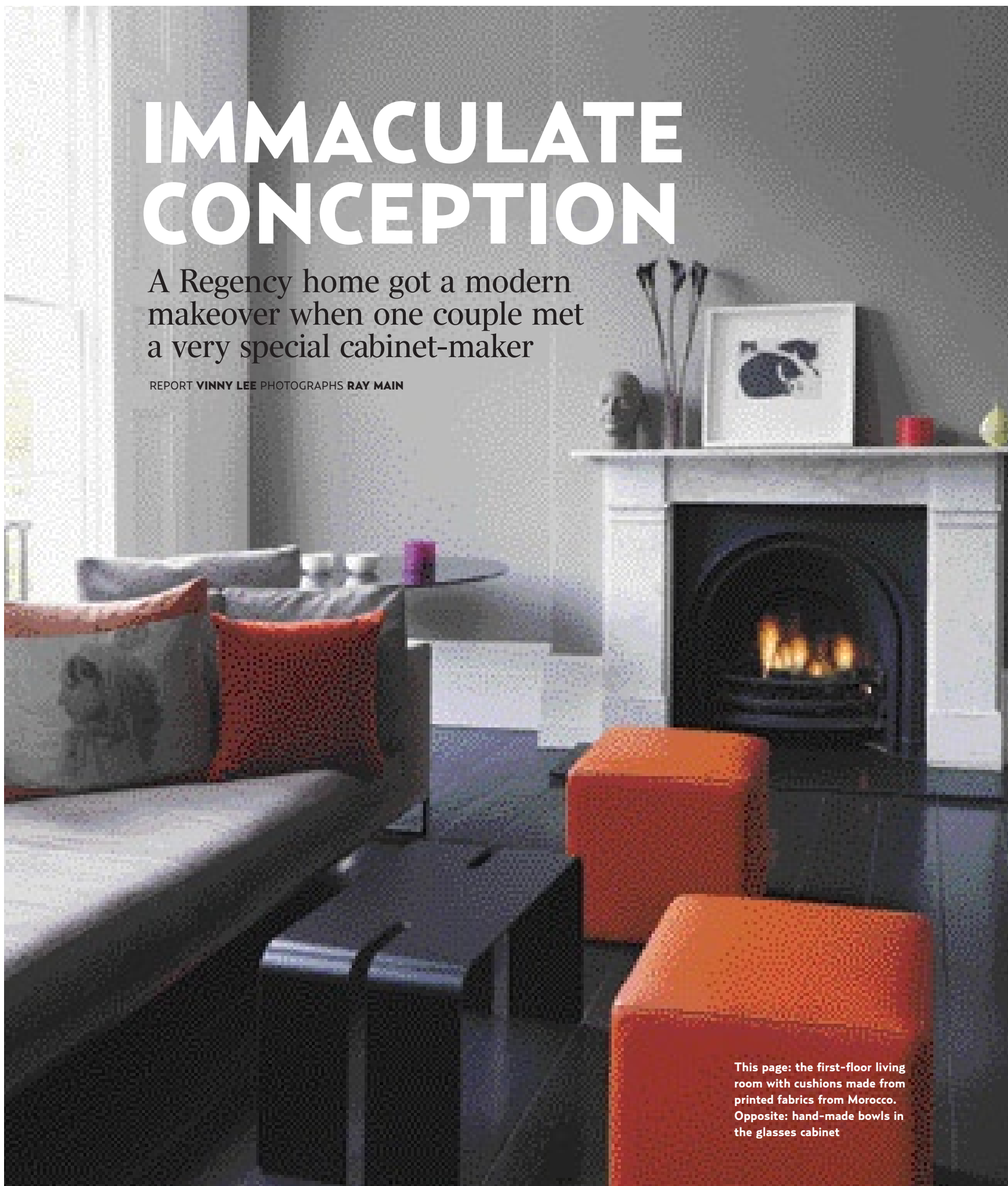


# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

A Regency home got a modern makeover when one couple met a very special cabinet-maker

REPORT VINNY LEE PHOTOGRAPHS RAY MAIN



This page: the first-floor living room with cushions made from printed fabrics from Morocco. Opposite: hand-made bowls in the glasses cabinet



## INTERIORS



Awkward spaces, uneven walls and sloping floors presented no problems when Alison and John Hill renovated their home in Greenwich, southeast London. To accommodate the idiosyncrasies of their Regency-style house as well as their lifestyle, the furnishings and fittings have been largely made by hand and finished and fitted precisely, like an haute couture suit. "It took time and money," says Alison, "but now I couldn't imagine living in any other way."

Alison, who recently became head of the creative team for homewares at Debenhams, has a background in textile design, and has worked for the Conran group, Habitat and Burberry, so she had a good idea of what she wanted. But when she first moved into the five-storey, 1840s house, she didn't anticipate such a radical refit.

"We had lived in a Victorian house in the same road for ten years, but heard that this house was going on the market. It was a property we admired, and we liked the simplicity of its structure so we seized the opportunity to buy. We then sold our house to a couple who became good friends, and when we moved into our respective new homes we exchanged tradesmen's particulars. They told us about Domus, a design company run by Tim Newbold that specialises in contemporary cabinetry.

"We got Tim to build a cupboard to conceal a hot water tank and he did a sympathetic job. A year or so later we asked him back to advise us on

some cupboards and units we needed on the top floor, and he devised a cupboard with individual spaces for my Pantone books, fabric swatches and office 'staples'. That was four years ago and since then Tim has worked here on and off, doing something in almost every room and floor by floor."

The house is tall and narrow, so the couple have built interesting stop-off points and storage space on each floor. For example, in the front half of the first-floor living room is a wall-hung unit for glasses, "so we don't have to carry trays up and down stairs from the kitchen when we have friends here for pre-dinner drinks", says Alison. In the rear part of the living room Newbold built a unit for John's computer-controlled music system.

In the bathroom, next to the second-floor main bedroom, a special frame was needed to support a pair of stone handbasins, and Newbold used the false depth of the supporting wall to make a recessed cupboard that contains all the accessories that might otherwise clutter up the basin surround.

In the main bedroom the headboard was made with integral backlights that shine through the glass shelves on either side of the bed – something of a feature in an otherwise minimally decorated room. "And the interiors of the wardrobes are specifically designed to cope with our volume and assortment of shirts and suits," says Alison.

A floating cupboard by the front window in >>

**Clockwise from top left: the kitchen with wall-hung and concealed units; the guest bedroom; the terraced garden as seen from the back of the house; the ground-floor dining room with CH36 dining chairs; John and Alison Hill**



