



EVERY
DETAIL
 COUNTS



DETAILS
 What A two-bedroom
 townhouse apartment
 Where Edinburgh
 Interior design Jeffreys
 Interiors

Fine craftsmanship, clever ideas and a surprising sense of fun fill this beautifully revived Victorian apartment in Edinburgh

Photography ZAC and ZAC Words Judy Diamond



Figuring out what your client wants, understanding their tastes and knowing how far they'd like to be pushed out of their comfort zone is an art that any successful interior designer has to master. It's tough enough to do when you can spend time together, leafing through samples and paint charts and discussing every detail of a project. But what if the client is on the other side of the Atlantic during a pandemic and hasn't even set foot in the property they've commissioned you to refurbish?

That was the challenge facing Carley Kyle of Edinburgh's Jeffreys Interiors as 2020 drew to a close. She got a call from a former client who lives in the city's west end to say the flat above his was up for sale and his parents in America were considering buying it. Would she be interested in checking it out with a view to knocking it into shape?

"I went and took a look," recalls the designer. "It was a first-floor apartment in a classic townhouse that had been divided up over the years. It had a lot of positives, but the layout wasn't right for modern living, and even though the interiors had barely been touched and everything was original, it didn't seem to have a lot of the character you'd expect in a property of this period."

She recorded a video tour of the two bedrooms, bathroom, living room and very small kitchen and sent it, along with a few suggestions of how it could be improved, to America.

The clients, Cynthia Croatti and Alan Patrick, had been travelling to Edinburgh a lot in recent years to see their son and daughter-in-law and their two grandchildren, and the idea of having their own place in the city appealed. They've done quite a lot of building projects in the States (they have homes in ►

[Opposite] Jim Thompson wallpaper and a Vaughan light fitting inject moody glamour to the master bedroom. The woodwork is painted in Zoffany's subtle Olivine. **[Previous pages, left]** The en-suite has water-proof wallpaper by Wall & Deco and a bath by Albion Bath Co. The green onyx-effect tiles are by Mandarin Stone. The wallpaper in the foreground is a Zoffany design. **[Middle]** Brass detailing on the stove by La Cornue is echoed by the handy fold-out tap for filling pans. **[Right]** A Christopher Farr fabric was used to upholster the headboard, while the cushions are by Elitis and Jim Thompson. The rug is from Turnberry Rug Works

Boston, Florida and Cape Cod), so the idea of working remotely on a large-scale refurbishment didn't faze them. They knew the building and the street, and here was Carley Kyle saying she could make it look wonderful...

"They took a leap of faith and bought it," smiles Kyle. "They didn't see the house in the flesh until travel restrictions were lifted, by which point we were six months in and about halfway through the renovation. The second time they saw it was at Christmas when it was complete. But they were on the ball and great to work with, and we conferred all the way through. 'Do what you think is best – we trust you,' they kept saying."

It helped that Alan and Cindy had supplied a strong brief for "something very traditional, very Scottish, earthy and cosy"; and told her they loved an Edinburgh townhouse Jeffreys Interiors had recently designed.

In spite of all this, her starting point was not interior design

but rather appointing an architect and hashing out floorplans. This is a listed building, so planning permission was needed to make changes such as adding a wall to create a utility room – essential if the kitchen was to be moved to the front to form one big semi-open dining and living space. The main bedroom was given an en-suite, and there's now a cloakroom too. "We had to fight our case but we got there in the end."

Next up was rewiring the electrics, installing a new central heating system and restoring the period details. "The existing cornicing and ceiling roses were really basic," says Kyle. "We upgraded them and put in the kind of architectural detail you'd expect to find."

The Edinburgh cabinetmaking firm of Peden & Pringle was commissioned to make the kitchen, the built-in wardrobes, the big bookcase in the living area and the walk-in cupboard in the hall. The latter sits behind a secret door and is what you ▶



[Below] The guest room has a bed by Edinburgh cabinetmakers Charlotte James, a rug by Turnberry Rug Works, a Vaughan pendant and distinctive Lewis & Wood wallpaper. "There was very little the clients didn't agree with," says designer Carley Kyle. "This bold wallpaper was in the very first design plan and they just loved it. They loved all the quirky little details." Look closely and you'll spot the leopard-print trim around the edge of the headboard and on a couple of cushions. [Opposite, left] Another view of the en-suite: the sink unit is a bespoke piece by Edinburgh Woodwork. [Right] The hall has a secret door – a beautifully made bookcase by Peden & Pringle that opens to a large storage cupboard. The pendants are by Heathfield & Co and the console table is by Charlotte James

