

It's a blend of all the looks I love

Sarah Raynor's lively family home is filled with brave colour and a mix-and-match selection of her favourite pieces



Moving to the Devon countryside was a dream come true for Sarah Raynor. She and her husband David were keen to swap life in a nearby town for the peace of rural Dartmoor and Sarah soon spotted an extended cottage in a tiny hamlet that ticked all her boxes. 'We love animals and outdoor activities like riding and cycling, and I wanted our children Sidney and Alfie to experience a real country childhood,' she says. 'This house needed work but was in such a special place. I knew it would be just amazing to live there.'

As their own home was still for sale and the cottage a bit beyond their price-range, Sarah put it to the back of her mind. Months later, with a buyer for the family house finally in place, she was delighted to discover it was still available. 'Nothing else I'd seen had fired my imagination, so we decided to stretch our finances and buy it if we could,' she recalls.

Sarah and David had renovated before so they were not daunted by the task they faced once they had moved in. 'The house had barely been altered in 40 years,' says Sarah. 'Everything inside was old and worn,

▼ The new living room is sectioned from the original snug by a double-sided wood-burner that provides heat all round. Blue tones and pops of bright pink, including a showstopping pink flock mirror, link the two sides



Good idea!

Bright pops of pink and mustard yellow break up the dark walls with a burst of vibrancy.

◀ Sarah brightened up the practical grey sofas by Sofa Workshop with colourful, tactile cushions. The chunky coffee table was originally a dining table. 'We had nowhere for it after the renovation, so we gave it a new lease of life by cutting down the legs!' says Sarah



including the electrics and plumbing. The living space downstairs didn't flow very well and the third bedroom upstairs was really small.'

After a couple of years spent getting to know the house and making plans, Sarah and David were ready to start the renovation. The first stage involved knocking the old kitchen and adjoining dining room together to make a new, family-friendly kitchen-diner. Once that part of the house was finished, work began on a two-storey extension that would add a big living room downstairs with a master bedroom and en suite above. Both were designed with huge windows to maximise light and take in the glorious green views. 'Life was pretty chaotic for about a year while all the work was done,' remembers Sarah. 'We lived here the whole time, and I knew it was going to be dusty and messy, but I just tried to stay positive and focus on the lovely house we'd end up with.'

When it came to decorating and furnishing the house, ▶

◀ Farrow & Ball's Stiffkey Blue makes a strong backdrop for Sarah's upcycled lipstick-pink sofa and brightly coloured cushions. Mix-and-match rugs in different designs warm and soften the dark slate floor

COME ON IN...



Feature Annabelle Grundy, Photos Colin Poole

OUR HOME IS An extended Victorian crofter's cottage near Ashburton, Devon.

WE ARE Sarah Raynor, 47, my husband David, 49, our daughter Sidney, 19, son, Alfie, 15, plus Tubby the Pug, four rescue dogs and two horses.

MY DESIGN INSPIRATION Is Abigail Ahern. I love her quirky style and the way she uses dark colour so bravely.

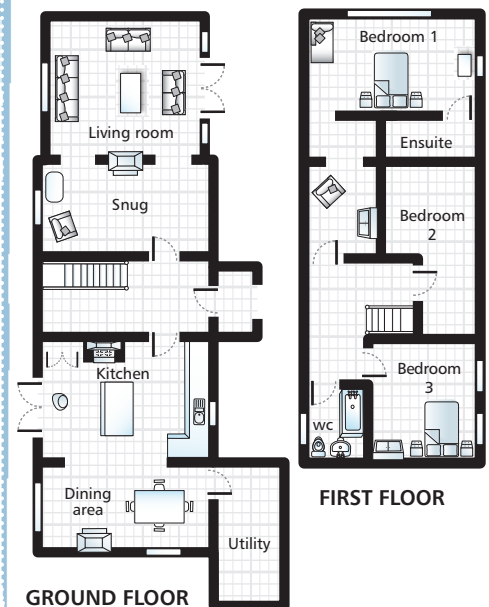
TO RELAX I love sitting on my bed with Tubby the pug and a cup of tea, taking in the amazing view.

MY BEST BARGAIN Is the bright pink sofa in the living room. It was a second-hand, brown corduroy monstrosity, but I've had it re-upholstered and now it's a fab one-off.

I LEARNT To plan and budget carefully, and not to try to do everything at once. It takes time to find the layout and the pieces that work for you.

