

# It's a home draw for Mr Fashion v Mrs Practical

Paul Slade and Emma Minford have converted a four-storey, late-19th-century house in west London. **Andréa Childs** discovers a quirky, stylish, family home



**Kitchen:** The painted wooden units are a departure for the couple, who have previously always chosen high-gloss designs. 'The insides are red, like the

flash of a suit lining,' says Emma. **Get the look:** The kitchen was bespoke. Ideas to Steal could create similar. The range cooker is by Wolf.



**Drawing room:** It may have a grand crystal chandelier and a marble fireplace but the couple's drawing room still feels relaxed rather than formal. 'We love the antique sofa in its ripped state. It has a real romance to it,' says Emma. The mirror is actually a Twenties door, found in a Paris flea market.

**Get the look:** The sofa, by Howard & Sons, and coffee table (see the Argo by

Soane for similar) came from Circus Antiques. Go to Decorex for a chandelier. For a mirror like this, try thefrenchhouse.co.uk. The artwork propped on the sofa is by Soozy Lipsey, available at Nelly Duff. The painting above the fireplace is by Laurent Dauplain, from Galerie Claudine Legrand. Milk Concept Boutique stocks Fornasetti waste-paper bins.

IT'S refreshing to have a reality check on what renovating a house can be like. 'All those random, tiny design decisions – I was so over this project by the end of it,' says Emma Minford.

Fortunately, her partner, Paul Slade, has a passion for detail. He's the 'design DNA' of their fashion label, Paul's Boutique, while Emma manages the business. The family – children Oliver, seven, and Isaac, four, and dog Rudy – bought the house in west London in 2010, then spent the next few months on a top-to-bottom conversion.

The property is a late-19th-century house in west London. The lower ground floor has an open-plan living/dining/kitchen space, WC and utility room, while the upper ground floor has an entrance hall, playroom, drawing room and WC. The first floor has a master bedroom suite, plus a second bedroom and family bathroom. The boys' bedrooms and a bathroom are on the top floor.

'Paul was really particular. He spent weeks choosing copper screws for the metal wall by the kitchen, whereas I just wanted to be able to cook a meal,' says Emma. 'It was worth it but it's hard to manage a project like this when you're getting on with the day job.'

Emma wasn't dealing with Paul's perfectionism alone. She says: 'We've done renovations ourselves in the past and were never quite satisfied with the result, so we drafted in architects Stiff + Trevillion. Our project manager, Chris Eaton, was great at getting into Paul's head to understand the look he wanted.'

Paul wanted a mix of vintage and modern, luxury and quirky, while Emma was focused on making the most of the multi-level space. 'As a child, I was fascinated by houses you could see all the way through, from front window to back garden,' she says. 'So the double-aspect ground floor is a dream come true for me.'

For Paul, it was all about the finish – the glamour of marble in the en-suite bathroom, the sheen of the polished concrete

and parquet floors, and the Crittall-style windows that are glazed partitions throughout the house.

'Chris suggested them as an alternative to bi-fold doors on to the garden – Paul just took that idea and ran with it,' says Emma. The couple's biggest argument was over the ground-floor living space. 'Paul wanted his study to be where the kitchen is now, and I wanted to make it one big cooking/dining/lounging area. I'm so glad I won that battle – it's changed the way we live as we spend so much more time together as a family.'

It was a blend of their individual styles which created this modern home that works for all their needs. The mood is

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indeed vintage yet luxurious – the Swedish bureau and factory lighting in the dining area, metro tiles with that marble in the en-suite, baronial antlers plus punk and pop art in the hall.

**M**ANY pieces were sourced from Paul's brother, who runs Circus Antiques in north London, or on the couple's trawls of auction houses along London's Lots Road. The palette is a blend of soft grey, mushroom and green, which softens the craziness of the ripped-up couch and the kitsch of a Pierrat painting in the playroom.

'The paint colours were my area, and I went for warm neutrals,' says Emma. 'My inspiration came from chic hotels I've loved staying in, but I think it's created a cosy, family feel.'

■ To see Paul's designs, visit [pauls-boutique.com](http://pauls-boutique.com). Contact the couple's architect via [stiffandtrevillion.com](http://stiffandtrevillion.com).



The cooking/dining/lounging (above) has changed the way the family live, says mother Emma

Photographs by James Merrell

Styling by Mary Weaver

■ The full version of this article appears in this October's issue of Livingetc, which is out now.







**Bedroom:** the bedroom is inspired by the décor of London's Covent Garden Hotel. "We stayed there when it first opened and I just loved the mix of textures in the rooms," says Emma. Even in this luxurious space there's a twist. "The bed linen is quite chintzy but it's been dip-dyed, so it has an edge and a nice contradiction."  
**Get the look:** the Dalston Rose bed linen is by House Of Hackney. For a light like this, see the Grand Paris pendant from Amara. The Eglomise table from Sweetpea & Willow is similar to this one. The photograph above the bed is by Euan Myles.

**Hall (below left):** "I wanted a strong but chic look in the hall," says Emma. "Classic grey walls are the ideal backdrop for fun pieces like our punk bear." The bag is from the couple's fashion brand, Paul's Boutique.  
**Get the look:** the Strathmore pendant by Holloways of Ludlow is like this lantern. The Bearbrick Sex Pistols bear came from Selfridges. The gold gilt Camille mirror from Ayers & Graces is like this. The paint colour is Ink by Paint Library. Westenholz Antiques sells busts.

**Walk-in wardrobe (below centre):** the couple's architects transformed what was the top-floor staircase into a luxurious walk-in wardrobe. It ensures the main bedroom stays serene and clutter-free.  
**Get the look:** This storage was built bespoke. Neville Johnson could create a similar arrangement.

**En-suite bathroom (below):** having a marble bathroom was Paul's "thing". "Even here we had to have metro tiles, though," says Emma. "It's a family joke that we are obsessed with them."  
**Get the look:** The bathroom was designed, made and fitted by Stiff + Trevillion. The marble is from Venice Marble, the lights on the mirrors from Hector Finch.



**Kitchen/diner (left):** the kitchen is separated by a wall of black-steel-framed glazing. "We've had an open-plan kitchen in the past but I like to hide away the mess when the cooking is finished," says Emma. The table is made of wood from a Blackpool ballroom's dance floor.  
**Get the look:** the table is from thefrenchhouse.co.uk. The chairs and jars are from Circus Antiques. For new versions, see the Roebuck by Race Furniture and go to Holly Anna for jars.

**Living room: (right)** "We like emphatic furniture, like our big, L-shaped sofa," says Emma. "It creates a definite seating zone in the open-plan space." Accessories in luxurious fabrics soften the look.  
**Get the look:** this is the Frank sofa by Antonio Citterio for B&B Italia. The purple velvet cushions are Timorous Beasties. The white cushions are Rory Dobner at Liberty. For similar storage, see Montana at Aram Store. The jugs are from Scarlet & Violet. The side table is from Circus Antiques.

