



**BOTH PAGES** The walls in the hall (top left) are painted in 'Hardwick White' gloss by Farrow & Ball; the carpet on the stairs and in the main bedroom (top centre) is 'Häggå' by Kasthall. The Forties bedside tables in the main bedroom came from Interior Eden; the chair is from B&B Italia, covered in 'Beaded Stripe Pigment' by Neisha Crosland. Leading off the bedroom is a study (bottom centre), furnished with a Thirties desk and chair, and a bathroom (bottom left), with a bespoke, marble-topped walnut unit and vintage wall lights from Norfolk Decorative Antiques. The owner's daughter's room (top right) is papered in 'Clouds Sonic' by Aimée Wilder above the picture rail, and 'Tile' (89/7026) by Cole & Son below; the artwork is from Art Interiors in Toronto. The wall lights in the family bathroom (bottom right) are from Hector Finch

Elsewhere, one pattern leads to another. The relaxed family room adjoining the kitchen is also tiled, but here the tiles are overlaid with a rug in a contrasting geometric pattern and set against star-spangled linen curtains. Upstairs, in Steffanie's 10-year-old daughter's bedroom, Henri has subdivided the walls for sock-it-to-me impact, introducing a psychedelic cloudscape above the picture rail and a restrained print below. 'She wanted a funky bedroom,' says Henri. 'I tried to give her what she was looking for, without doing something that would later drive you bonkers.'

As well as her daughter, Steffanie has a 12-year-old son, and Henri – herself the mother of four daughters – was sensibly aware that however 'cool' or sleek the look, the communal family areas needed to be forgiving of grubby hands and regular scuffling. Thus, the banquet seating round the dining table has been covered in a 'pretty indestructible' golden leather; and, contrary to conventional wisdom, Henri has dictated the use of gloss paint in the entrance hall and corridors. 'Halls are always the first thing to go – they can look ratty in months,' she says. 'People avoid using gloss because they feel that it shows the lumps and bumps, but it's fine – particularly if you're hanging art.'

Henri is someone who very much believes the decorating process should be fun, and she and Steffanie explored London's antiques and vintage shops and compared notes about potential purchases on the internet. Together, they compiled an enviable selection of mid-century modern and the thoroughly contemporary.

Some of their finds – a pair of Fifties armchairs in their original acid yellow and a console table topped in candyfloss-pink marble – inspired the mood for a room or hallway. 'But, ultimately,' says Henri, 'you don't want to go entirely vintage; it can end up looking over the top.'

Henri is particularly good at filling in any missing necessities with her own-design furniture, such as the mirrored bathroom cabinet of just the right scale, or the child's bed that provides extra storage space. She is equally skilled at pulling together a richly complex counterpoint of out-of-the-ordinary fabrics for furnishings and walls. 'I love texture,' she says. 'Fabric-lined walls, in particular, give a real, old-fashioned warmth.'

With her retail background, Henri remains acutely sensitive to the danger of falling into a 'this season' trap. 'In a house, you have to remember that you can get stuck with something for a long time,' she says. 'What you want to achieve is a look you're not quite able to pin down, something that is fresh and contemporary, but might have been there forever.' As far as Steffanie is concerned, she has certainly achieved that goal. 'The work Henri's done is incredibly creative and unusual,' she says. 'Every time I walk into my house, I can't believe I live here' □

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