MY TOP TIP For a no-cost room refresher is to try rearranging the furniture and swap accessories like lamps, rugs or cushions from one room to another.

NEXT TO DO Is turn the snug into a study-cum-home office, so I'm looking out for a lovely desk to fit under the window.



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✦ Sarah's home includes plenty of budget-friendly, upcycled furniture. The snug's electric-blue chair belonged to her mother and has been re-upholstered, while the pink table was a pine one that Sarah revamped with a spray can of car paint

◁ Sarah had a strong vision of laid-back, welcoming surroundings with plenty of colour and originality. 'I wanted our home to be relaxed and fun, with lots of different styles, bright pops of colour and quirky elements,' she says. 'I just pick out things I like, without worrying about whether they go together perfectly.'

The whole interior was painted off-white to start with, but attending a masterclass with designer Abigail Ahern gave Sarah masses of inspiration and the confidence to experiment with bold, dark shades, starting in the newly-constructed living room, 'I went the whole way with deep blue on the ceiling as well as

'I went the whole way with deep blue on the ceiling as well as the walls. The living room immediately felt warm, inviting and more individual too.'

Good idea!
Although meant for ceilings, these gorgeous tin tiles from Rockett St George add shimmer and texture to the walls behind the wood-burner, protecting the paintwork from heat.



The rustic pine dining table contrasts with classic Verner Panton dining chairs from The Conran Shop. For drama and warmth, Sarah painted the entire room with Farrow & Ball's Railings. 'It was scary, but with everything back in place, it looked amazing,' she says



Features such as the overhead beams and the different floor level between the kitchen and dining area are part of the character and appeal of Sarah's home. Rugged, practical slate flooring from Mandarin Stone helps to unify the two zones

the walls,' she says. 'The living room immediately felt warm, inviting and more individual too.'

Since then, Sarah's passion for interiors has grown, as has her like-minded Instagram following (@theraynors). She has developed her own informal style, making deep, moody colours a key part of the downstairs look. By contrast, the

bedrooms have a restful vibe, with dusty pastels and faded florals sitting next to cheerful artwork and accessories, 'I might try some dark colours upstairs in time, but I've always been a fan of traditional vintage style as well,' says Sarah. 'Having rooms with different looks makes the whole house more interesting.'

Some of Sarah's furniture has been ▷



✦ The wicker chair, which Sarah found in a local antique shop, has its own frame so is easily moved around when she fancies a change. Softened with a cosy sheepskin by Cowboy Kate Outpost, it turns a corner of the kitchen into a laid-back spot

✦ The rustic slate floor and an exposed timber beam over the Everhot range cooker offset the sleek, practical kitchen, from DeZine. Sarah painted the alcove cupboard with Farrow & Ball's Railings for a darker accent



REAL HOME

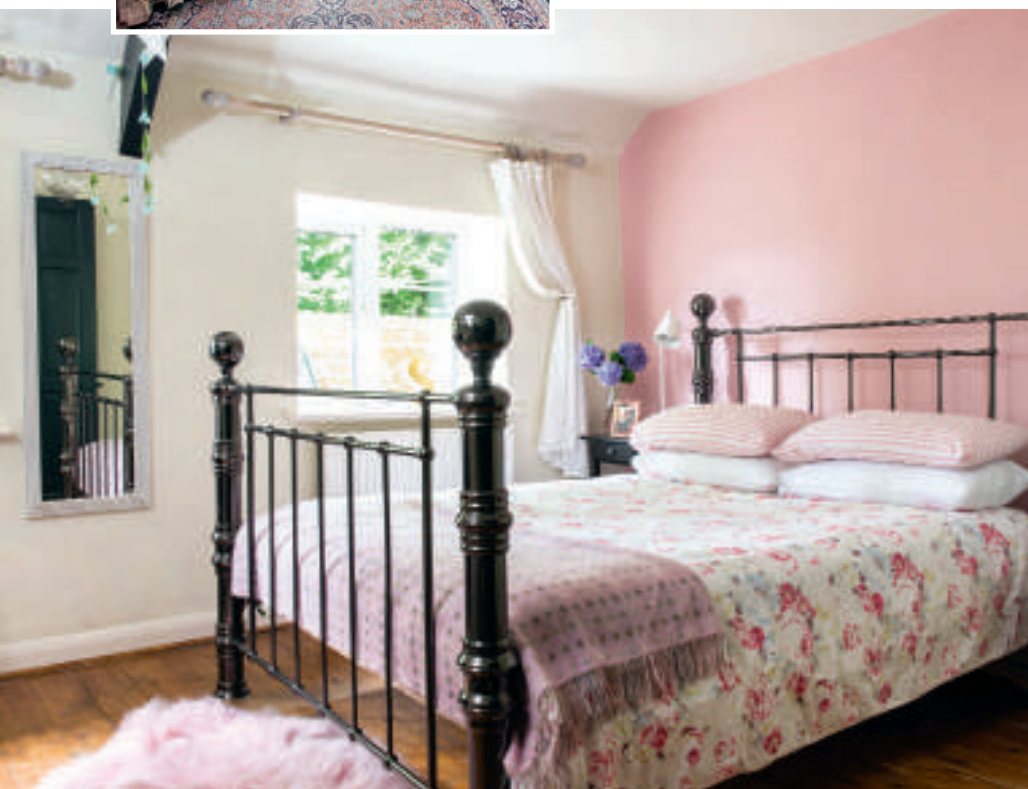
➤ Like the rest of the house, the bedroom has been accessorised with an intriguing mix of furnishings, including a funky rhino wall light from England At Home, framed artwork from Etsy and a hand-crafted hanging that adds an extra texture

