

period drama

Jackie has celebrated the beautiful bones of her historic home, while bringing it bang up to date with design classic furniture, contemporary art and vintage pieces

HOME PROFILE

THE OWNERS Jackie Mitchell and her husband Francis, a lawyer, who live here with their terrier-cross dogs Rafa and Rolo and Smokey the cat. They have six grown-up children between them, including Jackie's son Tom, 21, who currently lives here too. Jackie helps out with daycare for Arlo, her three-year-old grandson.

THE PROPERTY A Georgian house in Kent, with Victorian and Edwardian additions. The ground floor has a kitchen-diner, dining room with an adjoining family room, living room, utility room and WC. Upstairs on the first floor, there are five bedrooms (one en suite), an office and two bathrooms. There are three more bedrooms on the top floor and a media room and gym on the lower ground floor.

DINING ROOM

A soft grey paint shade tones down the decorative panelling on the walls and ceiling, linking with gunmetal-effect velvet curtains. Mid-century furniture and mesmeric lighting provide modern focal points.

Get the look These are vintage Series 7 chairs by Arne Jacobsen for Fritz Hansen and Rondino swivel chairs by Yngve Ekström for Swedese, all from Dagmar. The Celestial Pebble chandelier is by Ochre. The dining table and console table are bespoke for Barkerdesign by Dean Edmonds. The artwork, *left*, is by Mark Powell at Hang-Up Gallery and, *right*, by Peter Blake. The wall light is by Buster + Punch. The walls are painted in Grey Teal absolute matt emulsion by Little Greene.





← **LIVING ROOM**

The house came with an ornate wallpaper that was too beautiful to lose, even though it errs towards a more traditional mood. 'The solution was to paint the other walls and ceiling in a pale green shade and add mid-century furniture for contrast,' says Jackie.

Get the look The wallpaper is hand-painted de Gournay. The chairs are vintage Hans J. Wegner from Dagmar. The pendant is a bespoke design by Naomi Paul. The Sixties Greaves & Thomas sofa bed is from Scottlorenzo.com. The vintage coffee table is by Paolo Piva for B&B Italia at Béton Brut. The faux plant is from Abigail Ahern. The Sixties side tables are by Max Sauze at Béton Brut. This is Green Tea flat emulsion by Zoffany.

FAMILY ROOM

A dark, shimmering chandelier echoes the shapes of the architecture, while striking a more contemporary note.

Get the look This is the Eclipse chandelier by Ochre. The sofa is a bespoke piece by Barkerdesign. The coffee table is a vintage find. The rug is from Woven.co.uk.

I'm always on the lookout for objects or art that add an unusual touch,' says Jackie Mitchell. Architecturally, her house is a masterpiece of balance and measure, designed by leading 19th-century architect Decimus Burton, with Regency Revival pillars, a portico and elegantly high windows to prove it. But, as her home demonstrates, sometimes it's good to give history a bit of a nudge. 'I wanted to celebrate the setting, but without feeling weighed down by the past,' she explains.

The result is a style that blows the dust off the house's handsome features, while adding the odd surprise. It's a home where you can admire delicate cornicing and carved oak banisters, but then spot a Banksy or an audaciously glam Eighties coffee table – and where Persian rugs come in acidic green and pink rather than traditional shades. Think less English Heritage, more English eccentric.

To help her achieve this vision, Jackie called up Justine Hodgson-Barker of Barkerdesign. She admits she was initially cautious, as previous adventures with interior designers had steered her towards trad plaid wallpaper and fancy florals (and not in a good way). She needn't have worried. 'Right from the start, Justine "got" me,' says Jackie. 'She saw that my art collection erred towards the eclectic and that I love a bit of hotel-style glamour. Her first moodboard featured an Ochre chandelier, which, coincidentally, I'd just spotted and already coveted. I knew then that we were on the same page.'

While the house's core dates from Burton's heyday (the mid 1800s), later additions have brought Victorian panelling and some Arts and Crafts features into the architectural mix. 'The dark panelling and carvings are beautiful, but had started to feel rather overwhelming,' says Jackie. Justine's approach was to bring in influences from other eras – ranging from the Sixties icons right up to pieces by contemporary makers – to create spaces that are coherent yet varied. The reworked rooms now have an elegance that suits the historic setting, but created with designs that hail from a wider, more interesting spectrum.

For example, in the kitchen-diner, Justine respected the room's original dark oak woodwork, but added gleaming pieces and sculptural shapes that give the frame a lighter feel. A cluster of oversized vintage Holophane lights from Paris, bespoke brass shelving and iridescent glazed Moroccan tiles combine to give the darker features a style lift.

In the dining room, a pale grey paint shade was used to soften the period decoration that gambols across the walls and ceiling, leaving just some key areas – the fireplace and a set of sliding doors – in the original dark oak, while the gentle curves of furniture by mid-century masters Arne Jacobsen and Yngve Ekström sit comfortably in the setting. Softness comes in the form of superbly plush velvet curtains with a gunmetal finish. Justine's ability to mix eras and styles was something that also chimed with Jackie's outlook. 'I'm a bit of a magpie when it comes to interiors, fashion and art,' she says.

