



Mary Rose and Phil bought the cottage in 1987

I live in a gro

Potter Mary Rose Young has transformed her boring beige country cottage into a fantastic fairy tale house of adult fun...



Mary Rose made her dream home

To anyone driving past, my house looks much like any other cottage nestled in the rolling hills of Gloucestershire in the Forest of Dean. But when visitors walk through the front door for the first time, they gasp in amazement. And as they enter the magical world I've created inside, I love to watch their faces as they take it all in.

For every inch of my home has been hand-painted by me in a rainbow of colours – the walls, ceilings, floors and even the furniture. Each room has its own unique style, filled with giant roses, neon polka dots or fluorescent stripes. The result is a carefully curated cross between Willy Wonka's chocolate factory and the Mad Hatter's tea party from *Alice in Wonderland*.

It might not be to everybody's taste – but for me and my husband Phil, it's our dream home. It's like living in our own grown-up playhouse!

While it's a reflection of my taste, my work, my wardrobe and my hair, it also embraces my playful personality. The aim is to give everyone who enters our home

that childlike pleasure of looking into a sweet shop.

Phil and I bought the cottage in the village of Parkend, 39 years ago in 1987, for just £30,000. It was a humble dwelling made up of two small cottages. We knocked them into one building, but it was like a beige box, a cave with

no architectural features or light. I decided vibrant colours were the way to make it brighter and would also introduce some much-needed character.

It was the first place we'd owned, so it was really exciting to have a



I WANTED TO HAVE JOY AROUND EVERY CORNER



blank canvas and the freedom to decorate it exactly how I wanted.

As we'd spent every penny on buying the house, there was no spare cash for expensive wallpaper, furniture, tiles or carpets. So, painting everything myself by hand was our only option. And who needs fancy wallpaper when you can paint your own distinctive designs directly onto the walls! Not only was it inexpensive, it also made everything totally unique, which as an artist was very important to me.

The refurb was hard work but fun as I treated every room as if it were the inside of one of my pots. I let my imagination run riot and painted the wooden beams baby blue and the insides of fireplaces pink.



Phil encouraged Mary's plans

own-up doll's house



Each room has its own unique style

EACH ROOM HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE STYLE

It was totally unconventional and at first people were shocked. They seemed more concerned that no-one would buy it, should we ever want to sell up. I guess that's the reason so many people play it safe when it comes to decorating their homes these days. But I wasn't prepared to please some imaginary buyer in the future who may not share my taste in interior decor.

I wanted to live in a place that had joy, colour and life around every corner, where I could feel creative and inspired. Phil, who I met at a house party in Camden back in X, encouraged me to follow my heart.

Each room has its own synergy. The kitchen is one of the most charming and colourful rooms in the house. I painted the units and fired all the tiles myself and the fluorescent pink dresser houses all the cups and plates I've made.

The piece de resistance is my ceramic chandelier – it's very *Alice in Wonderland* as the centrepiece is a teapot and the lightbulbs fit into cups and saucers on the arms.

In the dining room, I created a ceiling rose made from faux flowers and petals with a hot glue gun. I have to admit, it's tricky to dust, but it's fun and I love it. Huge hand-painted pink, blue and orange



Mary Rose hand made her gallery's chandelier

Laurence Llewelyn Bowen was a fan of Mary Rose's work



Turn over for more

best for REAL LIFE



Mary Rose loved doing the refurb

roses adorn the stone walls in the dining room too, which adds texture as well as pops of colour and sets off the green dresser.

And it's not just the walls and ceilings that got a makeover – I also painted the stairs. It was so much cheaper than carpet – and if it ever gets scruffy, I just add a bit more paint.

The refurb took six months and inspired me to create a vaulted gallery filled with shelves to display all my pottery collections upstairs. For a touch of extra drama, I hand-made the crown chandelier as a centre-piece, which is worth £25,000 – though obviously I sell much more affordable pieces. It looks great against the striped walls and painted dressers.

Many of the colours in the house

If there's one thing I've learned

'Colour is a superpower - I embrace it in my work, my home and my wardrobe to bring happiness to other people which then reflects back onto my life. Try it!'

were inspired by a trip Phil and I made to New Orleans in the Eighties. I loved the way they put the pastel colours together – and the warmth and fun of the people. That's what I wanted to recreate in our home.

All our furniture also got a glow up – I loved the shape of the French-style wooden bed we had, but it needed some colour, so I painted the headboard red and the frame pink. Now it really stands out against the turquoise floor and yellow striped walls.

I love balancing colours – it's always trial and error and that's part of the creative process. I also made the tiles in the bathroom – and even painted and fired the sink and loo in my kiln to make them match.

Ten years ago we dabbled with the idea of buying a hotel nearby that we could turn into a business – Faulty Towers for the colourful! We put our house on the market and I had this daydream that an American collector of my work might buy it. But we only had one viewing and no offers.

The estate agent suggested we paint everything white to get a sale – but I couldn't do it and we decided to stay put because we love it here.

Instead, we bought The Pike House, a cottage around the corner, and I gave it a complete 'Mary Rose makeover' so it's like a colourful Hobbit version of our home that people can rent. It sleeps 12 and there's even a pottery shed in the garden so guests can enjoy the full creative experience!

Now, at 67, after almost 40 years of living in this house, there's not a day goes by when I don't feel absolute joy every time I walk through the front door.

● To see more of Mary's work or rent the Pike House visit maryroseyoung.com/the-pike-house/ or follow her @maryrosepottery



Mary Rose was inspired by a trip to New Orleans



The kitchen is one of the most colourful rooms