



SWEDE INSPIRATION

The 1920s façade of Anne-Gunn and Petter Oei's home may be typically English, but the interior is unmistakably Scandinavian

WORDS MAGGIE COLVIN PHOTOGRAPHY JOHNNY BOUCHIER

1 & 2 DINING ROOM Designed by architect Ray Thompson at Thompson & Baroni (020 7627 5511), this elegant space boasts a mix of furnishings. The dining suite, china and glass are all from Nordic Style (020 7351 1755), while Anne-Gunn bought the Vernon Panton pendant light at Skandium (020 7935 2077) and the Vitorio Splendore artworks from Trowbridge Gallery (020 7371 8733). Sumptuous walnut floorboards, supplied by Southern Cross Flooring (020 8404 1010), run through this room and into the living area







Five years renting a large family property in a leafy area of southwest London persuaded Norwegian couple Anne-Gunn and Petter Oei that this was the place to settle down with their children.

'The house had been built in the 1920s and was showing its age,' says Anne-Gunn. 'The stairs were rickety, the glazing was small and high off the ground and the kitchen area was divided into three poky rooms. But we loved its location overlooking green parkland and just a two-minute walk from a pretty cobbled high street. The area also has good schools for our boys Thomas and William, and there's a friendly, almost village-like atmosphere, which made Petter and I feel at home here.'

As a result, the couple spent much of their time trying to persuade the owner of the house to sell it to them and eventually, in 2006, he relented. All the improvements they had considered undertaking suddenly became possible, and friends soon put them in touch with the right architect. 'Ray Thompson had redesigned their property, and we admired the attention to detail and the modern open space,' Anne-Gunn recalls. 'It was exactly the kind of style we hoped to achieve.'

She and Petter faced an initial dilemma. 'We could knock down a few partition walls downstairs, tinker with the layout and have the loft converted,' says Anne-Gunn, 'or go for a much more dramatic option – rebuild most of the house to an altogether higher standard but preserve the façade.'

After bringing in a surveyor to examine the uneven floor levels and structurally weak roof, Anne-Gunn and Petter decided to go down the latter route. Their brief to Ray was for a large living space with increased access to the garden. But the sheer scale of the project proved to be a shock: 'I recall standing on the ground floor after the builders had finished ►

1 KITCHEN Designed by Sola Kitchens (0845 862 0297), the island and food-preparation areas are topped with hardwearing basalt

2 BREAKFAST ROOM The barstools were bought from breakfastbarstools.co.uk (0800 074 7457)

3 SITTING ROOM Set against walls painted in Ash White by Dulux (0870 444 1111), chrome-and-leather seating and contemporary shelving units, all supplied by Living Space (020 7731 1180), make a striking impression. The Gustavian-style coffee table is from India Jane (0870 220 8991)





MEET THE OWNERS



Anne-Gunn Oei, her husband Petter, who is a businessman, and their children Thomas and William
PREVIOUS HOME 'We rented a house nearby, before taking over the tenancy of this place in 2001,' says Anne-Gunn.

CURRENT PROPERTY Detached villa in southwest London, built in the 1920s

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, five bedrooms, four bathrooms

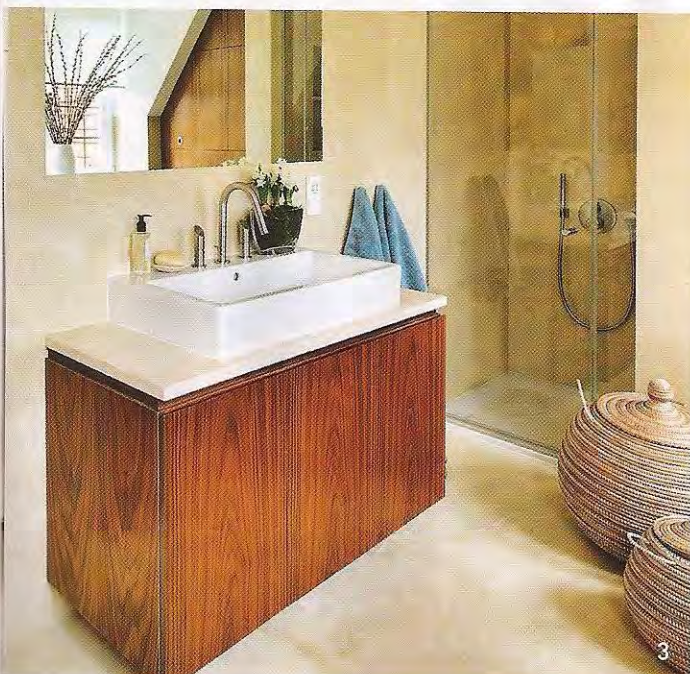
PURCHASED 2006



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for the day, and looking up to see nothing but open sky,' says Anne-Gunn. 'All that was left of the old house was a shell and I thought, "What have we done?"' But once the work was complete, and the family had returned from rented accommodation nearby, the result more than compensated for her initial anxiety.

All the reception rooms flow effortlessly together. On one side, the dining room opens onto the garden through French windows, while on the other, the kitchen is situated next to the sitting room, a perfect arrangement for contemporary family life. 'In the evening, Petter and I can cook while chatting with the boys as they watch TV,' Anne-Gunn says.

Having put much of her old furniture in storage and given some of it away, the new interior left Anne-Gunn with another decision. 'I was torn between my Scandinavian roots and a desire for minimalist pieces, which the house really cried out for,' she says. So she cleverly steered a middle path by keeping her elegant Gustavian dining-room furniture and mixing it with leather sofas and armchairs, and a gleaming, Swedish-built kitchen with sharp, modern lines. 'Quality was a big consideration,' says Anne-Gunn. 'We wanted units that were solid wood, without any MDF infills.' A banquette that was built around the walls of the breakfast area and lined with sheepskin rugs provided useful extra storage for books and DVDs.

The attraction of living in a clutter-free environment has seen Anne-Gunn rein in her use of accessories. Against a neutral palette, she uses flowers and fabrics to make bright colour changes. 'I think that, apart from a few paintings, we may leave the house as it is,' she concludes. 'I love the unified feel of walnut floors throughout and soft-grey blinds. It's incredibly restful and easy to maintain.'

1 HALL Anne-Gunn found the silver lanterns at Lombok (0870 240 7380), and buys her flower arrangements from Mystique (020 7371 5888)

2 MASTER BEDROOM The couple's bed is dressed with a combination of Hästens (020 7384 2020) and Designers Guild (020 7893 7400) bedlinen

3 BATHROOM Tiles from GMI (020 7498 2742) provide a luxurious backdrop to contemporary sanitaryware supplied by CP Hart (0845 600 1950)

4 THOMAS AND WILLIAM'S BEDROOM The furniture came from Clarkes Interiors (01372 464828) and the blind is by Silent Gliss (01843 863571)



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DESIGN ADVICE

'A uniform style can be dull, whereas a mix of old and new pieces helps give a place character'

