



DINING AREA

'I wanted the colours of the chairs to match the artwork in this space,' says Colette. Oslo oak extending table, £1,022, Oak Furniture Solutions, is similar. Pamona sells a choice of vintage pendant lights, from £300

RETRO REVIVAL

A passionate collector of all things vintage, Colette Meechan has used her 1930s home to showcase her gloriously quirky finds

FEATURE SALLY SMITH | PHOTOGRAPHY FIONA MURRAY



DISTINCTIVE

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

A 1930s detached house

LOCATION Surrey

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, family room, TV room, utility room, cloakroom, four bedrooms (one en suite), family bathroom

PURCHASED 2004

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a house just one street away from here,' says Colette.



After living in Florida for two years, Colette and Jim Meechan returned to their old home in Surrey in 2002. 'It was great to be back, but the house felt small in comparison to the grand American home we'd been living in,' says Colette. 'It didn't take long for us to decide that we wanted more space for us and our two young children, Darragh, now 21, and Iona, 18.'

The couple did not have to look far to find the perfect place – a four-bedroom detached house just around the corner. 'We wanted to stay in the area, and this was just what we were looking for,' says Colette. 'The big rooms gave us all the space we were missing.'

Theory of evolution

Once the Meechans had moved in, Colette was keen to put her unique interior design plans into practice. 'I can look at a room and I know exactly what I'm going to do,' she says. 'It does take a while, though, as ideas then evolve over time. Through the years, the house has undergone many changes but, initially, we re-tiled and replaced all the bathroom suites, laid carpets upstairs, fitted new windows and repainted throughout.'

The couple only upgraded the kitchen a year ago. 'I wanted a minimalist look,' says Colette. 'It definitely had to be white and easy to clean, but I couldn't resist giving the room a 1970s twist. I chose metro tiles as I knew they would create a retro look, and I really didn't want to have a standard stainless steel extractor hood, which looks too conspicuous. As an alternative solution, we had it encased inside a tiled surround.'

A taste of the past

Ever since Colette was a student, she has been collecting all things vintage, and her greatest pleasure is visiting antiques fairs and markets. 'I've always liked clothes and furniture from the 1950s, '60s or '70s,' she says. 'The quality is amazing, and it's such good value.'

Colette's home is a true reflection of her vivacious personality and style. 'I have to get a creative fix each day, so I'm always looking in magazines and online for inspiration,' she says. 'I like pieces that have a story to tell – if I see something interesting, I'll buy it. I often don't know where it will go, though, and it can take years to find the right spot. In fact, I've had to put a stop to my collecting for now at least, as we're running out of space and we really don't want to move again.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM
An imposing bed, which the couple brought back from America, sets a grand tone. Walls painted in Straw estate emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



FAMILY BATHROOM
'The original scheme was tired, now it's simple yet chic with hints of glamour,' says Colette. The Florida round illuminated LED mirror, £71, Better Bathrooms, is a good match

GUEST BEDROOM
This has a cossetting 1970s feel. Hip Hop wooden bed frame, £400 for a double, Bensons for Beds, is comparable. For similar bedding try Orla Kiely's Flannel Giant Stem collection, £80 for a duvet cover



The End



KITCHEN

Colette spotted these encaustic floor tiles in a restaurant in Dorset and replicated the look in here. For similar try Berkeley charcoal tiles, £67.56sq m; Metro wall tiles, £18.50sq m, both Topps Tiles. Units, price on application, Krysalis Kitchens

FAVOURITE ROOM *'I like to enjoy wine with friends in our technology-free sitting room'*

SITTING ROOM

Plain walls and carpet allow bold fabric and vibrant accessories to shine. Bespoke sofas designed by Colette and made by Thorngate Upholstery, £800 each. Walls painted in London Stone estate emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres. Farrow & Ball

