

Take the 60-second tour

BOUGHT FOR | SPENT | NOW WORTH
 £297,000 | £7,410 | £380,000

THE PROPERTY

A two-bedroom Victorian terrace in Cambridge, bought in 2008.

WHAT IT COST

Wood-burning stove.....£3,200
 Carpentry.....£1,960
 Building work.....£1,480
 Loft insulation & flooring.....£350
 Paint.....£300
 Hearth tiles.....£120
TOTAL.....£7,410

WHO LIVES HERE

Julie Wishart, an interior designer, with her youngest daughter Emma, 17, and Archie the West Highland terrier. Her elder daughters Jennifer, 21, and Lizzie, 22, have left home but come back for visits.

THE LOOK

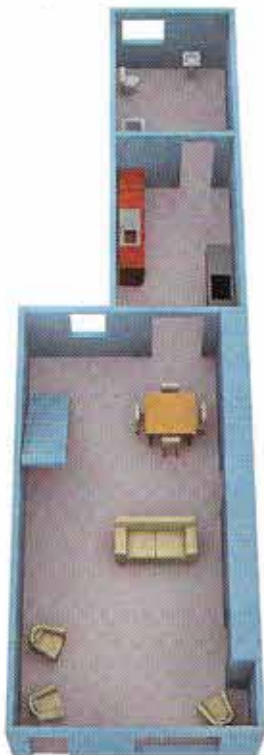
Calm country in an urban setting, with neutral walls brought together with a mix of check, floral and toile de Jouy fabrics. Mirrors maximise



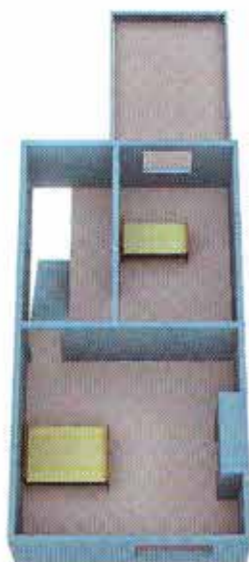
the feeling of light and space in the relatively small rooms.

LESSONS LEARNED

'In a small house, it's so important to be well organised and make the most of the space you have. I can't bear clutter, so I look out for storage boxes and baskets that are practical and pretty.'



GROUND FLOOR The living room and dining area are at the front of the house with the kitchen and bathroom stretching behind



FIRST FLOOR Upstairs there are two bedrooms, plus a hatch that leads to the insulated loft and a door from the back bedroom onto the roof terrace

Living room
 Julie has gone for a sophisticated colour palette in her living room, combining chalky grey with punchy raspberry accents. A rustic crate serves as a coffee table and also provides storage for spare throws and cushions. Walls painted in China Clay matt emulsion, £24.95 for 2.5ltr, Fired Earth

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Downsize your home, not your style

Make even the smallest home seem spacious with neutral colours and clutter-busting storage, like Julie Wishart has

For where to buy items shown, turn to page 216

The big CHANGE

REDECORATING FROM TOP TO BOTTOM IN SOPHISTICATED NEUTRAL SHADES, AND ADDING CLEVER STORAGE SOLUTIONS





'The most important thing for any house is that its interior needs to be comfortable and effortlessly stylish'

For Julie Wishart, moving to this cosy cottage in the heart of Cambridge was a fresh new start. 'When I first viewed it, I thought the house had a lovely feel. Although it's small, I knew I'd be able to make it a home and my daughters and I would be very happy living here,' she says.

Julie decided to move into the centre of Cambridge, with youngest daughter Emma, now 17, when she separated from her husband four years ago. Having lived in a large barn conversion in a village, she finds city life a refreshing change. 'I love it here,' says Julie. 'Everything is so close. I'm two minutes from work, so I don't have to drive. Although it's right in the centre of town, the street I live in is surprisingly quiet.'

Julie was renting a house over the road when this cottage came on the market. 'I was out walking the

dog with Emma, when we saw the For Sale board go up. It was after 5pm, but we phoned the estate agent straightaway to request a viewing. The house had been a rental property and the tenants had just moved out, so we spent a lot of time squinting through the letter box that evening!' she says. One of the main things that appealed to Julie was the south-facing courtyard garden. 'It really matters to me that I can pop back at lunch and sit outside in the sunshine,' says Julie, who once she'd bought the house also created a little sun terrace on the kitchen roof, too. 'It's a huge treat in summer,' she says. 'I come home after work and can sit up there with a glass of wine and a good book and watch the sun go down.'

