

# Seeking sanctuary

*A serene Japanese aesthetic and the practical needs of family life come together in Katherine and James Simmonds' beautiful new build*

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STYLING NINA LILLI HOLDEN

## SITTING ROOM

This peaceful space is decorated in soothing textures and natural hues. Sofas, Arlo & Jacob. Chandelier, Haus of Interiors. Walls in limewash in Palladio, Kalkitir. Ceramics (on coffee table), Melo Clay



**DINING AREA**  
Sliding doors allow ample light to flow in, with shadow play highlighting architectural shapes. Aim large pendant, Flos. Dining chairs, Vincent Sheppard. Dining table, Neptune

‘The limewash finish on the walls creates a very soothing environment, while the ceramics have a similarly tactile presence’

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**  
A three-storey new build

### ROOMS

Sitting room, family room, kitchen-diner, boot room, home office, cloakroom, five bedrooms, four bathrooms

**LOCATION**  
Surrey

### KITCHEN

Units in a natural putty shade and a marble splashback with a subtle striation make this a serene cooking and dining space.

An old-fashioned library-style ladder brings in extra character, while a partial room divider screens off the family room from the kitchen area, so cooking and playing can coexist without intruding.

Kitchen, The Main Company; stools, Neptune, all in Portland Stone, Little Greene. Room divider, Yoko Kloeden Design

### FAMILY ROOM

A patio door was replaced with a picture window, allowing a framed view of the garden where children and pets play. Artwork, Nina Lili Holden. Oak flooring, Ted Todd

### CLOAKROOM

Natural hues and organic shapes define this chic yet functional space. Graffiti wallpaper in Salmon Cream by Kelly Wearstler. Basin, taps, all Lusso



A detached new build in Surrey had all that Katherine and James were looking for in a home – except personality. Built recently, the house had faux-period doors, skirting and cornices that didn't look right and all the rooms were painted in a really dull beige. 'It desperately needed all the details to be refined and the spaces rethought so that they reflected our own personalities,' says Katherine.

The family had a love of the light and textures they had enjoyed on holidays in Cornwall, while Katherine had grown up in Japan and retained a memory of how nature-inspired elements can create serene interiors. When she discovered Yoko Kloeden Design, whose design philosophies draw on the calming effect of nature, Katherine and her husband James knew Yoko could help them.

The house required a full internal refurbishment to turn it from a mock period mix into a vibrant, nature-inspired haven that embraces the clean lines of the architecture. The couple have three daughters, Belle, Daisy and Louise, plus a menagerie of pets (two dogs, two puppies and two cats), so Katherine, a full-time mother, and James, a company director, knew the house also needed a practical side.

For example, the large kitchen-diner might have looked good on paper plans, but in reality it was too large, echoey and impersonal for family life. Yoko inserted a partial room divider in shadow-gap oak, which softened the acoustics and created a cosier family room alongside the still ample kitchen-diner. Yoko's design also integrated plenty of storage throughout the house, plus areas for feeding pets and washing off muddy paws.







**DRESSING AREA**  
An interplay of light  
and shade creates calm.  
Walls in Jack Black,  
Little Greene. Stool,  
Westmorland Sheepskins

**MAIN EN SUITE**  
Bland tiles were  
replaced with a tactile,  
contemporary wall finish.  
Walls in Microcement in  
NC-8 Lost Stone, Design  
Concrete. Bespoke vanity  
unit, Yoko Kloeden Design.  
Basin; brassware, all  
Crosswater. Bath, Bette

**MAIN BEDROOM**  
A dramatic black paint  
shade creates a distinct  
sleep zone on the top floor.  
Walls in Jack Black, Little  
Greene. Bedside table, Loaf.  
Window seat, bespoke by  
Yoko Kloeden Design

**MAIN EN SUITE**  
Brassware embodies the  
serene elegance of a spa.  
Walls in Micro cement in NC-8  
Lost Stone, Design Concrete.  
Brassware, Crosswater

Colours err towards the earthy and natural, repeated in the couple's many handmade ceramics, while upholstery in teal and a bold pink paint shade add dynamism. Furniture in natural materials such as wood and marble works alongside the timber flooring, bouclé fabrics and limewash walls. 'We trusted Yoko's guidance on textures and materials,' says Katherine. 'The limewash finish on the walls creates a very soothing environment, while the ceramics have a similarly tactile presence.'

Upstairs, the walls of the main bedroom suite are darker, with walls painted black, creating a separate sanctuary. 'Our dark bedroom is such a calming and comfortable space that we miss it when we sleep away from home on holiday,' says Katherine. Yoko's design also relocated the main bedroom to the rear of the house.

'My favourite spot to sit is at the window seat in our bedroom, taking in the view of the garden,' adds Katherine.

With a replacement picture window in the family room and a new sliding door in the kitchen-diner, the garden also feels linked to the interiors on the ground floor. Other inspired architectural additions include a series of arched openings in the hallway, which create layers of interest and distinct zones in what was previously one big box-like space.

Now this is a home that feels sophisticatedly calm, but also embraces the needs of family life. 'It strikes a balance between design philosophies while reflecting our individual personalities,' says Katherine. 'We couldn't be happier with it.' [yokokloeden.com](http://yokokloeden.com)

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