

MUNSTER INTERIORS

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SOUTH-SPECIFIC STYLE

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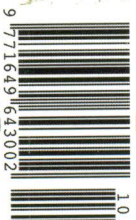
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Design Driven

MAPPING THE NEWEST LOOKS FOR MELLOW SPACES



AFTER THEIR DREAM HOME WAS DAMAGED BY FLOOD WATERS, THE OWNERS CALLED IN DESIGNER VALERIE HOGAN, WHO CREATED SPARKLING NEW INTERIORS THAT OPTIMISE THE LIGHT AND SPACE OF THIS ARCHITECTURALLY STRIKING HOUSE
WORDS BY **AFRIC MCGLINCHY**. PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MIKI BARLOK**.

Space Sublime



Imagine you are a young family, living in a cramped poky semi-detached house, all piled on top of each other. Finally, you manage to build the house of your dreams near Cork city. And then, hardly settled in, there is a flash flood, and your home is ruined. The water rises fourteen inches, destroying floors, skirting boards, furniture, kitchen units.

Enter an angel, in the form of interior designer, Valerie Hogan. Together with the owners, she transformed the interior of the house, so that not only was it habitable again, it was even more family-friendly than before the deluge. The earlier strong linear lines of the German-designed home were softened with curves, extra textures and curtains. The very long open plan space was broken up into three areas, each with their own atmosphere, although themed in colour tones. Several French doors lead out to the magical terraced garden, designed by landscape gardener, Rita Higgins of Anugreen.

The house was built with the family's needs in mind. They needed space, and light, without clutter. Valerie responded to her brief by selecting a kitchen with clean white lines. It has a very contemporary, almost space-age feel to it, with soft closing, handle-free drawers. Behind the gliding doors of the cupboards, discreetly tucked away, are the oven, toaster, tea making facilities, medical supply cabinet, bread bin, microwave, the family's cookery books, cereals, herbs, spices and



