn's Victorian home to life

FEATURE & STYLING CLAIR WAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER





RIGHT Blinds, hung at different levels for a playful feel, are made using a green linen called Travelling Light by Kit Kemp for Christopher Farr. The colourful bird prints are taken from a John Derian book.

BELOW LEFT An eye-catching painting by Madeleine and Max's mother, Ursula Buston, is framed by a yellow border. The bespoke octagonal dining table maximises space.

BELOW RIGHT The front door is painted in Glass IV from Paint & Paper Library. Max designed the front garden to have a Mediterranean feel.

*It's about making the house feel unified, but at the same time being playful and making sure there's interest everywhere you look'*

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While out exploring the wide, tree-lined streets of Clapham in London one day, back in early 2018, literary agents Madeleine and Giles Millburn spotted a house for sale that immediately captivated them. "It wasn't a route we'd normally take, so it was pure chance that we saw the house. The road had a delightful atmosphere, with beautifully cared for front gardens filled with colour. It felt like a dream place to live," remembers Madeleine.

Since the arrival of their daughter Hope, now six, the couple had begun to outgrow their two-bedroomed shepherd's cottage in Clapham Old Town, so were keen to take a closer look at the enchanting three-storey Victorian semi-detached property. "When I first stepped inside, I remember the owner had been

cooking marmalade, and a delicious smell permeated the rooms," Madeleine says. "The house was run-down but had a real charm that reminded me of my childhood home. I could tell it was a special place and I felt completely at home."

Upon moving in, Madeleine and Giles decided to live in the house for a year to work out the best plan of action before commencing the renovation. During this time, they enlisted the help of Madeleine's brother, Max Buston, who runs his interior design studio from a boutique shop on Richmond Hill. Max had redesigned the couple's new offices in a converted warehouse nearby, and they were so impressed they asked him to redesign their house.

"In that first year, Max sent us on missions to define our taste," Madeleine explains. "While we were on a ▶





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business trip to New York for our literary agency, he gave us a schedule of shops to visit, including Restoration Hardware and John Derian. It was a real learning curve. We sent him pictures, and by the end of it, he had filled a whole shipping container that was sent over to the UK."

The year-long renovation commenced in October 2019, and during this time, the house was taken back to its bare bones and reconfigured to suit modern family life. Once everything was stripped back, it became abundantly clear just how dilapidated the house was. "It hadn't been touched for 30 years, and everything needed to be renewed," Madeleine says.

"As soon as we started taking the plaster off the walls and carpet off the floors, we realised that the house was falling down. It felt endless."

Site visits were often nerve-wracking, and it was Max who was the calming force. "There was a point when we were standing in the house, and we looked up, and there was no roof, no floors, and basically just four walls; it was terrifying," recalls Madeleine.

Having the opportunity to be involved in the renovation right from the start gave Max a blank canvas and full scope to create fluid, free-flowing spaces that connect with the outside. Besides removing walls and creating a tranquil bedroom suite on the top ▶

ABOVE The Ursula Buston artwork over the fireplace was commissioned to enhance the sitting room's colours.

OPPOSITE The curtains are in GP & J Baker's Trebizon, while the sofa is in Gaston y Daniela's Lecco Rojo. Cushions in Willow by Sister Parish add dynamism.



LEFT The principal en-suite, an Indian bedcover, Max Buston ties in with made using ric from ano. Tigre also from ano, adds to the walls. boutique now open. more, visit on.com

floor, Max opened up the ground floor so the kitchen, dining area and sitting room all interlink. The dining area was once a dark, unused space with a low ceiling, but thanks to Max's ingenuity, the ceiling was raised and a light well added.