➤ The upstairs space was extended and rearranged, adding the main bedroom and vintage-style dressing area. The curtain is from Sarah's old home and the chair came from an antique shop. 'It's not really for sitting on, but I love the fabric,' she says



'I've always been a fan of traditional vintage style. Having rooms with different looks makes the whole house more interesting.'

Good idea!
House plants are a lovely, low-maintenance way to energise and freshen up a room, but if you don't have green fingers, faux foliage will do a great job.



➤ The upper floor's soft pinks and creams help the country-inspired feel continue in Sid's pretty bedroom. The wall is painted in Farrow & Ball's Nancy's Blushes. The black metal bed makes a crisp contrast, helping to anchor the pastel palette

with her for many years and extra pieces have been added since moving here. She picks up lots of ideas from magazines and social media, and her choices range from design classics like the iconic mid-century dining chairs, to upcycled second-hand bargains, vintage finds and playful accessories from favourite high street and online shops. 'I'm a real magpie and not loyal to any single look,' she explains. 'I'll just buy something because I like it, without knowing exactly where it'll end up. Then I'll move it around the house until I find the right place for it.'

Wherever she shops, Sarah always looks to maximise her budget by tracking down the keenest prices. 'We're lucky to have a lot of antiques fairs and flea markets around here, which are great for unusual

6 IDEAS TO STEAL



A hanging chair makes a talking point and a novel relaxation spot.

All-weather nest chair, £325, Garden Trading



Accessorise with shimmering metallics for warmth, drama and a touch of glamour.

Gold embossed feather mirror, £115, The Forest & Co

Make a stand-out statement with a fun, neon light.

Lumosnap neon Chill wall light, £50, Gingersnap



Lift those daring dark tones with a bold splash of pink.

Ritchie two-seater Candy Pink sofa, £499, Made



A macramé wall hanging adds an intricate, tactile element and artisan character.

Macramé wall hanging, £40, Ian Snow

Cosy up in an instant with a cuddly faux fur throw.

Duchess of Snugshire cream faux fur throw, £60, The French Bedroom Company



▲ Sarah designed the master bedroom with a huge window to maximise the fantastic outlook. As the footboard of their old bed would have blocked the view, she and David invested in a contemporary-style replacement. The console table is from Abigail Ahern and the tongue-in-cheek ceramic bulldog (wearing a necklace) is one of Sarah's favourite pieces

◀ The bathroom layout stayed the same but everything has been replaced with chic, space-saving and streamlined pieces. The modern white suite came from Bathstore and the Polished Granite Absolute Black floor tiles are from Topps Tiles

bits and pieces,' she says. 'As we're quite far from shops, I often buy online too, but I'll always search and compare prices before I commit.'

Country life suits Sarah and her family and they are making the most of the beautiful surroundings and outdoor opportunities. 'We're always busy, and we spend a lot of time outside, but it's lovely to come home to a place that's so right for us,' she says. 'If you have energy and ideas, it's amazing what you can achieve.' **YH**