



Scene shifter

Few decorators are able to leave their houses alone. But for Annie Stevens creating a new look is a compulsive habit. She gives Jackie Cole a tour of the latest makeover. Photographs by Jan Baldwin

FROM THE top-floor window of Annie Stevens's house in Wandsworth she can see her ideas being copied by her neighbours. One has recently built a conservatory that is an exact replica of her own. Another is constructing a wooden deck just like the one she built last year. Through the windows of another house you can catch a glimpse of cream sofas and rows of hyacinths in glass holders that look suspiciously similar to hers. One might think it was just a coincidence – if it wasn't for the fact that the house is pretty unusual, particularly in this area of London where one terrace house looks much the same as the next.

But her neighbours will have a tough job keeping up: Stevens is a serial decorator who has just completed her second makeover in only three years. But even now, she continues to move

things around. 'I like changing the decoration with the seasons,' she says, by way of justification. Now that the weather is getting warmer she is packing up her fake fur throws and creating a lighter feel with pistachio blankets and pots of spring bulbs.

Annie is an interior designer who started her career working for Nina Campbell. Twelve years ago she left to set up her own business, and she runs it from her house, a Twenties terrace with large, well-proportioned rooms. It had previously been lived in by the same person for 25 years and was ripe for a complete overhaul. Her experience of working with architects had taught her all she needed to know about making the most of the space she had. She started by doing the obvious things: adding a roof extension and knocking down walls between

Left, Annie Stevens with her son Sebastian in the kitchen of her Wandsworth home. Right, the drawing-room. She replaced the traditional fire surround with a simple MDF version. In the window, two sets of blinds are used to diffuse light