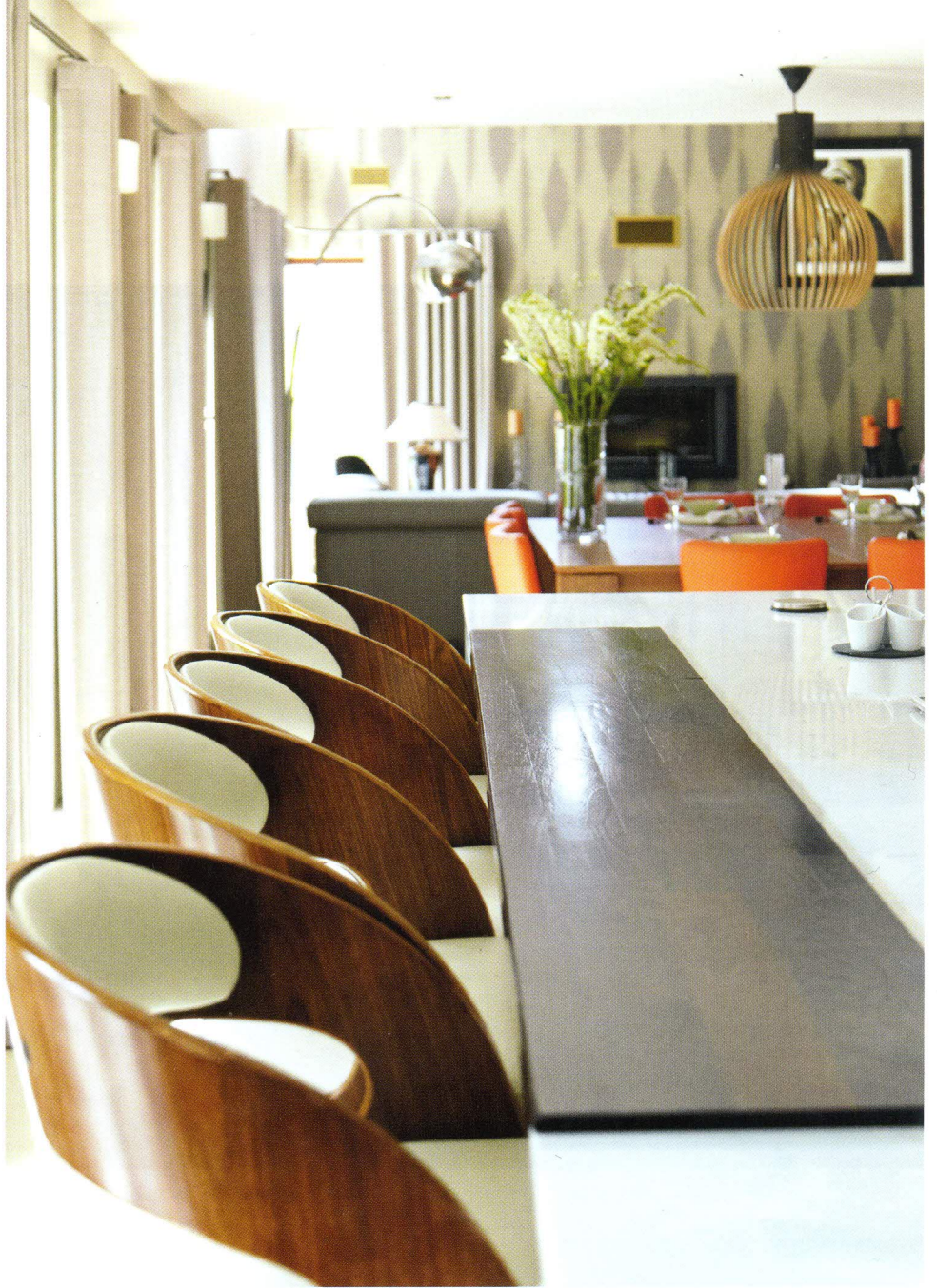


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condiments, all neatly lined in separately shelved sections.

These tall cupboards of dark African wood (called wenge, according to Val), provide a welcome contrast to the sheer light of all the smooth whiteness. The local Cork cabinet maker stressed the wood, giving it a crocodile skin texture. In fact, there are touches of Africa in occasional locations around the house: a batonka stool in the bathroom, a pair of elongated sculpted wooden figures on a shelf in an upstairs room. This genius for subtle echoes occurs more than once in this unusual home.

The floor throughout is limed oak with a thin strip of dark wenge inlaid to pick up the tall dark wood of the kitchen cupboards. In the main living space, the visitor is struck first of all by the massively high split level ceilings, which add grandeur to the home. Light is the other significant feature. French windows, and long narrow windows high up near the ceiling and set into alcoves in the wall throw unusual and abundant light into the space. A massive overhanging modern light swoops over the sofas. The next impact is textures: leather, slate, wallpaper and wood. Long vases display twirling twigs. A wicker basket in the corner offers yet another tactile contrast. Colours range from orange, red, green, and grey to purple, all picked up on the floor rug's meandering lines.







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EACH WITH THEIR OWN ATMOSPHERE

Orange candles and cushions add a spark to the muted soft grey base tones. A bowl of oranges on the kitchen counter picks up the dash of colour. An attitude portrait on the wall echoes this warmth. Valerie, feeling that the living space was very long and rectangular, decided to divide it into three sections – the living area, a large square dining table with ten chairs in the middle, then the kitchen area at the bottom end of the room. “I wanted to put in a square table, and to have different levels,” she says. “I wanted to get in a different shape.” The table easily accommodates ten, without seeming large. An overhanging gently curved latticed lampshade over the dining table also softens the otherwise linear lines. The curved backs of the orange seats add a touch of femininity. French doors lead to the hall. “The interior French doors were just plain glass before,” says Valerie, “so we had wood set into the glass to give added interest and shape.”

A children’s playroom faces the front garden, with shelves filled with barbies, dinkies, books and toys. A little blue circular table is surrounded by three legged stools and chairs. By the window there are big rectangular beanbags in bright lime, red and blue. A blue polka-dotted fabric blind can be dropped when the sun gets too bright.



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With well-placed shelving and storage space, this is a room that can convert easily to a teenage hangout den in years to come. Across from the playroom, folding concertina doors open up to reveal a tucked away office area, maximising use of an easily overlooked space. As elsewhere in this discreet home, everything can be hidden away with the sliding of a door or drawer.

The TV room offers a more intimate family space, where the feature painting is a nude by Boon, given to the owner by a friend for her fortieth. "I did think it might be better suited for the bedroom," she says, "but I love it. So here it is." And I agree with her that it's subtle enough, and in the perfect place. While daylight is maximised by the quantity of windows, evenings are catered for with dimmer ceiling lights and floor lights, as well as overhanging and standing lamps.

