

Media Outlet: *Ideal Home Magazine*

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# Ideal Home

‘It feels like  
we’re on holiday’

Be inspired by Caireen and Gene Payne’s ideas for  
creating a home with bright spaces and a relaxed vibe

FOR WHERE TO BUY ITEMS SHOWN, TURN TO OUR SHOPPING DIRECTORY

The big  
CHANGE

CONVERTING  
THE GARAGE AND  
EXTENDING TO  
CREATE MORE  
LIVING SPACE



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### 1 Garden

A sun-bleached white wall and a decked area for eating alfresco make the Payne's East Sussex garden feel like a Mediterranean retreat. 'We can see the sea from here,' says Calreen. Composite decking, from £39.50 per sq m. TimberTech

BOUGHT FOR	SPENT	NOW WORTH
£445,000	£128,000	£700,000



## THE PROPERTY

A detached, four-bedroom, Thirties house in Ovingdean, East Sussex.

## THE LOOK

Cool coastal, with a pared-back scheme of white walls, neutral flooring and wood furniture.

## WHAT IT COST

Building work.....	£56,000
Bathrooms.....	£10,000
Kitchen.....	£12,000
Windows, doors and shutters.....	£19,000
Flooring.....	£10,000
Cladding.....	£8,000
Decking.....	£13,000
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>£128,000</b>

## LESSONS LEARNED

“One of the problems when you do a big project like this is that once you’ve been through all the pain and effort of the building work, you realise that you still won’t be finished for a long while because you don’t have all the furniture that you need or the artwork you want for the walls – but it’s worth being patient so you don’t rush to buy any old thing.”

## WHO LIVES HERE

Caireen and Gene Payne, and their sons, Jacob, 10, and Lucas, six. They bought the house in 2010.



#### ◀ FIRST FLOOR

The main bedroom with an en suite and dressing room is on one side, while two guest rooms, one with an en suite, plus the family bathroom, are on the other side of the floor. The boys' room is in the middle

**GROUND FLOOR ▶**

To the left of the hall is an office and the family room is behind that. On the other side is the big open-plan kitchen/living space with utility area. There is also a cloakroom at the end of the hall





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## HOME IDEAS *Thirties house*

**T**hey say that good things come to those who wait and this is certainly true for Cairren and Gene Payne. After years of living in rented properties while they searched for their dream home by the sea, they found this one – a former rectory in Ovingdean, East Sussex, that has views of the sea. 'It had been empty for a while because the vicar had left and wasn't being replaced,' says Cairren, 'so we entered into negotiations with the church. It took a long time, but we got the house eventually.'

Despite having to wait so long to find their ideal home, Cairren sees the time she and Gene spent renting as a positive experience. 'We've lived in about five different kinds of houses since we got married in 2005, and from that we worked out exactly what we needed from a home,' she says. The couple have two

children – Jacob, 10, and Lucas, six – and Gene's five older children – Sam, 23, Emily, 21, Bethany, 18, William, 15, and Oliver, 14 – are regular visitors, so space was a priority. While the location of the rectory was perfect, the couple had plans to extend to create a house that could cope with such a big family. 'People come into our house now and say, "We don't know how you had the vision to do this", but it all came out of our need to make family life work,' says Cairren.

And work it has. The transformation from stuffy, Thirties rectory to a modern, light-filled house that wouldn't look out of place on the east or west coast of America is remarkable. Cairren and Gene consulted several architects to help them envisage the extension, but were not convinced. 'They all made some fairly radical suggestions for what we thought didn't need a drastic solution,' says Cairren. 'We then realised that we were the ones who knew →

'I really do feel like I am on holiday here, partly because of the location – we can walk to the beach – but also because of the space. It's very calming'



### **Kitchen**

Painting the base units was a last-minute decision, but Cairren likes the vibrant touch they add. Units and island, £5,000. Handmade Kitchens of Christchurch. Purismo Star sink, £562. Suter range, Sterling



### **Coastal INSPIRATION**

Go for a subtle seaside look with a few splashes of sea blue and plenty of natural wood

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## Living area

Keeping things pared back has helped Calreen achieve the relaxed look that she loves. She also likes the simplicity of classic pieces. 'I'm just not a follower of trends,' she says. For a similar sofa, try the Aubrey in F43542P, £1800, Collins and Hayes Furniture. For a similar white coffee table, try the Lack, £25, Ikea.

## Dining area

The boundaries between inside and out disappear in this part of the new, open-plan living space thanks to not one but two sets of bifold doors. Benches at the dining table are perfect for large family gatherings. Benches, £900 for two, Rococo Architectural Antiques and Interiors.





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exactly what we wanted, so we found someone to do the drawings, who in turn brought in a structural engineer to help us with the whole process.'

Caireen and Gene's priority was to work with the existing building, not against it, but to increase its size by making the garage part of the living space downstairs and then extending at the back of the house to make way for a massive kitchen area that's open plan to the new downstairs living space and also a utility room. They also gained more space upstairs by building over the garage to get an en-suite bathroom and dressing room for the main bedroom. They then built over the old kitchen, which is now a family room, to get a fourth bedroom upstairs.

