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## PROPERTY & HOME

# 'It's fun and eclectic... it is a bit of a mishmash'

THE SINGER LIKES TO DRESS HER HOME WITH A DIFFERENT OUTFIT FOR EACH ROOM

**You've been famous for a long time - did you get on the property ladder young?**

No! I was renting until eight years ago because I had a terrible record deal and could never afford to buy a house, especially in London. I bought for the first time after making my fifth album. It was a Victorian three-bedroom house in Willesden in north-west London and had a little garden. I loved it because I had waited so long to have any money to be able to buy a house and it felt amazing.

**How did you customise it?**

I turned one of the bedrooms into a wardrobe because I had so many clothes! My interiors are always inspired by my wardrobe - I like to dress my home with a different outfit for each room so it has its own personality. I like rich, saturated colours with lots of art on the walls. I got into this habit of collecting Catholic memorabilia that had obviously been stolen from churches and sold in flea markets. That stuff went in my spare bedroom. It was dark with red velvet - and there was a painting of Mary impaled on seven swords - calming things like that! So when people stayed they'd either get turned on or wake up really guilty!

**How would you describe your interiors style?**

Maximalist - but my mum describes it as 'like a child did it'. So the Paloma Home website is basically filled with adult things for adult children. It is fun and eclectic and a bit of a mishmash where you can put loads of stuff together that shouldn't go together - but it works!

**Did your mum influence your interior design style at all?**

No, as a child of the Sixties, my mum is really into minimalism. Everything had to be white - white sheets, white walls - and she was always getting rid of stuff. I would come home from school and she would have had a cull - and all my favourite things would be in the bin. So I rebelled and now I'm just a hoarder. Although I'm starting to turn into my mum - when my daughter asked where her picture was recently, I had to tell her I had chucked it away.



**What advice would you give to people refurbishing on a budget?**

The thread running through my home is vintage, as most of the things I own I've bought on Ebay or in junk shops. I created my homeware range to be affordable because everyone wants nice stuff. If you have zero money, check out Freecycle where people are giving things away. You can transform the look of an old sofa with a couple of cool cushions.

palomahome.com

INTERVIEW BY CLARE MORRISROE



Maximalist: Paloma admits to being a hoarder



All smiles: Tom and Beth are delighted with their new home

# 'I can't believe we own it!'

PRICED OUT OF THEIR HOME TOWN, THIS PAIR BOUGHT A REFURBISHED HOUSE NEARBY, SAYS **ANDREA DEAN**

ONCE they reached their mid-twenties, Beth Cook, a nanny, and her partner Tom Laland, a production engineer, decided that the time was right to get a place of their own. Keen to move out from their parents' homes in Hitchin, Hertfordshire sooner rather than later, it didn't take them long to work out that their budget wouldn't stretch to buying the size of home they wanted locally. The logical step was to expand their search, which led them a few miles north to Annington's Mayflower Park development in Henlow, where they were able to afford a newly refurbished three-bedroom house.

With nearly 40,000 homes in its portfolio, Annington is one of the country's largest private owners of residential property. The majority are detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, which are leased to the Ministry Of Defence and rented to military families. When these are no longer needed by the MOD, they are refurbished and sold on the open market at competitive

prices. They're often larger than average, have decent-sized gardens and are close to transport links.

'We were looking for a two or three-bedroom home that was within budget yet still close to our families and friends as we were quickly becoming priced out of the market in Hitchin,' explains Beth. 'We looked at the pros and cons of moving slightly further away, and it quickly became apparent that living in Henlow would only enhance our quality of life.'

After saving for two and half years the couple were able to put down a ten per cent deposit. 'We were so excited to find out we could afford to purchase a home instead of renting as we didn't want to waste our money,' adds Tom. 'Annington put us in touch with a mortgage adviser who was really helpful and gave us all the information we needed.'

'When you're a first-time buyer it's quite a scary process, especially as we've never made a purchase quite this big before.'

Now they're in, the couple plan to stay put for a long time to come.

'We've been together for six years and we're ready for the next step. It was important to find a home that could accommodate a growing family but also had access to good schools,' says Beth. 'It's perfect for us. I don't think we ever thought we could get a spacious and high-quality home with a large garden within our budget. I can't believe we own it.'

For now, the pair are enjoying forging friendship with their neighbours, as Beth explains.

'It's great to have a chance to be a part of the community being built here,' she says. 'Tom and I were one of the first to call Mayflower Park home and as more people start to move in it's slowly starting to feel like we are part of something.'

'A few of us have created a Facebook group to keep in touch and get to know each other - that's exactly the sort of place we wanted. It's such a find: nice and quiet but close enough to walk to the local shop and the station. We are very happy with our choice.'

annington.co.uk



Good as new: Nearby homes on Nene Road have been fully renovated

### DO THE MATHS

Mayflower Park is a mix of two and three-bedroom houses - previously married quarters for military personnel - close to RAF Henlow and convenient for Arlessey station, which is just 40 minutes from St Pancras International. It's now sold out but eight, fully renovated mid and end-terrace two-bedroom houses have just been launched nearby on Nene Road, from £310,000.

This is how the figures stack up for a two-bed house...  
 Purchase price: £310,000  
 10% deposit: £31,000  
 Mortgage: approx. £1,591 per month  
 Service charge: approx. £39 pcm  
 Monthly spend: approx. £1,630