The rest of the house was spared from damage, but in case you're curious, the first level offers a mezzanine where you can look down over the wall to the sitting room below. The main bathroom features a jacuzzi bath, sand-coloured stone tiles with alcoves for towels, a wicker basket, long oval sink, mirror, a corner narrow-necked vase and a batonka stool. The girls' room has a stand-out pink ceiling, with lilac wallpaper. Lovely and light, with an antique pale olive dressing table and a music stand,





the high-ceilinged room is a girl's dream.

Next door, full of teddies, is the boy's room. Here, the colours are blue and red. A slumped red leather chair is the kind he will keep as he grows older. The double bed too. Trendy lights in the landing and a 3D art piece offer interest, and again, there are windows up near the ceiling to maximise light. The landing also features a blue suede contemporary-designed seat with one arm and a tall back.

What I like about the bedrooms is that each one features an individual chair. In the guestroom, scooped-back, sheer white curtains create a lovely effect. The bed is also unusually set against the window, with wallpaper to either side, in silvery/grey/gold muted colours.

The owner shrugs and sighs when I asked about precautions against another flood. "The catastrophe happened because a tree fell across a culvert, blocking the drainage. That won't happen again. But just in case, we have tons of sandbags!"*

A CHILDREN'S PLAYROOM FACES THE FRONT GARDEN, WITH WELL





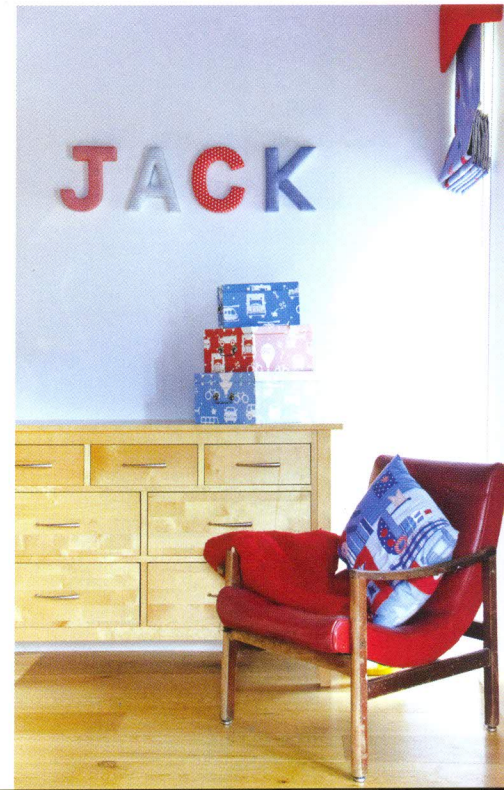
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IN THE GUESTROOM, SCOOPED-BACK, SHEER WHITE CURTAINS CREATE A LOVELY EFFECT. THE BED IS ALSO UNUSUALLY SET AGAINST THE WINDOW, WITH WALLPAPER TO EITHER SIDE, IN SILVERY/GREY/GOLD MUTED COLOURS.





Curtains and Poles: Valerie Hogan, Hogan Interiors, Ansdell, Highlands, Passage West, Cork, T: 086 2571649, E: info@hoganinteriors.ie, W: hoganinteriors.ie

Kitchen and bespoke furniture: Chris Dennehy, PHI Bespoke Interiors, The Old Farmhouse, Ballinrea Cross, Cork, T: 021 4919500, E: info@phi.ie, W: phi.ie

Leather Sofa: Square Deal Furniture, Washington Street, Cork, T: 021 4274045, W: squaredeal.ie

Wallpapers: Valerie Hogan (as above)

Cushions: Valerie Hogan (as above)

Dining Table and Chairs: Artisan Furniture, 19 Millennium Business Park, Cappagh Road, Dublin 11, T: 01 8649149, E: info@artisanfurniture.ie, W: artisanfurniture.ie

Rugs: Holland Rugs, St. Patrick's Woollen Mill, Cork, T: 021 4898000, E: hollands@eircom.net, W: www.hollands.ie

Master Bed: Casey's Furniture, Oliver Plunkett Street, Cork, T: 021 4270393, W: caseysfurniture.ie

Headboard: Valerie Hogan, Hogan Interiors (as above)

Bed Linen: Valerie Hogan, Hogan Interiors (as above)