



# Bijou beauty

This small house in Knightsbridge was completely reconfigured by its owner to create a comfortable home with a sense of spaciousness

TEXT **ALICE B-B**  
 PHOTOGRAPHS **SARAH HOGAN**  
 LOCATIONS EDITOR **LIZ ELLIOT**

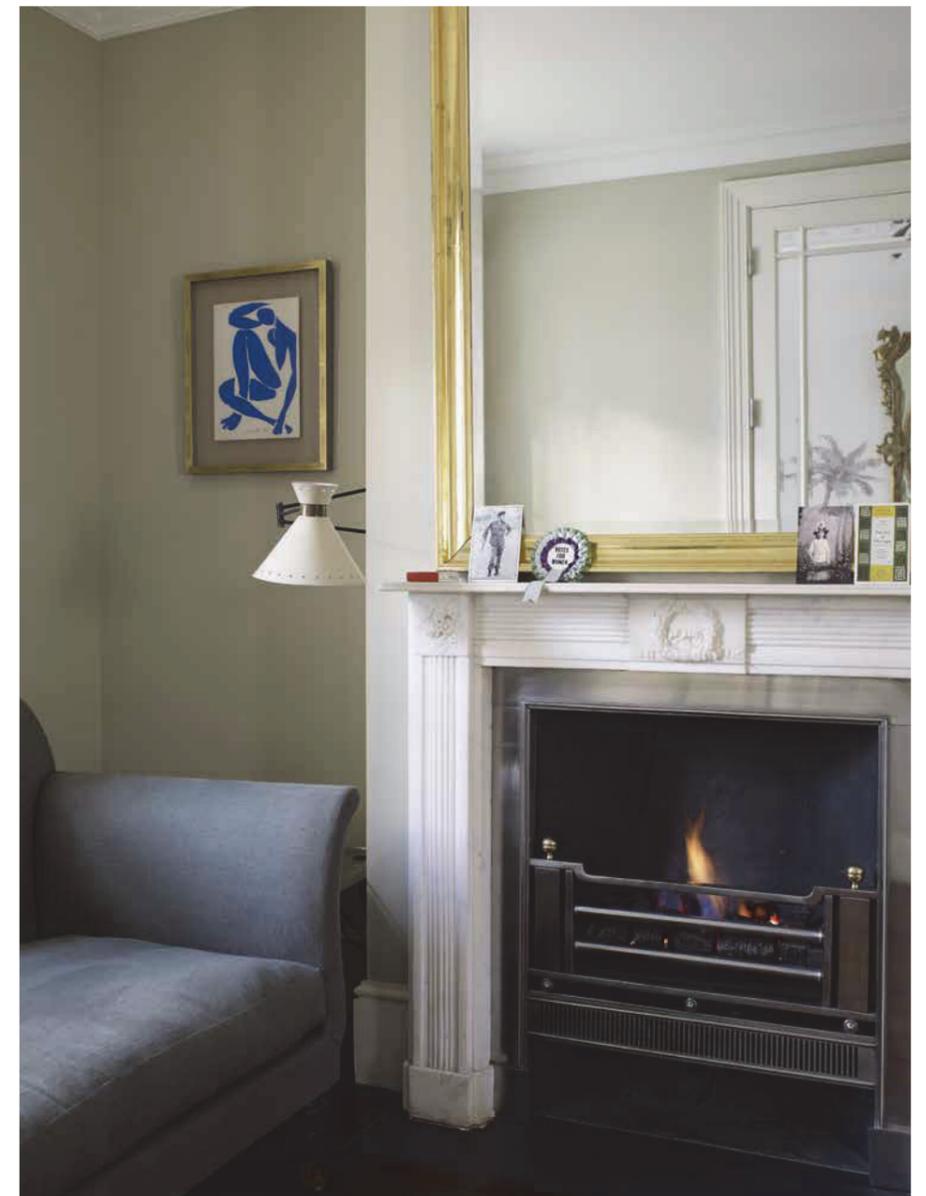
**I**'ve always been obsessed with having a house on Walton Street,' says cartoonist and interior designer Sally Ann Lasson. 'It's the most extraordinary street; you're in the middle of the city yet the houses are only two storeys high.'

