

No place like home

Actress and TV Presenter Tamzin Outhwaite on missing home, loving the theatre and why she'll never leave Crouch End



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Where are you living at the moment?

I've lived in Crouch End for 12 years, and I'm now in my third property here. I wouldn't move anywhere else unless I was emigrating.

What is it that you like about Crouch End?

I like that it only takes 20 minutes to drive into town. If you go on Finsbury Park tube it's something like 8 minutes to Oxford Circus. It's also on the Piccadilly and Victoria lines, but when you are here it feels like you are in a village. There are lots of green spaces and it's not too stuffy and middle class. It's got a lovely mix of culture. When I was renting I tried out lots of different areas, like Hampstead, Kilburn even Maida Vale, but this is the area that suits me best.

What is your idea of a perfect property?

As many period features as possible. My views have changed though. Before I had my daughter Florence, I preferred my home to be quite open plan. Now, it's quite nice to have doors that you can close off and go into another room.

What in your opinion makes a house a home?

Our house comes into its own in the summer because the garden is great. I like the idea of different areas in a garden, which is what we've created at home. For me, what makes a home is a fireplace, which we have, and for it not to be too pristine. Our house is clean, but it is very lived in. I think the minute your

house looks like a show home, it doesn't feel like a home.

What do you miss most about your home when you have to stay away with work?

(Sighs) I miss my home so much when I am away. I think it's the vibe. I like the fact that we have an open house in the sense that people are always popping in and out. I miss the people that my house attracts. When we were young, my parents' house had the same quality about it. It was a very open, warm and welcoming place.

What is the one item in your home that you couldn't live without?

Probably my computer. It broke for a week recently, and having got it back yesterday, I do now feel a bit more complete, however shallow that sounds.

Who does most of the chores?

I would say it is quite an even divide.

Which household chore do you dislike the most?

I don't iron. I just refuse. I don't buy anything that needs ironing, and if it does need ironing, it just goes on creased! When Tom met me, I didn't even own an iron. When I was younger my mum always used to watch the TV and do the ironing, and I always used to think it was just a big waste of time, and that I would rather be doing something else!

What do you like to do most when relaxing at home?

I generally read, watch TV and do the gardening, especially at this time of year. I also like moving things around indoors. It sounds ridiculous, but I am always pottering around and changing things. Renovating old bits of furniture, that sort of thing.

What projects are you working on at the moment?

I recently had a small part in the film *Great Expectations* and I am also patron of Park Theatre, which is a new theatre in Finsbury Park. It should open in the spring, but we are still trying to raise enough money.

Would there be any possibility of a return to Eastenders?

I have never been asked. I'm not even sure if there is anyone in the Square now that Mel could even visit.

What has been your favourite role to date?

I have liked most of them. I loved doing *Hotel Babylon* for the clothes, and on *The Fixer* I enjoyed working with Peter Mullan and Andy Buchan. I also loved playing Charity in *Sweet Charity*.

For more information on Park Theatre visit www.parktheatre.co.uk