



Grand Entrance

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- Large lion knocker in polished brass, £52.80, Danico Brass 020 7483 4477, danico.co.uk
- Traditional wired bell push with ceramic button, £31.20, Locks & Handles 020 7751 3397, doorhandles.co.uk



French Fancy



Sarah and Michael Jones discovered they were able to create a chic French look simply by shopping on their doorstep

Sarah and Michael Jones had already worked their way through all of the estate agents in Bath before they spotted Brindley Villa for sale in a local newspaper. "We had been searching for eight months and from the moment I saw it I was determined it would be ours," remembers Sarah. "Thankfully in hindsight I'm able to say that I was absolutely right to follow my instinct." It was the couple's plan to open a B&B and the property, which was built in 1871, met all their requirements. It was designed as a large family home and situated in a wonderful location on a tree-lined road in a quiet area south of the City.

"Even on our first visit it felt special and welcoming, which is just how our guests describe it now that we are open for business," Sarah says. When the Jones' bought Brindley Villa, it was already being run as a B&B. It had been owned by the same family for over 20 years and the fabric of the building had been immaculately maintained, however it would need a lot of work if Sarah was going to achieve what she had in mind. Thankfully she and Michael are experienced home renovators. "Over the years we've worked on quite a few houses," explains Sarah. "However now I think about it, that was always over a period of

years. This was the first project we completed all in one go and our first one as a business too." **Foreign affairs** The couple started by making some changes to the house's layout. The ground floor has remained the same, but they decided to reconfigure the first and second floors to increase the sizes of the guest

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SARAH JONES, OWNER

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bedrooms and upgrade the en-suite bathrooms.

Once these structural alterations were complete, Sarah could put her plans for the interior's new look into action. "We agreed that we didn't want our B&B to have a contemporary style like some of those we had visited in Bath and elsewhere. We wanted it to feel characterful and comfortable, so we went for a French look. I pictured painted furniture, *toile de Jouy* and a light and calming palette."



Sarah has long admired the French style. "I'm a self-confessed Francophile," she admits. "Michael and I have travelled a lot over the past 20 years, but France is one of my favourite destinations and we try to get there at least once a year. Actually at one time we even planned to move there and set up a *chambre d'hôte*. There are so many things I love about France, but at the top of the list is the French style of *décor*."

The first corner of the house to be refreshed was the B&B's most luxurious guest room, number

three. This large room is flooded with natural light courtesy of its big windows and Sarah wanted to make the most of its potential with a show-stopping scheme. "We started with the super-king French painted bed and went from there," she says. The striking colour scheme was inspired by fabric from her favourite shop in Bath, Atmosphere, which specialises in French and Belgian fabrics.

She did however encounter some opposition when she revealed her plan to paint the room's ceiling yellow. "I'm so

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pleased that I stuck to my guns though," she recalls. "It offsets the original cornicing and ceiling rose beautifully."

Close to home

Sarah's favourite room is the guest breakfast room. She chose to keep this large space simple with a quiet colour scheme which showcased its original features. Just like room three, it displays original cornicing. "It's a lovely reminder that our home was built to last and last," she says. The tiled fireplace, arguably the room's centrepiece, is also thought to be original.

She sourced furnishings from local antique shops and flea markets. "A lot of it was mine which I'd accumulated over the years and painted for the hotel," she adds. She is particularly pleased with the painted Oak sideboard in the breakfast room. "It receives so many compliments from our guests and I love being able to tell them that I bought it locally at White Living [a French-style homewares shop which has stores in Bath and Totnes]." In fact she has bought almost all of her purchases locally, from the fabrics to the paints, papers and carpets. "It felt like the local shop owners came along for the journey, which made it even more fun."

She has taken a great deal away from the whole experience. "I learned to keep things simple," she reveals. "It's been very different working on a house which is our home but also our business. Ordinarily I adore bits and bobs and objects which I think reflect our personalities but I forced myself to focus instead on colours and fabrics."

The Jones' hope that they will have plenty more opportunity to practice Sarah's new approach to interior design. "We're looking to buy another property and create an extension of Brindleys nearby, which is hugely exciting. The great feedback we've received so far has been so encouraging and I'm ready to take on my next project!"

Stay Here
For information about booking a stay at Brindleys, call 01225 310 444 or visit brindleysbath.co.uk. Prices start at £110 per room per night including breakfast.




get the Look
Recreate Sarah's stunning grey and yellow bedroom scheme



◀ **On reflection**

Louis mirror in ivory, £265, **AYERS & GRACES** 01582 536 760, ayersandgraces.com



Golden touch ▶

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▲ **Sleeping beauty**

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◀ **Sun flower**

Blossom cushion in chartreuse and pewter, £50, **HARLEQUIN** 0845 123 6805, harlequin.co.uk