A wide, wrought-iron staircase leads down from the ground floor into a tropical-style conservatory at the back of the house, with striking Moroccan tiles laid in an elaborate pattern. Evoking far-flung places, the new spacious conservatory has replaced a poky lean-to garden room that was cut off from the rest of the house by a wall. Once the wall was removed, a stunning vista was created, allowing the family to enjoy uninterrupted views from the front to the back of the house. "The long vista is one of the most magical aspects of the house - sitting at the kitchen table, with

sunshine pouring in through the bay window, you can see all the way through to the glass extension, with views of trees blowing in the breeze in the back garden," says Max.

Max, who previously worked on design projects around the world as designer and hotelier Anouska Hempel's studio director, gently pushed Madeleine and Giles out of their comfort zone. Myriad colours and patterns are interwoven to create inviting interiors. The effect seems effortless but is a precise alchemy.

Every weekend during the pandemic, Max, Madeleine and Giles would look at fabrics, colourways and mood boards. "We were inspired by a stay at the Crosby Street Hotel in New York and wanted the interiors to be uplifting, vibrant and punchy. Our vision was for every room to have an



*'We wanted the interiors to be uplifting, vibrant and punchy. Our vision was for every room to have an artistic feel, like a piece of art'*

artistic feel, like a piece of art," says Madeleine. A mix of Spanish, American and Italian patterned fabrics, in various scales, was eventually chosen to create an individual and cosmopolitan feel.

"The lovely thing about this house is that there is so much colour going on, but in a balanced way," explains Max. "The patterned fabrics all have a soft, neutral background colour which creates a calm, unified scheme that's also practical for family life. The walls are painted in pale shades of stone to offset the colour. The joy of working on this project was the amount of detail we could go into. Harmony, proportion and symmetry are fundamental to this design. It's about making the whole house feel unified, but at the same time being playful and making sure there's interest everywhere you look."

These interesting details include whimsical painted lines and ribbon borders that frame artwork and bring vibrancy to the walls. Max has also focused on the play of light around the house. Kitchen cabinets and architectural mouldings have been painted in a high gloss to add shimmer. Backsplash tiles are a mix of matt and gloss, whilst mirrors on either side of the kitchen windows reflect light. Gold accents glow and add a feeling of warmth, particularly at night.

This attention to detail also carries through to bespoke furniture designed to fit the interiors and maximise space. A bespoke table has been teamed with a practical, banquette window seat in the newly designed kitchen, and a four-metre-long sofa was created for the conservatory so the family can lie back and look up at the stars. ▶

ABOVE LEFT The Aequus bath from William Holland brings a luxurious feel to the principal en-suite bathroom. The blind fabric is C&C Milano's Pienza Rafano linen.

ABOVE RIGHT A built-in dressing table cleverly makes use of an unusual space.



**ABOVE** In the guest bedroom, Tiger Tiger curtain fabric from Jim Thompson is combined with cushions in Painted Ikat by Helene Blanche. The lampshade is from Munro and Kerr and the Aristotle Greek Key ribbon running along the wall is by Samuel & Sons.