As the project continued, hotels and restaurants provided another rich seam of inspiration. 'The Greenwich Hotel in New York is my absolute favourite, for the way it reinterprets luxury,' says Jackie. 'Hotels are also great at showing how modern design and art can work inside a historic setting.' One trick that Jackie and Justine borrowed from hoteliers was to create small break-out seating areas in the hallway and landing, turning unused corners into relaxing spaces.

To add zing to the main stairs – previously a dark zone, due to an abundance of oak panelling – a bespoke runner was re-dyed in a mini rainbow of sharp shades. 'I spotted a similar rug in New York and it's just the kind of unusual beauty I'm drawn to,' says Jackie.

Final flourishes include pulp fiction art and a sprinkling of offbeat but glam finds. In the family room, the centrepiece is a split-level brass coffee table that wouldn't have looked out of place in Stringfellows nightclub, circa 1983. 'It might not please an architectural purist,' says Jackie, 'but I think adding a "little bit of wrong" is always right.'

Contact Justine Hodgson-Barker at barker-design.com



KITCHEN

Tiling is taken up to the picture rail to accentuate the height of the room, while vintage lighting, fluted glass-fronted cabinets and shelves that replicate luggage racks add extra gleam.

Get the look The cabinetry is bespoke by Barkerdesign. The Zellige wall tiles are from Habibi Interiors. The Holophane pendants are from Felix Lighting Specialists. The shelving is from Alex MacArthur. The vintage bar stools are from Two Columbia Road. The range cooker is by Smeg.



‘I gravitate towards colours that have a strong presence, such as amber, green and orange’

KITCHEN

Jackie’s old kitchen table was stripped of its previous glossiness for a softer finish and partnered with mid-century chairs. A pinky paint shade gives the oak panelling a fresh feel.

Get the look The dining chairs are by Henning Kjaernulf from Two Columbia Road. *The Wonder Cabinet* art installation, right of fireplace, is by The Connor Brothers at Hang-Up Gallery. The painting is by Tau Muzambi, bought in South Africa. The paint shade is Dead Salmon estate emulsion by Farrow & Ball.

FIRST-FLOOR LANDING

The thick, vibrant rugs in The Greenwich Hotel in New York were the inspiration for this space - with an added dash of British artistic licence.

Get the look The rug is a custom-made design by Riviere. The artwork is by The Connor Brothers. This is BoConcept’s Satellite lamp.

HOME TRUTHS

A day in London - what’s on your hit list? Coffee at Monmouth, a browse in Liberty’s homeware department, then a bus over to Shoreditch for a wander down Redchurch Street. I’d then head to Red Rooster or Cub for drinks and supper, or Rudie’s in Dalston.

Next trip abroad? Planning on Park City, Utah.

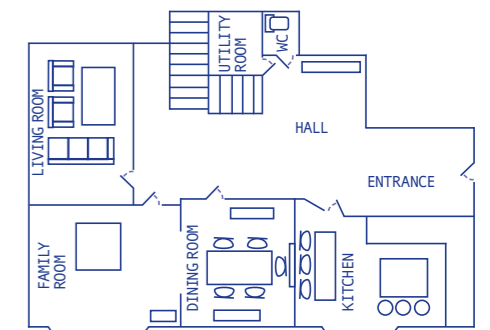
Era to time travel back to? The glamorous Twenties would be fun.

Most used app? Find My iPhone or iPad, depending on which one I’ve lost.

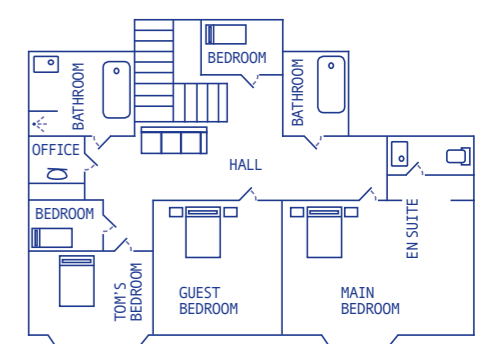
Current box set? *True Detective*. I’m on Season 1 and I’m hooked.

Favourite hotels for inspiration? The Zetter Townhouse in London and The Greenwich Hotel in New York - both do tradition with a twist so well.

THE BLUEPRINT



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



↙ **TOM'S BEDROOM**

There's a hint of locker-room luxe in here, with a hefty headboard made from an old leather gym mat and metal lockers as bedside tables.

Get the look The headboard and rug are both bespoke from Barkerdesign. The wall light is from Felix Lighting Specialists. The *Pink Men* artwork is by Richard Morrison. The bedside cabinet is from Pure White Lines. The throw is by Aphelia Opus.

↑ **DOWNSTAIRS CLOAKROOM**

Pops of colour and hyper-real photographic art liven up the downstairs cloakroom.

Get the look Kohler sells a similar glass basin. The photograph is by Shelley Rose. Orchid does a ceramic stool like this.

← **STAIRCASE**

A stair runner dyed in rainbow shades gives the house's dark wood detailing a new vibrance.

Get the look The runner was made bespoke for Barkerdesign. The wall covering is by Stereo Interiors. The limited edition print is by Patrick Caulfield from laysha Contemporary Art.

