



**MAKING SPACE:** Chloe, pictured, removed the glass doors to the kitchen to create a free-flowing space. She also made the dining table from an old French stove and a glass top.

# Chloe has place to call her own

*Decorative antiques trader Chloe Rymer of Maud and Molly's Place has transformed her cottage into a light-filled space full of character. Sharon Dale reports. Pictures by Jonathan Gawthorpe.*

**I**t's hard to believe that Chloe Rymer's cottage is just 15 years old. Packed with architectural features and oozing character, it's a lesson in how to turn a bland recently-built home into something extra special.

It is part of a small development on the site of an old petrol station in a village, near York, and the changes she made to it took some courage. They included knocking down a wall, ripping out a ceiling and reconfiguring spaces, which is not for the faint hearted.

Chloe also had the advantage of being in the art and decorative antiques trade,

so hunting down beautiful and interesting homeware is all in a day's work for her.

She runs Molly and Maud's Place in Kirk Hammerton with her mum, Karen. Mother and daughter make a great team as each has her own preferences. Karen loves art and textiles, while Chloe adores antiques and anything quirky. They both have a "thing" for early English oak. The livery cupboard in the sitting room is a good example. It's an historic beauty and is still hugely practical.

"I use it for keeping crockery in," says Chloe, who bought her cottage five years ago.



#### MIX AND MATCH:

Chloe designed the kitchen, which includes joiner-made plywood units and open shelves; the 1930s painting above the fireplace is a favourite of Chloe's and the dining table is an old French enamelled stove with a glass top; the old built-in wardrobes look better now in olive green. panelling the wall was cheaper than paying plasters.



It's her first home and she lived there for 18 months before deciding on a radical plan of action.

The first big job was to take out the hallway and utility room on the ground floor to make the sitting room bigger. A porch was added and the space under the stairs was turned into a loo and storage cupboard.

"That was a big job as we needed to put in a supporting beam but I saved on plastering by using some timber planks as cladding when I blocked the stairs off," says Chloe.

The glass doors leading into the

kitchen were removed, along with the architrave and the opening was squared off to create a semi open-plan ground floor. The revamped single-storey kitchen is a triumph thanks, in part, to a gung-ho approach that saw Chloe bash through the suspended ceiling one afternoon to see what was underneath.

"It was carnage but I managed to work out which of the beams above were load-bearing and where I could put a skylight and now the room is brighter and feels bigger," she says.

She was not keen on the bog-standard kitchen units she inherited and after

getting a quote of £4,500 for new ones, she decided to design her own. She got joiners to make some plywood units, which she has since painted black, and the old wall cupboards were replaced by rustic timber shelves. A longed-for concrete worktop was out of her budget so rather than use a specialist firm, she asked the joiners if they could help.

"They were brilliant. They made a mould, mixed the concrete and polished it for a fraction of the price. The whole kitchen with appliances cost about £4,500 but it is far better quality than the off-the-shelf one I looked



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**BRIGHT TOUCHES:** The mirror adds interest and reflects light and space while the loo under the stairs doesn't lack interest thanks to this collage.

➔ at," says Chloe, who mixed budget accessories from Ikea with a couple of luxury items like the Franke sink and Blanco tap.

The vintage German school charts that brighten the walls were found at an antiques fair.

Upstairs, redecorating and Chloe's gift for interiors styling has transformed the space. All the walls in the cottage are painted white to act as a neutral backdrop for art, which is ever-changing as she finds new favourites. Her latest is a 1930s portrait thought to be by Septimus Scott.

Furniture is mostly antique and includes the French marble-topped desk in the study while a printers' tray now offers storage for jewellery. The second-hand sofa is a rare modern item, while an enamelled French stove has been repurposed as a dining table after being topped with glass.

"I was quoted £250 for a glass top so I bought an old dining set on Gumtree and used the table top from that and sold the chairs for £30, so the glass only cost me £10," says Chloe, who also added a wood-burning stove to the sitting area.

Other items flow in between home and Molly and Maud's Place depending on what clients are searching for. ➔

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➔ Chloe, a former sailing instructor and self-confessed antiques addict, and mum Karen, a former interior designer, started their business five years ago. They travel all over the UK and beyond to source furniture, art and accessories that date from the 16th century to the 1970s. They supply the domestic and commercial market and many of their clients are interior designers. They sell online, at fairs and from their headquarters in the orchard behind Karen's house.

"My mum had two pet lambs named Molly and Maud who lived in the orchard. That's why we decided on the name 'Molly and Maud's Place'. We found the lambs a new home and bought a summer house to use as a showroom before building a bigger one two years ago as the business had expanded," says Chloe, who adds: "I didn't know what to do after leaving school and bought and sold decorative antiques as a hobby. I feel really lucky to do it as a full-time job now. I love it. I get to travel, meet interesting people and every day is different."

■ **Molly and Maud's Place is at Kirk Hammerton. You can find it online at [www.mollyandmaudsplace.co.uk](http://www.mollyandmaudsplace.co.uk).**



**CURIOS IN PLACE:** Karen Rymer in the showroom of Molly & Maud's Place in Kirk Hammerton.

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