

# TAILOR MADE

*Being in the business of doing up houses, when it came to her own, Miriam Peters saw only promise and potential in the period house she took over and restored*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LUKE WHITE

An antique baroque-style mirror above a grey sideboard from Belgium, sourced specially to work in the wide hallway: the curves are good in this setting as the deep piece accommodates lots of photo frames, lamps and artefacts, always interesting in an entrance hall. The Belgian armchair is covered in a Ralph Lauren fabric. The chandelier is Miriam Peters' favourite.



The drawing room, with ornate cornicing and new double doors that open to a glazed link which leads to the kitchen. The large torchère floor lamp is French and the table lamp with zinc base, from Belgium. The sofa with white cotton loose covers is by Orior by Design. The bookcase was chosen specially for its height and drama. The overmantel mirror with its narrow frame was designed to fit.

In 2003, Miriam Peters' rather dilatory house-hunting plans took on a whole new urgency when she and her husband Nigel Bray viewed a two-storey semi-detached Victorian with coach house, dating around 1862, close to their existing home. In spite of its rundown state and the fact that it had been chopped up into apartments in the 1940s, they fell in love with it immediately. It was an unusually decorative house, the predominant architectural style to the front is described as "Venetian Gothic", probably influenced by Ruskin with its balcony on the *piano nobile*, and a decorated gothic arched entrance. Her plans to renovate started to take shape that same evening. Determined to have it, she engaged

architect Paul Brazil to advise on the extent of work required and, still prepared to undertake the major renovation prescribed, made a successful bid at auction.

For Peters, being in the business of restoring and renovating houses for clients both in Ireland and abroad (she is owner and founder of the Minnie Peters interior business), it was a dream come true. She knew how she wanted the house to be and how to achieve it. With a new baby and another on the way the couple wanted the house to be an informal family home, yet smart enough to be a showcase when clients needed to see her work in situ.

As a protected structure, plans for the house would need to be made in agreement

with the authorities, and sensitive to the fabric of the house. While the rooms were certainly spacious enough, especially the large hall and living room, the house was found wanting in certain critical areas. The first step was to extend at the back to create a kitchen-cum-family-dining area, and then to connect this with the drawing room to allow effective flow throughout the ground floor. Plans for a glazed passageway at the rear of the house were devised, allowing the kitchen-dining area to link with the drawing room: this has turned out to be one of the nicest aesthetic aspects of the house and a stunning addition to the view of the house from the garden. The build took two years, with Peters acting as project manager on the dust-laden construction site practically



Double doors link the drawing room to the dining room with its Moissonnier central pod dining table (which can extend to seat up to ten people) and Massant calico-covered dining chairs in an antiqued grey finish.



The bookcase in the dining room with library lights and ladder.



In the kitchen, steps lead to the glazed link. A caryatid is mounted on a reclaimed wooden plaque. *Right:* In the front hall colours in the original tiles are picked up in a painted canvas by Australian artist Richard Alan.



In the master bedroom, white silk curtains are hung at the floor-to-ceiling height windows. The bed and daybed are by Massant.



The Chalon kitchen with large maple-topped island. The linen curtains are faded khaki to blend with the colour of the French doors. One of Miriam Peter's many visits to antique fairs yielded the pair of French antique lights.



The bathroom-cum-dressing room with bleached herringbone oak floor and antique teardrop chandelier.

every day. The family eventually moved in without a kitchen - decisions for getting things signed off for their our own house came way down on the list of priorities. Double doors were installed to link the drawing room to the reception room at the front of the house; for the last number of years this has been the children's playroom, but has just been converted to a grown-up space - study by day and dining room in the evening. Throughout, the palette is gentle - whites, dove grey and soft khaki - but restraint vanishes at the top of the house where the children's rooms have murals and hand-painted chests to store toys and books. The interior has a relaxed, unstuffy atmosphere with a mixture of old and new furniture, mirrors and objects - very much the kind of thing that Peters has been sourcing for clients since 1994 when she established her retail business in Dun Laoghaire with the intention of providing nice things to make nice homes. Three years ago the business relocated to Sandyford where the showroom has furniture and accessories from all over the world with a large collection of antiques from France, Belgium and Italy. It is also home to the Chalon kitchen brand, which Peters has represented in Ireland for over a decade. Now, her small specialised team focus on providing an interior design service to clients both here and abroad. ■ [www.miriampeters.com](http://www.miriampeters.com)



One of the children's bedrooms with hand-painted mural designed by Miriam Peters.