





# LIGHT SHOW

Genius design and an array of spectacular illumination give Caroline and Felix's family home its one-of-a-kind look



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## Home profile

**THE OWNERS** Caroline and Felix Milns, directors of design and build company Zulufish, and their children Maisie, five, and Imogen, three, plus Bob the dachshund.

**THE PROPERTY** A detached Victorian villa in west London. In the basement is an office, wine cellar, utility room and kitchen/living area. On the ground floor is a living room, kitchen/diner/family room and a WC. On the first floor is the master bedroom suite and a guest bedroom suite. Upstairs are the girls' bedrooms, a bathroom and a reading room.

## HALLWAY

'I wanted a sense of continuity from the outside in,' says Caroline, of the patchwork tiles on the pathway and in the hall.

**GET THE LOOK** These bespoke cupboards were designed and made by Zulufish. The Azule tiles are by Patricia Urquiola for Vicalvi. The lighting and vintage American post office box are from the Rose Bowl market in LA. Caroline designed the box's wood stand.





← LIVING ROOM →

'This room is a place to cuddle and put on the fire in the evening when the kids are tucked up,' says Caroline. 'We may be drinking a good glass of red with a square of dark chocolate.' She used a glass panel to visually connect the hallway with the living room. 'We wanted to open up the front room and not hide our favourite pieces away,' adds Felix. 'In reverse, the hallway also now has a sense of space.'

**GET THE LOOK** The Lunar pendant is from CTO Lighting. The Oscar sofa is by Matthew Hilton for SCP. The side table, left, is made from recycled seat belts by Ting Home. The coffee table is from Evitavonni. The side table, right, is from Scapa Home. The pure mohair rug is from Flexform. The small sofa is a vintage piece, upholstered in a Designers Guild velvet. This is a collection of tulip vases by Sophie Cook.



## 'Simplicity and clean lines

were the key drivers for us,' says Felix Milns, talking about the revamp of the house he shares with wife Caroline and daughters Maisie and Imogen. The couple run design and build company Zulufish from their west London home. 'Felix is able to visualise a sight line and instantly knows how to open up a room to let the light in,' says Caroline. So, he takes care of the spatial details, while Caroline, whose forte is finishes, materials and sourcing, 'is all about the design and decorating'. They're the perfect creative duo.

They bought their home mainly for practical reasons. Near a good school for the kids? Tick. Plenty of space to run the business? Definitely. The Victorian façade they fell in love with was an added bonus, which is just as well, as it's about all they kept. 'We hadn't realised it was such a wreck,' says Felix. 'We thought we might have to replace the roof tiles, but ended up slicing off the top of the house to put in a ring of steel and concrete to support a new roof.' Even the floors had to be removed so they could dig down to the old coal cellar to create a basement office.

'Renovate and innovate' is the pair's mantra and, as well as being big on letting in light, their design ethos is to give traditional shells an individual and unexpected twist. 'We're not into the "outrageous", but we do like to push ideas to the max, so each project has a personality all of its own,' says Caroline.

In the couple's home, the sense of flow between the living room and the less formal space at the back was achieved by pushing the staircase into the middle of the house, freeing up the hallway and inserting a panel

of glass between the two spaces. 'The hall feels luxurious and indulgent, while the living room is now lighter and better connected to the rest of the house,' explains Felix.

Caroline wanted to create a home that was 'stylish yet easy, based around textures and colour'. It may sound laid-back and simple, but due to her skilled eye, it's always surprising. Embossed, porcelain floor tiles, shimmery mosaics and a disco ball dance around the kitchen. An unexpected polished plaster wall graces the living room, along with silky textures and wow lighting. 'A place feels more homely when there are plenty of tactile pieces around,' says Caroline. The vintage sofa in the family area was re-upholstered in touch-me Chanel bouclé fabric. 'It's hard-wearing, takes the knocks and adds a fun element to the space,' she adds.

The house has a seamless fluidity, thanks to innovative ideas such as a suspended ceiling in the master bedroom, which hides the top of the curtains, and a feature wall that opens to reveal a run of wardrobes. A colour palette of warm greys makes for a timeless backdrop, while bright accessories and nifty ideas mean it's never dull. 'I like things to look elegant and have longevity; not too new and polished,' says Caroline.

The vintage American post office box in the hallway is her favourite piece. 'It was rusty and I cleaned it up just enough so it retained its authenticity, then designed the wood stand for it to sit in. It was a labour of love,' she says. 'Well, the whole house was really,' adds Felix. See Caroline and Felix's work at [zulufish.co.uk](http://zulufish.co.uk)





**Home truths**

**TYPICAL SATURDAY MORNING?**  
Long, lazy family breakfast – cups of English breakfast tea, boiled eggs and soldiers.

**YOU'RE OFF TO A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT DO YOU TAKE WITH YOU?**

*Caroline:* My vintage post office box in the hallway.

