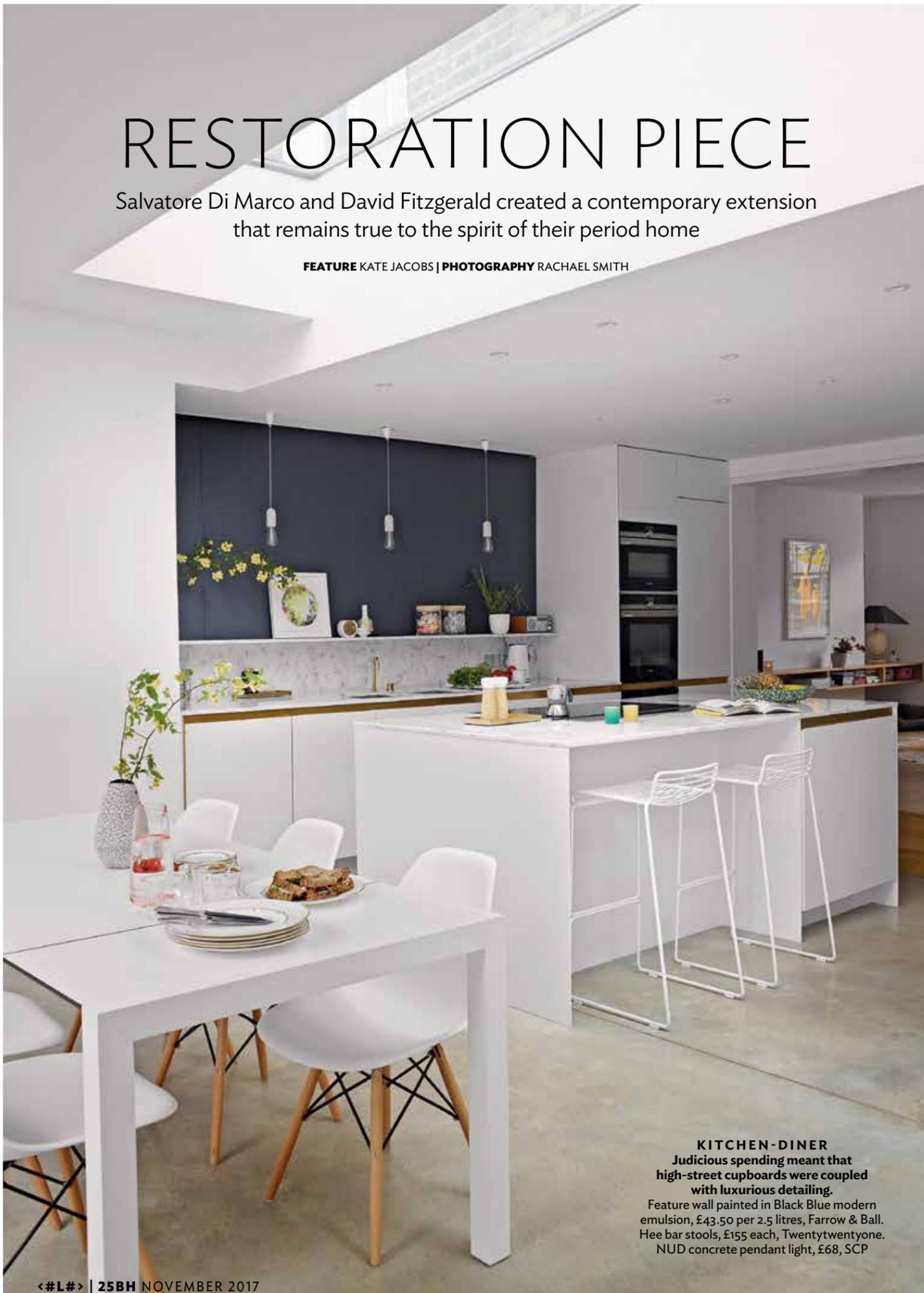


RESTORATION PIECE

Salvatore Di Marco and David Fitzgerald created a contemporary extension that remains true to the spirit of their period home

FEATURE KATE JACOBS | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH



KITCHEN-DINER
Judicious spending meant that high-street cupboards were coupled with luxurious detailing. Feature wall painted in Black Blue modern emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Hee bar stools, £155 each, Twentytwentyone. NUD concrete pendant light, £68, SCP

FAVOURITE FEATURE *'The sedum roof over the extension means that our views from the sitting room are full of greenery'*



REPLANNED

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Semi-detached house, built in 1843
LOCATION East London
ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner/reading room, TV room, office, utility room, four bedrooms, three bathrooms
PURCHASED 2010
PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'Before moving here, we lived in a four-bedroom new build around the corner,' says Salvatore.



