

Victorian Modern *A Design Bible for the Victorian Home*

Jo Leavers and Rachael Smith

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The perfect design handbook for anyone who lives in a Victorian home, placing period features and 19th-century design in context and exploring how today's designers are adapting these houses in innovative ways for contemporary lifestyles.

Loved for their period character, Victorian homes aren't always suited to modern living. *Victorian Modern* is the ultimate design bible to help you make sense of those inherited quirks and features, showing how leading designers and creative homeowners are turning their own homes into contemporary showstoppers.

The book comprises seven chapters, organized according to how we use our homes: dining, cooking, entertaining, sleeping, bathing, working and transitional areas, such as hallways. Each chapter explains how the Victorians designed and decorated these spaces, before moving on to their modern interpretations. Inside are plenty of tips, tricks and inspiration for transforming your 19th-century home into a light-filled modern one, ready for the 21st century.

Combining cultural context with advice and inspiration from the homes of interior designers, architects and stylists, *Victorian Modern* reveals how the history and design of 19th-century homes can influence and inform our modern lifestyles and home decor in fresh and interesting ways.

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Rachael Smith is an interiors photographer whose work appears regularly in House & Garden, World of Interiors, Elle Decoration, Homes & Gardens, Architectural Digest and magazines in Asia and Europe, and the Times, Observer and Telegraph. Her books include London Shopfronts (2021) and Dungeness: Coastal Architecture (2022).

PRACTICALITY AND BEAUTY

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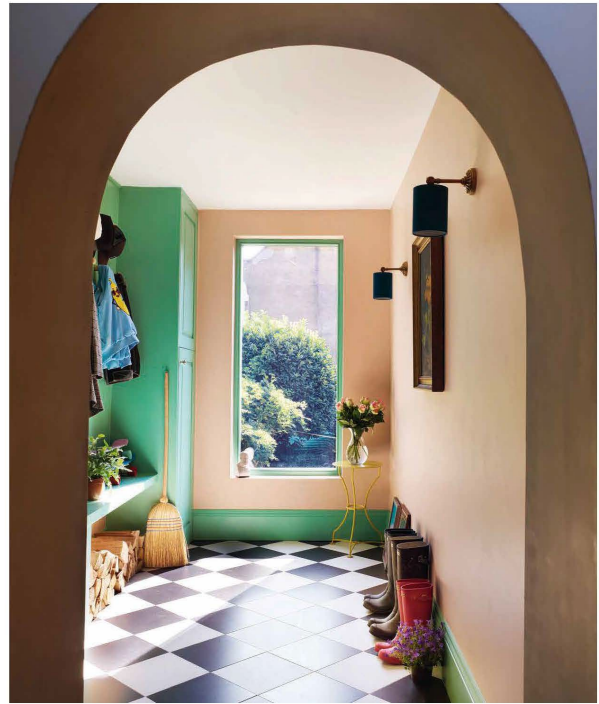
This southwest London home opens into a relatively small entrance area, so to create more space, owner Chris Graves turned the room opposite the front door into a boot room, decorated in a luminous shade of green. It had previously been part of the next-door drawing room, but Chris, who runs the interior design studio Clarence & Graves, reinstated the original wall, reclaiming the space and restoring the proportions of the room.

Coats, bags and hats all have their own designated place, and there's also a built-in bench and a log store. The old door was replaced with a larger archway, which acts as a frame for the delicious colour combination of 'Arsenic' and 'Setting Plaster', both by Farrow & Ball – shades given extra zing by the chequerboard flooring. The unadorned window at the far end adds a sense of classical balance, and allows light to flow into the boot room – an unusual bonus.

BELOW LEFT
Tongue-and-groove panelling brings a rustic touch to this urban home.

BELOW
An archway instead of a door means more light and less architectural clutter.

OPPOSITE
A modern window is outlined in 'Arsenic' to match the panelling and skirting.



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THE GREAT COLLECTORS

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The 19th-century fashion for displaying favourite objects in cabinets, under glass domes or on a mantelpiece was a large part of the decorative style of the time. The queen of household tips, Mrs J.E. Fanton, even went so far as to claim that the display of 'our dearest treasures' in the parlour reflected the high moral standards that were maintained in the home. For the wealthy, such collections indicated a finely tuned sense of taste. With the rise of factory-made pottery, however, even modest homes could have a special ornament on display. Today, collections are more about individual taste than moral rectitude, blending groovy mid-century furniture with florid Victoriana or bold art with family photographs.



ABOVE
Mid-century and family photos mingle with artworks in Alex and Mishari Al-Bader's home.

RIGHT
Suzanna Sharp is an avid collector of modern furniture and contemporary artworks.

OPPOSITE
With her eye for colour, Suzanna brings together collectibles from different eras.



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OPPOSITE
Café chairs from Sunbury Antiques Market live up to a traditional table.

BELOW
Walls in sunny yellow act as a warm counterbalance to the metallic finishes.

BELOW RIGHT
Different colours of paint were used to pop up the existing kitchen cabinets.

A COLOURFUL TRANSFORMATION

This extended kitchen-diner is a welcoming, easygoing space that has been transformed by colour without any drastic changes or a huge outlay. A side-return extension had already been completed when jewelry designer Sandra Barrio von Hürter bought the house, but she saw scope to widen the run of glazing at the rear, adding two extra sections of glass to make the space feel closer to the garden and bring in extra light.

Then came the colours. Sandra wanted to add hot, vibrant hues throughout, using paint, fabrics and patterns. She had blinds made in Mulberry's 'Sailboat' linen and kept the candy-stripe colours in mind for the rest of the room. The walls in 'Orangery' by Farrow & Ball give a year-round dose of sunshine, while four woven pendants by Masilda Goed for edit52 add to the frivolous, fun atmosphere.

DINING ROOMS - A MULTIPURPOSE SPACE



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BEDROOMS - A STYLISH SANCTUARY

IN PRAISE OF CHINTZ

'Chintz', derived from the Hindi *chint*, meaning 'sprinkle' or 'spray', has become shorthand for any slightly old-fashioned floral pattern. After Portuguese and Dutch colonists brought these fabrics back to Europe, the craze for such patterns reached a peak in the 17th century. Two hundred years later, British factories were churning out cheaper and fussier versions. Victorians loved furnishing with chintz with a smooth finish, favouring it over velvet and brocade, which were magnets for dust. The style was championed by Colefax & Fowler in the 1940s, revived in the 1970s and was popular into the 1980s. Despite Ikea urging everyone to 'chuck out your chintz' in 1996, it is now firmly back in favour, beefing up maximalist schemes or adding a nostalgic air to country homes.

ABOVE
The 'Nymphs' wallpaper by GP & J Baker is based on a Ming dynasty silk scroll.

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT
A modern take on florals by Minica Sutoldi for Solar in Alex and Mishari Al-Bader's home.

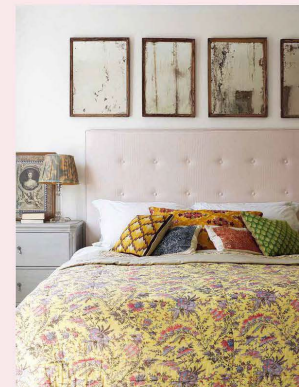
OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT
The vintage Morris & Co. curtain at Sprink Nest was an eBay find.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT
An antique chair in Suzanne Sharp's bedroom is covered in 'Avon' by Bennison Fabrics.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT
A kantha quilt and embroidered cushions in Rebecca Gordon's guest bedroom.



BEDROOMS - A STYLISH SANCTUARY



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