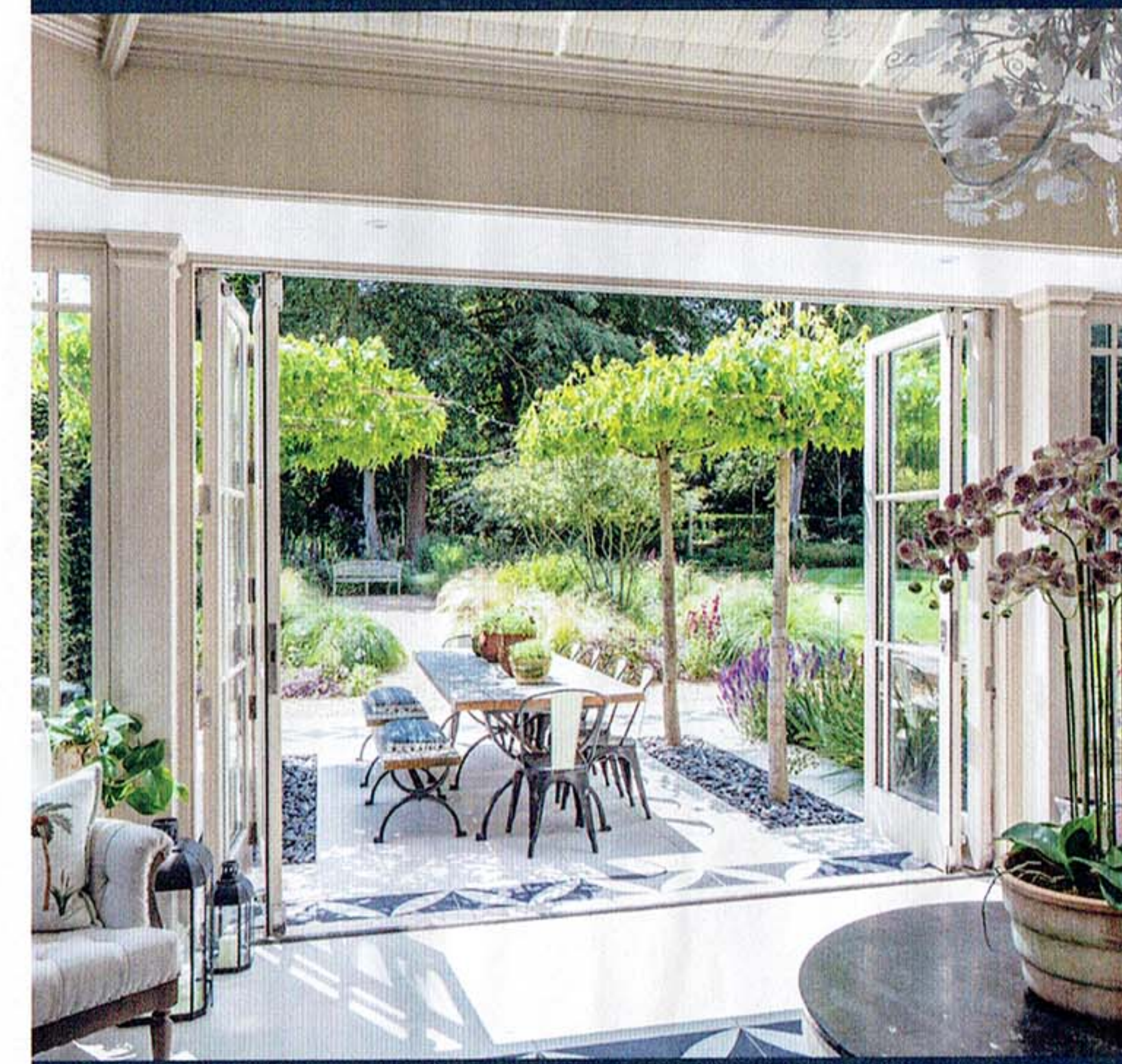
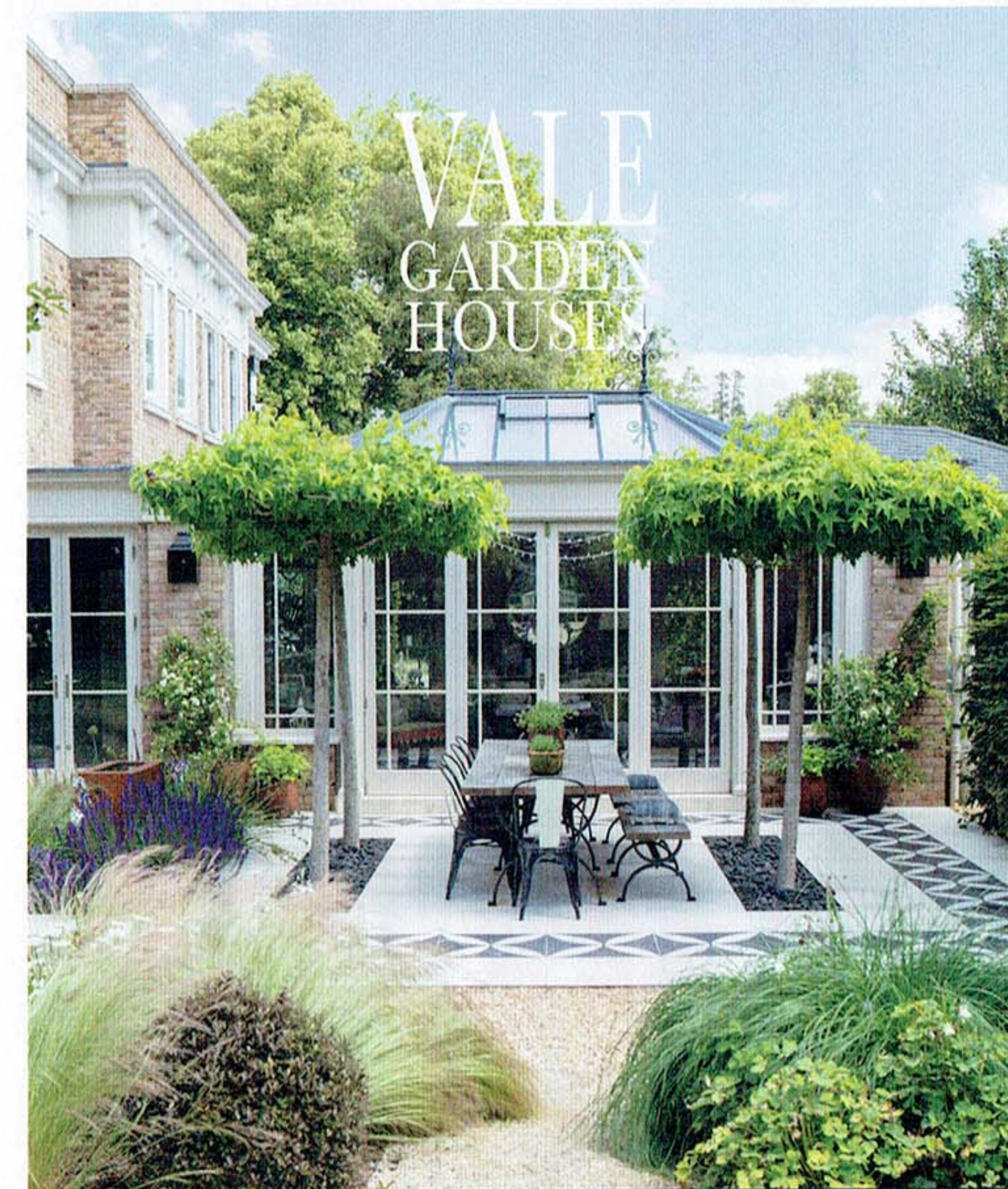


**RIGHT** A whimsical wallpaper called Sur Le Nil by Pierre Frey adds a fun touch to the guest en-suite bathroom.

As Madeleine and Giles are literary agents, Max was keen to make books a focal point in the sitting room and designed bookcases, edged in gold, to make the space personal to them. "Even though one wall is wider than the other, I've created the appearance of symmetry by installing a pair of bookcases measuring the same width, flanking the fireplace," he explains.

Fascinated by the history of the property, Madeleine and Giles discovered that the houses on the road were built around 1890 for middle-class professionals, and that a retired naval captain lived in their house in the early 20th century. Although a lot of the original plaster mouldings were unsalvageable, Max went to great lengths to source architectural mouldings that were in keeping with the era of the house.

Now that the interiors are complete, Madeleine, Giles and Hope are over the moon with their newly rejuvenated home. "It's been satisfying combining the graceful Victorian character with a playful, contemporary feel," Madeleine says. "We feel happy surrounded by all this colour." ■



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