

DRAMATIC DESIGN



genius trick

A large TV screen floats behind a two-way mirror so the only time it is visible is when in use, retaining the formal elegance of the room while also allowing for casual relaxation

A GRANDER VISION

A newly built townhouse has character and elegance due to the designer's vision to create grandeur and scale alongside luxury, comfort and a good dose of drama





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Words Kerry Boyne **Photography** Andrew Beasley

Often in design, as in life, the big challenge and the golden opportunity are one and the same. Such was the case with this expansive home in the historic spa town of Harrogate in North Yorkshire, UK. A new build, this project was a blank canvas for interior designer Lucia Caballero, allowing her to create something to reflect the tastes and lifestyle of the owner, a 28-year-old bachelor whose needs included entertaining his family on weekends.

Lucia, from Caballero Design, had the distinct advantage of having redesigned the owner's Knightsbridge apartment, so that all-important client-designer understanding was already established. The brief was to bring "the opulence and sophistication ... the same level of theatre, excitement and finish" to this home as she had to the London residence. →

LEFT The rear sitting room has soft, tonal finishes for a more casual and low-key feel than the adjoining main sitting room

BELOW The living-area walls are covered in a silk and grass woven wallpaper that tones with the silk-back cushions on the main sofa



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LEFT The statement single artwork, an oversized reproduction of Klimt's *The Kiss*, can be seen from the ground-, first- and second-floor landings, which form a central lobby to the house

ABOVE The bespoke island drawers are topped with glass to display accessories such as ties and scarves

There were, however, some structural obstacles in the new house. As the designer explains, "It was clear the developers had put scale and grandeur a clear second to the opportunity for an extensive inventory of rooms for the marketing material. The result was a very large house with numerous bland rooms failing to convey the feeling of a luxury home."

The first task was to reconfigure certain features to establish more impressive proportions before introducing elegance and warmth through furnishings and finishes. This turned a rather featureless house into an elegant, luxurious home for the enjoyment of the owner and his friends and family.

The work began at the front entrance, which, in the original build, had been a pair of doors. On first glance these doors were quite grand, but the habit of keeping one leaf bolted closed for convenience effectively meant a front entry that was narrow and tight. This meant a first impression that was the very opposite of the grandeur the doors were meant to convey.

A completely new door set was designed and the original window above the door removed to accommodate the new 2.4m-tall dark-oak door flanked by full-length windows either side, allowing greater penetration of light from outside. Inside, the doorways were also raised from standard height to give a further impression of grandeur, the existing doors replaced with ebony-veneered items. →





copy that

For the ultimate in bedroom bliss, why settle for a luxuriously-padded bedhead when you could have a whole wall upholstered in sumptuous buttoned Chase Erwin silk panels?

Stepping inside, the hallway’s polished white Brillante marble floor inlaid with dark-brown Port Laurent accents reflects the light, the glamorous glossy look continuing up the oak staircase, which was French-polished to match the interior doors and softened with a plush silk runner.

If the entry gives the first taste of the magnificence of marble, guests can luxuriate in its richly-veined beauty in the guest bathroom as well. The guest WC, which also features a very special bespoke onyx Pesca basin, is lit from within to accentuate the waves of gold and caramel veining.

In fact, the warmly toned Port Laurent marble, handpicked on a trip to Italy, was the inspiration for the overall colour scheme. It features again in the 1920s-inspired fireplaces of the living rooms and dining room. The marble’s organic veining contrasts nicely with the bold geometric-patterned fabric of the sofa in the main drawing room, which is toned down by the plain raw-silk back cushions and black scatter cushions.

The rather formal character of this room — which can be closed off from the adjoining living room — relaxes somewhat when the TV is turned on. The only time this hidden TV can be seen is when in use, appearing to float in the mirror. Ingeniously, when it’s switched off, all that can be seen is the mirror.

The centrepiece of this glamorous home is the private master suite, which spans over four rooms: bedroom, dressing room, private lounge and bathroom. The brief was that it had to be “something truly exceptional” — luxurious, contemporary, calming — and it certainly merits that description.

In the sumptuous master bedroom, the maroon and silver soft furnishings and handmade ebony side tables create an unmistakably masculine air, softened by the wall behind the bedhead, upholstered in buttoned Chase Erwin silk from floor to ceiling, and the decadently

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP For a magical dining experience, it’s all about the lighting, with the high drama of the crystal spears chandelier, strategically placed downlights highlighting the fireplace surround and antique side table lamps supplying a traditional touch

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM The slatted ceiling of the home cinema performs two functions: it provides excellent acoustics and covers up the awkward steeply-eaved original ceiling and recessed dormer

ornate silver bedside lamps. The overall effect is one of plush luxury and sublime comfort.

The private lounge has a more low-key ambience, its focal point the elegant chimney breast lined with silver-leaf paper. Off the lounge is the spacious dressing room with its rich dark-oak frames around the wardrobes, dressing table, doors and glass-topped island drawer unit displaying ties, silk scarves and other accessories.

Arguably the pièce de résistance of the master suite is the spectacular bathroom with its Castello free-standing oval bathtub embraced by a dramatic curved wall, tiled in a pearlescent Bisazza mosaic; behind it are twin rain showerheads and a cantilevered marble bench seat. For relaxed bathing in the tub, the overhead lights dim down and concealed lights provide a softly glimmering, romantic ambience.

Arabescata marble lines all the other surfaces — walls, floor and vanities. “For total control of the finish quality, individual marble slabs →

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ABOVE A softly glimmering curved wall tiled with dark pearlescent mosaics separates the shower space with its rain showerheads and cantilevered bench seat from the Castello free-standing bathtub

RIGHT Like the master bathroom, the guest bathroom is lined with handpicked Italian marble, this time in the warm tones of Port Laurent

were selected from Italy and then laid in a book-matched pattern, providing an unbroken tapestry of elegance,” says Lucia.

In fact, the delivery of the marble was a memorable moment. “Trying to get the full-size slabs of marble up the staircase was pretty special,” recounts Lucia. “We had eight guys to unload slabs of marble.”

When house guests come for the weekend they will no doubt make good use of the purpose-built home cinema, cosily tucked away in one of the loft rooms. Here, the problems of a steeply-eaved ceiling, recessed dormer window and stepped return walls were solved by the installation of an elegantly curved hardwood slat ceiling, formed on the advice of an audiovisual expert.

The walls and the doors to concealed storage are upholstered in silk and there is a subtly lit wet bar and drinks cooler within the panelling. Casually arranged oversized leather armchairs ensure maximum comfort for those enjoying a movie with their drinks.

With its moody, masculine colour scheme, lavish use of Italian marble, silk and exotic timber finishes, and bespoke pieces placed as points of interest throughout the home, this design achieves the desired balance of drama, opulence and comfort. **HD**

more info?

caballero.uk.com

in short

❖ A new build in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, UK, this large townhouse is owned by a 28-year-old bachelor who likes to entertain London-based family members on weekends ❖ Interior designer Lucia Caballero had previously redesigned this client's London apartment ❖ The brief was to imbue the somewhat featureless new house with the same urban sophistication, luxury and drama of the client's London home ❖ The centrepiece of the home is the four-room master suite, epitomising sumptuous style and plush comfort ❖ Extensive use was made of high-end luxury materials, including handpicked Italian marble, beautifully finished timbers and silk upholstery, curtains and wallpapers



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