

Main picture: The living room mixes Victorian details, retro furniture and decorative displays.



EASY ELEGANCE

Florist Kally Ellis used all her **DESIGN** skills to decorate her Victorian house. The result is a relaxed, elegant home that blends old and new

WORDS RUTH CORBETT PICTURES DARREN CHUNG

WHO LIVES HERE?

WE ARE... Kally Ellis, owner of the florists McQueens, her husband Damian Kelleher, son Freddie and daughter Sophie.



WE LIVE... In a three-story Victorian house in North London that's just around the corner from Kally's childhood home.

KALLY ELLIS IS one of the country's leading florists, famous for her beautiful, bold designs. As the owner of McQueens, she's created displays for Oscar parties and celebrity weddings. But there's more to Kally than brilliant blooms. She also has an eye for unique interiors, which is obvious the moment you step inside her London home.

Kally's signature look is to create unexpected combinations of old and new. "As our house is Victorian, very modern furniture looks out of place. But at the same time, I'm not trying to create a traditional parlour," she says with a laugh. "Mixing older pieces with modern furniture that has a mid-century look seems to work well. It creates a relaxed style that complements the age of the house."

The sitting room perfectly sums up this style. It's an elegant space with original



This Works

A wall of mirrors is an original and stylish way to bring extra light into a dark hallway

Clockwise from top:

An eye-catching display of mirrors; this blue console is a clever way to create hall storage; bright red flowers add colour to the dining area.



cornicing and beautiful ceiling roses. Flames crackle in the grates of two fireplaces and the bookshelves are stuffed with well-thumbed paperbacks. Against this convivial backdrop, Kally has introduced an eclectic mix of 1950s furniture – including a quirky coffee table – as well as a carefully chosen selection of candleholders and vases.

There's even a touch of drama thanks to the huge vases on the mantelpiece, which are filled with silver birch branches and decorated with glass teardrops.

When it comes to decorative objects, Kally tends to group items together for maximum impact. The hallway, for example, has been decorated with a large arrangement of >>

mirrors. "My friends call it the Hall of Mirrors," she says. "But it's not just for show. This isn't the lightest of houses and the mirrors help to reflect what light there is."

There are more decorative groupings upstairs in the main bedroom. One wall is home to a collection of gold-coloured icons. But this isn't a dark and sombre retreat – far from it. Kally has played against expectations and placed the icons in bright, sunny surroundings. In a nod to her floral talents, tulips reign in the bedroom. A tulip-print fabric has been used for the roman blinds and Aladdin tulips are grouped on the mantelpiece in a trio of vases.

In a further eclectic touch, there's a tailor's dummy displaying a dress by the late fashion designer Alexander McQueen. "I've never worn the dress – I just love its exquisite craftsmanship," says Kally.

The dress also has personal significance. The first shop Kally bought to launch her florist business actually belonged to the fashion designer's aunt – hence the name.



"MIXING OLDER PIECES WITH MODERN FURNITURE THAT HAS A MID-CENTURY LOOK WORKS WELL."



This picture: Kally adds a dash of colour through furniture, soft furnishings and small flower displays.

Above: The McQueen dress on show in the main bedroom.

Above right: Even the bathroom has a mix of modern and traditional styles.

TAKE FIVE

How to get designer looks at high street prices

IN BLOOM

Swap artificial **FLOWERS** for fresh ones. They look good and never need watering. **Amaryllis and vase, £32, from Debenhams. Tel: 08445 616161, visit: www.debenhams.com**



SIMPLE SOLUTION

DRAW THE LINE

Bold **CUSHIONS** in graphic stripes instantly brighten up sofas. **Tu Chenille Stripe cushion, £10, from Sainsbury's. Tel: 0800 636262, visit: www.sainsburys.co.uk**



WORD UP

Gold **LETTERS** create an impact on a mantelpiece. **Old English Letters (12cm tall), £6.75 each, from Posh Graffiti. Tel: 01400 281563, visit: www.poshgraffiti.com**



SITTING PRETTY

An **ARMCHAIR** upholstered in a 1950s-style print is a key part of the retro look. **Radio chair, from £599, from John Lewis. Tel: 08456 049049, visit: www.johnlewis.com**



STYLE TIP

SHINING EXAMPLE

Decorative **MIRRORS** work well against plain-coloured walls. **Gold Sun mirror, £45, from M&S. Tel: 0845 302 1234, visit: www.marksandspencer.com**



Down in the kitchen, more quirky items congregate to create an original look. Along with the vintage dining chairs, which were salvaged from a church, there are two very modern architectural chairs – one in bright orange. They are a bold but clever addition to the design of the room.

Even in the tranquil bathroom there's an unexpected mix of styles. As well as a traditional roll-top bath and vintage mirrored cupboards, there's a modern Pantone chair. It's been carefully chosen to match the cool colour scheme, which effortlessly pulls the different elements together.

But despite all the inspiring objects and collectible furniture, for Kally interior design will always revolve around flowers.

"They're such a big part of my work life, but I can't separate them from my home life," she says. "They make such a difference. Even a tiny vase or jug of small flowers can lift your spirits. They're real joy-bringers." ●

* Flower power

Kally Ellis reveals how to create three quick floral displays

1 I've started to use cut clematis for indoor displays. Normally a climbing shrub, it looks wonderful spilling out of a vintage enamel jug. It's a very attractive flower which works best on its own, rather than combined with other flowers.

2 Rustic window boxes made from woven wood create a relaxed look for the home. Fill with pansies, primroses and miniature daffodils.

3 Instead of placing just one big vase in the middle of a dining table, put flowers all the way along it. I like to use three different heights to look like the tiers of plants in a garden.



DARREN CHUNG/MAINSTREAM IMAGES

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