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Interior designer Claire Rendall's Wiltshire home
is fit for the silver screen

Words: **Lucy Land** Photographs: **Winfried Heinze**

When interior designer Claire Rendall first viewed her house, located just outside Bath in the English county of Wiltshire, she was reminded of the Hamptons-style beach house featured in *Something's Gotta Give*, arguably the most beloved movie home of all time. "The [Wiltshire] house had a special resonance with me," she says. "And guess what DVD was top of the pile in the TV room?"

She was drawn to the home's setting on a hillside, offering fabulous countryside views; and its large, airy rooms; stone mullion windows; and flagstone floors. "The house had a lovely quality feel about it. The garden had some pretty feature trees but otherwise the house offered a blank canvas."

The house in *Something's Gotta Give* has a gorgeous collected look, as though its interiors have evolved over the years – Claire has pulled off the same style in her own home. However, she had some work to do. The original palette featured heavy, dull pinks, blues and greens on the walls; patterned curtains; champagne and avocado bathroom suites; and the window frames were an oppressive dark grey metal. "The first thing I did was kill the colours," she explains. She used Paint Library's range of Slate on the walls to lift the rooms, while the window frames were changed to Farrow & Ball's Clunch. "It was amazing how the views suddenly came into the room rather than being shut out with the grey." To compliment the fresh tones, soft pewter silk was chosen for the curtains, which reflected light back into the rooms. The new palette also served as a simple, refined backdrop for Claire's collection of paintings and objects that she has collected over the years.

Initially, the kitchen featured stripped pine doors, a flagstone floor, white tiled worktops and a large range in the fireplace, which would have originally been coal fired. The range was replaced with an Aga and framed with 19th century Rajasthan pillars, which were chipped so Claire painted them with chalk paint. The pine kitchen was taken out to make way for a new, soft grey kitchen with Carrara marble worktops, which she customised. "I'm not keen on thin worktops so we mitred the edges and created a thick, handsome edge," she reveals. White-backed glass was installed as the splashback. "It's easy to keep clean and reflects the light back into the room." Meanwhile, the dark grey flagstones, which were heavily stained and difficult to maintain, were removed so that they could be used elsewhere on the property, and replaced





with warm, easy-to-clean walnut. Claire also updated a vintage French farmhouse table with a white-backed toughened panel resting on it while the adjacent room was fitted to be a fully functioning laundry and pantry for extra storage.

In the dining room, the walls were painted a soft duck egg blue. The oak floor, however, presented a challenge; it had been stained orange, which is tricky to change without obscuring the wood grain. Claire resolved the issue with floor paint, creating a pattern of white and taupe squares, which toned down the orange and lifted the room, giving it a sense of drama. “I think dining rooms should be about theatre and entertaining for your guests,” she reflects. Inspired by her time in Sydney where she saw buildings with original tin ceilings, she used wallpaper that resembled old pressed tin panels and inserted foxed mercury mirror glass into the alcoves. “I wanted to reflect light but considered that normal mirrors would be a bit harsh, so the speckling on these [foxed mercury mirrors] really helps tone it down.” Murano glass wall lights were installed, the radiators were boxed in, and the chandelier was placed low over the dining table to create a soft mood. The fireplace tiles offered the finishing

touch – Claire painted them with her my own version of Delft designs.

The living room presented the repeat problem of stained orange oak flooring. “This time I painted the boards white and laid a large Moroccan rug.” The same pewter curtains were hung and were complemented with grey velvet sofas while a range of lights – some for reading; others for mood – were added and a steel fire curtain was installed on the fireplace for added safety.

Claire created a dramatic space in the main bedroom. “I had a hunch that we could take the ceiling out and expose the eaves because of the shape of the roofline.” She was correct, and the extra height creates a sense of flow from the double-height hallway. The bedroom was painted white and a dressing room with built-in cupboards fitted, creating a fresh, calm and tidy space. There were originally three doors in the room: one entrance; one leading into the dressing room; and one next to it opening into the bathroom. Claire blocked the one opening into the bathroom and added a door between the en-suite and the dressing room. “It flows really well and gives the bedroom a more spacious feel,” she says.

Claire was determined to give her bathroom some personality. “The bathroom is such an important room –

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about it*
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it's where you prepare to sleep or start the day so I believe it's a great spot to have your favourite or inspirational pieces around you." She created a stunning space with highly patterned Carrara marble panels on the walls of the shower and beneath the dado height for the rest of the room, a large walk-in shower, large freestanding bath and she ensured plenty of space to display artwork and sculptures.

Claire's home interior isn't yet complete, but far from daunted, she relishes the continuing project. "It's great to have a work in progress," she says. With her interior design assignments taking her around the world, Claire's unusual finds include a striking oil painting by Australian artist Makinti Napanangka (pictured left), a vintage Beni Ourain Moroccan rug and a wire table lamp bought at a degree art show in Bath. Her mix of antique and contemporary pieces along with her own handiwork has resulted in that easy yet elegant look that made the home in *Something's Gotta Give* so envied.



HOME COMFORTS

My aesthetic is...

Eclectic for my own home but I get to work with different styles for clients.

I can't live without...

A really good bed. After a good night's sleep, you can tackle almost anything.

My style no-nos include...

Looking up to see light bulbs in wall lights; having to put your arm through the water to adjust a shower; freestanding washbasins in bathrooms, which lack space to put anything down. Good design is about making something look terrific and being easy to use.

My top décor tip is...

When choosing a wall colour, always paint a large sample on a white board and move it around the room. Live with it and see how it changes in varying light.

My other tip is...

When planning lighting, always pay attention to what the light will reflect off – it makes a huge difference.

Home is...

Your sanctuary. It should be where you chill and unwind; where you are comfortable with family and friends.