

A PERFECT START

This first time buyer made fantastic use of limited space and turned a new build into a beautiful, contemporary home

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AT HOME

Jessica's sense of style is evident in every room

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KITCHEN THROUGH TO LIVING ROOM

The downstairs of this two-bedroom house is open plan with the breakfast bar dividing up the space



LIVING AREA

Furniture with simple lines helps keep the look calm and uncluttered. The Livingstone sofa from Mollio has been upholstered in Naples fabric from Fryett's, available from Envision while the vintage-film-inspired cushions are made up in Andrew Martin fabric



EXTERIOR
Though just a few years old, the cottage is traditional in style

As soon as she left university, Jessica Kesson started saving up to buy a house. 'I was keen to get on the property ladder, but first I needed a deposit, so I moved back in with my parents for two years and saved every penny I made,' says Jessica.

During the week she worked as a stylist at her mother's interior design company, which specialises in styling show homes, and at weekends she worked for the luxury store, Mulberry, in Glasgow. 'I learned a lot about style working for both my mum and at Mulberry and I think my urge to buy my own home came from wanting to put my own ideas into practice,' says Jessica.

Having saved for a deposit, Jessica began her search. 'As most of my social life is in Stirling, I decided to buy there to be close to friends and family,' she explains. She wanted a traditional-looking flat in the centre of town and assumed, given her budget, that she'd have to buy a property that required updating. But after several viewings Jessica came across a two-bedroom cottage in a popular modern development near the city centre.

'The property was very deceptive – it looked like an old stone building that had been converted into houses and flats, but in reality the whole development was only two years old.' With two jobs and very little spare time, Jessica was relieved that she didn't have to do any major work. 'My challenge was to turn a blank canvas into a home with character that reflected the pretty exterior.'

Now the budget she'd put aside to spend on refurbishment could be spent on decorating and furniture. 'My offer was accepted in March and because the sellers were unable to move out until August, I had time to think about what I wanted to do.' By the

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KITCHEN
Jessica enjoys preparing meals for friends and family

HALLWAY
Andrew Martin's Library wallpaper brings interest to the back hall





SPARE ROOM

Jessica's dressing room doubles as a spare room. It has a double bed from Ikea that folds away into a single and is decorated with black flock Leopold wallpaper from Clarke & Clarke

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

SAYS JESSICA

time she got the keys on the last day of August, Jessica had ordered all the carpets, wooden flooring, a new kitchen, wallpaper, paint and most of the furniture.

'I wasted no time,' she laughs. 'On the first of September I set to work pulling out the old kitchen.' It had been installed by the property developers and although it was only two years old, it was starting to wear and wasn't arranged in a practical way; tall units ran down the right hand wall leaving nowhere for a breakfast bar or table. 'The units also closed the room in, making it narrow and dark,' explains Jessica.

A builder removed the downstairs toilet and turned the space into a utility room, which meant the washing machine and dryer could be relocated there from the kitchen. The newly freed-up space under the window was used for storage and allowed Jessica to take down the bank of units along the wall. 'There's not enough space in the living room for a dining table so I had a breakfast bar fitted where the units were. It's large enough to seat friends when they come over, and with storage below, it doubles as my office when I'm working from home.' To give the room a more contemporary edge, the cream carpet in the living room was replaced with wide-plank, whitewashed oak-effect flooring, and the painted walls were papered in grey textured wallpaper.

Upstairs a glamorous dressing room decorated with black-papered walls and black-and-white framed posters doubles as a spare room when friends stay over, while Jessica's bedroom is a peaceful haven with white furniture and bedding against a neutral wallpapered backdrop.

'As the house is small, it was important to decorate in similar tones, textures and styles so each space flows into the next,' explains Jessica. 'I've thoroughly enjoyed the whole process, so much so that now I have itchy feet and want to move on and do it all again!'  



MAIN BEDROOM

In this serene room Plantation wallpaper in Linen by Andrew Martin is echoed by the slatted wooden blinds, while the bed and furniture are from Ikea