

A challenge beyond even DIY:SOS

DEBORAH Drew enjoys a challenge. Until recently the interior designer made her living as one of BBC1's *DIY: SOS* team, transforming tired and shabby interiors with an instant makeover.

But the transformation needed on her home in Whitchurch, Cardiff, when she and husband Steve bought the property 10 years ago would have been beyond the powers of even TV's most creative talents.

The three-bedroomed Edwardian semi at one stage offered a unique view of the heavens with no ceilings in the bedroom and no roof above these.

Deborah, 40, explains, "When we bought the house everything needed doing – the bedroom ceilings were taken down because they were bowing and the roof was off at the same time so it was just open sky.

"But it was good because we kept all the original features – it was a big project, but good fun."

After 10 years of careful restoration the couple, who have two children Sam, 13, and Joe, 12, have had every opportunity to leave their stamp on the property and create a favourite room from scratch.

For Deborah the task of selecting a favourite could not be

Favourite room

BY DARREN DEVINE



easier – it's the C-shaped open-plan space encompassing the kitchen, dining room and living room.

She said, "Some people might not like it as a knock-through and I have thought about blocking it up, but I enjoy the space and it works for me.

"And the nice thing is it's quite a social space for the family, but also for occasions when we have guests around."

Deborah, who left *DIY: SOS* in January because the show was keeping her away from her family

for up to 30 weeks a year, added, "With the knock-through we don't have the scene divided up by having to go to the kitchen from the dining room, because the kitchen and the dining room are one space."

The kitchen space is designed to maximise the light with birch-wood units, tumbled marble tiles on the walls and the floor laid out in limestone.

She said, "It's all very light, which is good because there are not a huge number of windows so it's important to bounce as much

light around the space as possible."

Maintaining the bright atmosphere, one of the kitchen walls is painted powder blue, before this gives way to walnut in the living room, while a cherry wood table with suede chairs takes centre stage on social occasions.

Keen musician and amateur painter Deborah has decorated the walls of the space with a collection of six guitars and watercolours bought on family holidays around the UK.

She said, "For my 40th birthday we had a party at home and I invited the *DIY: SOS* team – Mark Miller, Chris Frediani and Nick Knowles – and they bought me a 12-string pink electric guitar and a

Marshall amp.

"So that's now on my wall as well and I've had to balance it out by putting my son's guitar up there too."

A mahogany piano sits alongside the table, while several frameless montages of large family photos are also up on the kitchen wall.

The interiors specialist, who now hopes to re-establish her business dddesigns.co.uk, said, "Basically, I've taken some very large pictures of the family and put them together. There are about 36 images laid over each other to make one big picture and I've got three of these montages next to each other.

"I would recommend everybody do them because they really stop people in their tracks and you just catch people at parties looking at them."

Illuminated by a series of lighting features around the edge of the room the living room is furnished with an oak wood floor, a pewter fireplace with a white surround and two cream leather BoConcept angular sofas.

DJ turned statistician Steve, 36, has a Technics turntable in the living room as he still prefers the sound of vinyl to a CD and the couple enjoy relaxing in the evening in front of their 42ins flat-screen TV.

Favourite object

DEBORAH regards a CD rack designed for Habitat by Texas lead singer Sharleen Spiteri as one of her most interesting and practical possessions in the lounge.

The rack stands about 65cm high by about 100cm wide and consists of five or so thin metallic shelves that are barely visible when full.

She said, "It's just amazing because it holds 400 CDs when it's full and you don't really notice it because it's so compact.

"My guitars are my pride and joy, but it would be too obvious to name them as my favourite object. The beauty of the rack is that the shelves are made of a really thin metal so you don't really see them."



STYLISH Deborah's CD rack