



SITTING ROOM

"The first thing you notice about this room as you walk up the stairs is the ceiling, so I painted it a soft teal colour," says Tule, who also chose a pair of carved wood chandeliers to emphasise the enviable height of the space. Kentia palms and Asian ceramics lend exotic touches. Interior design, Yellowhouse Design, 07747 000146.

yellowhousedesign.co.uk.

Mid-century French armchairs, Ebury Trading, 020 7881 0881, eburytrading.com. **Visconti chandeliers**, £3,234 each, Villaverde, 020 7610 9797, villaverdeltd.com. **Curtains in Gibraltar**, £95m, Thibaut, 020 7351 6496, thibautdesign.com. **Persian Kashan rug** (under sofas), around £1,800, Fine Rug, 020 8090 2640, finerug.co.uk.



LONDON TOWN HOUSE

CROSSING *continents*

*Contrasting cultural styles unite to great success
in this uplifting Notting Hill home*

WORDS RACHEL LEEDHAM PHOTOGRAPHS RACHAEL SMITH



This vibrantly decorated Notting Hill town house is a brilliant example of London's broad cultural diversity. Its interiors reveal unexpected but inspiring juxtapositions, for instance, the Persian carpets offset with contemporary, geometric fabrics, or the French mid-century modern chairs surrounding a Chinese lacquered table, opposites that testify to the owners' itinerant backgrounds. Tule Park was born in Korea and brought up in South America and North America before she met her French husband, Charles Laurent, when the pair were both working in Asia.

The couple have made London their base for the past 12 years, during which time their children, Chloe, 11, and Max, eight arrived. "When I land at Heathrow after being away, I feel that I have come home," says Tule. "It's a real sense of belonging, as the city represents such a variety of people, food and culture."

After 12 years of working in finance, Tule recently retrained as an interior designer. "Moving house a number of times made me realise how much your moods and emotions can be affected by your environment," she explains. "I painted the dining room in our previous apartment a vivid yellow and I couldn't believe the difference it made; the room instantly felt like a happier place."

"Uplifting" and "happy" are words that surface time and again in conversation with Tule; they were, it transpires, the guiding principles to her refurbishment of this house. Each paint colour was carefully chosen to lift the spirits, while plants,

SITTING ROOM

A Persian rug and a pair of vintage French armchairs define this second seating area, which is used for reading and playing board games. The mid-20th century painting is from France. Armchair in Cosmos in Nautilus 383-26, £76.50m, Lelièvre, 020 7352 4798, lelievre.eu. Persian Moud rug, from £1,800, Fine Rug, 020 8090 2640, finerug.co.uk.

LIBRARY

This smaller space adjoining the sitting room is lined with bookshelves painted in mushroom grey. The glazed panel above the piano was added to draw light into the staircase beyond. Bookshelves in Charleston Gray, Estate Eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball, 01202 876141, farrow-ball.com. Glover W3-001SP wall lights, £425 each; shades, from £112 each, all Besselink & Jones, 020 7351 4669, besselink.com.

DINING ROOM

Chairs in a blue-and-white geometric print offer a bold contrast to the organic pattern of the hand-painted silk Chinoiserie panels, which Tule had made in China. "I like to use geometric designs as they bring a sense of order," she says. The curvaceous lamps and lacquered table add to the Asian feel of the space. Dining chairs in Gabriel, £76m, Thibaut, 020 7351 6496, thibautdesign.com. For similar pendant lamps, try Gong, 07930 327772, gong.co.uk. Mandarin white lacquer console table, £1,195, Orchid, 020 7384 2443, orchidfurniture.co.uk. Walls in Down Pipe, Estate Emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball, 01202 876141, farrow-ball.com.



flowers and botanical wallpapers and fabrics were used to bring the outside into the home. “We love nature,” she says, “and we couldn’t live without plants and flowers; they transform a room.”

The Victorian building itself is unusual in that it occupies a corner plot in the street, which means that many of the key rooms have a double aspect. When Tule and Charles bought it in 2009, the house still bore evidence of the bedsits that the previous owners had put in. “I think a lot of people had been put off by the number of rooms and doors; the place was screaming out to be reordered,” says Tule.

