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Essential Interiors

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION OF STYLISH INTERIORS



THE INTERIORS BIBLE



a home in the country

Irish designer Miriam Peters is renowned for creating classic interiors infused with the kind of refined elegance the French have made their own. Having been given the opportunity to work on the interiors of one of Killeen Castle's premiere show homes in County Meath, she demonstrates that she also has a flair for designing with a distinctly contemporary twist.

Killeen Castle is Snowbury Ltd's luxurious development in County Meath, comprising a world class "signature" golf course designed by Jack Nicklaus, a 5-star-plus hotel housed in one of Ireland's most remarkably restored medieval castles and an enclave of individual homes dispersed within the resort's 600 acres of wooded parkland.

Words: Tracy Biggam / Photography: Barry Murphy

The developers' aims are that despite its obvious attractions for the hotel guest, Killeen Castle should become a living rural community, chosen by home-owners as their main place of residence. As such the interior designers here were charged with creating real homes that could function instantly as such, rather than purely "show" properties bereft of all the finishing touches.

Dublin-based firm, Brazil Lohan Architects, have designed the large detached homes at Killeen Castle with a contemporary aesthetic and an emphasis on the use of natural materials to blend the homes with their sylvan surroundings. The "Silke" home, a superbly proportioned residence is named after the William Silke, who was consecrated Bishop of Meath in 1434 and is believed to be buried in front of the altar of the 15th century St. Mary's church that lies adjacent to Killeen Castle. It is truly one of finest examples of a contemporary home constructed in Ireland.





To complement the contemporary style of the architecture and realise a collective desire that the outside should form a vital part of the inside, a muted basic colour palette was developed as a backdrop for the interiors.

In order that the interiors would not compete with the views of the golf course and surrounding woodland that the generously glazed external walls afford, Miriam opted for pale-hued furnishings with strong outlines such as the pair of cream couches and extravagantly upholstered footstool in the drawing room, made by a Belgian company who specialise in classic French furniture with contemporary touches.





To augment the unfussy nature of the furnishings, Miriam turned to her treasure trove of accessories made by artists and craftsmen locally in Dublin and also in France. These range from beautiful decorative pieces in reclaimed wood made by an old French couple whom she discovered at a *marche aux puces* in the south of France, to an eclectic range of zinc ornaments and original paintings.





Artwork is an outstanding feature in the house and is employed liberally throughout, providing explosions of colour on those walls where the outside is not visible and drawing the eye through the large open plan spaces to add perspective. This is complimented by interior lighting design by John Cullen Lighting of London which brings zest to the large living and entertaining rooms and provides great perspective between the major living spaces.





The giant orchid covering one wall of the dining room was borne out of a desire to provide diners on both sides of the table with a view – a glazed wall provides full sight of the picturesque scenery outside for one set of diners and so digital wallpaper was used to balance one immense picture with another. Above hangs a glamorous contemporary chandelier, aptly named the Arctic Pear Wave after the shape of the individual bulbs it comprises, which brings a slightly theatrical quality to the room and links well visually with the two tall banquette seats, their deeply cushioned buttoned backs upholstered in a pale shimmering fabric, which are tucked either side of an alcove as a cosy spot for a chat over pre-dinner cocktails.



Great visual continuity has been achieved in the home and while there are dramatic statement pieces in every room, the transition from room to room is smooth. Vital to this process is the choice of flooring. Jerusalem stone in a warm taupe shade runs, unimpeded, through the hall and into the vast kitchen and family dining area. In the hall squares of grey stone were added to further enhance the warmth of the double height space and to match-in with the zinc accessories diffused throughout the ground floor. Oiled and smoked oak is another material used liberally, forming the floor in the drawing room and dining room, as a wall-covering in the snug sitting-room hidden away at one end of the kitchen and commanding centre-stage in the kitchen where it tops the giant island unit.





A free standing Chalon kitchen was chosen for the "Silke" home at Killeen Castle. Chalon is the quintessential English country house kitchen brand beloved by many a country squire including, rather surprisingly, Ozzie Osborne, Liam Gallagher and George Michael.



The nature of the free-standing style of the Chalon kitchen makes it a versatile brand and here granted the ability to play with the basic design to present the classic-contemporary look desired for the home. The statement piece is the oak-topped island unit painted anthracite grey with curved brushed steel handles, sourced from the USA. A sleek black Aga and giant Miele fridge push the contemporary style and a combination of cream painted units and pale grey wall units provide visual balance.





The drama of the ground floor continues upstairs where the bedrooms are accessed from the curving sweep of the broad balcony looking down into the hallway. Here, another piece of vivid art – this time a trio of eighteenth century ladies depicted in glowing colours – sits between two great horn-shaped wall lights. In the bedrooms, however, the drama is left behind and instead a series of appropriately restful colour palettes from the Farrow & Ball range permeate the rooms. Soft browns, creams, pinks and aqua shades – and simple shapes combine to deliver a clean, uncluttered look, with dressing/wardrobe areas concealed behind tall upholstered headboards doubling as free-standing partitions. Solid Oak wardrobes by Hayburn in the master bedroom add to the defining character of the “Silke” home as the ultimate in grand living. Thick piled wool and silk carpets and marble bathrooms reinforce the luxury which noticeably underpins the house’s interior design.



The "Silke" Home has been designed with a family in mind and an element of fun has been injected into the spacious basement which houses a luxurious spa, a high tech gymnasium and a cavernous cinema room. The huge spa incorporates a free-standing jet bath clad in stone, a sauna, steam room and shower with gold mosaic tiles, chosen to add warmth and light to the subterranean room. The cinema room with its broad loungers upholstered in a sparkling weave comes complete with Haagen Dazs fridge and the gym features some tongue-in-cheek motivation in the shape of paintings depicting generously proportioned sumo wrestlers ... which not only prove that good interior design will give thought to even the most sensible of environments, but might just be enough to inspire you to run that extra mile!

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www.minniepeters.com www.killeencastle.com www.brazillohan.ie

www.chalon.com



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