

# NATURAL HABITAT

Take one mock-Tudor house in Surrey, gut it, then add pale neutrals and an impressive art collection. That's exactly what Lykke has done

Words – Joanna Simmons  
Photography – James Merrell  
Styling – Mary Weaver

## Home profile

**THE OWNERS** Lykke Højriis Larsen, an interior designer, her husband and their three children.

**THE PROPERTY** A detached house in Surrey, built in 1920. The ground floor has a living room, kitchen-diner, utility room, two store rooms, a games room, boot room, study, WC, wet room and a second kitchen. On the first floor there are four bedrooms, three bathrooms and the couple's dressing room and master bathroom. The loft has been converted into the master bedroom, with an adjoining sitting room and another bathroom.

## DINING AREA

'I wanted soft touches of colour in the house,' says Lykke, who sent a sample of the green leather on the chairs to the wallpaper company, so it could work the shade into the design.

**GET THE LOOK** The hand-painted silk wallpaper is from de Gournay. The upholstered chairs are by Philippe Hurel. The dining table was found in an antiques shop in Denmark. For similar designs, try Nicky Cornell.



## KITCHEN

Oak beams add a shot of English tradition to the open-plan interior. 'The wood is not completely stable,' Lykke says. 'It expands and contracts, which has caused a few problems – but it looks great!'

**GET THE LOOK** The island unit forms part of a Boffi kitchen. The china is by Royal Copenhagen. The wide Douglas fir boards are by Dinesen. For a similar woven basket, try Store. The large photographic artwork hanging on the living room wall is by Danish artist Trine Søndergaard.

# 'Art is good for the soul,'



**GET THE LOOK** Vintage Chinese photos such as this one were routinely destroyed during Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution, so are hard to come by. For similar prints, visit [Old Japan](#).

says Lykke Højriis Larsen, looking around at the portraits, abstract paintings, photographs and sculptures displayed in her home. 'It says a lot about what you like and who you are.' Her mother was an art dealer back in their native Denmark and she was constantly being taken to exhibitions as a child. 'For me, artwork makes a home,' says Lykke.

Before she had children, a career in sales and marketing took Lykke around the world. She lived in Asia, South America, Switzerland and Norway, picking up treasures along the way and gradually rethinking how her fellow Danes do interiors. 'Back home, we use a lot of white, but I prefer a softer, natural palette,' says Lykke. 'I like the clean lines of Scandinavian style, but think it sometimes lacks cosiness. I love English and French country décor, so I've tried to blend that with a Nordic aesthetic here.'

A mix of country and Scandi prevails throughout Lykke's spacious home in Surrey. Alongside Danish classics, such as the wide, pale Dinesen floorboards, are mellow tones taken straight from nature. There are touches of green – on the chairs and wallpaper in the dining space – hints of lavender and myriad greys too. 'There really are 50 shades here and I enjoyed choosing each and every one of them!' laughs Lykke. 'They don't strike the eye, but they help create a warm atmosphere.'

Perhaps the best place to see Lykke's vision of country cosiness meets Nordic restraint is the kitchen. Here, chunky oak beams ram the space with rustic style and act as a bold contrast to the sleek Boffi units. They also perform a serious function, supporting the floor above. 'I promised myself those beams,' says Lykke. 'They are more than just decoration, though, so I feel better about putting them in.'

Using wooden beams instead of steel was just one of hundreds of decisions Lykke made as she project-managed the 18-month redesign of the house. With help from architectural designer Chris Lee, she chose to clad the external walls in wide, grey boards, giving the property a Cape Cod vibe, light years away from its mock-Tudor origins, while inside, walls were knocked down to create an open, flowing space. 'My husband says we should have just built a new house,' says Lykke, smiling, 'but we've kept the outer walls and, more importantly, the soul of the original house, while also introducing some character.'

Lykke's bible during the rebuild was a folder she put together before the family's furniture and art went into storage, containing photos and measurements of all their possessions. 'It's the most useful thing I've ever done,' she says. 'It meant I could design alcoves to fit favourite sculptures and could leave wall panelling out of a room if it meant a painting wouldn't fit above it.' Art, for Lykke, is an essential ingredient for the feel of the house, so finding the right space for each piece was vital.

While artwork brings personality, casual country touches, including logs stacked next to the rotating wood burner that hangs between the kitchen and dining space, keep the look – and the temperature – warm. Lykke regularly throws dinner parties for 20 or more people, with the table from the terrace dragged in to make a double dining space.

Being able to enjoy food, fire, friends and family in this house is both a triumph of Lykke's design and a very Danish ambition. 'In Denmark, we have the word *hyggelig*,' she says. 'It means cosiness. It's how we all want to live and eat, to combat the cold and dark.' The *hyggelig* vibe seems to work well in grey old Britain too. 'Absolutely!' says Lykke. 'As a child, I could swim in the sea in April, like a true Viking, but not any more. I want to feel cosy now and I do here, all year round.'

To contact Lykke about interior design projects, go to [lykkelarsenliving.co.uk](#). Find out more about Chris Lee's company [Nuff Design](#) at [nuff-design.co.uk](#)



## ← LIVING ROOM ↑

Art books on the shelves and Lykke's paintings add colour to the otherwise neutral scheme.