I

I KITCHEN-DINER
Sliding doors vanish into a 'pocket' in the wall, giving an uninterrupted view of the couple's beautifully landscaped garden.
Thin-K extendable table, £1,811, Aria. For similar seating, try the DSW chair, £345, Skandium

2 READING ROOM
Designer Richard Penman made use of the original back door opening by transforming it into bespoke shelving for favourite books and family photos.
Platner side table, £844, The Conran Shop
The Dorchester buttoned velvet chair, £385, Alexander & Pearl, is comparable

3 OFFICE
The entrance to the couple's work area is concealed neatly and discreetly behind a bespoke bookshelf door.
Nic desk, £160, Habitat. The Burton gold round mirror, £40, Maisons du Mode, has this look. Arstid floor lamp, £39, Ikea. The Chifa rug, £480, Heal's, is similar



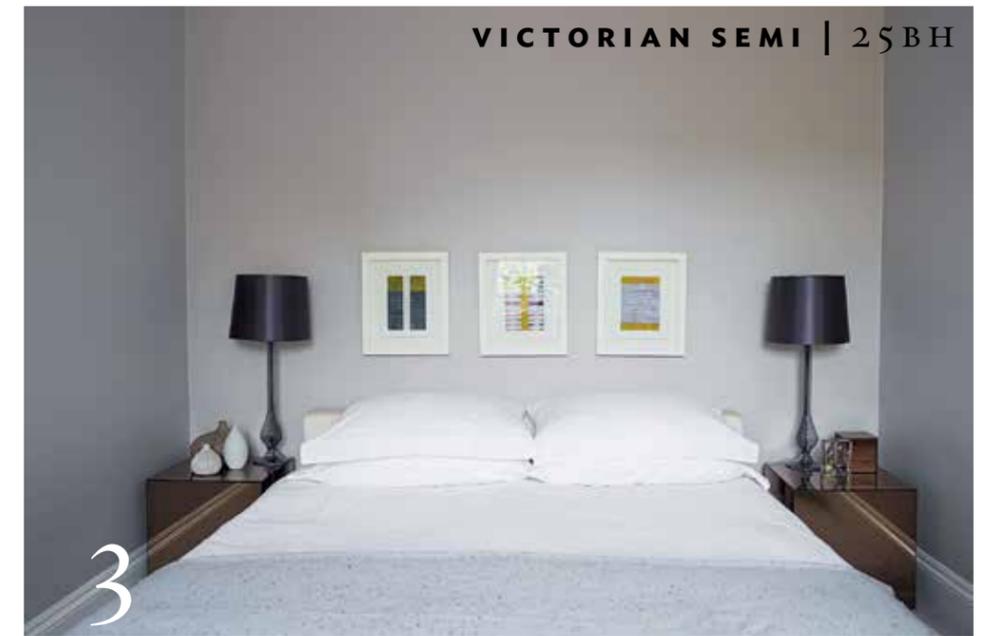
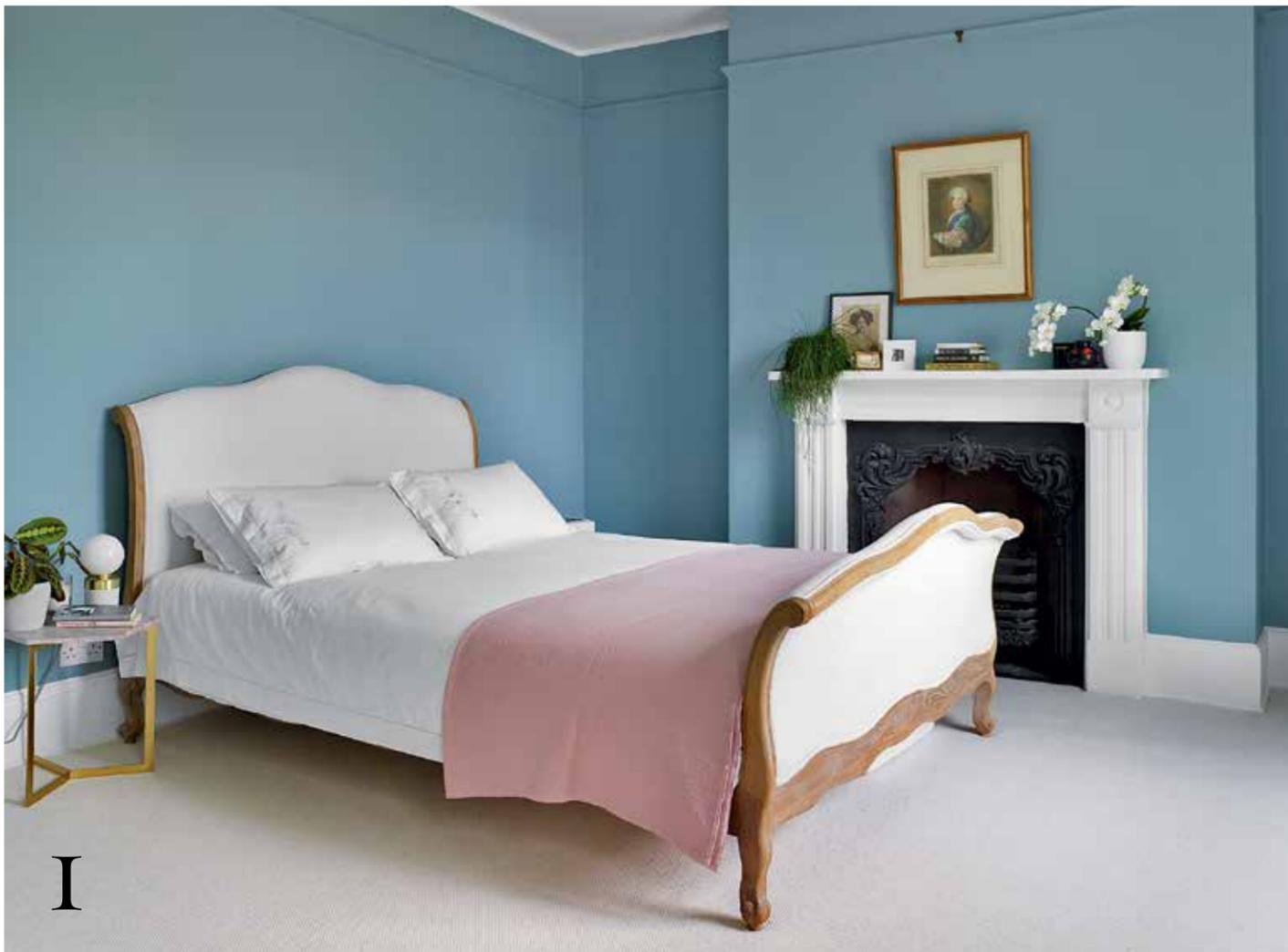
2



