

## Vamp it up!

Fashion goes  
gloriously gothic

### Here comes trouble

The world according  
to Naomi Wolf

### What's the alternative?

Meet the women fighting  
cancer on their own terms

### For your eyes only...

Bond girls through the  
ages – as they look now

### FOOD

Curry in a hurry with  
Diana Henry

# Stella

20 OCTOBER 2013

The Sunday Telegraph

Hall, Dinah. "Practically perfect," *The Sunday Telegraph*, October 2013.

**FRIEDMAN BENDA** 515 W 26TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10001

**FRIEDMANBENDA.COM** TELEPHONE 212 239 8700 FAX 212 239 8760



# Practically perfect

Given carte-blanche to create a home for a young family, the designer Faye Toogood pulled off something polished but comfortable. By *Dinah Hall*

Photographs by **Bill Batten**

68 stella

Hall, Dinah. "Practically perfect," *The Sunday Telegraph*, October 2013.  
**FRIEDMAN BENDA** 515 W 26TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10001  
**FRIEDMANBENDA.COM** TELEPHONE 212 239 8700 FAX 212 239 8760





Studio Toogood is eponymous rather than big-headed. And having survived being the butt of every joke going – you can imagine what fun teachers had with such a surname – you can’t blame designer Faye Toogood for capitalising on, and living up to, her name. Nominative determinism has clearly worked for her, but even if she had been born Faye Lacklustre you suspect she would have followed the same swift trajectory from decorating editor on *World of Interiors* magazine to owner

of a design studio working on everything from art installations to interiors such as this house in west London

The crossover from magazine styling to installations and exhibitions is easy to imagine – it is a natural progression from two-D to three-D, but is still in the world of the temporary and ethereal. The leap from that, however, to designing a five-storey house with all the practicality required for a family with young children is a big one. “The older I’ve got the more preoccupied I have become with

permanent spaces, but this was a steep learning curve for me. I even had to find somewhere to put the *television*,” she adds in the tones of someone being asked to house a war criminal.

Toogood’s clients are a fashion designer and photographer in their thirties, “so I wanted to create something that reflected them, the flavour and energy of their age. They’re young, so they didn’t want a prescribed cut-and-paste formula imposed on them. I’m not from the decorator era,” she adds –

stella 69



Hall, Dinah. “Practically perfect,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, October 2013.

**FRIEDMAN BENDA** 515 W 26TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10001

**FRIEDMANBENDA.COM** TELEPHONE 212 239 8700 FAX 212 239 8760



a statement bound to raise a few well-bred hackles in showrooms around Chelsea and Belgravia. "People want something more individual, and my job is to get to know them and bring out their tastes and interests." (To be fair, every decorator in the world says this about their clients - "it's not me, it's you" - but maybe they have their fingers crossed behind their backs.)

Toogood was, however, given carte-blanche to choose just about everything in the house, right down to the postcards on the mantelpiece. The only pieces the clients brought with them from their previous home were a Christian Liaigre sofa and some photographic artworks. And as Toogood's strategy is to start the construction of each room with images and objects, it obviously worked well.

The living-room, dominated by an extraordinary blow-up of an old Japanese photograph, is the star of the show with its sombre hues, stately proportions and eclectic furnishings, including a stuffed zebra head. Asked how different the house would be if it had been designed for her, rather than clients, Toogood says that this is the room that most reflects her own taste.

Furniture throughout the house is a judicious mixture of modern classics, revamped junk-shop finds and some of Toogood's own design, such as the Element coffee table - a sheet of glass resting on a brass sphere, a hand-turned sycamore cylinder and a stone cube - and rugs made for her by the Rug Company. The result is a home that looks

sleek and cool but has enough plumped-up comfort to suit a young family.

The colour scheme is perhaps the most successful thing about this house - it looks modern but at the same time has a subdued, aged quality. Toogood explains that it was based on the client's love of the fashion house Marni's distinctive palette. It's a sublime mix of the muted and the jewel-like, as in the living-room, where dusky greens and browns are set alight by vibrant velvet cushions. The paint is by Emery & Cie,



Clockwise from left The family room with chairs from Caravane, a pool-like rug from the Rug Company and a seascape photograph; the bathroom is clad in Made a Mano tiles; the master bedroom



a Belgian company that makes earthy, smudgy tones hard to find elsewhere.

So given that this was one of her first domestic projects, what mistakes did she make? She pauses long enough to satisfy modesty while clearly struggling to come up with anything. But then you wouldn't expect any less from a Toogood. ●

Photographs taken from "Interiors Now! 3" (Taschen, £34.99), by Margit J Mayer, which is available to order from Telegraph Books ([books.telegraph.co.uk](http://books.telegraph.co.uk); 0844 871 1514) at £24.99 plus £1.35 p&p