



Living area An orange 'Tufty Time' sofa by Patricia Urquiola for B&B Italia injects a splash of colour in to this whitewashed space. The 'Dot' cushions are by Hay, and the patchwork leather pouffe was a gift from a friend (for similar designs, try Moroccan Bazaar). The leather 'Tripolina' chair was bought at Dario Alfonsi in Rome. Beyond is the homeowner's studio, as well as the house's main entrance **Stockist details on p212**

PLAY HOUSE

How one Belgian couple converted a former dairy into a live-work space with a flexible, family-friendly floorplan that they can adapt as their children grow



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'BUILDING THIS HOUSE HAS BEEN AN ADVENTURE. THE REMODELLING OF THE INTERIOR HAS BEEN A CONTINUOUS LEARNING CURVE'



Living room The comfortable seating area opens out into the double-height kitchen. For a similar hide rug, try City Cows
Kitchen The seamless white units are painted MDF topped with a chunky composite worksurface (for similar, try Silestone by Cosentino). Rosie Lou's goldfish has a home on one of the counters, as do many of her colourful artworks **Stockist details on p212**



Portrait
 Photographer Emilie Vercruysse lives in the converted dairy with her husband David de Ber and daughters Rosie Lou (six, pictured) and baby Miu
Living area
 A staircase winds up to an office on the mezzanine level

A

snapshot of Belgian photographer Emilie Vercruysse's home reveals her vocation and passion. Emilie is well known in the profession for her portraits of children. Her vibrant and playful style spills into the house

that she shares with her husband David de Ber, a senior manager at power-generator company Aggreko, in the city of Ghent.

The couple live in a Flemish 1930s property that connects to a dairy warehouse. Led by architect friend Francisca Hautekeete, the conversion of the dairy is part of an ambitious five-year renovation plan to create a multifunctional space that is tailored as much to the couple's six-year-old daughter Rosie Lou and their newborn baby, Miu, as to their own needs. Emilie has fulfilled her wish of working from home by creating a photography studio, and there is also a first-floor office for David that serves as his base when he's not working away in Europe and the Middle East. 'We began living in the house before the renovation started, so we were able to discover exactly what was important to us before making any final decisions and adapting the space,' says Emilie.

The 'loft house' – as it's affectionately known by the family – is spread over 200 square metres. The kitchen and adjoining dining area are at the rear of the former dairy, situated beneath soaring industrial-height ceilings. This capacious entertaining space extends into a more casual seating zone, tucked beneath a mezzanine floor. The walls are white, accented by concrete floors and splashes of colour, from the yellow 'Tufty Time' sofa by Patricia Urquiola to Rosie Lou's artworks, which adorn the built-in bookshelves. Floor-to-ceiling glass doors provide a view of the inner courtyard from every angle, giving the home an inside-out feel. This central green space was installed to create a safe place for the children to play.

Just as Emilie and David have their own 'hideaways' indoors, so do the children in the garden. The couple commissioned Jeroen Worst and Ann Vereecken of Studio Andersom to create the courtyard's playhouse, which is constructed from recycled door panels and cabinets. There's also an adjoining vegetable patch where Rosie Lou likes to dig, plant seeds and water the flowers.

'Building this house has been an adventure,' says David. 'We slept in every room to decide where to place the main bedroom and the remodelling of the interior has been a continuous learning curve, even when it came to the choice of furniture. There are pieces from my mother's collection, and we're always trawling markets. We're forever on the lookout for props for Emilie's shoots and pieces that will bring something special to our home.' emilievercruysse.be ➤



SLIDING DOORS BEHIND THE
WORKSURFACES CONCEAL STREAMLINED
BUILT-IN SHELVING, WHILE SPLASHES OF
YELLOW ENLIVEN THE SPACE

Kitchen The open-plan space is focused around the dining table; its top was found in the house, and Emilie's brother built the frame. The yellow 'Hee Series' chair by Hee Welling for Hay (available in the UK from Pink Apple Designs) sits with secondhand pieces opposite a row of 'Butterfly' chairs by Arne Jacobsen for Fritz Hansen. **Stockist details on p212 ►**



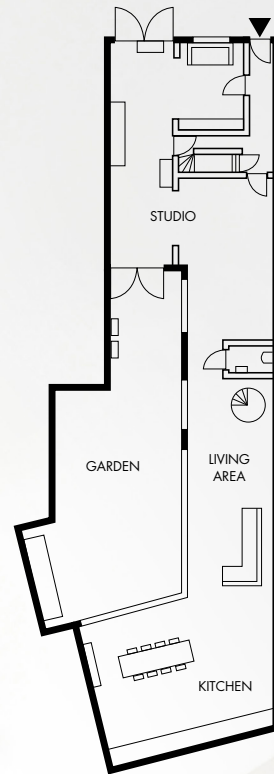
MY CITY: GHENT

The area we live in is a ten-minute bicycle ride from the city's historic centre. It's quiet and close to a natural reservoir. We see the birds arriving in spring, and watch them heading south when autumn begins.

Ghent is like a village but with all the advantages of a city: history, art and nightlife. There's a great food scene, too, with young chefs opening new eateries.

My favourite memory here is of one summer during the refurbishment. We started to realise just how much space we had created and we immediately began to plan how we would divide the house.

We like to shop at Rewind B.L.C.K, which stocks mostly Nordic clothing brands. Depot 09 (depot09.be) has a fantastic collection of vintage furniture, and Mayenne Nelen (mayenne-nelen.com) makes beautiful things with leather. If you visit, cross the street to grab a coffee at Simon Says (simon-says.be). **If you're in town hire a boat**, pack a picnic and enjoy the city by canal. In the evenings, we like to eat at Gomez (cafeomez.be), Gitane or Jigger's (jiggers.be).



Office The mezzanine office overlooks the garden. A niche above the window creates a handy shelf for books. The metal 'Cesca' chair is by Marcel Breuer (available from Pamono). The leather chair is the 'Selby' lounge chair by Georges van Rijck for Beaufort.

Garden The inner courtyard is a safe place for the children to play. The playhouse was custom-built using recycled door panels and cabinets.

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