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## THE SPITALFIELDS FIXER-UPPER

### The ultimate Spitalfields fixer-upper

Hidden among the architectural gems of Spitalfields in east London, a local salvager expert and restorer found the perfect project property



The living area with Deanna Harris Rubin's Contemporary sofa from B&B Italia  
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**O**wen Pacey is an East End restorer who does not mind his work. Renaissance London, his antique emporium run treasure trove, has been a fixture on City Road in Shoreditch for nearly three decades. Brought up in a council flat in nearby Bethnal Green, with a stint in a squat in King's Cross, Pacey's glitzy client list spans A-listers to architects, bankers to bartenders, and everyone in between.



The new showroom, packed in Soho by Pacey & his wife Rhys, with Pacey's Renaissance company  
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The showroom, in an old Victorian pub, is packed to the rafters with fireplaces (antiques, restored and reproductions as good as if done a dealer), ornate mirrors and gleaming Murano chandeliers. You'll find artwork by Tracey Emin, magnificent marble busts and loopy artefacts sourced from Europe.



The exterior  
from [curious.com](#)

Among Renaissance's earliest customers were the artists Gilbert and George - Spitalfields royalty - who strolled in 28 years ago on "a Monday night in the middle of winter" on a quest for a Queen Anne fireplace. Paolozzi said there's a perfectly fitting 18th-century one. They've since become "really good mates".



Interior features in Bristol, Southcombe in the ground-floor lounge.  
from [curious.com](#)

He's less enthused about certain footballers' wives and "bored housewives in minkies" purporting to be interior designers. "And we told Madonna to piss off," he says. The star's team had requested the keys to Renaissance for a private viewing. "I'm not letting her in my shop on her own." Other clients include Mick Jagger, Naomi Campbell and Kate Winslet. Orlando Bloom popped in for lighting.



Owner Paolozzi with his dog Puggie  
from [curious.com](#)

In the mid-1970s, Paocy's multimillionaire landlord arrived at Renaissance looking for a fireplace for his Mayfair apartment. "I put the puppy eyes on him and said, please would you sell me the building. He let me buy it off him and I gave him the fireplace," he recalls.

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The basement is where Paocy and his team stash their stock and carry out restoration and reproduction work; what used to be Paocy's "proper bachelor" flat above the shop is now filled with old books and vintage Gusti mirrors.



The garden  
www.therose.com

Paocy, 57, met his partner, Rachel O'Hare, a journalist, in early 2020. "She bought a table. That was it, as soon as I saw her." It's much the same story with the couple's new home in Spitalfields' conservation area: love at first sight. "Rachel spotted it," says Paocy. "I knew the house would need a lot of work. She was like, that's good, we can put our stamp on it."

In July last year they bought the five-storey 18th-century house from a German/American couple. "There was not one fireplace in there," Paocy recalls. They put in an offer a few weeks into lockdown. It was rejected. But a year later the owners U-turned. "Basically, we got it for what they paid for it four years earlier."



Home in the studio  
www.therose.com

Their home (which they share with Labradorie Magg) is the only house on the street not constrained by English Heritage restrictions; its facade burnt down in the 1870s and it was remodelled in the 1840s. "For some reason it's not listed. It should be," says Paocy. Scrubbed clean of many original features, over the nine-month renovation fireplaces, skirting and simple coving were reinstated, "true or close to what they would have been", while its ghostly spotlights were removed. "What a palace that was," he says.



The kitchen, with island, chosen for more than convenience

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At more than 2,000sq ft this was not an insubstantial project. The radiators and valves alone cost £14,000. Naturally, Percy made the fireplaces at Renaissance. "We've got all these tricks that make them look old. Can't tell you too much," he says. In the first-floor lounge, Farrow & Ball's Smoked Trout is paired with a pink marble Brecciatello Francesco collection fireplace - a type of fire surround, spun on a lathe, which has been around for 400 years. On the ground floor, a Palladian fireplace in Breccia Veneta marble "adds some oomph". The multi-coloured velvet Seventies Mario Balleli Camaleonte sofa is new, via B&B Italia on Brentford Cross; the orange Murano glass cabinet is a Renaissance Station reproduction.



Guest room with Louis XV style bed

O'Hare "has an amazing eye", says Percy. She "knifed out" a full set of mid-century Pierre Paulin tulip chairs for the Knoll kitchen table and picked out the blue/black paint in their bedroom, hallway by Farrow & Ball. "I wasn't sure, but when it was done I loved it," he says. The gold bullion bee-inspired chandelier is from a bank in Turin, imported via his connection in Murano. It languished in the shop for a year but "since it went in there, everyone wants it. Rachel won't let me sell it."



The bathroom

Percy has come a long way from his first job, stripping pine doors for £20 a day on Horseay Road in north London. "I used to dream about living in Spitalfields," he says. "To actually live there now - I've never been so happy."

[www.pauliancelondon.com](http://www.pauliancelondon.com)