*Felix:* Can I take my wine cellar? If not, the artwork in the kitchen-diner; there's a story behind it.

**WHAT'S IN YOUR FRIDGE?** *Felix:* Lots of Bol meals, a new brand I'm working with.

*Caroline:* Masses of fresh fruit, veg and Willie's dark chocolate.

**WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF TOTAL LUXURY?** *Caroline:* Somewhere hot on a boat with friends, sipping champagne.

**FAVOURITE FILM OR BOOK?**

*Caroline:* Anything by Rose Tremain.

*Felix:* *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Márquez.

**DINING ROOM ↑**

The kitchen/dining/living space was previously four different rooms. Caroline and Felix wanted one large area with designated spaces. 'We used the fireplace to separate the kids' seating area from the kitchen-diner,' says Caroline.

**GET THE LOOK** The dining table is from *Numéro Unique*. These vintage dining chairs are from *The Old Cinema*. The chandelier is from *Ochre*. The Brooklyn artwork is by *Barry Cawston*.

**KITCHEN →**

Felix and Caroline used 1.2m-wide pan drawers with no handles to keep clean lines. They took the units up to the ceilings for maximum storage.

**GET THE LOOK** The kitchen was designed and installed by *Zulufish*. The splashback is made out of brushed metal hexagonal mosaic tiles from *Via Arcadia*. The floor tiles are by *Patricia Urquiola* for *Vicalvi*. The central lights are from *Studio Bel Vitro*.



**FAMILY ROOM**

'As a mother, this area works perfectly,' says Caroline. 'I can be cooking and keeping an eye on the children, while friends are drinking a glass of wine on the sofa. We put the paper pompoms up for a big 40th party along with the disco ball that never came down!'

**GET THE LOOK** The vintage *Eighties* sofa is by *Roche Bobois* and upholstered in *Chanel* fabric from *Zinc Textile*. This is the *Arco* floor lamp by *Achille and Giacomo Castiglioni* for *Flos*.



‘When it comes to family living, having plenty of storage is key’



**MASTER BEDROOM**

‘This room has a complete sense of calm,’ says Caroline. ‘I used translucent porcelain lighting to give a soft glow at night.’

**GET THE LOOK** The bed is from Scapa Home. The throw is by Josephine Home. The cushions are by Nikki Jones. The bespoke side table and dressing table are by HMD Interiors. This occasional chair by D&ID is also bespoke. The customised cupboards were designed by Caroline, layering different heights of plywood and then spray-painted for a seamless finish. The wall covering is by Maya Romanoff.



## ← BATHROOM

'We wanted the bay window to frame the huge oval bath, creating a spa-style look,' says Caroline. Zulufish designed and built the floating vanity unit with double inset sinks.

**GET THE LOOK** The bathtub is from Victoria + Albert. These are Quartz worktops from Silestone.

## GARDEN ↓

'The garden feels like another room,' says Caroline. A key feature is the outdoor sofa, designed to catch the last rays of the day, while giving a view of the house. The flower beds are lit to provide ambient lighting – great to turn on in winter.

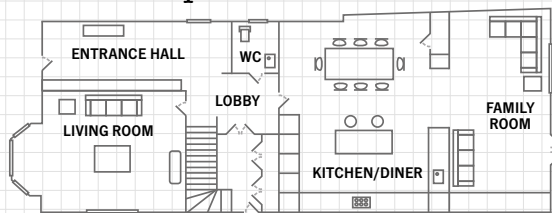
**GET THE LOOK** The lime bench is a spray-painted vintage French wire piece. The grey sofa is from Aram Store. This stone bowl outdoor fire is by Urban Fires.



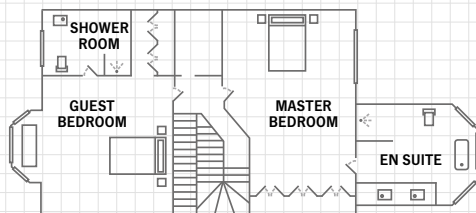
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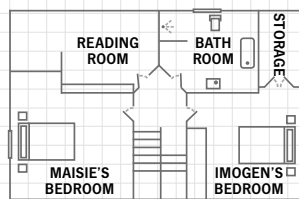
## The blueprint



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



LOFT FLOOR