



AT HOME WITH...

JO Berryman

The interior designer shares her 'love vivid, live vivid' mantra as she gives **Lauren Romano** a tour of her north-west London home

Dolly the dachshund-shih tzu cross is the first member of the Berryman clan I meet as I cross the threshold and step into an entrance hall painted a striking shade of St Giles Blue. Hot on my heels, she follows me downstairs to the basement kitchen-diner, where she territorially stakes her claim on an original Bill Andrus Steles sofa and armchairs. The mid-century three-piece suite wouldn't look out of place in a Frank Lloyd Wright designed LA pad, although its spidery, milk chocolate leather still manages to fit right in with the rest of the furniture at the Hampstead terrace. Guard dog duties performed, Dolly pipes down and starts circling around her owner, Jo Berryman, who emerges with 15-month-old Romy on her hip.

It's been a busy year for Berryman. As well as rebranding her design studio (formerly known as Matrushka), she's relocated her office from the first floor of her house into a new space in Fitzrovia, and had the builders move in to tackle an extensive renovation that was completed just weeks before her daughter was born.

Not that you would be able to tell. Berryman is the picture of serenity; juggling the baby, fielding calls from the office and sticking the kettle on to

make me tea, all the while looking far too fresh-faced for a mother currently in the throes of 'attachment parenting' bedtime drills.

"Changing the company name to Jo Berryman has been one of the most significant business decisions I've ever made," she begins. "It's clearer what the studio is all about. It feels like my baby – she's all grown up now and she needs a name to match."

Even in its infancy the Berryman brand didn't fair too badly. Over the years she's styled an Edwardian mansion in Hampstead that was rented by Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis, and designed an LA apartment for Gary Lineker. More recently with her core team of three she has worked on numerous commercial offices, ▶



► such as the Bertha Foundation & DocHouse in Cavendish Square. But residential projects will always be her bread and butter. “I have a very soft space in my heart for those sorts of jobs. I’m not a cookie-cutter designer. I don’t just do various shades of taupe on taupe, or churn out the same looks. It is really a response to how the family move and live within their home.”

Littered with French flea market finds and retro gems from Alfies Antique Market and Mid-Century Online, her own home bears the hallmarks of her so called ‘future classic’ aesthetic. She moved in in 2008 after being charmed by its “beautiful Victorian bones”.

For the most recent renovation Berryman collaborated with friend and architect Takero Shimazaki to maximise the existing Cantifix extension by creating a little minstrels’ gallery with a desk space for nine-year-old Nico (her eldest daughter from her first marriage to Coldplay bassist Guy Berryman), and adding a garden room.

As a big advocate of colour, hues weave their way through the various floors of the house. From the gleaming golden accents in the kitchen to the bright blue walls and red carpet in the hallway and the smoky, inky greys used in the bedroom – a white cube this is not. “One of my mantras is: love vivid, live vivid. I’m not afraid of colour. It adds bursts of interest. I like to tell each family’s story through the schemes we go for,” she continues. “It’s important to create durable shells on which you can move stuff around, evolve – it’s the theatre of your life in a way.”

Upstairs, Berryman’s bedroom suite is a decadent sanctuary, complete with a sumptuous dressing room with a roll-top bath and a walk-in shoe closet, where row upon row of enviable Miu Miu and Nicholas Kirkwood heels sit neatly arranged. “I love the idea of having space when I dress,” she explains. She is inspired by “great dames” such as the unstoppable fashion legend Iris Apfel, American artist Georgia O’Keeffe and Frida Kahlo. But if she ever suffers from a bout of designer’s block she turns to *Grey Gardens*, a 1975 American documentary film depicting the lives of the reclusive aunt and cousin of former US First Lady Jackie Onassis. “I always think: ‘what would Edie do?’” she says. “She’s my style icon on many different levels.”



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Before entering the interiors realm, Berryman moved in sartorial circles, working at *Elle* and Agent Provocateur before launching her own fashion boutique Jezebel. “I feel like interiors is so much more enduring and soulful,” she confides. “The fashion world is too capricious for my liking. I love fashion but I’m not a slave to it, it doesn’t move me anymore.”

She admits she approaches the task of dressing herself like she would her home. Today she’s channelling the ’70s with wide-legged striped trousers, suede mules, a frilly floral blouse and sapphire and ruby rings from Zoe & Morgan in Primrose Hill. “I’m trying to do sort of dapper gentleman meets frothy Penelope Keith chic – splicing the masculine and the feminine. It’s what I do in design and I like to balance those polarities: a tailored trouser with a frothy top, or a gorgeous dress with some



knackered boots. I love unlikely juxtapositions.”

Talk turns to her dream interiors project – either a crazy, gothic folly, nestled in the woods, or a mid-century Californian gem – but she’d love a hotel gig. The closest she’s come so far is a boutique retreat, 42 Acres, in Somerset where frazzled city dwellers can switch off with raw food feasts and yoga workshops.

Her own wellbeing strategies revolve around natural movement and clean eating, with the occasional slice of carrot cake (she insists I join her in sharing a Melrose and Morgan bake with my tea). “I go to Ibiza a lot [she married her husband Philip Bergkvist there last year]. There’s this cluster of likeminded people who are really into design and spirituality and love good food and wine.” This summer however the family is forgoing the sunshine for a trek up to the Isle of Arran, where a friend has bought a castle on the coast.

Plans of leaving the rat race behind haven’t crossed Berryman’s mind though. The family recently sold their bolthole in the Cotswolds to a client, fully furnished, because they weren’t really using it. “There’s a sense of community in north-west London that you might not expect. Yes, you do have to forfeit a bit of space, but having Hampstead Heath on your doorstep makes up for it. I feel like I’m such a part of the furniture here now.” ■

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