



Chaise longue and bookcases

THE GREAT INDOORS

Niche interior design practice The Room Company is giving Marylebone's rooms a chic revamp

by NATASHA BURROUGHS

Marylebone is a prime example of an area which has utterly transformed over the past decade. Now home to a host of boutiques, delis, gourmet restaurants and a few celebrity residents, this central London village attracts people, particularly City workers, looking for a bijou London pad as a sound, long-term investment. The property boom in Marylebone has naturally brought the neighbourhood a wave of avant-garde residents who expect state-of-the-art living with all the latest trends. And when it comes to revamping their properties, a name that carries a lot of cachet is The Room Company. The niche interior design practice, based in Marylebone Village, has as much pulling power as the exclusive, chic property interiors

it helps to create. Firmly at the forefront of contemporary interior design and refurbishment, the company specialises in luxurious, bespoke, high-tech environments. The brain behind The Room Company is Genny Henderson, a highly talented designer who is praised for her ability to always see the potential in a property and to transform it to maximum effect. Her designer touch gives any building a fashionable makeover, bringing an eclectic mix of cultural influences into the interiors she works with. Wholly client-focused, her work could be described as a combination of 'urban chic' and 'design for living', characterised by individually designed, custom-built installations using quality materials and cutting-edge technology.



Fireplace



Hallway

Genny's latest project was the £500,000 re-design of a Marylebone mansion three-bedroom apartment. Ridiculously out-dated for its trendy location, the property was in need of serious renovation, given its regency style, with black cornices picked out in gold and a twelve tile layout in the kitchen depicting a bucolic scene. Initially, the client (a divorced Canadian banker) commissioned Genny to re-furbish an existing family bathroom, with no brief except that the shower should be as large as possible. Using initiative and her expert eye, she suggested a design that would require knocking through to the neighbouring en-suite bathroom. The result was a spacious, contemporary bathroom with a large shower/steam room, complemented by porcelain tiles and a bath set against carved glass fibre optic panelling that was backlit to depict bubbling water. Modern technological features included the latest under floor heating and a high-tech iPod sound system, well balanced by a wall of bronze porcelain tiles which echoed a more natural feel. But real creative flair lay in the main feature: a custom-built waterfall shower, which gives a wonderful tropical rainstorm effect. On seeing Genny's ideas for the bathroom, the client decided the whole apartment could benefit from her interpretation of a contemporary, masculine style and set her to work on solutions for the rest of the space. Again, the design was left in Genny's capable hands, the main objective being to create open, flexible spaces with adequate book shelf space, and cabinetry in the sitting room which would display an unusual collection of Inuit art. Taking into consideration her client's love of music, cutting-edge technology was extended to the whole apartment, with an iPod sound system, which works off several iPod docking stations, recessed into the walls. A home cinema facility was also

integrated into the multi-room audio system, allowing the client to listen to his CD collection, digital radio and Sky music channels. Masculine, modern touches that perfectly reflected his City lifestyle are omnipresent in the original use of wood, glass and textures, including doors fashioned from African zebano wood and fumed oak floorboards. The master bedroom had its existing, tired white wardrobes ripped out and replaced with made-to-measure oak and walnut marquetry wardrobes that give ample hanging space and shelving. In the sitting room, a striking and unusual gas copper fireplace now dominates the space, while the other half of the room resembles a library of rare antique books. Blissfully uncluttered, with just a chaise longue to recline in, it is the perfect space to read and listen to music after work. And finally to the kitchen. To create a more contemporary space, the protruding built-in cupboard was removed and the wall curved to create an eating area which accommodates a beautiful, Italian round glass table. A disappearing sliding door – stainless steel on the kitchen side to complement various Miele appliances – topped off what was essentially a dramatic makeover, a model of aesthetic perfection. Having set up The Room Company seven years ago, Genny is bringing the bespoke back to design. Nothing is off the peg; all fittings and furnishings are tailor-made and contracted out to skilled craftspeople. The company claims to be able to source almost everything, no matter how unusual the request, so cool, unique finishes are part of the package. Genny's design philosophy is invaluable in today's housing market, filled with properties in need of refurbishment. With her ultra-modern aesthetic and contemporary ideals, she is able to create much-needed inspiring, liveable homes. ■



Bathroom



Sitting Room