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JUNE
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DESIGNER PROFILE

CLARE GASKIN

ELIZABETH METCALFE talks to the interior designer, whose projects reveal a playful spirit



Making strong use of colour and pattern, Clare Gaskin's projects are imbued with a sense of fun. Take, for example, this recently decorated flat in Wimbledon, where there is a bold, black, white and green wallpaper by Edmond Petit, a dramatic Amy Kent rug in the sitting room and glossy navy cabinets in the kitchen. 'I encourage my clients to be brave with colour,' says the designer, whose current projects include a house in Marylebone and a riverside apartment in Fulham. She is not afraid to go off-piste, either – one client tasked her with transforming a Georgian lodge in Surrey into a 'den' for his teenage children and she responded by commissioning graffiti and neon art to decorate some of the space.

Having studied history of art and architecture at the University of Manchester, Clare began her career at Bonhams, before moving to Sotheby's in 2003, where she worked for five years in the jewellery department. It was the process of doing up her own house in Putney that prompted her to pursue a career in interiors. In 2007, she enrolled on an evening course in interior design at Chelsea College of Arts, which led to her landing internships at Allegra Hicks and at Todhunter Earle. 'I loved the variety,' says Clare.

Interior designer Clare Gaskin in a recent project in Wimbledon, in which she has used her trademark bold and colourful aesthetic to turn a family home into a more usable space for an empty nester now living alone

She then embarked on the Certificate Residential Interior Design course at KLC, but her first interiors project – a Belgravia townhouse – came along only a month into the 11-week course, when a friend introduced her to the owner. 'I juggled the two and luckily the projects just kept coming,' she says.

Over the past 11 years, she has worked mainly on projects in London, as well as some in Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. Clare's clients are no doubt attracted by her bold aesthetic. 'But I am practical and put reality first when designing a space,' she says. For this Wimbledon flat, Clare transformed a family home into a space that better suits the needs of the homeowner – an active empty nester who is now living alone. Storage has been carved out of formerly dead spaces and the previously poky kitchen moved into what used to be the family room. Glass doors were added to connect the kitchen to a new sitting and dining

room, more usable than its previous iteration as a formal sitting room. She combined much of the owner's furniture with contemporary pieces, reupholstering antique dining chairs in Designers Guild's 'Sarang' fuchsia velvet and pairing them with a lacquered table from Julian Chichester □
Clare Gaskin: claregaskin.com