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PRACTICAL PERFECTION

From laidback luxury on an island paradise to the gentle evolution of a Sussex farmhouse

PLUS THE DYNAMIC CHATELAINE OF AN INNOVATIVE COUNTRY ESTATE

THIS PAGE The striking 'Convex Globe' lantern from Jamb provides a focal point in the entrance hall, while the rug is one of several in the house from Robert Stephenson. **OPPOSITE** At the back of the house, a paved terrace adjoins the lower-ground floor and there is a glass-walled balcony that extends from outside the kitchen around to the drawing room, plus a terrace outside the main bedroom above. The garden was designed by Colin Nicholson for Leveson Landscape



open to all

An unpromising cluster of trade-union offices and bedsits in south London has been transformed by Cindy Leveson into spacious rooms, which are elegant but practical for a young family

TEXT ANNABEL FOLEY | PHOTOGRAPHS ALEXANDER JAMES | LOCATIONS EDITOR LAVINIA BOLTON





THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The main staircase was built by Excel Stairs. In the main bedroom, an antique dressing table from Guy Dennler is paired with a Hepplewhite stool. The fabric on an antique chair from The French House picks out the pinky hues of the marble bath surround in the main bathroom. **OPPOSITE** Colefax and Fowler's 'Fernwood' wallpaper is used in a child's bedroom



Fortunately for Cindy, the couple knew what they liked and were very decisive. 'We were quite like-minded in our tastes, so I would often put together things I might choose if it was my house and find that we agreed,' she says. 'It works for them now, and I don't think the design will date.'

It wasn't all plain sailing, though. The ikat curtains in the drawing room are inspired by a fabric by Robert Kime. Sadly, he couldn't provide enough fabric to make them so, having already started decorating the room, Cindy found a man called Aziz in Uzbekistan who promised he could make something very similar. Samples went back and forth, never quite matching the original.

'He sent through one that looked very pretty – though different – and so the order went in,' says Cindy. 'Because ikat is made of very narrow widths, we needed 98 metres to make these curtains. The fabric was shipped straight to the curtain maker who rang me to say she had good and bad news. I opted for the bad, as I felt that it couldn't get any worse and I had already had months of sleepless nights over it. She said that the fabric was a completely different colour to the sample, but the good news was that it was ten times better.'

Since the family moved in three years ago, they have used every room in the house, though there is little evidence to suggest that an army of small children races through it on a daily basis. What is obvious is that Cindy has achieved exactly what they were hoping for. As the owner simply puts it, 'It's perfect' □

Leveson Design: 020-7622 8815; levesondesign.com