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Young at heart

STYLISH AND CHILD-FRIENDLY, THIS LONDON HOME ILLUSTRATES THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO COMBINE FAMILY LIFE WITH A SOPHISTICATED INTERIOR

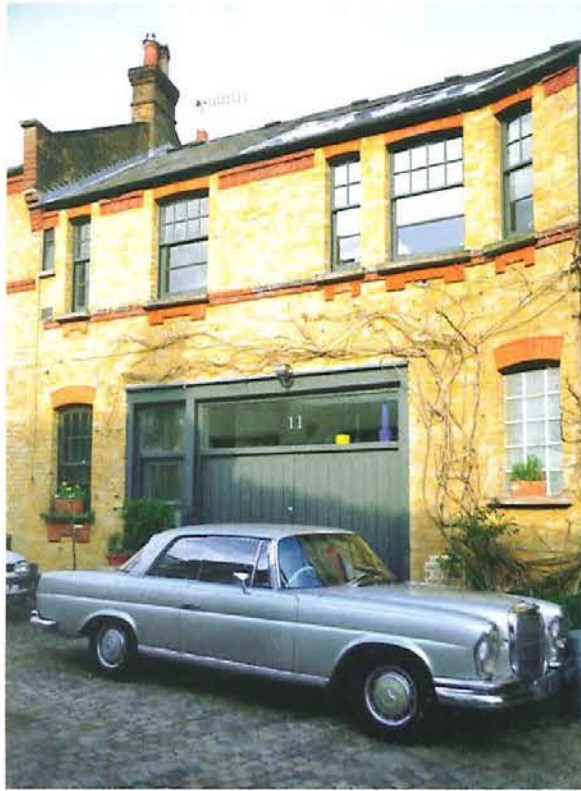
Words **TRISH LORENZ** Pictures **BILL KINGSTON**



Living area The cream 'Barcelona' chairs by Mies van der Rohe for Knoll (try Aram Store) were a wedding present. 'The kids love sitting on them,' says homeowner Sally. Being well-used, the chairs now have a certain patina that adds to their sleek good looks. On the shelves, a framed Takashi Murakami print sits beside leather boxes by family friend Bill Amberg. The floor is spruce-oiled oak (try Ebony & Co) ►

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When children arrive on the scene, even the most tasteful home can descend into chaos; toys and baby bits and pieces aren't normally conducive to stylish interiors. But Sally Mackereth and her husband Julian Vogel show that it needn't be a given. Their family home, in a peaceful north-London mews, is light, welcoming and beautiful too.

Sally and Julian share their home with Lola, eight, and Oscar, six. 'The kids are everywhere in this house,' Sally says. It's true – the children's presence ranges from their paintings and photographs to the row of brightly coloured Pez sweet dispensers in the bathroom. But the secret of this home's success is storage. Spread over four floors, the house is Tardis-like, with every nook and cranny concealing bespoke cupboards that hide the paraphernalia of family life, from Lola's piano, which fits in a closet downstairs, to the children's homework and art supplies that are kept in the purpose-built drawers in the kitchen. 'I'm obsessed with cupboards and storage,' says Julian. 'I don't like everything to be visible, out on display all the time. I'm a bit of a hoarder and we've got lots of stuff but it doesn't have to take over.'

It helps that Sally is an architect and designed this house to suit their family life. Mews homes are often small and dark, but here a mezzanine living area and vast skylight open up the space, while a glass panel in the kitchen floor lets light penetrate down to basement level. 'I thought about how we actually live in our home,' Sally says. 'The main bedroom is on the ground floor behind the kitchen because it made more sense to have the living room upstairs by the terrace – I also like the fridge being en suite!'

Furniture plays its part, too. There's nothing of the glossy showroom about this space. Mix-and-match pieces include family heirlooms such as the Forties Czech closet in the main bedroom, eBay finds and classic Modernist designs. It's certainly an approach that works – this is a warm and inviting home that doesn't feel clinical or forced. Perhaps that's because it's very much dedicated to everyday family life.

First floor From the outside, the mews house gives little away. The first floor mezzanine has access to the terrace, while a skylight helps illuminate the lower levels. The purple mohair-covered Harry Bertoia 'Bird' chair for Knoll (try Aram Store) is one of Sally and Julian's favourite reading spots

Dining area In the more formal first-floor dining area, wire Harry Bertoia chairs for Knoll mix with 'Tam Tam' stools from Habitat, an opulent chandelier (try Chelsea Gallery at The Furniture Cave) and an antique mirror from Portobello Market ►

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Every nook and cranny conceals bespoke cupboards that hide the paraphernalia of family life

Kitchen At ground/entry level is the kitchen and family dining room. It's painted in Dulux's 'European White', which Sally and Julian also used on the cabinets that were custom-made by a local joiner. A section of glass floor allows light into the basement

Ground floor A wooden work surface adds further warmth to the kitchen. 'It's designed not to be too precious,' says Sally. 'We

wanted it to be welcoming. Julian loves to cook and the kids like to help out, too.' The green and white 'Bersa' cups and saucers are by Stig Lindberg and are available from Skandium. The main bedroom is separated from the kitchen by a large sliding door that can provide privacy yet also keeps sight lines open during the day ►

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The children's presence ranges from their paintings to the row of Pez sweet dispensers that line the bathroom

Playroom This the children's domain, and manages to be functional without sacrificing style. The vintage Arne Jacobsen 'Egg' chair was an eBay find and the green sofa is vintage Knoll

Basement The white resin floor and white walls help to keep this level as light as possible. One wall of Lola's room is lined with felt, adding a lovely tactile

element, and can be retracted to create a large open-plan play space or closed for more privacy.

In the children's bathroom, a collection of Pez sweet dispensers lines the walls. The vintage basin vanity unit is by Dutch designer Cees Braakman from Fears & Kahn **DECO**

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