

STYLE/INTERIORS

Words Heather Macleod Photographs Jamie Simpson



GENETIC AESTHETIC

When your mother is an interior designer it should be a cinch to make your flat beautiful. But there's beauty, and then there's Matt Paton's flat

Whenever hands split up the reason cited is usually creative differences, but when you are part of an interior design team, maintaining a kindred aesthetic is even more critical. When Margot Paton, the owner of interior design specialists Chelsea McLaine, took on her son Matt as a new team member, she was confident they shared similar ideas about design. He'd created a Japanese-inspired garden from scratch for his mother while still at school, so her confidence was built on solid foundations. "The main reason I started the garden was because I wanted to do anything rather than study for exams," recalls Matt, who is 25, "but it helped me realise my mother trusted my

judgment, which is important when you're running an interior design business." With a local, UK-wide and European client base, Margot's team offer a service that includes everything from hanging wallpaper and pictures to structural engineering and building extensions. Margot has worked in interior design since Matt and his brother Andy, now 22, started school. Although Matt went on to study law, he spent his holidays working for Chelsea McLaine, doing DIY at show homes, building furniture and generally learning the logistics of the business. "It seemed a natural progression for Matt to join us," explains Margot. "He is an experienced project manager, familiar with our clients and gelled with the team. When it comes to decision-making, his logical, legal mind is much appreciated."

Matt Paton's apartment in the west end of Glasgow is laid out over three levels, its neutral black walnut wood floors and white walls enlivened by colourful accents

It's one thing making decisions for clients, but when Matt moved into his first apartment in the west end of Glasgow three years ago, although he took care of the structural aspect, the creative input came courtesy of the entire design team. Laid out over three levels, recently refurbished and with not one but two roof terraces, the flat already had a lot going for it, but possessed unrealised potential. Matt immediately set about reconfiguring the space to create more light, storage zones and additional bedrooms. "With such vast ceiling heights, reconfiguring was a no-brainer," says Matt, who created two dressing rooms accessed by floating staircases, three en suites and a cloakroom, increasing the size of the flat without altering its footprint.



► The layout of Matt's apartment works around his routines and rituals, with all three bedrooms, plus living/dining/kitchen/library zones on the ground level, overlooked by a mezzanine with an additional kitchen. Accessed by a metal staircase, the penthouse living room is flanked by the two roof terraces which expand the living space by modulating the distinction between indoors and out.

To establish a sense of continuity over all three levels, the neutral backdrop of black American walnut flooring and white walls is enlivened by various colour accents provided by paintings, rugs, throws and cushions.

"Matt loves big, bold paintings," says his mother, "and we always advise clients not to be afraid of using large-scale pieces in a small space. When you walk into the main living/dining areas, the eye is immediately drawn to

the library at the other end of the space. Although this was one of the smallest areas we had to work with, we had no hesitation in choosing an enormous metallic chandelier by the Belgian company Moooi for dramatic impact."

With floor-to-ceiling bookshelves crafted at Chelsea McLaine's in-house workshop, a free-standing pewter mirror, Zoffany wallpaper and Larsen voile drapes on the windows, the library is a quiet corner in which to study or simply sit back with coffee and newspapers.

In the dining area, modernity merges with tradition thanks to the deft pairing of a Habitat glass plinth table with antique dining chairs, upholstered in a contemporary Zoffany fabric. Matt took his colour cue for the room, rich purple hues, from a painting by Scottish artist Gordon Wilson.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

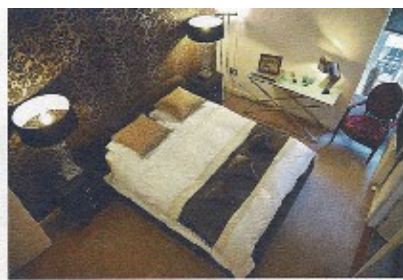
● When working with small or en-suite bathrooms, tile walls and floors in one colour to create an illusion of space. Avoid visual barriers such as cabinets or glass.

● New windows on the mezzanine level of Matt Paton's apartment allow the hall to benefit from borrowed light from above.

● Shimmering wallpaper by Elitis creates the impression of a wall of fabric in the second bedroom, while the ceiling light shade, by Penta, adds a geometric edge.

● Make seasonal adjustments to your home by adding texture or changing colour. Transforming a bathroom can be as simple as buying towels in a fresh colour.





'If clients are undecided about something such as a sofa, we'll pop down here so they can see how the furniture and fabric work in an authentic setting'

The larger sitting room has a contemporary limestone fire as its focal point, with two sofas upholstered in grey Boussac French fabric, which Matt describes as "block-friendly". After all, this is a man with a wine fridge in his kitchen. A coffee table by Jan Cavalle and two armchairs in Designers Guild fabric add custom-made cosiness.

Matt and his mother point out that the flat is almost an extension of their company's showroom in Bearsden, north-west Glasgow. "If clients are undecided about something such as a sofa," says Matt, "we'll pop down here so they can see how the furniture and fabric work in an authentic setting."

Textiles dominate Matt's bedroom, with the muted tones of the feature wall of wallpaper in graduated charcoal shades and bespoke suede headboard offset by a chair upholstered

in lively red fabric by Nina Campbell. The en-suite wet room is outfitted with a Drencher shower and moody charcoal tiles from Porcelanosa. Matt even sourced a mirrored cabinet recessed into the wall on eBay.

"I was responsible for the majority of the practical work," says Matt. "It can get quite messy, but when you know exactly what you are aiming for, the thought of the end result keeps you going."

"It's the same at work - I get the greatest buzz when clients come in after the completion of a job and their delight is palpable. Sometimes, in the early stages, some people are slightly worried or sceptical, but in the end they see it is money well spent." ■

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The penthouse living room is flanked by the two roof terraces (top, far left), while the dining room (above) is decorated in rich purple hues, inspired by a painting by Scottish artist Gordon Wilson