



'At last, we've

Shelley Falcon, 30, from South East London longed that would be good for entertaining and, after lots

My room

ABOUT ME I'm Shelley Falcon, 30, and I'm married to John, 30. We live with our son, Asher, three, in a three-bedroom semi-detached house in South East London, which we bought in September 2007.

THE PROBLEM The house hadn't been touched for a long time when we moved in and it was looking tired and dated. We hated the brick fireplace that took up the back wall in the dining room and we wanted to open up the whole space.

OUR WISHLIST We wanted a light, modern dining room where we could entertain friends and family. I love the nautical-style accessories that you can find on the high street and online, and thought that would be a great theme.

BEST BUY The ladder shelves are ideal. They're a modern design and give me plenty of styling space without taking up too much room.

STYLE TIP Add a focal point with a large mirror. We now have no fireplace, so I added a large square driftwood mirror to the chimney breast to turn it into a feature.



GREAT IDEA!

To give a room a focal point, hang a mirror with an interesting frame, or an eye-catching painting or print



'Our dining room was stuck in a real time warp'

Where to Shop guide on page 128

Dining room makeover **Love it**

a space to entertain'

d for a light, bright modern room of hard work, her dream came true



TIME TO DINE

'The wooden table and chairs really warm up the cool white dining room'



TAKE A SEAT

'I've chosen a chair with loose covers because they're easy to clean. The cushions fit in with the nautical theme'

When we first bought our house, we knew that the fireplace in the dining room had to go,' says Shelley. 'It was a real throwback to the 1970s and took up too much space. The colour of the room was bland, too, and the whole space looked dated. But tackling the kitchen and dining room were going to be such a big project that we had to wait a few years, so we could save enough money. During that time, we realised that if we removed the wall separating the two rooms, we'd have a great entertaining area - big enough to invite the whole family over.'

Two into one
When we finally got builders in to work on the kitchen, we got them to knock down the non-supporting wall and rip

out the horrid old fireplace. It was too big a job for us, especially as there were gas pipes to be removed, so we left it to the experts.

Once the fireplace, hearth and brick fire surround were removed, the room felt twice the size. We added a modern radiator on the wall near the patio doors to keep us warm in winter.

Makeshift kitchen

While the building work was being carried out, we didn't have a kitchen and had to set up in the dining room, using our electric oven in there and trying to prepare healthy meals for the three of us. The lowest point was when we had no table for him to sit at to eat his dinner and he had to have it on a tray on his lap in the living room. He also really missed being able to have his friends round to play, so we

TOTAL £2,144

Turn over for my shopping list

'We painted the whole room white, with the chimney breast in a deep sea blue'

had a very clear goal to get the dining room finished as quickly as possible.

The colour scheme
We painted the whole room ourselves, doing a bit at a time at weekends and in the evenings after work. We chose white to give the illusion of more space and light, but wanted to make the room look more interesting. So we decided to go for a nautical look and painted the chimney breast a deep sea blue.

Once we'd finished all the painting, we had new flooring laid throughout the downstairs of the house. We wanted to invest in a wooden floor that would stand the test of time and be Asher-proof. We went for rustic oak engineered-wood flooring. It was the most expensive part of the makeover, but it was worth it as we love the way it looks.

We had the curtains made up for us by Dunelm Mill and John put them up. We settled on a striped fabric because it looked so fresh and went well



THE PERFECT DISPLAY

'I knew we needed somewhere to put photos and accessories, but didn't want a sideboard, so the ladder shelves were a great option'

with our theme - I don't ever get bored with stripes. Then we added red accessories to give the room a warmer feel.

Wood works

We toyed with the idea of having all-white furniture, as it looks so modern, but we thought it may be too harsh. So we chose wood furniture instead, as it provides a natural warmth that looks so much

more inviting, while the variations in grain and texture also add interest to the room.

My favourite bits

We enjoy entertaining here now and often have friends over for dinner. But I also love sitting on my own reading in the armchair by the window. The new layout has created a much more relaxed atmosphere. It's perfect.'



How to get Shelley's dining room style



DRIFT AWAY

Natural driftwood accessories set the scene. Large Lattice Driftwood mirror (41cm x 41cm), £110, Interiors@tides



SEASHORE FINDS

Look on the high street for decorative marine-themed accessories. Starfish Object ornament, £15, Marks & Spencer



RED ALERT

The easiest way to pull off a nautical theme is to go for red, white and blue. Drill cushion, £3.99, Dunelm Mill



EARN YOUR STRIPES

Striped fabrics in shades of blue will help conjure up a feeling of coastal chic. Sea napkin, £1.75, John Lewis

Dining room makeover **Love it**



STYLE TIP

'These lovely screen prints come in several different colours to suit your scheme'



WEBSAVVY

'I found these cute beach huts at coastal-style company interiors@tides. They're actually money boxes'

PROJECT DIARY

Want a new dining room? This is the story of my revamp



From this...



...to this

PLANNING TIME The building work starts on our kitchen, which makes the dining room almost unusable. The dust is everywhere!

ONE EVERYWHERE! The dividing wall and the ugly brick fireplace.