Being an interior designer, with her own business, Orchard Street Interiors, it wasn't the redecoration of the cottage that daunted Julie – it was the prospect ➤

Dining area

Julie's daughter, Jen (right) often comes home to see her mum and sister Emma. In the dining area a tongue-and-groove cupboard was built into one of the alcoves to provide extra storage, and it's barely noticeable, thanks to it being painted in the same colour as the walls

For similar tablecloth try Picnic Red oilcloth, £13.99 per m, The Tablecloth Shop. For similar cushions try Chenille Spot, £15, Marks & Spencer; Dartmouth Stripe, £30, Jim Lawrence



Courtyard garden

Julie loves her very private south-facing walled garden – perfect for lunch in the sunshine. She has a small collection of garden antiques in zinc and terracotta, all kept looking neat in shelves she made from crates found at the local garden centre

For similar chairs and table, try the Rive Droit set, £110, Garden Trading

Kitchen

Every inch of space is essential in Julie's kitchen, which is why she replaced the original door with a sliding one that no longer bangs against the back door and she uses the exposed pipes to hang kitchen accessories on

Kitchen trolley, £81.69, IKEA. For similar bread bin, try the Pastoral, £20, Debenhams



MAKE YOUR FLOWERS GO FURTHER

These ideas only need a handful of beautiful blooms



Big and blowsy

Hydrangea heads look great on their own. Cut the stem short and pop inside a spherical vase. Add a little water so the petals stay dry, but top up regularly



Statement vases

Colourful vases look striking even without flowers, so you only need a couple of stems. Choose blooms in a contrasting colour and aim for an odd number of vases in each display



Single stems

Gather a selection of vases, bottles and jam jars and pop one or two stems from a mixed bouquet in each. This works well along a windowsill or along the centre of a dining table

of off-loading all her large pieces of furniture. 'I'd been renting for 18 months by the time I bought the house and I still had so much in storage,' she says. 'When it was delivered, the furniture simply overwhelmed the cottage. I started selling pieces, putting some on eBay, and ended up giving my friends lots of things. In return, they came round to help me decorate.'

Julie realised she had to be ruthless about what stayed in the cottage. 'Everything on display here has a use,' she says. 'My music is all on my iPod and the only photos are the ones that are really precious. It broke my heart to get rid of lots of my books, but I kept the special ones. My magazine collection had to go, too, but again, I kept the ones I really need for reference and inspiration.'

Keeping just the special things has given Julie's home personality, but without the clutter. She still has her grandmother's set of blue china on display in the kitchen and has framed some of her favourite letters and Mother's Day cards from her girls. 'On the whole though, I'm one of life's thrower-outers, rather than a collector. I'm not keen on knick-knacks and can't give house room to anything that I don't absolutely love,' says Julie. 'In the end, I suppose downsizing has been quite a liberating experience!'

When it came to choosing colour schemes, Julie knew the best bet for a small house was to keep the décor coherent throughout, restricting the palette to sophisticated neutral shades that wouldn't assault the eye at every turn. 'To me, the most important thing for any house, traditional or modern, is that its interior needs to be comfortable and effortlessly stylish,' says Julie. 'I used to work as a colour consultant for >>>

3 of the best CARVED MIRRORS



£35

**Now you see it
The shutters have a
cute country feel –
and you can close
them on bad hair days!**
Frame Shutter (H51cm
x W32cm), John Lewis



£110

**Understated
overmantel
Subtle detailing and
an elegant cream
finish – simple and chic**
Regency (H97cm x W67cm),
Sweetpea & Willow



£389

**Something
different
An unusual
shape that works
for both Rococo
and nautical looks**
Bandar (H142cm x
W116cm), OKA



Julie's bedroom
Originally shared by the girls, Julie decided to make the larger bedroom her own when Jennifer started at university. The dusky green walls provide a restful contrast for the sumptuous velvet bedspread, rose-print bed linen and gingham cushions bought in Holland. Walls painted in Oak Apple, £29.50 for 2.5ltr. Fired Earth. Peg rail, from £29 per m. Providence. For similar bed linen try Bouquet Floral, £65 for a duvet cover, Cath Kidston

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Bathroom
The bathroom is prettied-up with a floral shower curtain and towels. For similar towels, try Cherry Blossom, from £8 for a hand towel, Bhs



Bedroom storage
Julie keeps her open shelving neat and tidy with wicker baskets, patterned boxes and plain drawers painted to match the walls. For similar baskets, try Pantry Baskets, from £15, Store



DON'T LET CLUTTER TAKE OVER

Follow these tips to help you get organised in a small space

1 Pare down your paperwork by shredding what you don't need and investing in pretty binders or box files – with clear labels and dividers – for things you need to keep.

2 Build in storage wherever you can and paint doors in the same

colour as the walls for a seamless look. Inside, keep organised with baskets and boxes and screw hooks on the inside of the doors for added hanging space.

3 Decant essentials such as laundry liquid or dried foods into glass bottles or clip-top jars. They'll look nice enough to


be kept out, leaving cupboard space for packets and tins. Try IKEA for a selection of bottles.

