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JUNE 2013

LIGHT & BRIGHT

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H&G | *London town house*



CURIOUSER & CURIOUSER

With its refreshing mix of unconventional paintings and sculpture, Niloufar Bakhtiar-Clignet's London home celebrates the weird and wonderful

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When you ask Niloufar Bakhtiar-Clignet about the sort of things you would never find in her house, she has no hesitation in replying. "Alors," she begins, in her charmingly French-accented English, "top of my list are white basins in the bathroom – too boring," she says. "I'm not keen on chintzes or fussy prints either." Unpainted wooden doors, white walls and elaborate joinery are also decorative no-nos.

Niloufar may be a woman of decided tastes, but there is nothing too serious about the London home that she shares with her husband Guillaume and children, Maxine, eight, and Alexandre, 13. At first glance, the interior appears to be a vision of well-honed elegance – all seamless dove-grey walls, gleaming bespoke furniture and swishy silk curtains. But look closely and dashes of wit, warmth and even, dare it be said, less-than-impeccably good taste puncture the grown-up air. A cartoonish model of Ronald Reagan perches next to an art tome. In the living room, a sculpture of a six-foot-tall giraffe greets visitors with a grin. As Niloufar puts it, "I like spontaneity, fun things that prevent a house from feeling like a hotel."

The couple's reasons for choosing the 1930s town house were similarly simple. Not only was it almost three times the size of their previous home, but Niloufar, with her interior designer's eye, saw the potential to use the space more efficiently for a family of four. "We did

LIVING ROOM

Ungainly pillars and dated joinery were removed to create a flowing ground-floor space, which also incorporates a dining area (shown overleaf), while adroit decorating tricks, such as the mirrored chimney breast with inset picture (above left), bring laid-back glamour to the scheme. Niloufar (above) has a penchant for pieces that make her laugh, including the giraffe sculpture (left), which surveys the room where pale walls act as blank canvas for a controlled palette of warm reds and pinks.

Portraits either side of the fireplace, Maria Torroba at Stephanie Hoppen Gallery, 020 7389 3678, stephaniehoppen.com. **Fauteuils upholstered** in Orsini 5187, £360m, Fortuny at Claremont Furnishing Fabrics Company, 020 7581 9575, claremontfurnishing.com. **Obbecca armless chairs**, £1,570 plus

5m of fabric each, William Yeoward, 020 7349 7828, williamyeoward.com.

Bespoke backgammon table, Archer & Smith, 01793 740375, archersmith.com. **BGB table** in Nickel (shown with orchid on top), £4,185, Amy Somerville, 020 7586 2211, amysomerville.com.

