



HOUSE & GARDEN®

THE
EDIT

OUTDOOR LIGHTING
PATTERNED TILES
UNUSUAL SUMMER BULBS

Plus

A kitchen garden in
Somerset and cooking
with British fish

PASSPORT
to PARADISE

Heavenly homes in Spain, Australia and the English countryside

PEOPLE

THIS MONTH: An interior designer whose love of colour and detail informs her bold schemes; London-based curators and artistic matchmakers with an eye for new talent; and a figurative artist whose portraits offer a glimpse into private worlds



Interior designer Stephanie Barba Mendoza in the sitting room of her house in north London



Designer
**STEPHANIE
BARBA MENDOZA**

ELIZABETH METCALFE meets the Mexican interior designer, whose own house in north London showcases her adventurous aesthetic and her playful yet elegant use of atmospheric colour and pattern



As her north London Victorian terrace makes clear, interior designer Stephanie Barba Mendoza is not one to shy away from colour. Take her jewel box of a sitting room, where a pink mohair sofa and palm-print screen are set against 'Blue Gum' walls – a punchy hue from Paint & Paper Library. 'I love deeper shades for living areas, as they are so much more atmospheric,' explains Stephanie. An antique chaise longue, reupholstered in a large-scale Robert Allen floral in warm blues and pinks, adds to the rich mix and references Stephanie's native Mexico. 'The fabric reminds me of my grandmother, because she used to have huge bird of paradise plants in her garden.'

Stephanie's interest in art started in childhood and she went on to study architecture at the Ibero-American University in Mexico City in 2002. She spent a year there, but soon realised it was colour and details that really excited her. 'I decided that I didn't want to build skyscrapers,' she says. 'I managed to find a two-year interior design course at the Autonomous University of Guadalajara. I immediately loved it and gained the confidence to pursue it as a career.'

Having spent a happy gap year before university studying English in London, Stephanie decided to move back here in 2005, signing up to KLC's year-long diploma course. 'I wanted to learn about the interiors industry here.' After completing it, she worked as a designer for various residential developers.

Her big break was in 2010, when she landed a job with *House & Garden* Top 100 designer Martin Brudnizki. She quickly moved up the ranks, becoming a senior designer in 2012 and an associate in 2014. 'Martin was a real mentor to me and gave me so much freedom,' says Stephanie, who worked on private houses and high-profile commercial projects during her 10 years with him, including restaurants Sexy Fish and The Ivy, as well as Annabel's private members' club.

In 2019, she launched her eponymous studio, focusing on residential projects worldwide: 'I didn't feel a great urge to leave Martin's, but I did start to crave a new challenge.' Based in Kensal Rise, she is currently working on a mid-century modern house in Miami, a house in Notting Hill and a Tudor-style newbuild in Antwerp. 'My approach is detail-oriented,' says the designer, who cites American decorator Elsie de Wolfe, French designer and artist Serge Roche and Italian architect Renzo Mongiardino as key influences. 'I am led by the architecture, but for me it's the details that make an interior work.'

The house needed little structural work, so Stephanie was able to invest her time – and budget – in aesthetic flourishes that would transform the space. A good example is the two chimneypieces in the sitting room, decorated with patterns she designed herself, which she commissioned Dominic Lewis and his team at The Finishers Company to create. One is rich and tortoiseshell-esque, while the other features a graphic chequerboard pattern, influenced by a 2019 collaboration between Gucci and French design studio Antoinette Poisson.

The main bedroom, which occupies the converted loft, has a softer palette, with pale pink walls and a fantastic antique tapestry. 'I want to create spaces that are layered and bold,' says Stephanie. These are qualities she appreciates in her clients, too: 'There's nothing better than working with someone who trusts you and wants to be adventurous with you' □ *Stephanie Barba Mendoza: barbamendoza.com*



OPPOSITE FROM TOP Hand-painted chimneypieces create rich focal points in the sitting room. A vintage screen was reupholstered in Braquenié's 'L'Exotique' damask in terracotta. THIS PAGE Walls in Paint & Paper Library's 'Blue Gum' were the starting point for the scheme

J.W. COOPER