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see directly in front of you as you enter the flat. A large chunk of the overall budget went into the kitchen and the cabinetry, acknowledges the designer. "It was a serious investment. But there's a lot of it, and it's a big kitchen with 4m-high ceilings, and a huge bookcase. We find in the majority of townhouses like this that we have to do bespoke cabinetry," she adds. "Because of the scale of the rooms, nothing ready-made will fit."

the units to stop them feeling too blocky. The cabinetry has been spray-painted for an ultra-smooth finish, their doors opening to reveal solid oak interiors. One very special cupboard and drawer in the utility is devoted to Alan and Cindy's dog, who always travels with them. "The dog's bowl just sits on the floor in my house, so I know how useful that drawer is!" she smiles.

There was pressure to come up with something "beautiful" for the kitchen since the room is open to the rest of the living area. Kyle and Peden & Pringle endeavoured to make the design feel less obviously 'kitcheny', suspending glamorous CTO pendants above the island, and inserting reeded-glass doors into

It's just one example of the dazzling, intricate detail, much of it unseen, that elevates this project to such a high level. Cindy and Alan loved all the quirky little touches and were tickled by Kyle's ideas. "I love leopard print and so I try to bring a tiny bit of it into every project," she says. "We always design for the clients and in any style, of course, but Alan and Cindy thought my love of ▶



[Previous pages] Bespoke cabinetry by Peden & Pringle and pendants by CTO lift the kitchen beyond the merely functional. The dark paint (Zoffany's Bone Black, paired with soft pink Beauvais Lilac) doesn't overwhelm, thanks to the airiness of the 4m-high ceilings. **[Above]** The repositioned kitchen is now part of the living space rather than isolated at the back of the flat. Carley Kyle worked with architect David Ralph at GLM to devise the new floorplan. **[Right]** Views across parkland is an added bonus. The main contractor was Bann Joinery. **[Opposite]** A Charlotte James sofa and woolly armchair by Fisk invite you to curl up in the living room



[Below and opposite] Dark walls (the same paint as the kitchen) ground the huge living room. It's a sunny, space, so diffuser blinds were needed as well as curtains. A Julian Chichester sideboard and dining table and a pendant by Visual Comfort sit happily alongside the period details (fireplace, cornice and plasterwork) that were added during the upgrade. "The secret of success is to put together the right team, who you can trust to get things done on time and on budget, while letting them exercise their talent and experience to create something unique and interesting," says owner Alan Patrick





[Left] A special space was created for the owners' dog in the utility room, complete with bowl drawer. [Above] Porta Romana lights, a modern roll-top by Albion Bath Co and marble floor tiles by Ca' Pietra give the main bathroom a timeless quality

leopard print was really funny and were very encouraging. You can see it on the headboard and the cushion trim in the guest bedroom, but I also lined one of the drawers in the bookcase with it as a surprise for them. It's nice to add a tiny bit of yourself even if no one will ever see it."

The palette of dark greys and sage greens captures the earthy, cosy vibe the owners wanted. It's almost more difficult to pull off a muted scheme than a really bright and colourful one, Kyle believes. "You have to find a way to make it interesting. The trick is to use lots of different shades, because it would be too dark and dull if it was all the same. You can also create a feeling of warmth by layering colours."

The couple finally saw their new home in December, a year after buying it. The Jeffreys team had put up a Christmas tree for their arrival and decorated the flat with lights and presents.

"We were anticipating a fine end product," says Alan. "Even so, we were a little nervous climbing the stairs for the first time. But that dissipated immediately on walking through the front door and seeing the quality of the design and the work that had been put into the project. It just felt right in terms of style, scope, finish, design and decor. We like stylish and cosy, liveable and practical, and this place certainly meets that. It just flows and gives off a relaxed and sophisticated ambience."

"We were thrilled," adds Cindy. "It was perfect."

Transatlantic trips to Edinburgh to see the family now are even more of a pleasure. "Having travelled a lot globally for many years, it's so nice to know you are sleeping in your own bed," say the couple. "We're able to stay longer and enjoy the city more. We have our regular places to go, like the gym and the market. It feels like home." ■