

**WHERE**  
UMEÅ  
SWEDEN

**WHO**  
SORAYA, MICHAEL, JACK, JAMES,  
NOEL, BENJAMIN, CLARA, TIM

**WHAT**  
18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
COTTAGE

# A poetic eighteenth-century cottage for a family of eight

Umeå is a Swedish city located 600 kilometers north of Stockholm. This is where designer and interior designer Soraya Forsberg and digital sales manager husband Michael decided to move their big family four and a half years ago, swapping the capital's frenetic pace for the more peaceful lifestyle of Michael's hometown. There, they stumbled upon a decrepit yet graceful eighteenth-century cottage, which came as a great opportunity for the six kids of the family—Jack (19), James (17), Noel (14), Benjamin (10), Clara (8), and Tim (7)—to finally get their very own space while the garden could make Diesel and Bamse (the family's dogs) happy. Above all, the whole revamp project was an ideal playground for Soraya to unleash her fervent creativity.

*"The main floor was originally divided in two parts with a shop at the back, and there was nothing upstairs but a very cold attic. We started the renovation work by re-thinking the ground-floor layout completely, did some painting, and tore up the lino to reveal a magnificent wooden floor. The next step was to transform the first floor into*

*what it is now,"* says Soraya. This upper level now hosts four new rooms, an office, a guest room, and an open area where the children can play and welcome their friends, but the house as a whole has regained its original splendor. The half-timbered walls were whitewashed, exposing their beautiful imperfections, while earthy colors created by Soraya inject a timeless elegance. These combine with a selection of vintage and second-hand objects to enhance the beautiful, classic Scandinavian aesthetic of the house.

*"In Stockholm, the kids always had to share space so they couldn't really have friends over. Now, we often have two to six additional children at home—and I love it!"* Soraya, whose expertise extends to interior styling and product design, recently embarked on studying landscaping. *"When we bought the house, there was nothing but grass in the garden. Today we have a vegetable garden and a greenhouse we built. I really enjoy being outdoors and I'd love to be able to help my clients to imagine both the interior and the exterior of their family home."*

