



Blending old and new, brutalism and trad, *Rachel Chudley* transforms a London mews house into a stylish, art-filled home for a young family

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ICONIC 20TH-CENTURY DESIGNS, INCLUDING AKARI LANTERNS, BARCELONA CHAIRS, AND AN LC4 CHAISE LONGUE, MINGLE WITH OLDER PIECES LIKE A LARGE-SCALE EARLY-19TH-CENTURY UPHOLSTERED STOOL USED AS A COCKTAIL TABLE AND ANTIQUE TEXTILES AND PORCELAINS IN THE LONDON LIVING ROOM OF TOM GUINNESS AND TISH WEINSTOCK. FOR DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.

GUINNESS, WEINSTOCK, AND SON REUBEN IN THE ENTRANCE HALL. THE PORTRAIT OF LITTLE RICHARD IS BY MARK LECKEY. OPPOSITE AN ANTIQUE SUZANI FROM ROBERT KIME IS DRAPED OVER A CUSTOM SOFA IN THE MORNING ROOM. JAMB FIREPLACE SURROUND; ANTIQUE TAPESTRY.



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hat makes projects special are the people living in them—but Tish and Tom are on a whole other level.” So says Rachel Chudley, a British interior decorator known for funky-chic rooms that are full of surprises. The name-checked clients would be blue-blooded Londoners Tish Weinstock,

a *Vogue* writer and beauty editor, and Tom Guinness, a model turned soulful fashion stylist. “Both have style with an edge,” Chudley continues, adding that the finished product, a house for the couple and their toddler son, Reuben, “walks the line between old and new and bad taste and good taste.”

Before taste of any kind could be explored, there had to be a property to decorate, and the couple were keen on moving to one of London’s highly coveted mews. “They are quite idyllic, don’t have traffic—the streets dead-end—and are usually in pretty nice areas, because the buildings were the coach houses at the back of big town houses,” Guinness explains. The one that he and Weinstock, child-free at the time, settled on in Holland Park possessed a bland prefab appearance, though,

suggestive of a decades-old rebuild or renovation. Still, it did have a rear garden, an unusual feature in most mews. Architect Milan Nedelkovic of local firm Helm (with sage input from Weinstock’s stepfather, Jonathan Sykes, a property developer) stepped in to reimagine the house along more conventional lines, facing it with honey-colored brick, topping it with a mansard roof, and excavating a basement that now houses a multipurpose living room. “It actually looks closer to what it could have been,” Weinstock says, “but from the outside it’s quite deceptive.”

One reason is that the rooms are suffused with sunlight—abundant natural light is another atypical mews characteristic—pouring through double-hung windows as well as a light well and strategic skylights. Another distinction is the idiosyncratic decor, which brings the subject back to personal preferences and parenting styles. “I get a bit of a kick out of the fact that we haven’t made our house into a massive nursery,” says Guinness, the youngest son of Lord Moyne and a grandson of Diana Mosley, the most beautiful of the legendary Mitford sisters. “Reuben has to learn to live with nice things.” (Indeed, they count themselves charmed by the crayon marks on one sofa.) Those nice things—only a couple of lamps have been toddler casualties so far—run the gamut of materials, periods,

MARK LECKEY.



ABOVE BENTWOOD CHAIRS SURROUND A SUZANI-COVERED TABLE IN A TENTED ALCOVE OFF THE LIVING ROOM. ANTIQUE CRYSTAL SCONCES HANG ON THE MIRRORED WALL.

“I get a bit of a kick out of the fact that we haven’t made our house into a massive nursery,” says *Tom Guinness*.

