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SPICE AND SIMPLE...

The woman taking the mystery out of Indian cookery

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Full of life

Ever felt daunted by photos of perfectly styled interiors? Then this celebration of real homes for real people is for you...

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PHOTO: CHERI TREDGAR



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Lived in: The wooden mantel was found at a flea market and the cushions during a trip to Vietnam



PHOTOS: DEB TRELOAR

Welcome to the lived-in rooms...

Interior stylist Emily Henson's book debunks the myth of the flawlessly perfect home, says **Beth McDonald**

WE ALL enjoy looking behind closed doors, and no one more so than interior stylist and author Emily Henson. 'I love getting to see how other people live,' she says. And her latest book – *Life Unstyled* – is certainly all about that.

It features an eclectic mix of homes – including a council flat in Brixton, a Victorian terrace in Clapton, a loft next to the Brooklyn Bridge and this three-storey house in Philadelphia – all of which have been inspired by Emily's blog of the same name, in which she seeks to show the reality behind those polished images of homes in

magazines and online. 'Kristian Lazzaro's Philadelphia home is the most amazing place; in fact it's probably the most polished of all the homes we've featured in the book, so it's not truly a *Life Unstyled*, but the way he collects and displays things is interesting,' she adds. Here we publish two extracts from the book – looking at Kristian's beautiful American home and, below, the Duchars' house in Clapton, where a money-making project turned into a labour of love.

IT'S certainly safe to say that Kristian has one of the most enviable interiors-related jobs around, as

Anthropologie's senior buyer for furniture, lighting, curtains, rugs and antique furniture. That shibori-dyed sofa and rattan bed you've been coveting? Kristian made that happen, along with many other swoonworthy pieces. His house in Philadelphia's hip Fishtown neighbourhood is testament to his impeccable taste and innate ability to mix styles and eras in a way that feels layered and interesting, rather than cluttered and overwhelming.

Built in 1915, the home became his when he moved to Philadelphia to begin working at Anthropologie's head office. For 11 years, Kristian lived in New York, a city that's notorious for cramped apartment living, so for him, the prospect of owning an entire house was thrilling. The property had already been brought up to date by a developer,

but it's the unexpected features added by Kristian that give this home personality and heart.

With its highly polished floors and brand new quartz work surfaces, this house could have gone in the direction of a glossy, bland show home. But Kristian has made some wise decisions that have brought warmth, texture and soul to the shiny remodelled space.

With a bit of guidance from his friends at Jersey Ice Cream Co. (which, despite their name, design homes), the home was given a vital injection of soul in the form of the painted shiplap timber used on the living-room walls, the laths on the side of the

ground-floor staircase and the reclaimed barn wood on the ceiling of the top-floor den.

Adding wood of almost any kind to bare walls can have a huge impact for a relatively small outlay. Another trick Kristian employed was to add a fireplace to the living room to replace one that had been ripped out by the previous owner.



Even though this one, found at a flea market, doesn't function, it creates a central hub around which a group of chairs can be gathered.

When it comes to decorating, Kristian must have one of the best contact lists in the business and this came in handy when he wanted to find a few special pieces



Eclectic: Dan and Sarah's home brilliantly shows of their quirky style

A well-loved space filled with family

DAN and Sara Duchars never intended to stay in their Clapton house for long. The plan was to fix it up, sell it on and buy their dream home. Instead, they ended up falling in love with this Victorian terrace house in East London, and now, some 15 years later, share it with their two children, Alfred, aged 13, and Flossie, 11, and a lively collection of animals.

Dan is an interiors and lifestyle photographer and Sara runs a craft company, Button Bag.



Their home is a perfect expression of their gutsy creative style, filled with bold colour choices, intriguing collections and tons of personality.

Collections are a dominant theme – a rock collection on a shelf welcomes you on entering through the front door. In the living room, joining the stuffed badger and fox (found at a Belgian flea market and carried home on the back seat of the car) are groups of vintage clocks and bird skulls, while on the 'nature table' sits a

collection of interesting objects picked up on walks over the years.

The walls are boldly painted in every room. There's a warm, grey-brown shade in the hallway, a rich wine in the living room, chalky pale blue in the kitchen and deepest petrol blue in the master bedroom. Not content with painting just the walls, Dan and Sara have coated the window and door frames of each room in contrasting colours, adding another layer of interest to this characterful home. In the kitchen, the couple carried out what was intended to be a quick-fix renovation, adding metro tiles, wooden cabinets painted in



Fine dining: The kitchen is full of beautiful utensils like the copper pans and black Eames dining chairs



FEELGOOD SPACES

'I READ interiors magazines and blogs and I love seeing inspiring images, of course,' Emily admits, 'but it does make you feel a bit bad sometimes. I hope this book makes people know that everyone has got wires under the desk and - for me especially! - piles of papers always on the kitchen counter and that's OK; that's normal.'

A former head of store creative at Anthropologie London, she lived in the US for 17 years before returning to the capital five years ago. Her globe trotting has seen her tastes change over the years - from her eclectic house in

LA, with its whitewashed floors as a background to a riot of colour, to her current minimalist flat in north London. Her changing tastes are represented in the book through its variety of homes - some of which her friends live in, while others were found by scouring design blogs.

The one thing they all had to have in common was a realness, something that will make any reader feel better about their space. 'It's about being kinder to ourselves, rather than always feeling our homes aren't perfect enough. I hope this gives a more realistic impression of the way people live.'

for his new home. The Chieftain chair by Finn Juhl was a housewarming present to himself, purchased with the help of the Danish company Onecollection. The vintage leather club chair was sourced for him in Paris by old friend and designer Steve Harivel and represents something of a shift in style from Kristian's mostly Danish chairs, which he's been collecting since college. But he's just as likely to find something on Craigslist, such as his Chesterfield sofa, or on the street or at a yard sale, like his drafting table-turned-bar cart.



says he is drawn to handmade pieces, such as the shibori-dyed curtains in his guest bedroom are flat-woven dhurrie rugs, hand-dyed in India. His job means that he's on the road for much of the year, so his home has an eclectic style, filled with things he saw and loved and lugged home in his suitcase.

Kristian admits to being unable to resist buying pieces while he is away, often putting up with the impracticality of getting them home because he knows that if he loves an item, it will work. For this buyer extraordinaire, the only things he ever regrets are the pieces he didn't buy.

■ *Life Unstyled* by Emily Henson (Ryland Peters & Small, £19.99). lifeunstyledblog.com

Mixed in with the vintage designer pieces and street finds are objects chosen for the imprint of the artist's hand. As the child of a painter, Kristian

mementos

a distressed blue with antique handles and butcher-block work surfaces. Many years later, the 'makeshift' kitchen is still going strong.

Open shelving adds character, and family mementos taped to walls make this room feel like a loved and well-used space. A pair of wooden crates stacked in the corner serves a dual purpose - cookbook storage and family gadget-charging station. There's so much to take away from the Duchars' London home, where everyone's needs are met and each family member's decorating style is represented - a true family home.



Full of character: The 'makeshift' kitchen

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