Work on the extensions began in August 2010 – just a month before Caireen, Gene and the kids had to be out of their rented house. Things moved along quickly, but there were some mishaps. 'On day two, Gene ripped out a kitchen cupboard with a little too much vigour and broke a water pipe,' Caireen recalls. 'There was much gushing of water and the mains wouldn't turn off. We had to call the water company

out, but in the meantime we had to drill a hole in the wall to allow the water to drain out!'

Minor floods aside, the builders made good progress. Even so, the family had to move into temporary accommodation for another month as the house was uninhabitable. Most of their possessions went into a 20ft x 8ft metal container in the garden. 'We got 90% of a four-bedroom house into it,' says Caireen. 'I never would have believed it.'

It took a day to move everything back out of the container and into the house when the family moved in at the end of October. The place was still a mess, but the extensions were done. 'I had to wipe dust off my keyboard every time I sat down to work,' says Caireen. 'Progress felt slower once we'd moved in, I suppose because you see every little ounce of activity as it happens, rather than seeing the culmination at the end of a day or a week.' The house was still without a kitchen at this point and the family had to make do with a makeshift arrangement in one corner.

A year after work first began, the house was completely finished. Caireen and Gene even →

### 9 Hall

A carpenter built the big cupboard, which contains all the family's clutter.

'I've got a bit of a storage obsession,' says Caireen. 'I like things to be in their place and preferably for that place to look nice' Cupboard painted in Babouche Estate Eggshell, £50 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball

### 3 of the best STOOLS



£75

#### Leg it

You can get the legs in a soft green, too House Doctor Industrial stool, Nelly Pepper

#### Sit pretty

It's available in seven other colours Industrial metal bar stool, Alexander & Pearl



£75



£95

#### Step on it

This one folds flat for easy storage Step stool in Clay, Garden Trading

'The renovation came out of the need to make family life work'



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## ④ Main bedroom

Instead of a headboard, the couple went for a fantastic painting over the bed. It's these quirky touches that make the house so unique

Tiger by Dave White, from a selection, antrepublic

## ⑦ Boys' room

As in all the other rooms, bold blocks of colour lift the neutral scheme. Nantucket bunk beds, £450; flat truckle bed, £150; both Aspace. For a similar rug, try the Zest in Multicolour, £19.99, Rugcrazy.co.uk



## Bring wood furniture to life

*Work wonders with a lick of paint*



### Gorgeous grey

Not adventurous? Go for a classic shade and create an aged effect with a waxed finish. Try Annie Sloan's Chalk Paint and waxes, from £7.95 for a 500ml tin of wax



### Into the blue

A classic colour that has the ability to calm. For a beautifully bright blue like this one, go for Little Greene's Sky Blue Intelligent Eggshell, £48 for 2.5ltr



### Tickled pink

Candy pink is very now and can give a traditional piece of furniture a new lease of life. Try Designers Guild's Hibiscus Eggshell, £31.20 for 2.5ltr



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## Family bathroom

The vintage cupboard and stool for the kids to stand on provide a lovely contrast to the modern fittings. For a similar wooden step, try the wooden step stool, £29, Jolo Manton Bed.



## En suite

The serene blue-and-white scheme is a nod to the house's seaside location. For similar basins, try the Karl rectangular washbowl, £165, Bathstore.

'We've lived in about five different kinds of houses since we got married, and from that we worked out exactly what we needed from a home'

gave the outside a makeover, bringing a touch of New England to the south coast of England with pale-blue cladding. 'The house was just a big white box before,' says Caireen. The interior also has a classic east coast of America look, with white walls used as a backdrop for gorgeous, well-made wood furniture, either painted or left in its natural state. The real success, though, is the open-plan living area downstairs. The entire space is flooded with light, thanks to two sets of bifold doors that open onto a large decked area, which becomes a second home for the family in summer.

The project isn't completely finished. Looking ahead, Caireen and Gene have plans to build a garage with a work space above it, to house Caireen's office and studio. She set up her own creative craft workshop business, Cascade, a few years ago and it is expanding fast, so she needs a dedicated area for that. However, for the time being at least, the dust has settled and the family are enjoying their new home - as are their extended family and friends. 'I really do feel like I am on holiday here, partly because of the location - we can walk to the beach - but also because of the space,' says Caireen. 'It's very calming. It feels like a real privilege to be here.'

## Sort out some shelving

Try a solution that's the perfect fit for your space

■ **Buy off the peg** If you have a limited budget, flatpack furniture is the most affordable option. Go for a modular shelving range, such as Ikea's Billy collection, which comes in different widths, depths and heights, so you can tailor-make a combination to suit your space.

■ **Order made to measure** When off-the-peg furniture doesn't fit the bill, but you still don't want to spend a fortune, Jali has a made-to-measure service that's more affordable than fully bespoke shelving. The furniture is

made from MDF to your exact specifications, and delivered ready to assemble, fit and paint yourself at home.

■ **Commission a carpenter** For a truly bespoke service, a carpenter or joiner will be able to create furniture to fit your brief. It's worth having examples of what you have in mind, so your carpenter can draw up a plan for you. Remember to always ask for a written quote and a breakdown of the materials. You can find a local carpenter at [ratedpeople.com](http://ratedpeople.com).

FEATURE: ANGELA EVERTT STYLING: MARISHA TAYLOR PHOTOGRAPHS: JAMES FRENCH BOX COPY: LISA PIZZANI PLANS: PERSONAL ID