

The HOME that BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

From supper club venue and workshop space to home office and, not least, stylish family home, this Victorian terrace has to tick a lot of boxes – all of which it does with ease, thanks to a super-smart redesign undertaken by its entrepreneurial owners

HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Carine Ottou, an IT sales manager and food entrepreneur, Jacob Eborn, an IT sales executive, and their two young daughters, Maj and Moa

THE PROPERTY

A three-storey, three-bedroom Victorian terraced house in Brixton, south London

KITCHEN

The zinc-topped island is on castors so it can be rolled outside for Carine's cookery workshops in good weather. **Worktops**, Mortise Concrete. **Pendant lights**, The French House →

A passion for cooking and bringing people together

has led Carine Ottou to transform both her work and her home. The global pandemic and the impact it had on work/life patterns made many people rethink their living spaces to create multifunctional areas that operate as both offices and living spaces – however, Carine's home has to work harder still: 'Jacob and I both have busy jobs in IT, but I also host pop-up supper clubs, run cookery workshops and own my own food brand, Marie Little Jar – and we have two lively young girls,' she says with a smile.

Having previously rented in nearby Tooting, in 2011 the couple bought their two-storey, three-bedroom house in Brixton. 'It initially worked well for our needs, but as our family grew with the arrival of our two daughters, and our working lives became intertwined with home, we decided to take the plunge and make some big changes,' explains Carine.

After careful research – and drawn to her nature-led aesthetic – the couple enlisted the help of Japanese interior designer Yoko Kloeden. Working with AMP Architecture and London-based building firm GDP Property, they undertook an extensive renovation, knocking through the entire ground floor and extending the kitchen to both the rear and side. This meant they were able to create a stunning open-plan living/dining/kitchen and garden space where the lines between indoors and outdoors are

purposefully blurred. Upstairs, the loft space was also converted, adding a third storey to the house, and this became the main bedroom and ensuite, while one of the first-floor bedrooms was transformed into a home office.

With its simple lines, natural materials and calm colour palette, the resulting interior has a look that's stylishly in tune with Jacob's Scandinavian heritage, while Carine finds joy in the use of raw materials. 'This project has been a celebration of nature – from the exposed brickwork and the living wall, to the Belgian lime paint on the walls and our handmade oak kitchen,' explains Carine. 'When we looked at Yoko's previous work, we could see that she had a deep understanding of natural materials, using them in a way that is understated and yet lets them shine. This, along with her precision and attention to detail is what led us to her.'

Materials and accessories have been carefully selected to also reflect Carine's Cameroonian and French heritage: original West African mud-cloth cushions are moved between the built-in wooden benches in the dining room and the seating under the living wall outside, as the family and Carine's cookery workshop attendees and supper club guests dine according to the weather. 'I love to cook and eat outdoors, but the great British weather sometimes has other ideas, so it is great to have the flexibility to be →



KITCHEN DETAIL

A wall of perfectly imperfect scalloped tiles behind the stove nods to the scales of the West African spiced seafood cooked by Carine for her supper club guests. Zellige tiles, Emery & Cie



KITCHEN DINING AREA

With an extendable dining table and custom-made bench seating with built-in storage for supper club crockery, the kitchen is a versatile space that can be used for family life and Carine's business



LIVING AREA

Soft pastels and the wooden floor create a calm place to relax at the end of a busy day. Yoko Kloeden designed the day bed to fit under the window and built-in storage has been painted to match the walls and increase the sense of space

LIVING/DINING AREA

Below and right Antique glass pendant lights found at a French brocante are offset by the natural textures of exposed brickwork, Belgian lime-painted walls and the stone fireplace, where a painting is perched



able to move quickly between the two spaces,' laughs Carine. The statement kitchen island, with its patinated zinc top, has been put on castors so it can be easily wheeled through the bifold doors and used for outdoor cookery workshops or as a bar for supper clubs. Giving old pieces new life is also important to Carine, who sourced the antique glass pendants over the dining table at a French brocante.

It wasn't all plain sailing, though. 'It was tough keeping to our budget with such a big project, and getting the building permit licences in place in time to coordinate with the work was stressful,' remembers Carine. 'We also had a dispute with our neighbours over the living wall in the garden, which meant that almost as soon as it had gone up, it all had to be taken down while negotiations took place. Watching the plants coming out just as we thought we'd nearly finished was so upsetting, but thankfully it was all resolved in the end.'

In fact, Carine feels she has learned a lot of lessons throughout the process and has some advice for anyone else thinking about a major building project: 'Make sure you have a detailed design plan before you start, but also be prepared for the unexpected.' Despite the ups and downs, the couple are thrilled with their newly renovated home, where every member of the family has space to work and follow their passions. So, would she do it all again? 'Yes,' she smiles. 'Absolutely!'

Find out more at yokokloeden.com



MAIN BEDROOM

Two Scandi-style lights hang above a vintage wooden bedside table in the converted loft space where the calm colour palette continues
Lights, Menu Space →



BATHROOM

Left and above Geometric shapes are mixed in with off-white wall tiles, while a moon and stars on the floor bring a fun celestial touch.

Wall tiles, Mandarin Stone.

Floor tiles, Emery & Cie

GIRLS' BEDROOM

Bottom left A rich blue lime paint covers the walls around a custom-made windowseat **HB**



GARDEN

Carine chose a living wall as a way to link to nature, while providing privacy and saving space in a small city garden. The Siberian larch deck and seating will weather into a beautiful silver over time.