

exotic enchantment

When not at their adored French dwelling or sunny Cyprus villa, Paul and Isabelle wanted a spacious, serene London bolt-hole for luxury city living. Discover how to recreate their look...



design profile

A far cry from its original cramped layout, this now vast Victorian villa has been transformed by architects and interior designers Fletcher Roger Associates into a modern, light-filled home. With inspiration taken from its owners' worldwide travels, it now boasts an open-plan, contemporary kitchen, ultra-chic master bedroom and indulgent en suite, while a neutral colour scheme lends itself perfectly as a blank canvas in which to display treasured collectables and fine furnishings.

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Paul Jarvis and Isabelle Pierrard are very busy people. Their lives run on hectic schedules, played out in a truly international arena. "I work in advertising and Paul is CEO of a multi-national based in Cyprus," explains Isabelle. "We have a house out there where we spend quite a lot of time, and also a wonderful place in France because that's where I'm from," she explains, spoken in slightly accented but impeccable English.

"Plus, one of our main passions in life is travelling. We like to go to destinations as strange and remote as we can find."

It's no wonder then, that when the couple return to their property in south London, they are looking for a space in which they can immediately unwind. "For us, the house here had to fulfil two criteria," says Isabelle. "Firstly, it had to be a totally calm space, and, secondly, we wanted a neutral backdrop for

above Mowlem's dark wenge kitchen is given an uplifting contrast with travertine flooring, cream walls and a vast roof window.

right Kitchen essentials are kept organised with a wide compartmentalised drawer.

far right Providing a sense of symmetry, doors into the living room reflect those to the garden.

top right Housed within tall units, the stainless steel ovens are surrounded with ample storage.





above Ample storage includes sliding shoe-trays built to specifically fit Isabelle's heels.

left A monochromatic colour scheme ensures a simple yet sophisticated look.

below Japanese-style mirrored doors act as a subtle divide, while bouncing light around the room.



displaying the different items we will bring back from our travels over the coming years." Paul and Isabelle bought their terraced London villa at the end of 2002. With its typical Victorian façade, standing anonymously in a street of fifty or so identical properties, it gives no hint from the outside of what might lie within. "The front betrays nothing of what we have done in here," agrees Isabelle. "It's only when you step inside that things are revealed to be completely different. The interior is modern, serene and a pleasant surprise for first-time visitors. I rather like that feeling of

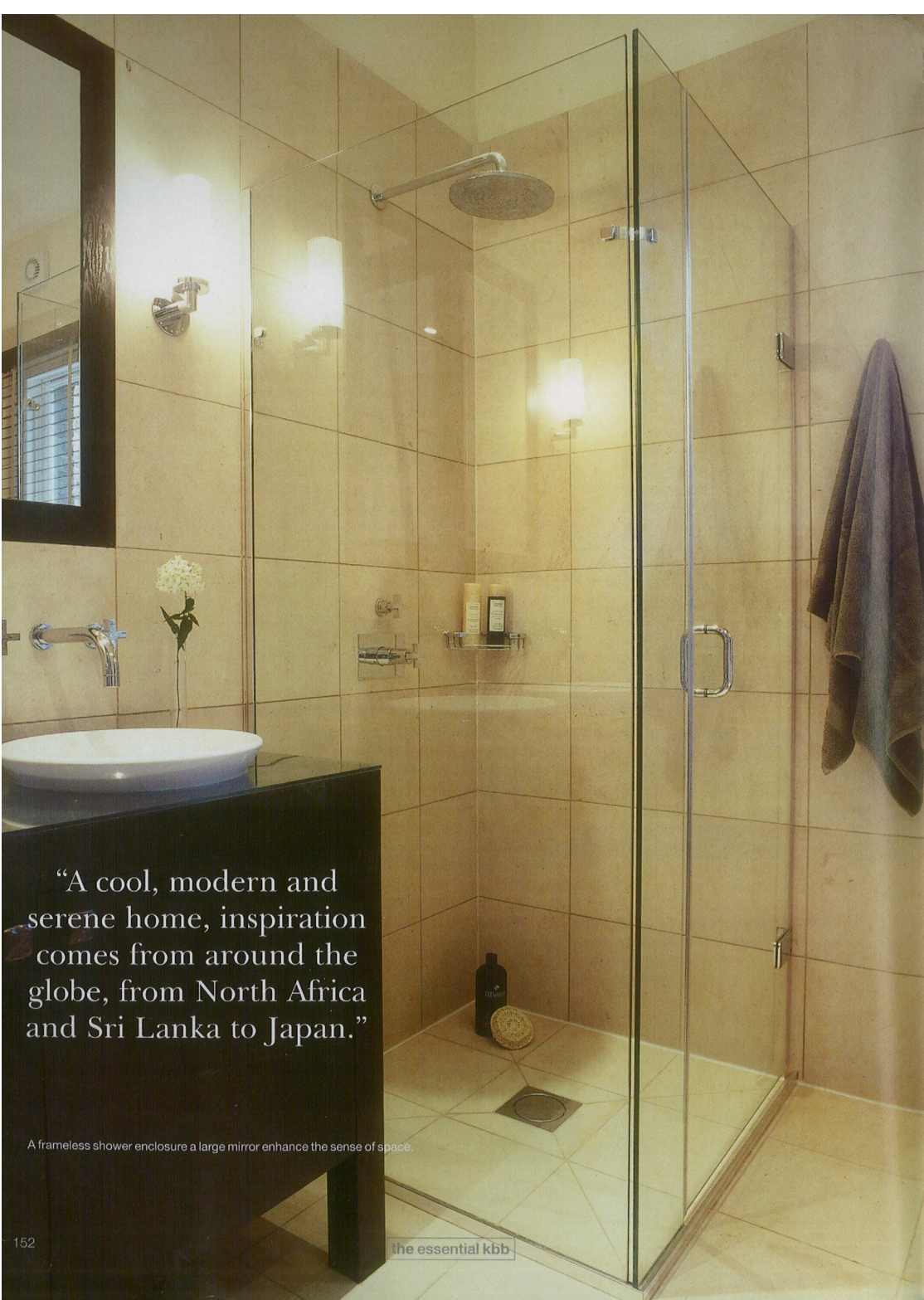
hiding a surprise or guarding a secret, that this contrast provides," she smiles.