RIGHT VINTAGE CHAIRS WITH LAMBSKIN UPHOLSTERY SURROUND A ROSE UNIACKE DINING TABLE. THE LIGHT FIXTURE AND CHINA ARE FAMILY HEIRLOOMS. BELOW PENDANT LIGHTS BY SVEND AAGE HOLM-SØRENSEN HANG ABOVE THE KITCHEN’S MARBLE ISLAND. 1970S COUNTER STOOLS; APPLIANCES BY GAGGENAU AND MIELE.



and styles, from Art Nouveau bentwood chairs pulled up to a table dressed in a brilliant suzani to a skeletal custom-made iron bed set atop a vast 1970s sheepskin rug that Chudley rightly calls “ridiculously shaggy.” Light fixtures by Isamu Noguchi and Erik Höglund dangle from the ceilings, heirloom portraits hang in niches, and an ink-blue Chinese carpet bristling with trees and flying birds has been flung down on the dressing room’s pale plank floor.

“**TOM LEANS TOWARD** brutalism, and Tish gravitates to traditional design that really isn’t in vogue right now,” Chudley says. “There were quite a few lively debates among the three of us.” One of those conversations was over a flowered chintz sofa that Weinstock had desired but that just seemed all wrong to her once it arrived. “We moved it around the house for about two months” until it finally found its happy spot, Chudley says. Which, to everyone’s surprise—at least until it was relocated yet again—was the basement living room, amid Le Corbusier chairs and black leather upholstery.

“Bravery in style comes from combinations like that,” the designer observes. “That’s why this was such a creatively



ABOVE THE BATHROOM FEATURES A CLASSICAL CARVED MARBLE BASIN FOUND ON 1STDIBS AND AN ANTIQUE MIRROR. LEFT VIBRANT COLE & SON WALLPAPER ANIMATES REUBEN'S ROOM. THE SLEIGH BED FROM PAMONO IS UPHOLSTERED WITH DEDAR FABRIC.



IN THE PRIMARY BEDROOM, A VINTAGE ERIK HÖGLUND CHANDELIER HANGS ABOVE THE BESPOKE BED, AND SHELL SHADE SCONCES FROM THE ENGLISH LAMP COMPANY HANG OVER VINTAGE SHELL BEDSIDE TABLES FOUND ON 1STDIBS. BED HANGING OF ROBERT KIME FABRIC.

thrilling project for me. The sofa needed to be combined with something that had an edge so it didn't look like some old-school object on display." Helping with that blending is the plant-filled light well—mirrored to increase both the sunlight and the foliage—a grand old Turkish carpet, and an object that neither Guinness nor Weinstock ever felt that they would own: an antique wall-spanning tapestry depicting a pastoral scene populated by sheep.

"WE'RE SO USED TO looking at screens and lights and disposable images, and then you're confronted with this 17th-century textile that's been crafted over time, which I think is very alluring. You get lost in them," says Guinness, whose taste in art otherwise leans to the contemporary; Mark Leckey's 2003 portrait of Little Richard surveys the entrance hall. He also found himself hugely enjoying shopping at several antiques-rich auctions, including the estates of AD100 star Nicky Haslam and Picasso biographer John Richardson. "That got us through a sticky lockdown," Weinstock says, noting that much of the decoration was executed while they were living on-site and caring for a newborn. "Like a lot of people

confined to their houses and looking at the walls during the pandemic, we pored over interiors books and sale catalogs."

The forced domestic focus had another bright side. "Part of what I do as a writer is to respond to popular culture, but it's nice to disengage from all that and think about other periods and aesthetic movements," says Weinstock, an Oxford University art-history major. She recalls how she immersed herself in Guinness's reference library of art, architecture, and design books during lockdown and found herself finally understanding, among other things, his attraction to the 1980s Memphis Group. As for Guinness, the stylist says, "I do something new every day in my work, so I'm not used to holding on to projects for so long, but I've really enjoyed that here. This has been about designing the way you want to live your life, what kind of person you want to be. It's the externalization of self."

The best lesson? A lamp whose glass shade didn't survive Reuben's grasp now wears a paper replacement that turned out to be more complementary than either parent thought possible. "When something hasn't worked out, why lament it?" Weinstock says. "Come up with a solution and move on." ▀

The skeletal custom-made iron bed sits atop a vast 1970s sheepskin rug that designer *Rachel Chudley* rightly calls "ridiculously shaggy."