

SOME LIKE IT HOT

Lina Li Pizzi found design inspiration for her sunny, Mediterranean-style home from an unexpected source

FEATURE RENÉE GREEN | PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID GILES



SITTING AREA
Open shelves create a lived-in feel. Lack wall shelf, from £10; Besta TV bench, from £155, both Ikea. Dirty Sexy Marilyn No 3 screen print (unframed), £495, Ben Allen Studios



OFFICE
‘This multifunctional space is easy to convert into a guest bedroom,’ says Lina. - Papiro writing desk, £1,900; Porado Siro white leather chair, £600, both Lina Interiors





KITCHEN

Colourful touches add interest to the pale design. Everest Grey Oak laminate floor, £14,745q m, Wickes, has this look. For bespoke patchwork furniture try Ginny Avison. The Larred white kitchen bar stool, Egg, Stools Online, is comparable.

DESIGN TIP 'Architects' plans are just a starting point – from these initial drawings, feel free to move walls and concepts around to get the perfect layout'



REPLANNED

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

A 1930s detached bungalow

LOCATION

Hertfordshire

ROOMS

Sitting room/

kitchen-diner, office, utility room,

two bedrooms (both en suite),

guest bathroom

PURCHASED 2014

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before buying this place, I lived in a two-bedroom apartment in north London,' says Lina.

During her weekly supermarket shop, Lina Li Pizzi received a phone call that changed her life. 'I was browsing the aisles when my friend called to say she had found the perfect house for me,' explains Lina. 'She had been looking for a new property and was at a one-day viewing of a bungalow. It wasn't right for her, but she thought it might be good for me. So I abandoned my trolley and rushed to meet her.'

Lina had been searching for a suitable home ever since she sold her apartment several months earlier. 'I hadn't anticipated that finding one would be such a difficult task, and I ended up moving into

a rental while I looked at a long list of places,' says Lina. 'Even though my old flat was quite roomy, I yearned for greater space and a nice outdoor area of my own.'

However, it wasn't exactly love at first sight when Lina visited the two-bedroom bungalow her friend had recommended. 'As soon as I walked through the front door, I almost bumped into a spiral staircase leading up to storage space in the loft,' recalls Lina. 'There was also a tiny sitting room, and the rear bedroom window had been bizarrely bricked in, making the house very dark.'

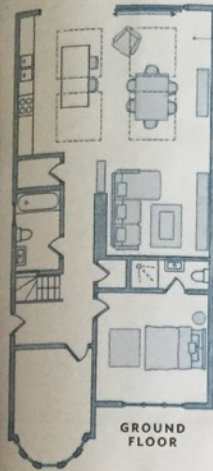
Far from being deterred, Lina focused on the positive aspects of the building – its

good location, large garden and loft. 'I had no hesitation about putting an offer in,' she says. 'It had great potential, and I felt I knew exactly what needed to be done to it.'

As an interior designer, Lina is no stranger to big renovation projects. With the help of an architect, she reworked the layout, designed a loft conversion and applied for permitted development rights to build a small rear extension. Despite an initial delay, with a neighbour at first objecting to sign a party wall agreement, the project went ahead – starting from the top.

A large eaves area was discovered while converting the loft, so Lina tweaked the plans by building a partition

AFTER

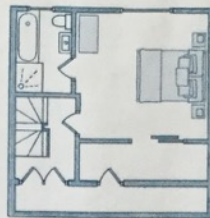


GROUND FLOOR

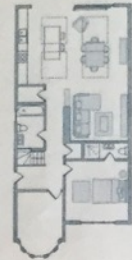


INCREASING SPACE

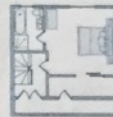
By adding a six-metre rear extension and removing interior walls and former room boundaries, Lina has created a generous open-plan area for cooking, dining, socialising and relaxing. Maximum light enters the vast room through the large skylights and glazed sliding doors that run the width of the room. Other building work included converting the loft, which had been previously used for storage, into a spacious master en suite, complete with dressing room.



FIRST FLOOR



BEFORE



DINING AREA

Lina has created the illusion of even greater space with the large statement mirror and contemporary transparent furniture. Keel mirror panels, £690; glass-top table, £250; Eames-inspired Wire chairs, £79 each; Cattelan Luna 3 sideboard, £3,500, all Lina Interiors



MASTER BEDROOM

The neutral tones in here are enlivened with bright artwork and accessories. Astoria table lamps, £95 each, John Lewis. UK-CF Cityscape Oslo bedside table, £150, Wayfair, is a good alternative



MASTER EN SUITE

'I didn't have to choose between a shower and bath, as there was room for both,' says Lina. Cranford Gray wall tiles, 60 x 60cm, £179q m, Home Tiles



GUEST BEDROOM

Layered bedding lends an air of hotel luxe. Round storage cubes, £275 each, Lina Interiors

INSPIRATION *'On my frequent trips to my native Italy, I like to visit trade shows and get new ideas'*

wall to create a dressing room. 'It was a smart idea and it didn't affect the rest of the space, as I was still able to have a large en-suite bedroom,' she says.

Beyond the success of the loft conversion, Lina is proud of the reworked downstairs area, where her trademark Italian styling is most evident. The extension generated room for a sociable open-plan space, featuring a glossy white kitchen and relaxed dining and seating areas. It works well for the large family gatherings Lina regularly hosts, and a wall of sliding doors opens out onto the garden, further increasing her socialising areas.

Lots of storage was included to compensate for the lost loft space, while white walls and pops of colour including an

Azure blue splashback in the kitchen add a modern Mediterranean feel. 'After selling my flat, I made an impulse purchase of a limited-edition Marilyn Monroe screen print,' says Lina. 'This quickly became my inspiration, and I worked everything around it. I just loved the colours.'

Even Lina can't believe how amazing her once-dark and cramped bungalow now looks. Clever planning and practical additions have made it almost unrecognisable from the place that she originally bought. 'It's everything I wanted and more,' she says.

'This is now the perfect house with great entertaining space and storage,' says Lina. 'I think I may well have excelled myself this time.'