

STYLE

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INTERIORS SPECIAL HOW TO CREATE A STYLISH HOME

EXCLUSIVE

INSIDE THE HOUSE
THAT INSTAGRAM BUILT
LAURA JACKSON'S
RENOVATION STORY

DOLLY ALDERTON
ON HER WORST VICE

FASHION

WHERE TO SHOP
VINTAGE



THE HOUSE THAT INSTAGRAM BUILT



Above Jackson at her front door. Jacket, £2,495, and trousers, £1,160, Prada. Shoes, £475, Malone Souliers. Serpenti gold and diamond earrings, £36,700, Bulgari. **Above right** The living room is painted in Hunter Dunn by Paint & Paper Library.

Opposite Jackson kept the smoke-stained wallpaper, thought to be by Sanderson, in the living room. The vintage woven chest of drawers came from Vinterior and the tropical wall sconce was an eBay find. Shirt, £295, and skirt, £375, Rejina Pyo. Rose des Vents rose gold earrings, £3,400, and matching bracelet, £6,200, Dior Joaillerie. Rings (throughout), Laura's own



Fashion favourite Laura Jackson is the poster woman for a new generation of interiors obsessives who have cultivated their craft on social media. Here, she shares the exclusive first pictures from her lovingly curated family home. Interview by **Olivia Lidbury**

IF FURNITURE COULD SPEAK, then the rooms in Laura Jackson's house would be full of chatter. Her downstairs loo, for example, previously belonged to Mark Owen of Take That fame. "It's a good story," Jackson laughs. "I want my house to be a collection of things that tell a tale, rather than buying everything from one shop."

From the lavatory door (reclaimed from a courthouse) to the top of the dining table (salvaged from a school), almost everything in her carefully curated house has enjoyed a past life.

That's what Jackson, 33, founder of lifestyle brand Hoste (@hoste.london) found endearing about the four-bedroom Victorian house in Forest Gate, east London, that she and her photographer husband, Jon Gorrihan, 38, bought in 2016. The woman selling the property had lived there for 50 years, marrying and raising a family. "It had a really nice, calm feeling and I felt it would make such a lovely family home," says Jackson, who since moving in has welcomed a daughter, Sidney, now nine months.

Any of Jackson's 106,000 Instagram followers might feel like they have been on part of the renovation journey with her. They've seen posts of decor scenes that inspire her, been asked via Stories if sisal is too slippery to be a

Photographs Nacho Alegre Styling Rose Forde



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stair runner (it turns out it is — she has opted for hessian) and provided recommendations for an illustrator to paint the nursery. It makes for a compelling relationship. By accident she has added interiors influencer to her CV, and her enthusiasm has been welcomed by an industry that has become more democratised thanks to social media. In 2017 and 2018 she had sellout home-wares collaborations with Habitat, and last September she founded Hoste, now with its own podcast, *Hosteing with Laura Jackson*.

When the couple moved in three years ago, the house was livable but dated. They pulled up the carpets and sanded and plotted for more than two years before embarking on modernisations. (Jackson points out that this is not a home paid for through #spon freebies.) The project, which started early last year, was ambitious for a first home, especially with a baby on the way. Starting from the top down, the attic was converted into a bedroom with an open-plan bathroom, featuring a roll-top bath. Until a cowboy builder disappeared midway through the works. “His price was really good — too good — and he screwed us over. It felt so personal, because you’re essentially letting people into your own space.”

For the costliest part of the renovations — the kitchen extension and basement excavation — she got three quotes, then spent time getting to know their chosen builder, sharing mood boards and viewing previous projects in person. The end result is a luminous greenhouse-like structure with kitchen-cabinet fronts made from repurposed Italian church floors from Retrouvius, fashion’s favourite interiors and reclamation company. The new kitchen is the heart of the home, where she will stage monthly Hoste supper clubs. “I love inviting people round and having dinner parties,” she says. “I wanted it to be a space where everyone could sit and drink and watch me cook.”

Jackson grew up in Huddersfield with a sister and three step-siblings. Her mother was creative, hand-sewing dresses for her daughters and frequently entertaining — which left its mark on Jackson. She studied events management at Greenwich University, but it was while working as a receptionist at Shoreditch House that doors into broadcasting opened and she got to front television shows such as *Freshly Squeezed* with Nick Grimshaw and *Take Me Out: The Gossip*. In 2013 she started hosting supper clubs with the Radio 1 DJ Alice Levine, a friend and fellow food fanatic. These became so popular that they put out a cookbook, *Round to Ours*, in 2017.

With no interior designer on board, the attention to detail in Jackson’s house is remarkable, from the choice of plug sockets and light switches to the old vitrines that hold the crockery. Jackson loves a bargain: “I’m happy to get up at 6am to go to a flea market where I’ll find something I really love, whether it costs £1 or £50. Anyone can do it, you just have to be bothered enough.” When she was quoted £16,000 for terracotta kitchen floor tiles from a well-known retailer, she was determined to find an alternative, eventually landing upon a tradesman



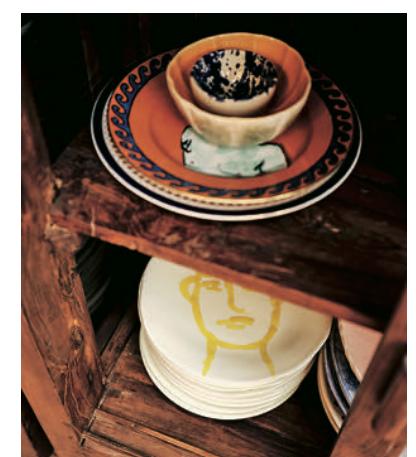
‘I’m happy to get up at 6am to go to a flea market to find something I love. Anyone can do it, you just have to be bothered enough’

who sourced a similar style from Serbia for a sixth of the cost. If it all sounds a bit exhausting, then Jackson is the first to roll her eyes and admit that it is. “People said to me, ‘You’re mad doing a house and having a baby and trying to get back into work,’ and I was, like, ‘It’s going to be fine.’ But, yep, it was probably the most stressful time of my life.”