Having hankered since 2006, Sally Ann's lust was fulfilled in 2011. 'I got it by chance when a sale fell through.' It came with planning permission for a closet wing extension, but Sally Ann decided to go the whole hog. 'Once you start bashing around, you might as well do everything,' she says.

With the bashing over, the house now reads as follows: entrance hall, sitting-slash-dining room with a step-up to the galley kitchen by Plain English on the ground floor. Down the relatively wide, original staircase to the basement with a padded-velvet Soho House-inspired cinema room, guest loo with Vola taps – a nod to Sally Ann's Danish roots – and a canopied bedroom leading on to the pretty Jon Uglow garden, designed around an over-blown cartouche fountain.

The first floor is dedicated to Sally Ann's own quarters. The cool Papers & Paints 'Lead III' bedroom walls are warmed with chairs covered in Bennison's 'Christmas Roses' and chunky mahogany doors that open on to a corridor wardrobe stuffed with Pucci dresses

**OPPOSITE** Trompe l'oeil 'Scenes Siciliennes' wallcovering from Zuber creates visual impact in the hall. **THIS PAGE** CLOCKWISE FROM TOP. A Matisse print brightens a corner of the sitting room. 'Tulip' chairs add a modern note to the dining area. The kitchen is housed in the new extension





and Manolos, then into the romantically domed marron-marble bathroom. 'I've always wanted a dome,' says Sally Ann. 'It was made by Thomas & Wilson who hung it on straps from the ceiling – the same way they've been doing it since they started the business in 1840.'

Where most of Walton Street's remodelled houses have gone open plan and done away with the hall, Sally Ann went large. The hall was her most radical statement. 'I made it extra wide,' she says. 'Because it's such a small house, I felt it was important for the first impression to be one of comfort and space. My architect and friend Jeffrey James said, 'You can't do that, it's a waste of space,' to which I replied, 'That's the only kind of space I like.' The trompe l'oeil Zuber wallpaper adds extra girth to the hall, while glass double doors into the sitting room create a sense of mystery.'

Sally Ann's wizardry with small spaces is threefold. First, she eked out vital inches where possible; the ground-floor ceiling was raised to add an all-important seven inches, while a flat roof replaced the space-munching butterfly roof, giving the first floor an unexpected extra couple of feet. Secondly, Sally Ann employs the mini-grand technique of double doors. Thirdly, secret jibbed doors make for sly storage. 'The smaller the place, the more storage, the more hooks, the more shelves you need,' says Sally Ann. 'You have to plan a space for living in, rather than the fantasy of walking into your house and just putting one newspaper on the hall table.'

But despite being small, the house proffered several spatial surprises, including a coal-hole now tiled to form a handsome cellar twinkling with beaten-copper wall lights and a tiny skylit garret used as a study. The dressing table in her bedroom and lily-pad cinema lights are from Valerie Wade, all the curtains are from Chelsea Textiles over the road, and the sofa, chair and the register grate in the sitting room are by Jamb, all creating a mood of elegant restraint.

'The thing is these houses were built in 1850 for the independent working classes, like drapers or carters,' explains Sally Ann. 'And they were living 16 to a house. It wasn't until the Seventies that the street became salubrious, when the first banker bought a house here. But now if you live on Walton Street,' she adds, 'you've got to learn to love a Lamborghini.' □

Sally Ann Lason: [www.sallyannlasoninteriors.com](http://www.sallyannlasoninteriors.com)

**THIS PAGE** A compact staircase (top left) leads to the attic study (top right). Double doors (centre right) connect the main bedroom (centre left) and dressing room. Curtains from Chelsea Textiles screen the french window in the spare room (below left); a marble-lined bathroom opens off it.

**OPPOSITE** The garden was designed by Jon Uglow