**GET THE LOOK** The Camilla armchair is from Poliform. The sofas were bought at Harrods. The marble-topped PK61 coffee table is by Poul Kjærholm for Fritz Hansen at Republic of Fritz Hansen. The rug was bought from Design Centre Chelsea Harbour. The Taif chandelier is by Angelo Barovier for Barovier&Toso. The painting is by Zhang Xiogang. Visit [Pace London](#) to see more of his work.



↓ KITCHEN →

'I wanted a rustic-style scheme, but my husband liked this modern, streamlined look,' says Lykke. 'It's a nice contrast to the beams and works with the rest of the house.'  
**GET THE LOOK** The kitchen is by Boffi. The ceiling lights are from Luceplan. To buy the Lem bar stool by La Palma, try John Lewis.



*'I've mixed and matched lots of influences, but because I was quite conservative in the way that I did it, I think it all works together'*

**MASTER BEDROOM**

'Our bedroom is our private haven,' says Lykke. 'The children tend to go down from their rooms, not up, so this is a quiet space.' Built-in alcoves contain sculptures, while the beams and skylights create the light, bright, country feel that Lykke loves.  
**GET THE LOOK** The Chinese bedside table was bought from an antiques dealer in Denmark. Try 1stdibs.com for similar. To buy the Bestlite 1 table lamps by Bestlite by Gubi, visit The Conran Shop. For glass balustrades in this style, go to Urban Glass Systems.



Home truths

**IN YOUR NEXT LIFE, YOU WOULD BE...** Tall – definitely!  
**WHAT BORES YOU?** When things are the same, day in, day out...  
**WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT LIVING IN ENGLAND?** The English language. I love the accent. Plus, the beautiful countryside, the international diversity and London.  
**WHAT DO SCANDINAVIANS DO BEST?** Cosy cafés and restaurants. The English need to shape up!  
**WHAT'S ON THE MENU WHEN FRIENDS ARE OVER FOR DINNER?** It could be Asian food, salads or a rare steak. I love Gwyneth Paltrow's recipes too. Her kale and mint juice is amazing – I drink it every day.  
**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE WAY TO WASTE TIME?** A good deep-tissue massage.



← **MASTER BATHROOM**

Lykke created a bathroom and dressing room in what had been the master bedroom. 'In our last place, we had a bath in an open-plan bedroom,' she says. 'It looked cool, but it was a nightmare! Now if one of us gets up early, we can come down here and get ready without disturbing the other.'

**GET THE LOOK** The Flumi bath is by Boffi. The mirror is a French antique. Try La Maison for similar. The Shadow Dharmar chandelier is by Barovier&Toso.

**DRESSING ROOM** →

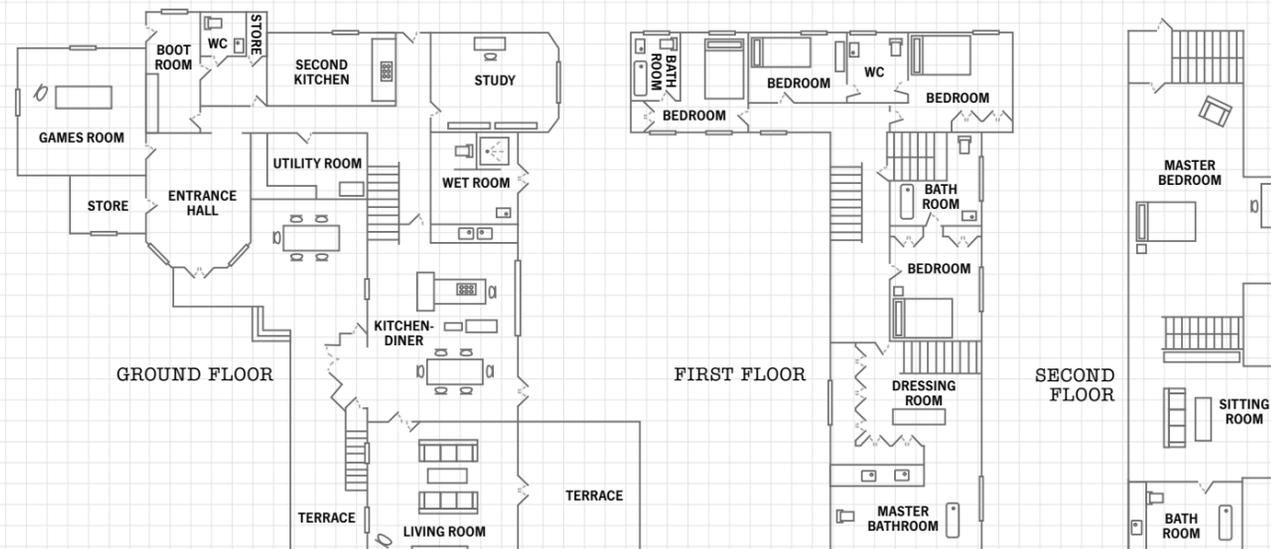
Built-in wardrobes provide ample hanging space, while a central island contains drawers and open shelves for Lykke's shoe collection.

**GET THE LOOK** The built-in storage is by Poliform. The Matrioska suspension light is by Barovier&Toso. The PK22 lounge chairs are by Poul Kjærholm for Fritz Hansen at Republic of Fritz Hansen.

*'My husband had a very cool flat in London before we got together – it even had silk curtains, which is quite unusual for a man! But we agreed that I would do*



The blueprint



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