

LABOUR OF LOVE

A grand period residence devastated by fire and left to ruin has been lovingly restored and returned to its luxurious former glory by a young Dublin family

Photography RUTH MARIA MURPHY

The living room design with reclaimed flooring and panelling with handpainted detail is centered round the iconic Roche Bobois Mah Jong sofa. Interior design throughout by Tonya Douglas of Little Design House.



Set on twelve acres of land, this country estate in Rathfarnham has been meticulously restored, having been left to fall into a state of complete disrepair over the past decade. Turning a bleak situation into a restoration triumph, Isabelle and her husband took ownership of this extreme blank canvas, sympathetically reconstructing the interior, taking mouldings of original architectural features and having authentic design painstakingly returned to this unique and gracious country residence. The interior has been custom designed with a contemporary twist, reflecting the couple's individual style and inspired by their love of travel, to create a striking juxtaposition of old and new.

Spending a huge amount of event, time and money, the couple have created their dream forever home, with a team behind them to ensure that every detail was addressed sympathetically and to the greatest benefit of the architecture and character of the house. The house was essentially a cleaned out site when the couple's interior designer, Tonya Douglas of Little Design House got involved. Still a building site with temporary structural walls, no windows and no floors, the house required pretty much everything and only retained its essential external structure. Working with the couple's architect, Tonya took care of every interior design finish, also taking into account proposed layouts and door positioning to maximize every aspect of the interior.

Getting to know the couple's personal tastes, Tonya achieved a balance between clean contemporary lines and timeless classic design. While Isabelle prefers a contemporary, linear aesthetic, her husband was drawn to more traditional finishes, so the interior scheme is very much a balance of both. As well as providing a blank canvas to design a new interior scheme, the condition of the house allowed the couple to start completely from scratch, installing all the modern elements for luxury living, such as underfloor heating throughout, giving them the opportunity to create a brand new luxury home within a beautiful historical façade.

The kitchen is one key area where the couple decided to go all-out contemporary, which stands as a striking contrast to the period architecture. Originally going traditional with the kitchen furniture, the couple found it wasn't quite giving the edge they wanted, so they made a swift turn and set their hearts on a contemporary bespoke Bulthaup design. A concealed pantry is accessible through double doors, which acts as a more classic style cook's kitchen, giving them the best of both worlds, and amazing extra prep space perfect for entertaining. Double doors connect the kitchen and dining area to the living room allowing these key spaces to be either zoned or interconnected, depending on the occasion. Such is the carefully considered design and layout that another door leads off the kitchen to the orangery and onto an atmospheric bar, allowing these rooms to flow almost seamlessly – a dream party house!

On a really practical level, the children's playroom can be viewed through a glass door from the kitchen, allowing Isabelle to keep an eye on her two young sons. This glass opening incorporates a window seat with storage, another hugely functional design concept by the couple's interior designer.

While reinstating sympathetically designed architectural detail was paramount in this substantial restoration project, so too was creating a contemporary and super sociable new layout in tune with this family's needs. Interconnecting rooms, a versatile playroom to adapt to the children's needs as they grow, a glamorous bar and bathrooms of divine opulence, this outstanding home is a stunning reflection of this family's style and lifestyle.

A more formal scheme can be seen in the drawing room with elegant decor and dramatic dark wall detail. Julien Chichester sofa; Porta Romana wall lights; Jan Kath rug from Rug Art. Interior design, Tonya Douglas of Little Design House.



The Bulthaup showroom in London inspired not only their kitchen cabinetry but also their flooring. Bulthaup have Dinesen flooring in their showroom and these extremely long and wide plank Danish boards went perfectly. Bespoke kitchen, Bulthaup; appliances, Gaggenau; flooring, Dinesen; bespoke Eley Kishimoto; mix of lighting from Tom Dixon, c2O Lighting and Brigit Isreal; Carl Hansen chairs.



The guest bathroom is an ornate affair with striking monochromatic scheme and rich brass accents. The orangery with its reclaimed flooring, upcycled table and designer dresser leads from the bar area. Dresser, Nicholas Haslam; rug from The Rug Company.



INSIGHT

The owners

The greatest challenge was the size of the project and our differing tastes. My husband is more traditional while, while I favour modern design and clean lines but our interior designer blended the two for a classic interior with a modern twist.

My favourite item is the Roche Bobois Mah Jong sofa, which my children adore too. It's an expensive piece to let kids play on but it's easy to see why they're so drawn to it!

The interior design has been inspired by our travels; the bar, Murano chandeliers, marble detail and Venetian-print wallpaper in the bedroom are all things we've loved on our trips away.

My favourite room is our bedroom with its bespoke mirrored furniture, eight-foot wide bed and walk-in wardrobe; it's a luxurious and distinctive theme.



The bar is an opulent and atmospheric den located off the orangerie, both rooms a new extension to the original footprint of the house. Featuring three different wallpapers, paneling, tin tiles and vintage finds, this room adds great character. All joinery, fitted furniture, panelling and window seats throughout from Dunmore Joinery.

The opulent master bedroom and its spectacular en suite have been inspired by the couple's love of Venice, with the Hotel Cipriani providing the main inspiration for the decor. Interior scheme by Little Design House featuring bespoke Murano chandelier.





The guest bedroom features Jessica Zoob wallpaper and French style furniture. Contemporary family bathroom featuring Carrara marble and Fired Earth tiles.



Featuring a bespoke window seat with pull-out storage, this children's bedroom's colour scheme evolved from the Harlequin rug.