



ALL IS CALM

Pared back, soulful and timeless, this Cambridgeshire haven is a lesson in combining sustainability with minimalism and a quiet sense of occasion

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Styling **HOUSE OF GREY**



Living room Bespoke sofas from Caravane, reupholstered in linen, and an oversized rug from Larusi give this space a textural warmth. Statement antiques from AU Bespoke, including a marble coffee table, continue the refined palette, while a 'Mirror Ball' pendant light by Tom Dixon adds a touch of glamour. The rustic bowl on the table, also from AU Bespoke, is filled with decorative crystals ►

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Portrait Homeowner Anna sits at her bespoke dining table in front of specially commissioned canvases by British artist Oliver Hilton

Dining room Anna loves to entertain so had a huge marble top made for two vintage marble bases to create a table large enough to accommodate guests. The antique parquet floor, salvaged from the old MI5 building in London, enhances the seamless flow between the main dining and living spaces. The chairs are a vintage Danish design, upholstered in sheepskin, and the mirror is also second-hand, all from AU Bespoke. Another 'Mirror Ball' pendant light by Tom Dixon hangs above ►

Beauty is more than skin deep at Anna Unwin's Cambridgeshire home: a former religious retreat in Hemingford Grey that greets you with an immediate sense of calm and understated sophistication. Its symmetrical Georgian proportions play host to a collection of one-off design finds, all selected with the keen eye that has made her antiques and textiles shop, AU Bespoke, a favourite choice of interior designers, boutique hotels and private clients.

'Restoring the original bones of the house with integrity was as important to me as the aesthetics and functionality,' says Anna. 'When sourcing furniture and accessories, I'm drawn to soulful old pieces – repurposed for modern living, their sense of story always resonates.'

After swapping the streets of London for life in the countryside 10 years ago, with her husband, Willie McDougall, and their three girls – twins Olive and Flo, 12, and Betty, 11 – Anna has slowly transformed this space from an austere, 22-bedroom monastic retreat to stylish five-bedroom family home. 'The sheer scale of the 790-square-metre property meant taking our time to finesse the internal layout and to thoughtfully source,' she explains. 'It gave me the freedom to imagine and create.'

Throughout the house, off-white backdrops are complemented by a few considered pieces. There's the covetable parquet floors reclaimed from the old MI5 building in London, 400-year-old thick stone fireplaces from a dealer in France, Italian travertine tables and mid-century modern lighting, as well as abstract art and heavy antique textiles. 'Curating aged finds within a minimalist scheme adds a contemporary edge that new, on-trend collections never quite deliver for me,' says Anna.

In the kitchen, pale pink bespoke cabinetry is complemented with an artful mix of luxury materials, including brass, copper, foxed glass and natural granite details, while in the living room bespoke linen-covered sofas, bought 20 years ago from Caravane, set the tone for this property's inviting palette of cream and white.

It's a colour scheme that lends itself to Christmas, but Anna's same minimalist aesthetic applies to the festive season. Think oversized branches of fir, a handmade wreath and waxed brown paper parcels, finished with rustic string – simple, foraged, natural, recyclable.

'During the renovation, sustainable choices became a way of life,' says Anna, who is an advocate of hunting out designs that have a style capable of transcending time and trends. 'I love that my customers increasingly value this aesthetic too,' she adds. 'Choose pieces well and you will love them forever.' aubespoke.com