3



SITTING ROOM
Wooden furniture and flooring warms up the cool blue walls. 'We wanted to create a calm gentleman's club atmosphere in here,' says Salvatore.
Walls painted in Stiffkey Blue estate emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball.
Theo Show wood footstool, £299, West Elm



1 & 2 MASTER BEDROOM
Painted white, the original Victorian fireplace takes centre stage.

Walls painted in Oval Room Blue estate emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Antoinette bed, £1,145, Loaf. Hex side table, £159, West Elm. Design Project No.46 lamp, £65, John Lewis. Patsy mirror, £195, Habitat

3 GUEST BEDROOM
This unfussy, neutral scheme is designed to suit all overnight visitors.

Try Homes Direct 365 for mirrored cube storage units, £140 each. Light elongated copper table lamp with dark grey shade, £129, Lite Craft, will suit this setting. West Elm sells a selection of decorative bottles

4 BATHROOM
This bright and modern scheme that was once part of an unsightly 1970s garage now accommodates overnight guests.

Mike Pro monobloc tap, £199, Crosswater. Soak.com sells countertop basins, from £65. Vermont carrara white worktop, from £179, Bathstore, would suit this scheme

I

There are many things to love about this east London home, but the simple fact is that its owners, Salvatore Di Marco and David Fitzgerald moved here for the garden. 'We liked the area, the street and the house itself,' explains Salvatore, 'but for us the beautiful, mature garden was always the star of the show. However, there was no view of it from the house and you could only access it through a maze of rooms.'

Having fought off competition to buy the house, the pair honed their ideas for a few years before starting work on the lower-ground floor. Opening up the garden was key, and they also wanted to convert the garage into a guest suite, as they often have people to stay, including their elderly parents. 'It's the perfect place for them as everything they need is on one floor,' says Salvatore.

Salvatore and David selected Martyn Clarke Architecture for the project because of the company's experience on similar jobs and in dealing with the local planning authorities. Its designer Richard Penman worked with the couple to develop their ideas and draw up plans. 'We wanted to extend the rear of the property by four metres to create an open-plan kitchen, dining area and reading room,' explains Salvatore. 'But we felt that a cavernous space would not sit well with this early Victorian property and wanted to keep a sense of the proportions of the original house and give each area a clear function. Steps leading up to the reading room would help define this area – plus save excavation costs.' In the

kitchen, Carrara marble worktops and brass detailing make the basic Ikea units look ultra high-end. The guest suites on the upper and lower-ground floors are deliberately tucked away, while the utility room and office entrances are disguised behind a cupboard door and bookshelf respectively. This ensures that Salvatore and David can accommodate friends and family, but avoid the sense that they are rattling around a huge house when it is just them and their Victorian bulldog, Molly.

'Ambitious as this project was, everything went incredibly smoothly,' says Salvatore. 'The architects and their builders, NGS Building Services, were great to work with and very understanding. We moved out for seven months while the work took place as David preferred not to see the house during all the upheaval. But I visited the site every day – watching the transformation was amazing.'

With the structural work complete, the couple could then focus on redecorating the upper floors. Deciding to go bold, they opted for a dramatic dark inky-blue shade in the double sitting room. But they are most pleased with the new extension. 'We can finally enjoy the garden from the house,' says Salvatore. They also love the view of the house from the lawn, where they can marvel at what has been achieved and how the builders sensitively matched the new brickwork to the old. 'It has been wonderful to add our stamp,' concludes Salvatore, 'but we've tried to treat the house with respect and are aware that we're just its current custodians.'

FUTURE PLANS 'We'd like to inject more colour into the lower-ground floor starting with the TV room, and add more contemporary furniture throughout'

