The entrance hall and staircase walls are painted in Oval Room Blue by Farrow & Ball. The French marble-topped hall table was bought from antiques dealer Hugh Leuchars. The Toile de Tours Murillo fabric used for the curtain is by Le Manach at Pierre Frey.

Gothic MASTERPIECE

An early-nineteenth-century rectory in Hampshire is given a bold redesign in keeping with its period but with all the comforts of modern living

FEATURE & STYLING CLAIR WAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MCDONALD

LEFT Having considered using classic Carrara marble for the island worktop but knowing that it stains easily, Victoria opted for Silestone in Lyra which has blue-grey veining that echoes the grey paint on the island.

BELOW LEFT Gothic arches and hood mouldings above each window create a decorative facade. Victoria has created a pared-back, formal front garden, echoing the symmetry of the architecture.

BELOW The distressed convex mirror, originally from an Eastern European factory where it was used to prevent forklift collisions on corners, came from 17–21 Antiques. Victoria is seated at the oak dining table made to her design by a local cabinetmaker.

'I chose the colours in response to the strong character of the Regency architecture, Gothic features and high ceilings'

Feeling that number of bedrooms was insufficient for the size of the house, Victoria decided that one of the more important jobs was to rework the single-storey wing and change it into a two-storey version. By doing so, she created a large family room on the ground floor and two extra bedrooms, each with an en-suite bathroom, above.

When designing the interiors, Victoria opted to use bold colours. "I chose the colours in response to the strong character of the Regency architecture, Gothic features and high ceilings," she explains. The grand yet welcoming entrance hall sets the tone for the rest of the house with its dramatic Gothic cornicing and arch. "I felt this space needed a statement colour so I chose a chalky blue-grey which I think has an affinity with the architecture," says Victoria. "The colours that I've used are strong but not garish. To me, that's the English country style. Early-Georgian interiors can be quite austere, but by the time they'd got to the Regency period, decoration had become a lot more flamboyant, so I felt like I needed to reference this. I wanted to create an English country house style with a contemporary approach that was sympathetic to the period architecture."

Victoria's first consideration was to look at the orientation of each room. The drawing room, for example, faces north-west and has a cool light, so she selected a warm cream colour for the walls. To prevent the decor from feeling too traditional she ▸

ABOVE Victoria chose the New Classic kitchen cabinets with Quarter Round mouldings from Martin Moore and had a chimney made to create a focal point. She chose a soft blue-grey colour called Plumbago from Fired Earth for the kitchen island. The Oak Tree chandelier is by Cox London.