4 Choose storage-savvy furniture that's multifunctional. Julie's coffee table can also be used to store books, for example. Look for divans with built-in drawers, too.

Fired Earth, so I'm a bit of a colour geek. I love muted, neutral tones and I already knew exactly which colours I wanted to use before I'd even moved in. In the living room and the kitchen, for example, I've used Fired Earth's China Clay, and in the bathroom, Ultramarine Ashes. In the bedrooms I used Oak Apple and Farrow & Ball's Light Blue.'

This subtle scheme provides the perfect backdrop for the flashes of vibrant raspberry red and pink that appear throughout the house, especially in Julie's mixed-and-matched fabrics, be it gingham with florals, ticking stripes with classic checks, or embroidery with plain velvets or woven cotton.

The house might be small but Julie has been quick to employ some fail-safe design techniques to make her rooms seem larger. She's hung mirrors in every room to maximise light, kept to neutral base colours, gone for lots of built-in cupboards and chosen dual-purpose furniture that contains hidden storage, such as her divan bed with its essential built-in linen drawers. Ever mindful of her need for extra storage space, Julie investigated the loft, only to discover the roof cavity was completely open, right along the street. 'I had to get a builder in to make some simple breeze-block walls for better security,' she says. 'I also had the loft boarded over and insulated, so now it's an essential storage space.'

Julie's style success, however, is down to her luxurious finishing touches, which fool you into thinking this house is larger than it actually is. By using exotic orchids, plush velvet bedspreads and baroque-style mirror frames, she's created an opulent country-house feel – but on a smaller scale. And with her eye for detail complemented by her unsentimental attitude to downsizing, it's no surprise that Julie has proven that size isn't always everything. 

'In the end I suppose downsizing has been quite a liberating experience'



Emma's bedroom

Emma's mirror is festooned with pretty pink fairy lights and another pretty, but practical, feature is the peg rail where she can hang her favourite clothes. Her bed has a pull-out mattress underneath for when one of her sisters comes to stay. Walls painted in Light Blue Estate Emulsion, £29.50, Farrow & Ball. For similar flower lights try Pink Rose lights, £27.95, Glint

Co-ordinated bed linen

Emma's bedroom echoes the feminine feel of the rest of the house, combining restful blue walls with pretty pink accessories and fabrics, and a few floral touches. For similar bedspread, try Geometric velvet bedspread in Pink, from £80, John Lewis

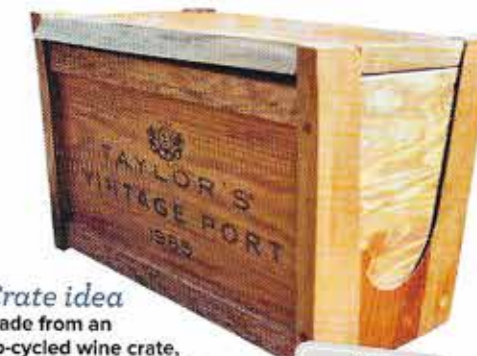
FEATURE: LIZ WALKER. PHOTOGRAPHS: COLIN POOLE. PC IMAGES. BOX COPY AND GET JULIE'S LOOK: BETHAN JOHN. PLANS: PERSONA4D

Living room



Go for comfort
Soft brown leather makes this a really comfy choice. Madison leather armchair, John Lewis. £699

French feel
Pop garden flowers in this rustic jug for a casual, summery arrangement. Enamel jug, The White Company. £32



Crate idea
Made from an up-cycled wine crate, use this chest as a coffee table or blanket box. Personalised wine crate chest, Notonthehighstreet.com. From £159



Well spotted
Snuggle up with this gorgeous knitted cushion. Red Dotty cushion, Feather & Black. £45



Pretty pattern
An elegant and traditional addition to any living room. Malmaison rug (180cm x 120cm), Laura Ashley. £200



Add an accent
You don't always have to stick to neutral colours for your sofa – make it a feature and choose this bold red option. Ektorp two-seater sofa in Idemo Red, IKEA. £240

Get Julie's look

Be inspired by Julie's simple style – sophisticated neutrals with accents of vibrant red

For where to buy items shown, turn to page 216

Main bedroom



Hang up
Half handy storage, half a place for a pretty display. Shaker peg rail, Heal's. £48



Summer shade
Add a punch of fuchsia pink to your scheme. Raspberry bedspread, Pied a Terre range, House of Fraser. £135

Paint effect
A distressed-look stool adds a rustic touch. Gainsborough painted stool, Hip Furniture. £135



Bright light
Choose a tall, slim light for your bedside table to make the most of limited space. Theo Pod desk lamp, B&Q. £22.98



Store in style
Give your shelves a makeover by sorting your clutter into these pretty boxes. Floral boxes, The Contemporary Home. £5.99 for three



Spell it out
No country-style home is complete without a bit of appliqué. Circus Home cushion, Retreat Home. £29