



READER AT HOME

# Japanese influence

In a quiet cul-de-sac near to acres of delightful National Trust land at Pinkneys Green is Kate Lovejoy's stunning house, which has been inspired by her travels and love of colour

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Kate Lovejoy has worked in the world of design for 20 years, so she knows a thing or two about how to make a house look lovely. And her own home here in Berkshire didn't disappoint when she invited me round for a tour recently.

With a degree in Theatre Design followed by an MA in Film Production Design at the Royal College of Art, Kate went on to have a successful career in feature

films and large-scale television production, which in turn, allowed her to travel far and wide. And it is this love of travel and the colours and landscapes she's seen along her way that comes across in her four-bedroom home in a quiet cul-de-sac in Maidenhead.

"We moved out of London 14 years ago to raise a family here in Berkshire. I have a teenage daughter and son, and I've become a single parent," Kate says. "I've

ABOVE & RIGHT: The cosy dark sitting room

always enjoyed being creative and making things, and I have a deep understanding of colour, so I decided to set up my own design business in 2009. Of course, my home was my first project. It helped ground all my knowledge in a complete respect for home and all that it facilitates; a deep connection, self-expression and a place of safety to return to."

And her home does indeed feel like a safe haven. Stepping



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through the entrance door of the 1970s house, the splashes of orange and blue accessories give a hint of the colour within. A red silk scarf by Louise Gardiner hangs in a frame on the wall, and Kate cut an antique chest of drawers in half and painted it to make a funky radiator cover. "I love colour; it is very powerful," says Kate. "It can influence your daily life."

And stepping into the sitting room, you can tell this space has been a labour of love; it shows off Kate's bold and confident design skills. "This is the third or fourth time I've decorated this room," says Kate. "I've never finished – my house will always be a work in progress. But this time, I wanted to make the living room dark, cosy and intimate, so I used Dulux paint on the walls. It helps me to relax and to feel cocooned. I work in seasonal colour palettes and the

main colour of my home is autumn.

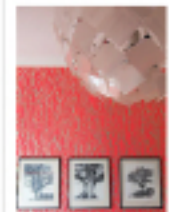
"I went to Japan five years ago and loved the culture. I wanted to create an image that would remind us of our fantastic trip and so found an old tinted photograph, created a large print and coloured it to fit with the colours I like.

"I source a lot of my furniture and 1960s vintage pieces on eBay," Kate adds. "I painted the coffee table myself. And the large stylish birch Octo 4240 Pendant Lamp from the Finnish brand Secto Design was from John Lewis. It offers a great diffusion of light. The fireplace is an MDF creation that has also been painted in Dulux 30GY 09/171 paint. Inside the nook, I've decorated the wall with a small piece of Cole & Son Acuario wallpaper, which I think really sets it off. On the walls there are a collection of vintage Vogue covers, plus on the shelves there are small displays of personal memories that all add to my story."

Kate says she does a lot of sewing and makes all of her own cushions. She bought the armchair in the sitting room at an auction house in Chiswick and covered it in vibrant floral fabric called Tango by Linwood. "It was red before," she says. "But I much prefer it now."

I notice a huge lamp with a fringed lampshade up the corner. "Fringing is back and bigger than ever at the moment," Kate says. Next, she takes me into the kitchen, and I'm blown away by the gorgeous turquoise scheme. Here she has created a zoned area

ABOVE: Kate in her cool booth  
BELOW: The funky pink wallpaper on the stairs  
BOTTOM: The additional family room



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with a block of colour. The walls are covered in Cole & Son The Albemarle Collection Piccadilly Teal Wallpaper, which is simply stunning. And the radiator cover has been painted to match. A large circular mirror reflects the light from the window, and a beautiful brushed brass pendant from Habitat hangs from the ceiling.

On the wall is a large acrylic picture of her gorgeous dog, a Schnoodle called Wilbur. "The vet actually took that picture and I played around with it in Photoshop to stylise the look of it," she says. There's a cool booth that Kate had bespoke made. "And my dad, a carpenter, made the oval walnut dining table for me," she adds.

The rest of the kitchen is a pinky-beige colour, quite understated, with a glass shelf-turned-gin bar, a quirky hanging plant and a beautiful Japanese-style print of a woman with a head of flowers. "The kitchen is from Howdens," says Kate. "We built an

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extension to the front of the house after we moved in, to make the kitchen bigger and brighter – and it's a really lovely space now."

When I ask her where she gets all her unique ornaments from, such as a striking zebra vase, she says: "They're an eclectic mix of things I've found from lots of sources, such as charity shops, on eBay and in antiques stores. I'm constantly sourcing items and dressing places for my clients, so I am always on the lookout for new and unusual things."

Next door to the kitchen is an additional family room, where Kate keeps all her things that she takes with her to shoots and to stage houses. They're all displayed on a beautiful grey bookcase, which her father also made. "The ceiling was a bit bland, so I wallpapered it in a gold and cream paper called Arbor by Romo and it adds a touch of glamour to the room," she says.

"This used to be the dining room with doors through to the sitting room, but when we had our extension, we created this separate space, and also knocked through the garage to make my office."

And it is in this office space that Kate makes her magic happen. Ideas are splayed out across the huge old library table, and fabric is stacked in a tall blue dresser, with a gold mannequin plant-pot head on top, which was made by MuckinBrass.

"I found the ceiling light on eBay before we even had planning permission. We had to design the space so that we had enough ceiling height for the light,

I loved it that much!" Kate laughs. Two large IKEA wardrobes allow for valuable storage space on the left wall, and Kate popped on MDF fronts and wallpapered them, then added Japanese bowls as handles.

Upstairs, the autumnal tones continue. En route, I comment on the vibrant pink and silver wallpaper on the stairs. "It's called Grasses by Clarissa Hulse," she



TOP: Kate's bedroom  
ABOVE: The zoned dining area

says. "This pink is Pantone's Colour of the Year 2019, so I'm ahead of my time! It was a bold move to use it as it's so bright."

The main bedroom has a feature wall painted in the same dark green shade as the living room, and there are gold wall lights and a gold ceiling pendant. Iconic images in frames adorn the one wall, and jewellery hangs from nifty little shelves from Etsy on the other side. "I up-cycled the bedside tables myself, repainting them to fit the colour scheme," she says.

"The scheme was all based around the fabric that I used to make the upholstered headboard (a velvet print from Linwood). And I opted for terracotta and green cushions and bed linen to offset the dark walls. It's such a relaxing space now. I'm even contemplating painting the ceiling in the dark green, to give the feeling of being

enveloped in it. That's the great thing about paint; you can try things out and change the feel so quickly."

Kate loves her work. She says: "I enjoy helping clients to connect with their home emotionally by designing a space that will enhance their lives."

Now in the 10th year of having her business, Kate also has some exciting news. "Later on this year, I am launching a sideline business called CherryPick Interiors with my friend Tilly Foley. We've seen such a shift in recent years of high-street stores offering homewares at affordable price points. There is so much on offer! Coupled with the fact that we see so many beautiful images on Pinterest or in lifestyle magazines, it can be bewildering. We are finding that people don't know how to pull the look together and if it will work in their home. CherryPick Interiors will offer that stepping stone with workshops, online tutorials and remote design services. You'll be able to pick and choose the bits you need to help you find those interior style solutions." ♦ Visit [katelovejoy.com](http://katelovejoy.com) and [cherrypickinteriors.com](http://cherrypickinteriors.com)



RIGHT: Kate sitting in front of her Japan print  
LEFT: The gold MuckinBrass mannequin plant-pot head