



**Go for gold:** the kitchen, by Jo Berryman Studio, with gold-shot onyx island. Gilded glass splashback and kick boards by Dominic Schuster. Shear wall light by Bert Frank, Boucherie sign from a Paris flea market and range cooker by Mercury



**Inside out:** "This is a townhouse courtyard in Zone 2 and it's not pretending to be anything more," says Jo. "I think it works because I've approached it as simply another space in the home. The fibreglass Chesterfield gets piled with cushions when the sun's out." The sofa is by Edinburgh-based Gray Concrete

# A LIFE MORE VIVID

Interior designer Jo Berryman's family home reflects her "live vivid" motto with bold, fresh colour – and her quest for the perfect blend of order and flow. By **Jo Leavers**

**T**WO days before her wedding in Ibiza to Philip Bergqvist, who runs digital animation studio Encycle, interior designer Jo Berryman hasn't even started packing. "It's a thrilling, exhilarating moment," she says.

With eight-month-old Romy on her hip and nine-year-old Nico (from her previous marriage to Coldplay guitarist Guy Berryman) due home from school at any moment, she could be talking about last-minute preparations for her wedding. But the excitement she is talking about is the creative kind.

"We all know the feeling of flux that gets ideas whizzing around – it's what excites me," she says. "In design, there's a constant tension between trying to impose order and just letting things flow." It's something she strives for. "I try to find the perfect balance between containment and chaos. It's interesting, you get different results every time."

When it comes to her clients, she urges them to be bold, to live vividly and not be afraid of colour. On home turf in Hampstead, she lets the balance sway one way then the other, switching furniture and artwork around and introducing fresh colours.

When Jo moved into the red-brick townhouse, it had good light and location. Close to Nico's father, who Jo hadn't long split from, it felt like a homely, private oasis. "It wasn't overlooked, with just a

beautiful little church hall at the back," says Jo. "You could hear the tinkling of piano keys as girls practised ballet, or the clickety-clack of their tap shoes."

"Initially I just wanted to do a decorative overhaul and add the glass conservatory. But in the past two years, in light of my expanding family, the time felt right to do more structural work."

She collaborated with friend and architect Takero Shimazaki to create a loft space and a garden room. "Now there are two contemporary architectural insertions at either end, with Victorian rooms sandwiched in between. It makes for a very beautiful, interesting home."

The south London-based architect helped move the project beyond conventional Victorian "up and out" extensions. As a result, the house abounds in surprising "pockets, tiers and platforms". The ground floor has a wood-balconied library space inserted into a

turn in the stairs, while the loft room is more of a sun deck than spare room and contains a hammam.

"Shimazaki's approach worked as a natural counterbalance to my propensity towards bolder motifs and colours," says Jo, who found herself led towards earthy and elemental touches: solid fumed oak, gilded glass and gleaming base metals and stone. The kitchen island is golden-shot onyx. "Not everyone's go-to surface for a kitchen," she jokes.

**C**OLOUR is threaded through the house. "None of us could really exist in a house made up of perfect, white glossy surfaces," she says. "We need colour to add energy and, sometimes, a degree of disorder." For Jo, this comes back to the notion of creative chaos. "There's true beauty in imperfection," she says.

To prove her point, she glances at a huge photograph in the dining room, a vivid vision of a forest, its leaves and serpentine branches crisscrossed. "You only have to look at nature to see that beauty isn't about bland symmetry, but about a moment of freedom and flow. Capturing the imperfectly beautiful – that's what I'm aiming for."

■ See more of Jo Berryman Studio's work: [joberryman.com](http://joberryman.com)  
■ Takero Shimazaki Architects: [t-sa.co.uk](http://t-sa.co.uk)



■ The full version of this article appears in the March issue of *Living etc*, out now

**Brightness and energy:** Colour has a physical effect on how you feel," says Jo Berryman. Living room walls are in Charleston Gray estate emulsion by Farrow & Ball. The ceramic figurines are by Pierre Williams. The table, and the Seventies sofa (re-upholstered in Lewis & Wood velvet), are from Alfies Antique Market. Find a mirror like this at Aldgate Home

Photographs  
**Paul Massey**





**Soak in style:** "I thought, 'Let's really go to town with a decadent dressing and bathing space.' It also works as an extra living room where Romy and Nico hang out with us." The bath is from The Albion Bath Company; chandelier from Sweetpea & Willow; sofa from Circus; Gold Rings rug by David Rockwell for The Rug Company



**Bedroom textures:** "The woodwork shade is surprisingly soporific and works well with the smoky wallpaper and darker, drama-laden touches, such as the wall lamps." The headboard is in a Romo tweed; wallpaper by Zoffany; bedside table from Circus; Shear wall light by Bert Frank. Cushions are in Pierre Frey's Venus cotton, in Nuage