The couple's main concerns were all about the dynamics of open space and bringing a coherent flow between one room and the next. "The brief to our architects was to open up the interior as much as possible, and to try and create vistas that ran the whole length of the house," Isabelle explains. "When we first moved in here, my friends joked that we were the only couple they knew who had completely gutted a house that had absolutely nothing wrong with it, but I wasn't used to this Victorian

style of house at all – with all its boxy little rooms. I grew up in Tunisia, where houses are cool and open, and the desert is the backdrop, so some of the inspiration for the layout in here came from the Riads of North Africa.

"Our other big influence on the décor is one of our favourite hotels – the Kandalama in Sri Lanka," she continues. "In fact, when we were looking for a suitable architect and we mentioned the Kandalama, the people at Fletcher Roger Associates knew exactly what we wanted – it was then that we knew we had found people on our wavelength to work with."

"The house had to fulfil two criteria...to be a totally calm space and a neutral backdrop for displaying the different items we will bring back from our travels."



“A cool, modern and serene home, inspiration comes from around the globe, from North Africa and Sri Lanka to Japan.”

A frameless shower enclosure a large mirror enhance the sense of space.

What they have achieved, in tandem with contract builders Voytex and kitchen design company Mowlem & Co., is a serene set of rooms, which employ the clever use of symmetry and a subtle monochrome palette for a singularly tranquil atmosphere.

Infusing rooms, especially the kitchen at the rear of the building with as much natural light as possible, was another big consideration. So, when the kitchen was extended at one side to improve the room's overall width, it was decided that the new roof section above should be entirely glazed, and the main run of the kitchen located underneath. A beautiful contrast of tones and materials gives an ultra-sophisticated look.

The chic scheme of dark chocolate and cream continues upstairs in the luxurious master bedroom, while, in the en suite, the walls and floor have been clad in limestone. The glass-topped, stained oak washstand in the corner, containing two circular ceramic basins, was designed by Isabelle herself. “I had seen washstands with the basins either sitting on the top of the surface or totally sunk in, but I wanted them set in halfway – so that's exactly what we did!” she explains.

“We're both delighted with the way everything has come together,” says Isabelle. “I think that from now on we will be spending a lot more time here, really appreciating the space. But then again, you can never underestimate the inspirations you get from travelling,” she laughs.



above and top right His and hers basins are unusually sunken halfway into the vanity unit and teamed with sleek, wall-mounted Barcelona taps.

top left Wooden blinds complement the wenge surround of the recessed shelving and bring warmth to the otherwise pale palette.



Useful Information

Kitchen

Bespoke kitchen, around £25,000; 30mm honed Bon Accord granite **worksurface with splashback**, around £3000, all at Mowlem & Co. **Tel: 020 7610 6626.** www.mowlemandco.co.uk

Recess and built-in wall cupboards, £10,000, constructed by Voytex. **Tel: 07834 233983.**

Appliances

Sovereign 60 American **fridge freezer**, around £3000, at Maytag. **Tel: 01737 231000.** www.maytag.co.uk

Bespoke **extractor hood**, around £400, at Westin. **Tel: 01484 421585.** www.westin.co.uk

ER77160GB five-burner **gas hob**, £429; HB560550B **oven**, £809; SE65T370GB **dishwasher**, £529, all at Siemens. **Tel: 0870 840 3300.** www.siemensappliances.co.uk

Fixtures and furnishings

Iranian travertine 600mm by 400mm **floor tiles**, including fitting by Voytex, around £3000, at Mica Schist. **Tel: 020 7602 8915.** www.micaschist.com

ARX160 sink, £220, at Franke. **Tel: 0161 436 6280.** www.franke.co.uk

Europlus One **mixer tap**, £169, at Grohe. **Tel: 0870 848 8877.** www.grohe.co.uk

Bedroom

Bespoke fitted **wardrobe** and **Japanese-style doors**, both price on application, designed by Fletcher Roger Associates and built by Voytex. **See design profile for details.**

Wooden window **blinds**, price on application, at The Conran Shop. **Tel: 020 7589 7401.** www.conran.com

Wolf fake fur **throw**, £100; Jukes velvet **cushions**, £20 each, all at Habitat. **Tel: 0845 601 0740.** www.habitat.net

Bathroom

Deca ceramic **basins**, £316; Barcelona **taps**, £242; Bette **bath**, £426, all at West One Bathrooms Ltd. **Tel: 020 7720 9333.** www.westonebathrooms.com

Bespoke **washstand**, price on application, at Voytex. **Details as before.**

Limestone **tiles**, £1000, at The Reject Tile Shop. **Tel: 020 7731 6098.**