

PINK

Perfection

Sophie Paterson, one of the UK's most sought-after interior designers, tells **Mama** how she created a dream nursery for her daughter

Words **MORAG TURNER**



Absolutely Mama: *How did you go about planning Ava's nursery?*

Sophie Paterson: As soon as I knew I was having a girl I knew I wanted to use a palette of soft dusty pink combined with antique brass accents on a neutral base of taupe and cream. It's a colour combination I have always loved, it is so warm, feminine and pretty.

I have designed a number of nurseries for clients previously so I have quite a good formula. I like to create a room that will grow with the baby and won't feel irrelevant once they are at school.

I started with the space planning as I do on all my projects. I knew I wanted a sofa bed, a rocking chair and a chest of drawers that could double up as a changing station and so I played around with the layout until I found something that flowed and was functional with set areas for each activity of playing, reading, nursing, changing and sleeping. The pieces I found far and wide from the chandelier and cot in LA to the mobile I found on Etsy and the wallpaper

that I sourced in the Chelsea Harbour Design Centre. It was a labour of love and such a dream to design a nursery for my own baby finally.

AM: *What did you love most about designing it?*

SP: Nurseries are always special and magical to design- they encapsulate so much love and excitement. To be able to design a nursery for my own baby after having suffered multiple miscarriages was a dream come true. It took us four years to have Ava and I was so grateful to have a happy ending with a healthy baby after going through that. The interiors were beautiful and I loved designing the room but I was also very nervous about tempting fate. I had it all planned in my head for months before I felt secure enough to buy anything.

AM: *What do you consider to be the most important factors when designing a home with children and pets in mind?*

SP: Where to start. Fabrics I would say are



SOPHIE LOVES TO SPEND TIME WITH AVA IN HER NURSERY

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AVA'S READING CORNER WITH HER MONOGRAMMED CUSHION

key- make sure they are dark enough with enough pattern or texture to hide stains. Flooring as well, make sure it is easy to keep clean. Don't choose a tile that is porous or has a texture where dirt can get ingrained- it will make upkeep a nightmare. In Ava's room I used a rug that can be jet washed if the worst was to happen. I love how it looks but it is also reassuring to know that if there was a nappy disaster I could deal with it without replacing the carpet. I usually use vinyl wallpapers in a high traffic area where there are pets or lots of little grubby hands to leave marks on the walls - they are wipe clean which is ideal.

Ultimately, homes are for living in, and whilst you want a home that is beautiful you also want one that is relaxing. If you make sure you think about the practicalities and combine this in a way where it still feels luxurious and elegant then your home will be enjoyable to live in as well as look beautiful.

AM: What are your favourite children's interiors brands?

SP: I ordered the cot from Restoration Hardware in America which has a great selection of children's furniture. Sadly it is expensive and fairly laborious to arrange

shipping with them to the UK. The art with the baby animals was by Sharon Montrose who is also based in the US and doesn't ship to the UK (I like to make life difficult for myself). Pretty much everything else I designed and had made bespoke. We make and design most of the furniture bespoke for all our projects so that we get the perfect fit, proportions and style for each room. So designing the nursery I couldn't resist designing the furniture too.

AM: Where else do you shop for Ava?

SP: When Ava was little and before she started weaning, I bought a lot of clothes



from Harrods baby department. I love brands including Tartine et Chocolat and Belle Enfant, but now she is completely weaned and crawling around the floor it's impossible to keep her pristine so I've rediscovered the high street with Zara being a particular favourite.

AM: *What do you love most about being a mum?*

SP: I love watching her grow, it makes me want to have a pause button when I see how quickly the first year has gone, but at the same time I burst with pride every time she learns something new and watching her confidence grow. She has just recently developed a great sense of humour and loves doing funny things to make us laugh. She laughs so much, and it makes us both so happy.

AM: *And what do you find most challenging?*

SP: Combining running a business with being a mum is full on. Both require so much time and I have definitely had to sacrifice almost all 'me time' to make it work this last year. I worked right up to the day I had Ava and within a week I was back checking emails... I'm lucky that I love what I do but I'm very conscious that I want to treasure this time with Ava too, so I make sure I have one or two days during the week where I am with her all day and then weekends are all about her too. I'm lucky that I get offered so many great projects and opportunities with my business but I only say yes to the ones I feel hugely excited by as otherwise I could find myself overstretched and miss out on things with Ava. I'm fortunate to have a great team that work with me on all our projects and an understanding husband when I have to work in the evenings after Ava has gone to bed.

AM: *Do you have any tips for other mums on storage solutions for their nurseries and playrooms?*



SOPHIE USED A PALETTE OF DUSKY PINK AND BRASS IN AVA'S ROOM

SP: I have wicker baskets breeding in my house at the moment. I can't keep up with all the toys Ava keeps being given. I think people like to buy the brightest ugliest toys to watch my reaction, but it's amazing how you just don't mind a bit of mess even if you're naturally OCD.

AM: *Tell us more about your interior design background?*

SP: I first started working for a property developer and started my first project 10 years ago in 2007. I set up my business in 2008 so that I could also take on private clients as well as working with the developer. I always knew I wanted to be an interior designer, right from being obsessed with rearranging my bedroom as a five-year-old to getting work experience at Zoffany and Cole and Son in Chelsea Harbour at 16. It was always a huge passion of mine. As a designer you get better every year and with every project you never stop learning.



SOPHIE AND AVA HAVING A CUDDLE AFTER BATH TIME

“IT WAS A LABOUR OF LOVE AND SUCH A DREAM TO DESIGN A NURSERY FOR MY OWN BABY FINALLY.”

AM: *How do you balance work and motherhood?*

SP: With a lot of support. I have a nanny, a housekeeper, a hands-on husband who is devoted to Ava and also a great team of designers at work. I can't pretend to do it all, I'm so lucky to have great support in all areas of my life. Even with all of them it is still hard work and you feel like you never sit down or stop. I work most evenings but I try and ensure I have some work-life balance by keeping the weekends completely free.

To see more of Sophie's beautiful work visit sophiepatersoninteriors.com