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SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

COHESIVE INTERIOR DESIGN AND IMAGINATIVE STORAGE SOLUTIONS AUGMENTED THE SENSE OF SPACE AND VISUAL FLOW IN THIS EXQUISITE CHELSEA APARTMENT, WRITES KERRY HARPER-CUSS

Flooded with daylight and benefiting from open views, this smart apartment sits in a prime position in Chelsea. Its elegant appearance is a total metamorphosis from the property bought by Joseph and Elli in 2019.

The professional couple in their 40s were relocating from Switzerland back to London and sought a pied-a-terre. Pivotal to their choice was the view. “The apartment is high up, and from the sitting room there’s no property visible to the front. Being Mediterranean, it was important to us to be able to see an expanse of open sky; from here we can enjoy the morning and evening colours and sunlight streams in from midday to late evening throughout the summer,” Elli says.

She explains that the one-bedroom property’s original condition was “a typical former rental: neutral and well taken care of but not characterful or loved.” Although the couple intended to redecorate, demanding work commitments – as well as the challenges of Covid-19 lockdowns – delayed action. And so, one year after moving in, they called upon the expertise of interior designer Robert Moore to not only help choose furniture and colour schemes, but to also improve the sense of space.

Robert is known for his modern-classic aesthetic and meticulous details-oriented approach to both decor and functionality. Here, his spatial solutions are not only ingenious but largely imperceptible.

The first step was to enhance the apartment’s proportions. After careful investigation, Robert discovered several of the ceilings had been lowered and hid huge voids. He restored the former ceiling heights and introduced new cornicing to make each space look and feel discernibly taller.

In the bedroom, the previous owners had blocked up one of the windows and enclosed recesses with plasterboard either side of the bed to create a flush-look wall. Robert reinstated the window and cleverly turned the recesses into storage units, disguised behind jib doors which are decorated in the luxurious seagrass wallcovering that

BIJOU DELIGHT

Opposite: Mirror panelled recesses overhung with art give the illusion of more space in the main reception room and amplify both daylight and intimate evening light. The artwork is by artist Jean-Marc Louis, the arm chair is from Dudgeon and the wool and sisal rug is by Crucial Trading. **Top to bottom:** The large abstract artwork in neutral tones creates a statement focus while also complementing the soothing colour palette; hidden jib doors made for more storage space throughout the couple's one-bed apartment





Space SHIFTERS

Interior designer Robert Moore on decorating to amplify a sense of space,

- Number one is to plan the layout to create activity-specific zones and maintain clear pathways, so the space feels uncluttered. Use rugs to help define areas
- Use overscale furniture and objects to trick the eye. Pieces of acrylic and Lucite furniture are great at both being there and not at the same time. There are some great coffee table designs available in these materials
- Keep window treatments simple: hang curtains from the ceiling or right up against the cornice to enhance the feeling of height
- Add generously sized mirrors to help double the sense of space, give different perspectives, and draw light in
- Integrate clever storage solutions into the styling, for example, the ottoman in the sitting area unfolds into a double bed for when family visit
- Consider neutral and dark colour schemes: both work. Light shades make spaces feel brighter (not necessarily bigger) while darker shades can conceal corners and angles
- Paint the cornice the same colour as the walls to create the illusion of more height
- Use predominantly plain fabrics with lots of textures; add pattern sparingly for interest and colour
- Choose large artwork to simplify and create a focal point or 'view' within the room

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“I WANTED TO CREATE A SOPHISTICATED HOME FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS; TO SURROUND THEM WITH ART AND LOVELY OBJECTS AND FIND THAT CAREFUL BALANCE BETWEEN ANTIQUE AND MODERN.”

Interior designer Robert Moore

encircles the room. The doors are perfectly tailored so that contents can be accessed without disturbing the bedside tables.

Inspired solutions abound for every practical need. In the bathroom, shelving pockets behind mirrors and a cupboard hidden behind dado height panelling store essential toiletries. In the hall, two full height cupboards behind yet more jib doors accommodate outdoor wear, the vacuum cleaner and cleaning paraphernalia. In the kitchen, Robert neatly reconfigured an underused boiler housing for larder storage. And in the sitting room, his design for a long, low lacquered box – hidden behind the sofa – doubles as a receptacle for the ironing board and a plinth to raise the screen that’s also firmly affixed to the wall.

Of course, to the unwitting observer, it’s the sophistication of the decor that captures attention and admiration: the soothing hues, luxurious textiles, and beautiful blend of modern and antique furniture and art. Robert admits to an almost obsessive attention to details... whether that be picture mounting, mitred details within mirror panelling or specifying a bespoke plasterwork extractor hood. “When designing, I automatically think about continuity of feel and tonality of colour flow throughout all the spaces but – especially in period spaces – about creating moments of intrigue too. Every elevation should work together towards a balance of calm and dramatic focus and there should be beautiful things to enjoy from every view point.”

The result is a home that has exceeded the elegant-yet-inviting welcome brief that the couple had challenged him with.

“Now, the apartment is beautiful and functional yet also wonderfully cosy and comfortable,” says Elli, “We could never have imagined or achieved this quality without Robert’s vision and direction.” ■

APARTMENT THERAPY

Clockwise from bottom left: The sitting room is filled with an eclectic mix of modern and antique furniture, including a chinoiserie screen, creating a luxe feel; a combination of muted shades and mirrored door trims create a sense of elegance and flow; the bathroom is full of artful secret shelving and decked with porcelain marble-effect and marble surfaces; the bespoke headboard – upholstered in Bennison Fabrics’ Lorenzo print in Oyster – is complemented by antique Swedish bedside tables; a generous octagonal Venetian mirror hangs above an antique French chest of drawers, flanked symmetrically by architectural prints

