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THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION OF STYLISH INTERIORS



flight of the phoenix

In a new development of penthouses, apartments and period style three storey five bed roomed townhouses in a leafy suburb of West Dublin, this one stands out.

Miriam Peters of Minnie Peters was given just three weeks to design this three storey townhouse, which meant she had no time to order custom-made furniture or wait for deliveries.

"I had to pull from all my resources so it was quite a challenge to achieve what I wanted. Normally on such a project we like to be on it from the hole in the ground stage. The house is a mock Georgian with two entrances – one at ground level and other up a flight of stairs to the middle one. On the ground floor, she explains, is the dining/ sitting/ family room area with a conservatory, which she describes as the 'Nutella sandwich' area, where the kids can go to enjoy such delicacies - without leaving chocolate fingerprints everywhere else

"When I came up first to look at the property I nearly ran over a Barbie bike and there were little trikes strewn on the lawns, so I quickly realised that it was young families that were moving in to Farnleigh, as well as people who wanted to downsize. The development is a mixture of apartments, penthouses and townhouses in a beautifully landscaped location just outside the Phoenix Park. It's set among gorgeous gardens, which you don't have to maintain.

When Miriam was given the commission, the carpets and tiles were already in situ. Both were very neutral so they dictated, in some way, the direction the décor palette would go.





"I decided to start with the walls, using colours from the Heritage Collection from Colortrend. I am a big fan of Colortrend paints and use them wherever possible. They're Irish too. I chose the same colour throughout, but had it mixed so that as you went upstairs where the light is always brighter to the eye, the walls became darker to balance them." "The house is not traditional enough to go completely traditional with very large pieces of furniture; it's not contemporary enough in layout to go ultra modern either; so I went somewhere in the middle, using luxury and quirky pieces together. The palette I chose ranges from degrees of sand and camel to mink and grey. I love grey, but you have to be careful with it or it can look really wrong and cold."

There is no separate dining room although the area is divided for the kitchen by an island, so a solid practical table was an essential. It's in oak and the high back chairs have textured covers, which can be removed to be dry-cleaned. The 'Nutella' area had an easy wipe glass-top table and chairs and makes a great breakfast room too. The kitchen was made by John Daly, the integrated appliances are by Neff and the floors here and in the living and dining areas are made from semi-solid wide plank oak. The kitchen has marble floor tiling.

"We changed the colour of the units and toned them down to clotted cream to complement the mushroomy tones of the walls and the black granite work tops. We used a herringbone cotton/linen mix to keep the drapes light, yet make them cosy when closed at nighttime. There's a recessed flame effect fire to add atmosphere too. It's a lovely space and leads directly in to the family living room, although this can be closed off by sliding doors.'

Here Miriam has flanked the fireplace by two aged cabinets with curved bodies and leg. Behind each there are mounted ceiling roses on painted wooden frames which she has used picture-style. These are spacious and provide storage, an element often missing in modern homes, she says. The cabinets come from a Belgian company and the designs are based on Italian styles. All the lamps and accessories throughout are from Minnie Peters.

"Each project I undertake I treat as if it was my own home I was doing up. I do it as if I am going to live in it when it is finished. I hate when I read the property pages, especially when they feature apartments, and they all look exactly the same. I don't follow fashions slavishly and am not in to the latest bold colours and large swirly patterned wallpapers. However if that's what my client wants then I'll use it. Decorating a show house you have to appeal to a wider audience.





If the potential buyer is going to pay €1.7 million, then there has to be something special to make this appeal to him or her above other properties that are on the market. With that in mind you try to make the house or apartment cosy, luxurious, spacious, have lots of storage and be easy to keep. You don't want gimmicks that may go out of fashion very quickly. Those gimmicks are the very things that can turn a buyer away. Besides they can always add their own once they move in if they want to."

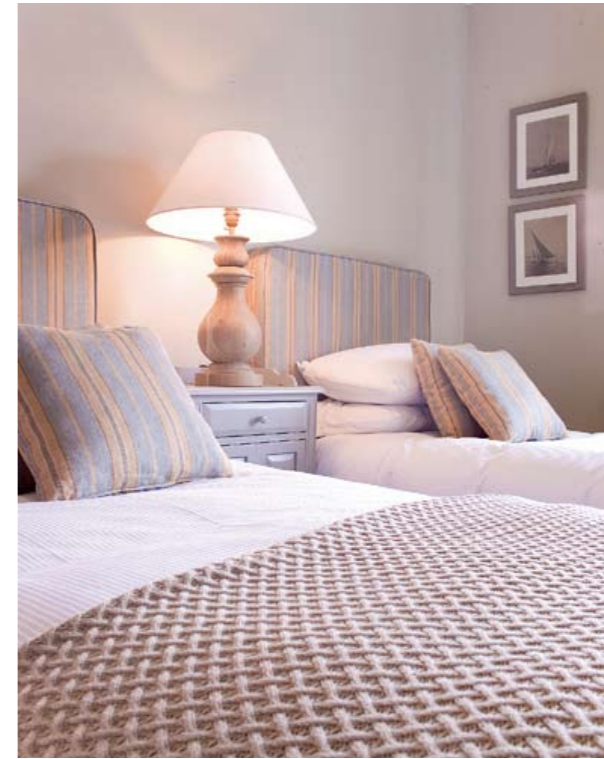
The middle level of this townhouse at Farnleigh has an oak floored entrance hallway, simply dressed with a console table with matching lamps and three organically shaped vases. These are reflected in the large carved mirror behind. There are only two rooms on this floor - the really generous master bedroom with spacious en suite and a serene sitting room retreat.

"The theme here had be comfort with a get-away-from-everybody feel. This is the place to curl up and read the Sunday papers or get away from the kids for a while. The sofas are by Orior by Design and there are two armchairs in this room in camel mohair, which says Miriam, "makes you feel as though you are sitting on a giant teddy bear!" The sofa is suedette and the walls are hung with sets of muted toned prints of Asian dancers. She has integrated the television into the bookcase, setting it on to an arm, which can be swivelled to suit the viewer's requirements.



In the master bedroom a chestnut and poplar bed is dressed with luxurious linen and the drapes are silk. Antique gold has been added by the details on the bedside lockers, the lamp base trims and accessories. There's no shortage of wardrobe space in this gigantic room either, and there's a giant love seat in winter white, with a matching footstool in front of the fireplace. Completing the pampering elements the en suite bathroom does not disappoint. This, and all the bathrooms, are kitted out with Porcelanosa suites and tiles. The carpet is the same throughout the house – a soft velvet sand and, where rugs have been used, they are neutral with a discreet pattern to make them practical.





The remaining four bedrooms are on the top floor. Chocolate brown provides the contrasts in the first- in the headboard and bed dressings and painted furniture detail. A second bedroom has single beds with striped blue and mushroom headboards and cushions of the same fabric. Knitted throws continue this tactile style.

Miriam designed the third bedroom as a child's room, mindful that the buyer of this showhouse may not need a kiddy's room. If that happens, by simply removing a few pictures and the accessories it can be restored to general use.



The smallest room she dedicated as a study, with a large desk in light weather-beaten wood, so as not to dominate too much. She added a wicker swivel chair and used a striped cotton/denim fabric for the window treatments.

This townhouse in Farmleigh Woods is a Menolly Homes development and backs onto Georgian Village and is right next door to the Phoenix Park. So, in estate agent's parlance it has it all – location, location and interiors by Minnie Peters.