

# THE GOOD MIXER

*Whether she's throwing a Christmas party or decorating her house, meet a homeowner who knows that the secret to success is to shake it up*

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*'I've always had eclectic tastes – I think we are all a product of lots of different influences, but for me it's about design integrity'*

Yasmin mixes Vitra's (020 7608 6200, [www.vitra.com](http://www.vitra.com)) Noguchi coffee table with a Chesterfield sofa, bought locally and re-covered in a Kvadrat (020 7324 5555, [www.kvadrat.dk](http://www.kvadrat.dk)) fabric.

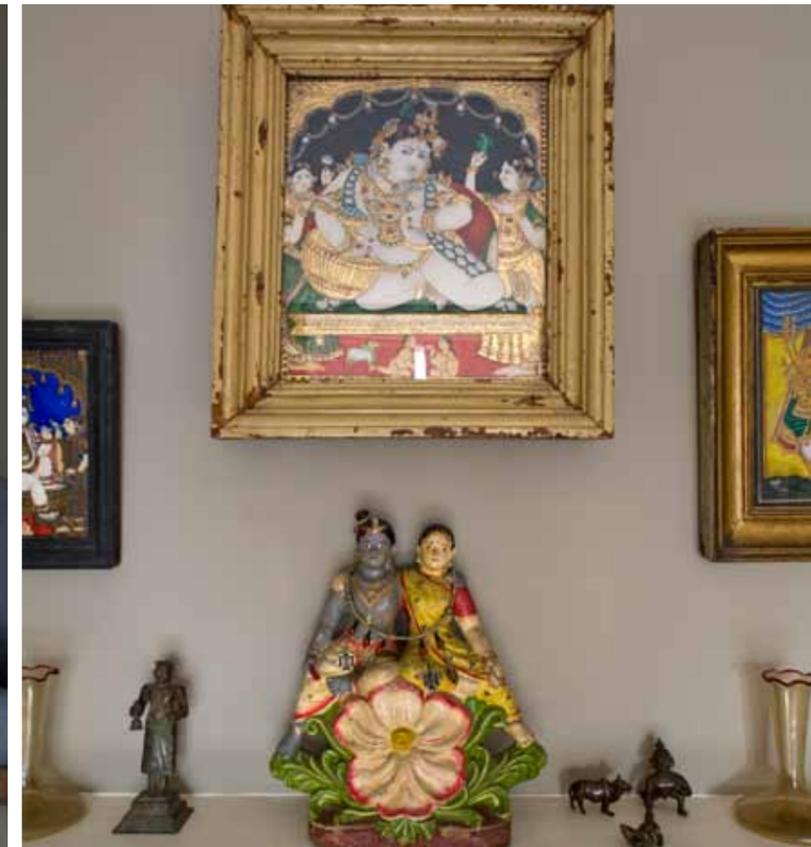
**Top far right** The cushions are handmade in India by Bornhof (01795 535913, [www.bornhof.co.uk](http://www.bornhof.co.uk)). **Top right** The Arts & Crafts panelling has been painted in Tablecloth and Rita Says from The Paint and Paper Library (020 7590 9860, [www.paintlibrary.co.uk](http://www.paintlibrary.co.uk)). **Right** The staircase is just one of the many original features still intact.

**T**he Arts & Crafts vicarage in which Yasmin Hossain lives with her family, wasn't quiet what she had in mind when they decided to move from London to Kent. 'I've always wanted to live in a big Georgian house in the countryside, with picture windows and lovely proportions. So initially, this house was a disappointment of sorts, but in time it's become the right house.' Disappointing is the last word you would use to describe this handsome home, filled with a mix of treasures from as near as the local charity shop, to as far away as south Asia. Yasmin's business, Bornhof, designs and imports hand-embroidered textiles from Chennai, in India, and these form the common thread running through the eclecticism. 'I think handmade items help to underpin us. Everything is so fast in today's world, but these things have a nurturing quality to them – because

the process is slow, they've been made with care. When people create things with absolute sincerity, they make something quintessentially beautiful!' Competing for attention with intricately embroidered curtains and cushions, originally destined for the trousseaus of Indian brides, is a mix of objects that have been chosen because they share this same feeling of sincerity. 'I've always had eclectic tastes – no one likes to be typecast, do they? – but I think we're all a product of lots of different influences. You've got to like what you like, of course, but for me it's about design integrity. Even the mass-produced items, like the coffee table, they're not just churned out; someone's put a lot of thought into it.' Yasmin has a lovely way of subverting what might be expected from her. The Victorian Chesterfield sofa in the living room is covered in fabric from the

*Style advice*

Yasmin's eclectic style is evident in the bedroom with modern designer furniture and Indian artwork on the walls.



**Right** A 'Navaratri' statue of the god Krishna and his consort Radha, and a 19th-century South Indian Tanjore painting take pride of place in the bedroom. **Below** The doll was a christening present for Yasmin's daughter, it is by the German maker Annette Himstedt ([www.himstedt-dolls.com](http://www.himstedt-dolls.com)).

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contemporary textile brand, Kvadrat, while the formal Arts & Crafts panelling is made informal with a finish of blue/grey paint.

At a time when open-plan living is most coveted, Yasmin has made the traditional layout of the house work for her. 'It is open-plan, in its own way. You can circulate all the way around the ground floor and that means you can live in a contemporary way, but with the flexibility to close off areas to make them more private. It flows very nicely, which makes it good for entertaining too.'

Yasmin's annual gluhwein and stollen party at Christmas (the culinary influence comes from her German husband, Axel) is one of many unmissable gatherings at her house, and just as with her taste in decor, she recognises that successful hosting is

all about the mix. 'I'm drawn to big, warm-hearted people, regardless of their walk of life – when you have guests like that, it makes it easy.'

Despite the free-flowing ground floor, this is a house that also has plenty of comfortable nooks and crannies, including a 1970s swivel chair to curl up in and a luxurious day-bed draped in embroidery, tucked into a little room upstairs.

Yasmin's passion for textiles feels like a continuation of the ethos of the Arts & Crafts movement, with its idea that there is inherent integrity in traditional, handmade objects. 'But if I were to add more of the same type of things, you wouldn't see the Arts & Crafts elements for what they were. Juxtaposing genres makes each one come alive. It's the same with people – opposites attract.'

**Above** Designer style meets vintage style in the bedroom. The grand maple bed is by Italian brand Giorgetti (+39 0 3627 5275, [www.giorgetti.eu](http://www.giorgetti.eu)), but the 'matching' maple bedside table was picked up at a local bric-a-brac shop, as was the lamp and curvaceous chair.





Yasmin's office displays her work-in-progress, including the Tresor range from Bornhof (01795 535913, [www.bornhof.co.uk](http://www.bornhof.co.uk)). Here the mix is as eclectic as ever with an Ikea desk (0845 358 3364, [www.ikea.co.uk](http://www.ikea.co.uk)), vintage chairs and antique light.