# LIFE IN COLOUR

## Strong shades enhance the elegant lines of this London townhouse, designed by Studio Indigo

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**SITTING ROOM**
**The walls were inspired by the curtain fabric and are lacquered to reflect the light. 'I thought: let's push boundaries,' says designer Christiana Syrris of Studio Indigo. Donghia fabric,** Rubelli. **Rug,** Tim Page Carpets.





BLACK YELLOW MAGENTA CYAN

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**SITTING ROOM**
**The elegant chest of drawers and portrait of owner Mikael's father look striking against the mustard walls.**
**Wall effect,** Mathew Bray & Matthew Collins.

In 2015, when Mikael Lofberg acquired his Kensington townhouse from his parents, who were returning to Sweden, it was one of the last on the street to be updated for modern living. 'It was in a time warp,' he recalls of the Eighties decor, 'but I felt very fortunate to get my hands on it.' In fact, Mikael's brother had recently sold his next-door property and the new owners were keen to renovate, so the two households hired the same architect to 'kill two birds with one stone'.

'The house had deteriorated over the years and was in need of complete repair and restoration,' says architect Mike Fisher of Studio Indigo. Mikael had worked with Mike on previous commercial projects and was impressed with his ability to define space. 'Mike is a master at dealing with staircases. He also recognises that less is often more. Most architects try to maximise the square footage, while he looks at the quality of the space,' says Mikael.

While in the past, people preferred larger rooms at the front of the house, Mike observed that modern living demands that the larger rooms be at the back. Accordingly, with Liam Saxby as project manager, he gutted and reconfigured the house, adding a central 'mini grand' staircase. Walls were removed to leave two large rooms on each floor, while door heights were raised and the landings made wider. 'The whole house has become more logical and flowing,' says Mikael.

Eager to move in, along with his partner Henrique, Mikael insisted that the restoration take under two years, and started the planning process about nine months before taking ownership. 'We did end up moving into a building site, which is something I can't recommend, but it was certainly worth it in the long run,' he says. In terms of cosmetics, Mikael was very clear on his brief to interior designer Christiana Syrris, also of Studio Indigo. 'I wanted it to be rich in colour and texture; too much of what you see in London for a long time has been pretty monochrome. I also wanted it to be homely and have character.'

Christiana embraced her mission heartily, with the most obvious example of her fearless use of colour being the saturated and rich mustard hue of the sitting room. 'I was very nervous about it,' admits Mike. 'In theory, it looked great on the moodboard but when it went on the wall I thought it looked too strong, but Christiana convinced me.'

The completed room is a confident combination of colour and texture, with the lacquered walls the perfect backdrop for Mikael's art collection. Elsewhere, each room's paint choice gives it its own clear sense of identity: Scandinavian blues recall Mikael's Swedish upbringing, green Verde Alpi marble in the bathroom looks masculine and elegant, while bold Moroccan red enhances a guest bedroom.

Mikael's love of entertaining was a big factor in the planning of the house's renovation. The kitchen has been conceived as the main living area with the dining room, furnished with inherited Chippendale chairs, reserved for more formal occasions. Downstairs, Crittal windows divide a wine cellar from a gym, cinema, spa and soundproofed 'nightclub'.

Keen to share the achievement of the restoration, Mikael threw a party after he moved in, inviting 100 guests. 'The party went on well into the night; I feel privileged to have these wonderful spaces and that they all get used.'

Once slumbering, this Kensington townhouse has clearly been awoken and now is filled with new life.





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**HALLWAY**
**Mikael suggested using grey for the woodwork. 'You would see this in 18th-century Swedish houses; it creates a nice contrast.'**
**Walls in** 9093, Papers and Paints. Hyde **lantern,** Jamb.

**KITCHEN**
**The space was planned to be the social hub of the house; the mirrored splashback cleverly enables Mikael to engage with his guests while he is cooking.**
Crystal tube **light fitting,** Lee Broom. Lacquered reclaimed wood **island,** Barn In The City. Beetle **bar stools,** Gubi.





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**CONSERVATORY ROOM**
**Previously an open terrace off the main bedroom, this area has been transformed into a contemporary space with a glass ceiling.** Bespoke **chair,** Studio Indigo; **upholstered in** Donghia outdoor fabric, Rubelli.



**HALLWAY**
**A neo-classical niche and elegant console table make a striking statement here. Walls in** 9093, Papers and Paints. Console **table,** Lamberty.



**GARDEN**
**Exterior architect Iain MacDonald transformed the garden, with this formal water feature as the focal point. 'The space is perfectly suited to entertaining,' Mikael says.**




**GUEST BEDROOM**
**The upholstered headboard stretches across the wall behind the beds so that they can either be used as twins or made into a double. Stool,** Oka. **Similar paint on walls,** Venetian Red, Sanderson.





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**GUEST BEDROOM**
**This Scandinavian blue was inspired by Mikael's Swedish roots.**
**Walls in** Prussian, Zoffany. Headboard **upholstered in** an archive fabric from Turnell & Gigon. **Rug,** Robert Stephenson.

**DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM**
**Striking wallpaper creates a pleasant surprise when guests open the door onto this small space.**
Leopard Walk 109/2008 **wallpaper,** Cole & Son. Lonsdale **basin** on frame, The Water Monopoly.





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