



**FAVOURITE ROOM** *'We love the kitchen-diner. The sheer size of it means the whole family can spend time together without getting in each other's way'*

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**W**hen Rebecca and Andrew Doyle moved into their house in Kent with their twins, Max and Isabella, now six, they decided to leave any building work for at least five years. Instead, they began by revamping the dated property to suit their immediate needs. However, this still involved creating two new bathrooms, rewiring, installing uPVC double glazing and redecorating and recarpeting throughout.

'It was important to upgrade the windows, as it felt colder inside than out,' says Rebecca. 'And we needed to do something about the 1970s-style bathroom, which was so spacious that it easily became two suites instead.'

As both Rebecca and Andrew are 6ft, they purchased a 1.85m cast-iron bath, but it was so wide that they couldn't carry it up the stairs until they took out some plaster boarding. 'It took seven people to lift it into the ensuite,' she says. 'There were also fireplaces and gas fires that we removed as they weren't to our taste, and we took out the fitted units in the bedroom as initially we couldn't fit our bed in.'

After applying for planning permission when they moved in, they were so thrilled when they

#### I DINING AREA

**'I'm a fan of painted furniture in greys and creams - it lends a peaceful ambience,' says Rebecca.** Provence table, £1,297; Biarritz glass cabinet, £1,291, both Maisons du Monde, are similar. Bird prints, £295 for eight; Linen cover for the Echo chair is comparable, £165, both Oka

#### 2 KITCHEN-DINER

**New handmade cabinetry was teamed with the existing oak units.** Cabinets, £25,000, Sambourne Kitchens. Original units painted by Emma Brown in Emma's Door, £55 for 3 litres, Holman Specialist Paints. Blind in Beech Ivory Oxford fabric, £39m, Susie Watson. Tasman pendant lights, £299 each, Universal Lighting

### 3 SITTING ROOM

A wall of framed prints and artwork adds a personal touch. Sofa, £1,295, Laura Ashley. Throw, £84, Susie Watson. Coffee table, £100, Maisons du Monde, is a match

### 4 & 5 MASTER EN SUITE

Luxe fabric and opulent furnishings create a glamorous feeling in here. Cast-iron bath, £1,045, The Cast Iron Bath Company. Dove Grey Josette curtains, from £95, Laura Ashley

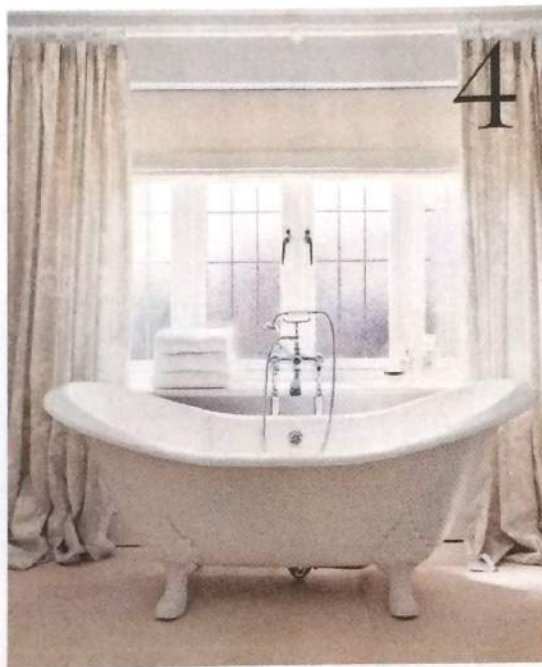
### 6 MASTER BEDROOM

French-inspired furniture and decor is a style that Rebecca adores. Bed, £1,595, The French Bedroom Company. Throw, £375; cushions, £85 each, The White Company

finally received approval that they decided to go ahead with the renovations straight away, even though it meant having to remortgage. 'We built a two-storey extension at the side of the house and a kitchen-diner at the back,' says Rebecca. They also created an extra bedroom for when family come to stay.

The work involved major changes and took a considerable amount of time. 'At one point, there were 17 workmen in the house every day, no central heating for four months and then, to top it all off, we had no hot water for a week,' says Rebecca. During this period, the family moved into a holiday apartment for six weeks. 'When we came back home, we were so inspired by the renovations that we decided to redecorate.'

This time, Rebecca and Andrew chose not to take on the work themselves and hired professionals, who created a neutral backdrop that was combined with handpainted furniture and French-inspired decor. When it was complete, they were finally able to enjoy their newly improved home. 'It took just under a year and we went well over budget,' says Rebecca. 'But we've almost doubled the size of our property, so it was certainly worth it.' 25



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# ALL IN good time

Rebecca and Andrew Doyle's extension required patience and perseverance, but resulted in an elegant home that doubled in size

FEATURE VICTORIA JENKINS | PHOTOGRAPHY DARREN CHUNG

## INSPIRING



## HOME TRUTHS

### THE PROPERTY

Detached 1950s tile-hung house

**LOCATION** Kent

**ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen-diner, snug, study, utility room, gym, cloakroom, five bedrooms (two en suite), bathroom

**PURCHASED** 2011

### PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a new Georgian-style townhouse in Tunbridge Wells,' says Rebecca.

## TERRACE

When the bifold doors are opened, the exterior flows seamlessly into the kitchen-diner.

For a garden set like this try the White Romance table and chairs, £490, Debenhams