On the plus side was the fact that the property came with plans to extend the narrower, north-facing end. This enabled the couple to expand a small, boxy space to create a dining room on the ground floor, and add a bathroom to Chloe’s bedroom on the floor above. In the basement, a warren of rooms has been turned into a home cinema, a gym, a utility room and a guest bedroom, while a shower room has also been made by excavating beneath the steps that lead up to the house.

For the family, the “headquarters” of the home is the kitchen and informal dining space, which was made by knocking one of the many sitting rooms and a laundry into one. “The huge south-facing windows in the laundry had been boarded up and when the boards came down, we had this wonderfully bright, energising room,” says Tule, who turned the same dual aspect space on the floor above into the sitting room.

A soft shade of sand has been used to decorate the walls of the staircase that runs through the core of the house, and this

KITCHEN

“I chose painted wooden cabinets because timber has a wonderful tactile quality,” says Tule (above). The classic kitchen design is enlivened by lampshades with a botanical motif and an alcove above the worktop in chartreuse green. **Classic kitchen**, Roundhouse, 020 7297 6220, roundhouse design.com. **Similar chairs**, Camargue dining chairs in Linen Grey, £169 each, Oka, 0844 815 7380, okadirect.com. **Window seat** in Braulen, £63.50m, Nina Campbell at Osborne & Little, 020 8812 3123, osborneandlittle.com.

GUEST SHOWER ROOM

A palm-leaf design brings a lush, exotic touch to this space, created by excavating beneath the entrance stairs. **Palm Jungle wallpaper**, £78 a roll, Cole & Son, 020 7376 4628, cole-and-son.com.

CHLOE’S ROOM

Curtains in the same pattern as the wallpaper hide the entrance to Chloe’s bathroom. The canopy adds a decorative touch and insulates the bed from the exterior wall. **Orchard Blossom wallpaper**, £64 a roll; **curtain** in Orchard Blossom, £61m; both Nina Campbell at Osborne & Little, 020 8812 3123, osborneandlittle.com. **Canopy** in Carnival Toile, £47m, Thibaut, 020 7351 6496, thibautdesign.com.

GUEST BEDROOM

This basement room is papered in an intricate toile de Jouy design, which is offset by the crisp trellis-patterned cushions. **Cushions** in Xu Garden, £69m, Kravet at GP&J Baker, 020 7795 0110, gpandjbaker.com.





MAIN BEDROOM
Tactile wallpaper helps anchor the bed in this bright space, while a large plant and leafy armchair fabric (below) reflect the couple's passion for nature. Grasscloth GC055 wallpaper, £170 for a 5.5m roll, Altfield, 020 7351 5893, altfield.com. Chair in Manila, £52m, Sanderson, 0844 543 9500, sanderson-uk.com.

Colours were chosen to lift the spirits, while botanical prints bring the outside into the home.

dictated the palette of subtle hues for the living spaces. These colours form a canvas for the couple's possessions, many of which were culled from far-flung corners of the world: blue-and-white china from Hong Kong, woven baskets from Cambodia and Burma, and delicate shells collected on a recent trip to Polynesia. "Having lived on four continents and travelled widely, I've picked up a lot of things over the years," says Tule.

The dining room is the most Asian-inspired of the rooms and also the most dramatic: the fourth wall of the otherwise moody grey-blue painted room is lined with exquisite silk Chinoiserie panels. "The room faces north so there was no point in trying to brighten it; I wouldn't have succeeded," Tule says. "Instead, I chose a dark blue background for the panels because it makes the birds and foliage stand out; you almost feel there is movement in the pattern."

The room comes into its own in the evening, when the couple uses it for entertaining. Just like her decorative schemes, Tule's cuisine is a mix of influences: "My cooking is a fusion of East and West and everything in between," she laughs. "As a starter, I can serve escargots on a bed of mascarpone mashed potatoes, followed by a green Thai curry with a kick." Fusion, indeed – and all the more inspirational for it. □

