



HAPPY EVER AFTER

Working interior design
magic on a Docklands apartment

Emma and Chris had recently moved into a two bedroom riverside apartment in the Docklands. They had lived in New York and Japan before settling into this cosmopolitan area of London very close to Canary Wharf, where Chris now works in the banking sector. The apartment had been rented out since it was built more than 12 years previously in 1998 and still had the original finishes and fittings. They had saved around £50,000 towards their planned

renovation, but they were concerned that this wouldn't be enough to fulfill their dreams.

On a trip to Grand Designs Live at the Excel Centre in May 2010, they met Christine from Christine May Interiors, one of the experts on the 'Ask An Expert' stand. Emma and Chris's question was, "is £50,000 enough to do everything we want?"

The couple had brought the proposed plans with them and explained their list of 'must haves' and 'would likes'. Although, they were worried that they would have to trim

their aspirations to make their budget work, they invited Christine to see the flat and after a detailed consultation they asked her to take on the brief.

Christine had a lot of new design ideas but she was already struggling to meet Emma and Chris's brief within the available budget. So it became clear that there simply wasn't enough money to be able to fulfil the couples' dreams and complete all the work discussed; an upgraded kitchen, including repositioning the sink, new worktop, a bar,



two new bathrooms, relocating the boiler, new wood flooring throughout and window treatments throughout. They also wanted new wardrobes and bespoke joinery. After pouring over the proposed plans for their apartment, Emma and Chris decided that they didn't want to compromise and opted to put the refurbishment on hold until more funds became available.

In the spring of 2012, Emma contacted Christine to ask if they could meet up again with a view to getting the project underway.

Emma is a semi-professional cook and writes food reviews, so getting the kitchen right was central to her plans for the flat. The existing kitchen was a long dark galley with a hatch into the dining area. Christine worked with her colleague, James Haley, an interior architect, on the kitchen design. They suggested removing the end wall where there was a door into the kitchen from the large living and dining room. The 'hatch' was to be opened up as much as was structurally possible and a glass bar area would be added.

Opening up the kitchen would bring in more natural light and would make it a much more sociable space for this couple who love to cook and entertain. The sink was to be repositioned to the sitting room end of the kitchen allowing the dark space at the end of the kitchen to become a walk in pantry with pocket doors. The oak kitchen worktop was extended into the living room to create a workspace for Emma adjoining the kitchen, which is perfectly located for her to sit at her laptop with a coffee.