It helps that her husband also loves to seek out old treasures; together they have gone on road trips in his van (on two occasions, baby included) all the way to furniture warehouses in Holland and Belgium, just to unearth the perfect bathroom cabinet. “It’s a process, not a race, and where there’s a will there’s

Left Travertine worktops offset the salvaged kitchen cabinets. The splatter bowls are from her collaboration with Habitat. Shirt, £130, dress, £2,290, and belt, £275, Michael Kors. Shoes, £850, Jimmy Choo. **Below** Crockery was sourced on her travels. **Bottom** In the kitchen are a reclaimed school table, and dome lights from Retrouvius.

Opposite, top The photograph was taken in Sicily by Jackson’s husband. **Opposite, bottom** The hallway and landing are painted in Setting Plaster by Farrow & Ball. The artwork, Indigo form V by Caroline Popham, is from Alex Eagle, and the sisal floor runner is from Alternative Flooring. Dress, £1,100, Kate Spade. Shoes, £795, Prada. B Blossom gold and diamond earrings, £4,500, and matching ring, £2,680, Louis Vuitton



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a way. I've always been such a homemaker and obsessed with interiors. Even when I didn't own anywhere, I had Pinterest boards for kitchens and wallpapers." She and Gorrihan previously rented an old warehouse space in Hackney with a "higgledy-piggedy" kitchen, where the oven would wobble on the uneven floor.

The overall aesthetic of the house is soft and warm, rather than nodding to any decor trends. Jackson says she is drawn to individual pieces rather than any specific look or style. She is inspired by dozens of Instagram accounts, including decoupage specialist John Derian Company (@johnderiancompany), Rose Uniacke Interiors (@roseuniacke) and ceramicist Marion Benoit (@maisonmerveille), but adds: "It's important to remember that taste is subjective, and while it's easy to get caught up in what everyone else is doing on Instagram, this is a house simply to please me and my family."

After fashion, interiors is arguably the platform's biggest industry. Trends are born via its tiny squares, from pink velvet sofas to imitation-Berber rugs, then die through ubiquity. Whereas Jackson may have made purchases impulsively in the past, she is more mindful now about what will work with the house. Her design

'While it's easy to get caught up in what everyone else is doing on Instagram, this is a house to please me and my family'



Far left The nursery walls are painted with a bespoke botanical mural by decorative artist Tess Newall. The rug is by Weaver Green and the rocking horse was found at Ardingly Antiques & Collectors Fair.
Left The master bedroom is painted in Fair Blue by Edward Bulmer. Travel treasures sit on the chest of drawers

no-nos include spotlights — which raised challenges around the lighting — and feature walls. She is also candid about making mistakes: the mustard yellow kitchen walls may eventually be painted over in favour of something "calmer" and the floor-to-ceiling vitrines sold on — "they feel too woody" — to make way for a sofa.

A decision she has no regrets about is keeping the 50-year-old floral wallpaper in the living room, which is smoke-stained in parts. "I had wanted to strip it out, but I'm glad Jon convinced me not to. It feels like such a big part of the house, and I remember the former owner saying how much she loved that room."

Jackson accepts that the house might never quite be done. Next on the list is to tackle the garden (and, where work is concerned, surely an interiors-themed TV show with her as the impassioned host is on the cards). But the thrill of the find is a process she relishes — and the mission to have created a home is certainly complete. "I love being here," she says. "Every day I feel excited to come home and make dinner."



HAIR LEIGH KEATES AT THE WALL GROUP MAKE-UP: EMMA WHITE TURLE
AT THE WALL GROUP NAILS: REBECCA LADE WILSON AT THE WALL GROUP



Above Wool top with brooch, £850, Louis Vuitton. Red pleated skirt, £1,060, and black leather choker, £285, Gucci. Earrings, £825, Sophie Bille Brahe.
Left The bathroom tiles are by Cevica, the vintage bath is from Original Baths and Jackson found the cabinet in Belgium.
Opposite, bottom The bathroom sink came from Original Baths and the shower is made from tadelakt, the Moroccan waterproof plaster



WHAT WOULD LAURA DO? HER TIPS FOR DECORATING YOUR HOME

■ Don't be afraid to haggle, especially if you're buying a couple of things from the same vendor. Be a bit cheeky when asking if they can do a deal.

■ The cost of plants quickly adds up, so we use Freecycle (freecycle.org). It's surprising how many offices move and have plants that need saving.

■ Don't be put off by distance: I use the transport marketplace Shiply (shiply.com) to get quotes for eBay purchases that are bulky and located far away.

■ The Saleroom (the-saleroom.com) is a brilliant website that consolidates auctions from around the UK. I found my daughter's wardrobe on there for £50.

■ Canvass your Instagram followers. I often ask for recommendations and it has proved invaluable — there's always going to be someone who can share first-hand advice.

■ Think carefully about lighting sources and types of bulbs. Our small living room doesn't have overhead lighting, just low-level wall lights, which makes it feel warm and relaxed.

■ Finding tradespeople who will go above and beyond and who are keen to make your vision a reality makes all the difference. Take the time to find out what solutions someone can propose and how you can work collaboratively.

■ Never cut corners on carpentry and plumbing — these are aspects that outsiders might not notice, but you need them to function as well as they possibly can.

■ If you don't have the budget for a high-spec kitchen, spend your money on a special worktop or handles to make it unique. It's those finishing touches that will really make it. ■

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