

“IT’S OURS AT LAST!”

I had my eye on my dream house for years, but until I spotted a ‘for sale’ ad in the paper, I never thought I’d ever get to live here. It’s better than I ever imagined.



SECRET GARDEN

‘The first spring after we moved in all these plants I’d never seen before began to bloom. It was a beautiful sight, but the garden was so overgrown it looked like a wilderness. It was, in fact, just a very mature garden planted by the first person to live here, who was a naturalist. Even after managing to tame it I have to cut back all the plants each spring – but doing the gardening is far better exercise than going to the gym! Then, as soon as it’s warm enough, I invite all our friends and neighbours around to celebrate the new season.’



‘I don’t have expensive garden furniture. I just throw a piece of my favourite fabric over a tressle table when I’m entertaining.’ Pernilla

How did I end up living in my dream house? It's a question I often ask myself. My son's father lives opposite and I used to drop Johannes off there once a week. It wasn't long before I began to notice the wonderful house across the road. As a child I dreamed of living in a house with a balcony and a turret. This one had both, as well as an enchanting wild garden.

My mum and several of my friends live in this area – just outside Gothenburg and a short bicycle ride from the sea – so I knew we'd love living here. But the area had recently become expensive and besides, the house wasn't even for sale. So I just continued to dream.

Until I saw an ad in the paper. The house was for sale. My boyfriend Per and I weren't looking for a house at the time but I decided to go and see it anyway. As soon as I walked in I knew I had to have it. An elderly couple lived there and it was quite run down, but this appealed to me even more. We'd always wanted to renovate a house and I immediately saw the potential this one had.

I didn't let the thought that we couldn't afford it put me off, I began to think how we could make it possible. The house was divided into two apartments and the small garden flat needed the most work. I thought if we lived in the downstairs flat while renting out the top floors we might be able to manage it. We'd have to do most of the work ourselves, but we were prepared for that.

There were several other couples interested in the house and we were convinced we wouldn't get it. Then the owners found out that I was Johannes's mother. Because they knew him from the neighbourhood they decided to offer us the house. It was amazing – it was ours at last!

Although some things went unbelievably smoothly – the tenants were looking for somewhere bigger and were happy to move upstairs – not everything did. While building was going on the sewage pipe broke and flooded the garden. We had to dig out the cellar and part of the garden to fix the problem. It was all worth it. With a new baby on the way we're thinking about moving upstairs, and one day we'll put the whole house back together, but for now we're happy.



RING THE CHANGES

'I change my textiles round all the time. It's the best way of keeping things fresh. I chose this warm stone colour for the walls so it would always be a good background for any colour scheme I try out. At the first sign of spring I take down my winter drapes, throw open all my doors and bring cut flowers in. Bringing lighter, brighter textiles into a room helps carry the spirit of spring into the house. I also have a big clear-out. I hate clutter and this is the perfect time to get rid of things that we don't use any more.'

'When we stripped back the walls we found layer upon layer of paper - it was like a wallpaper museum!' Pernilla

DESIGNER KITCHEN

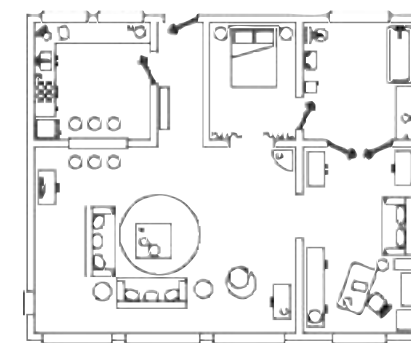
'Per and I sat down separately and drew out plans for our ideal kitchens. When we compared sketches they were identical! We both wanted a double bank of cupboards on one wall to maximise storage potential and work surfaces along two full walls. In practice we found we needed a smaller cabinet for things we used all the time - like coffee and mugs. We found an IKEA shoe cabinet that blended with the rest of the kitchen seamlessly.'



'I wanted a kitchen with an enormous table so we had to swap rooms around in the house. This was the main bedroom' **Pernilla**

FINDING BALANCE

'Our kitchen is a place to relax and dine as well as cook, so I papered one wall to take the edge off its utility feel. I made a bench by putting legs onto a LACK shelf - thus it's become Johannes's favourite place to sit as well as a handy place to store all my cookery books.'



UNDER THE SEA

'Johannes's room is tiny, so we custom built this bunk bed to fit the available space. He loves to play on it and it frees up lots of space on the floor. We also put a sofa underneath for when his friends stay. I used magnetic blackboard paint on the bunk and one of the walls to give him somewhere to write messages and put up pictures.'



Pernilla's way of making her small space work

SHELVE IT 'High shelving keeps clutter above eye level so it doesn't crowd a small room and reduce valuable space.'

IN ROTATION 'Separate summer and winter clothes and store what you're not using away.'

OFF THE FLOOR 'Freestanding lighting takes up floor space, so we've fitted lighting on to walls and furniture in the bedrooms.'

CENTRE POINT 'I have made a focal point behind the bed to give the room depth, and left the rest of the room neutral so it doesn't become too busy.'

AIM HIGH 'High beds are great for kids. Not only does Johannes love clambering all over his, but there's also space for a sofa bed underneath when his friends stay over.'

For more clever ideas for children's bedrooms, visit www.IKEA.xx/kids



OVER AND ABOVE

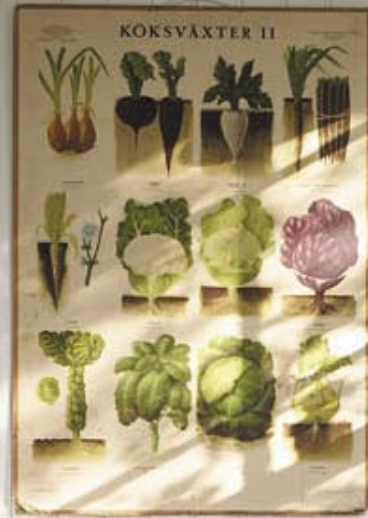
'We already had the bed, so Per built the wardrobes to fit exactly around it, and then we fitted IKEA kitchen cabinets along the top. We even fitted lights underneath the cabinets as there's no room for side tables with lamps. IKEA is now doing a special range of PAX wardrobes and fittings that are made to go around the bed just like this. The patterned paper makes a feature of the wall and it makes the bed more of a cosy den. I pile cushions at the head of the bed to compensate for the lack of a headboard.'



'This room is north-facing making it perfect for a bedroom. We get a few more minutes of dark in the long Swedish summer' Pernilla

GREEN FINGERS

'Plants can make a room cosy and relaxing, that's why I've let them take over this room overlooking the garden. I like greenery that looks after itself. I have a passion for orchids and it's great that they can withstand droughts between watering. When the flowers go I swap them around and bring other plants out.'



'Everytime I look into the garden I see something I've never noticed before. The way the light plays on the trees fascinates me' Pernilla

**MAKING IT
A REALITY
WITH IKEA**

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**A ROOM WITH A VIEW**

'In the winter this room gets cold so I shut it off from the main house and put thick drapes up at the window. We use it for storing our outside clothes and I bring my plants in here that can't withstand the temperature outside – such as the lime tree that I brought back from Croatia. But in spring I open the adjoining doors and let the light from here flood into the rest of the house. After six months of neglect, it always needs a good clear-out. I like to put lighter curtains up and new cushions on the chairs. I sort all my plants out, replacing the ones that didn't survive the winter and sweep and clean everything. The view into the garden is one of my favourites. I could sit here enjoying the view for hours.'