EXCLUSIVE INTERIORS

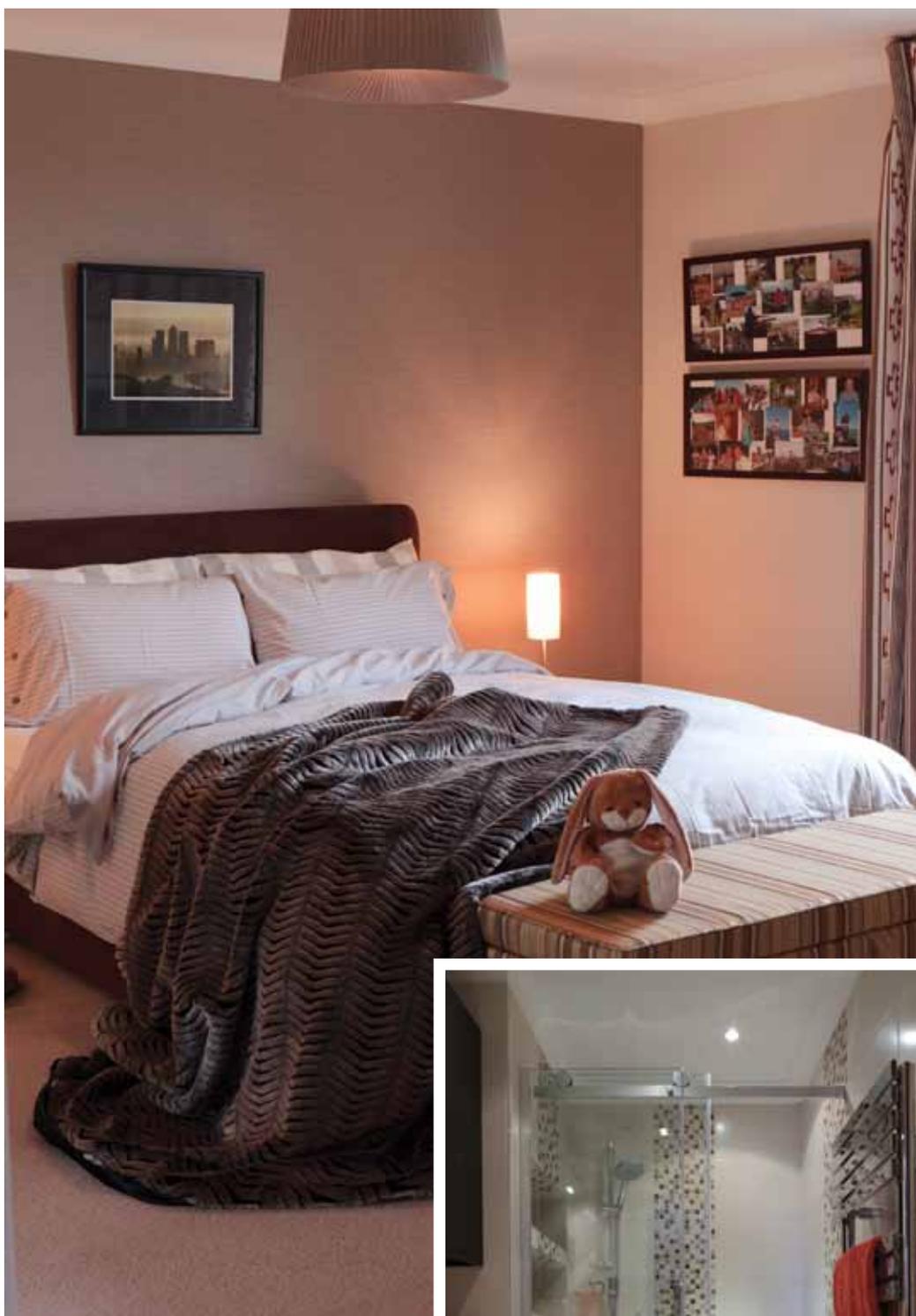
The living room with its views across the Thames fell far short of its potential as a warm and inviting entertaining space. A lighting scheme was suggested that would enable the couple to zone the space and to highlight their very personal artwork collection. To keep costs down, the couple's existing sofa would be recovered using faux suede while a vintage style armchair was tailor made to Emma's measurements, making it the perfect sized chair for her to curl up into. A bespoke media wall was designed and built to be an attractive focal point to house the television and all the accessories that now come with TV as well as space for DVD's, ornaments and books.

There was a shortage of space in the master bedroom with one small built-in wardrobe whilst another cupboard housed the central heating boiler. By changing the boiler to a more efficient electric combination boiler, it could be moved to the cupboard in the hallway. The newly freed up space in the bedroom could then be incorporated into a fitted wardrobe across the length of the bedroom wall, facing the bed.

It was then suggested that if Emma needed another wardrobe they could steal some space from the adjoining guest bathroom. Both the guest bathroom and the en suite were tired and showed the legacy of the flat's rental days. There was no practical space for storage or for standing a tooth mug. The showers were inefficient and the rooms were cold and unattractive. In the en-suite, stylish modular wall cabinets with a matching vanity unit were added plus an integrated basin and counter top to keep all the usual bathroom paraphernalia tidy and close at hand.

At the start of the project, Emma showed Christine a postcard of a painting showing the colours that she envisaged in her home. The colours were shades of olive green, browns, sludgy creams and silver greys. Those colours were used as the starting point for the décor in the flat. Green is the prominent colour in the living room and is a bold choice for the kitchen contrasted with black appliances, truffle beige and pops of orange. The same truffle beige walls follow through the entire flat but in the master bedroom the main colour is bitter chocolate brown, with the curtains and ottoman in shades of ochre and burnt orange to lift the scheme.

In the study the theme turns from brown to grey with the silvery toned oak and silver-grey roman blind. The sofa provides a masculine contrast in charcoal grey and, as in the rest of the flat, orange in the cushions provides the accent. Behind the sofa, the David Hicks inspired wallpaper, pulls



together all the colours used in the room and confirms the space as "Chris's den".

The building work was completed within the agreed six weeks that the clients had stipulated. Without their patience and the extra injection of cash, the results would still have been excellent, but what Emma and Chris have now is the home of their dreams and, a space in which to welcome their friends and family that truly works for them. In Emma's words "I love everything about it. I wouldn't change a thing and we are both extremely comfortable in our new home".

* www.christinemayinteriors.co.uk

