

HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Michael Beatt, 39 (known as Mikey), and Michael Jones, 40, who run interiors company Hunter Jones, and their dog, Daisy

THE PROPERTY

A two-bedroom Victorian terraced cottage in Rye, East Sussex

PRICE

The couple are renting. They pay a low rent in return for the upkeep of the interior of the house



LIVING ROOM

Colour is used to stunning effect in this inviting space. The blue sofa is from Sofa Sofa, while the armchair and kilim are from Hunter Jones



Collectors' CHOICE

An eclectic mix of styles, and treasures packed with memories, have added personality to this rented home

WORDS AMY MAYNARD PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD GADSBY



When Michael Beatt and Michael Jones decided they wanted to leave London, a tiny cottage in Rye, East Sussex, turned out to be the perfect place to move to. The Cinque Port town sits on the edge of Romney Marsh, a few miles inland from the sea, and its cobbled streets are filled with independent shops, antiques dealers and art galleries. It seemed the ideal spot for the couple to expand their vintage homeware business, Hunter Jones.

Michael Jones was working in product development and Michael Beatt, known as Mikey, in sales, and they were renting a flat in the capital when they decided to devote more time to their fledgling business. 'We knew that if we could halve our rent by moving to the countryside, then we would have more freedom to put our energies into our company,' says Mikey. They began to hunt for an ideal area to relocate to. 'A friend had moved to

Hastings and we considered that area, but then we were driving through the town of Rye one day and just thought, "We can't do any better than this",' he says.

And so began their search for the perfect rental property. 'There wasn't a great deal available for rent but then we were told about one house in the old town. I loved it straight away. It was the attic bedroom that sold it to me because it's just gorgeous, tucked away in the eaves,' says Michael. They signed on the dotted line and, in October 2010, left London for Rye.

Luckily for the couple, their landlord allows them free rein when it comes to decoration. As a result, they've used vibrant colours throughout the house and replaced the kitchen. 'We weren't sure about spending money on the kitchen in a rented property, but it was so old that we decided it was worth it,' says Michael. 'We spent about £1,000 in the end.' Gone are the dated units and in their place are



pale Wickes cabinets with a dark-stained worktop and open shelving. In the rest of the house, colourful rugs and cushions, jewel-toned upholstered furniture and a phenomenal collection of knick-knacks and art work all come together to create a fun, unique look.

'Michael likes big pieces of furniture and I'm into the details,' says Mikey. 'I become obsessed with certain objects. So, for a few weeks I'll be fixated on finding the perfect candlesticks, and then I'll move on to something else. It can be quite specific, like 1970s Wedgwood glass or Victorian mantle dogs.'

Michael and Mikey try to steer clear of what's in fashion, preferring to be led by their hearts. 'Both of us are drawn to ethnic pieces, such as Persian and Moroccan accessories. If we like something, we just go for it and then make it work – we don't think about it too much. We don't follow any style rules – we just fill our home with the things we love,' says Michael. Mikey agrees. 'We go ►

CAREFULLY CURATED

A careful selection of art and mirrors hangs above the sofa. Paisley cushion by Rowan Plowden Design. The Persian rug (on back of sofa) is from Hunter Jones

ON THE SHELF

The couple found most of the objects on display at car boot sales, including the ancient gilded angel wing and the bamboo chair, which Mikey updated with red paint

COLOURFUL CORNER

Old and new mix to stunning effect, with a 1920s bamboo table, antique paintings and a modern lampshade from Pooky



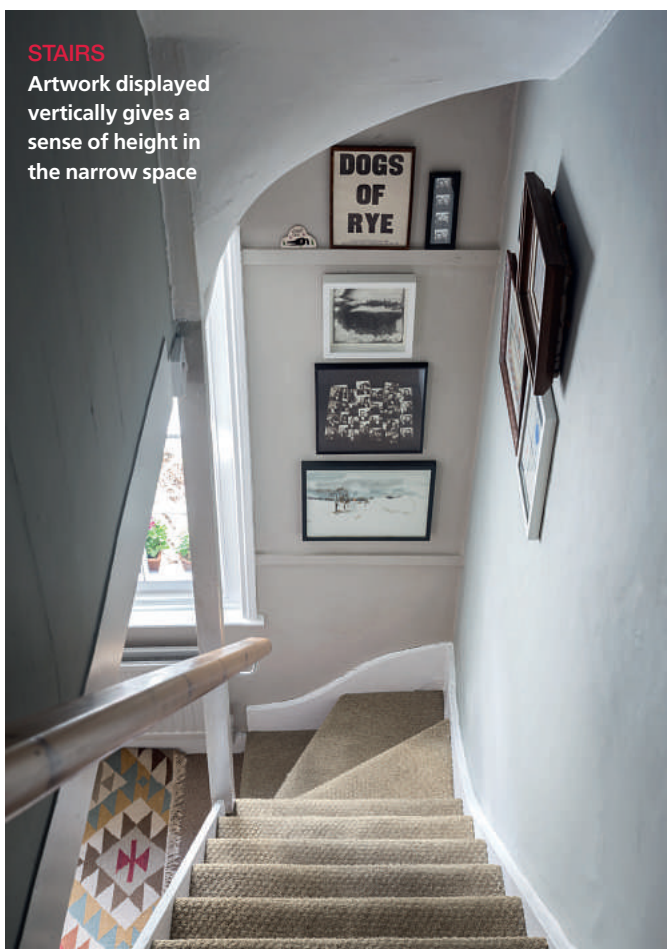
‘We weren’t sure about spending money on the kitchen in a rented property, but it has been worth it,’
SAYS MICHAEL

KITCHEN

A wall rail constructed from plumbing materials and an airer on the ceiling add extra storage

STAIRS

Artwork displayed vertically gives a sense of height in the narrow space



EXTERIOR

The Victorian terraced property is in Rye's old town



CURIOS

Old pieces of coral, animal figures and trophies have been collected over many years



PATIO GARDEN


Mikey (left) and Michael are happily settled in their home



‘I’d much rather someone thought our house was interesting than really stylish and on trend,’
SAYS MIKEY

for lots of different looks. Sometimes I think I need a 600-bedroom property to indulge them all! I’d much rather someone thought our house was interesting than really stylish or on trend,’ he says.

Life in Rye has more than lived up to expectations for both Mikey and Michael. ‘After London, the Sussex countryside around us feels more natural,’ says Michael. ‘We both grew up surrounded by greenery, so this feels like coming home.’

What’s more, they’ve been able to put more of their time into the business, and their homewares have gone down a storm in the area. ‘It’s easy for anyone to have a nice house,’ says Michael, ‘but unless you trust your instincts, you won’t make it your home.’ 

● For more information on Hunter Jones, call 07792 985943 or visit hunterjonesvintage.com



ATTIC BEDROOM

Bed linen is from Merchant & Mills. The print of Henry VIII in a gilt frame was bought from a friend and the fan coral came from a trip to Santorini

BATHROOM

Wooden cladding painted in a dark grey shade provides a smart contrast to the white suite and walls

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE