

FEB 6th
SCOTLAND on SUNDAY

Rooms with a vi

James Barbour and never tire of watchin
Firth of Forth from th
their North Berwick

UNLESS you know N
might never have m
gates Road to take in
ther and higher up th
those views get, sweeping out to
and on across the Firth of Forth
feel separate from the town be
walk takes you back downhill to

On a clear day it's a stunnin
to appreciate why builder Jan
Homes grabbed the opportunit
here and build Marlyrise, the h
partner, Helen Loy, and their s
Steven, 20, Rosanna, 17, Andrew
11, and Max, four.

With a family of this size you
and, at around 4,600ft sq, Marly
expansive, light-drenched living
the central hallway, and with s
first floor layout separates neat
and a separate master suite. Th
that looks great in photos but
where you can experience the
well as the quality of the detail

In the hallway is the Americ
tioned to create a seating area
the stairs, from where you look
area at the back of the house an
trees to the rear of the garden. I
with beautifully simple, brushe
from Karcher's Stockholm rang
place (from Stonecraft) creates
windowed drawing room, a den
of formality.

Engineered Kahrs oak floori
living spaces on the ground flo
which features large-profile Xia
Porcelanosa with an unusual, a
The bathrooms feature Porcela
and each is different with a disti
tural basin creating a feature. As
is neither entirely contemporary
combination is what we were tr

And, of course, in the flesh, yo
ible light and views. When Jame
it was an overgrown conifer pla
trees - while retaining the strip
are replanting over time with br
moving the tonnes of earth was



Barbour Homes specialises in building high-quality individual houses – the company also offers a project management service – and James usually sells the properties from plans. Here, he bought the site as a commercial venture and Marlyrise was designed and built to sell once completed. As he says: “I couldn’t have started it at a worse time,” as the house was completed 18 months ago, by which stage the market had crashed.

The timing wasn’t all bad, however, as the opportunity arose for James and Helen, who is a physiotherapist, to first rent and then sell the house they were living in at the time, at which point the family moved into Marlyrise and made it their home. “When we were building this house I’d sometimes think, I would love to live here, especially for the view,” James acknowledges. “We’ve found that our lifestyle has changed since moving here. Our last house didn’t have a huge outlook, whereas now at night the TV is off and we’re sitting of an evening looking out across to Fife.”

Bringing light into the house was central to James’ approach to the design, which he worked on with architect Tom Pyemont from Pyemont Design Partnership in Roxburghshire. “I wanted to create something with a lot of glass,” James explains. “The hallway is quite extravagant when it comes to floor area, but I wanted to create this impression of being able to see through the house, where you can stand in the back garden and look through the hall towards the Lamb.”

The giant windows forming the double-height glazed wall to the rear of the hallway are one of the highlights. “One thing we’ve really appreciated living here is the insulation of the windows,” says Helen. “Even when it’s snowing outside you don’t feel any hint of cold.” Likewise the underfloor heating has been a hit with the family.

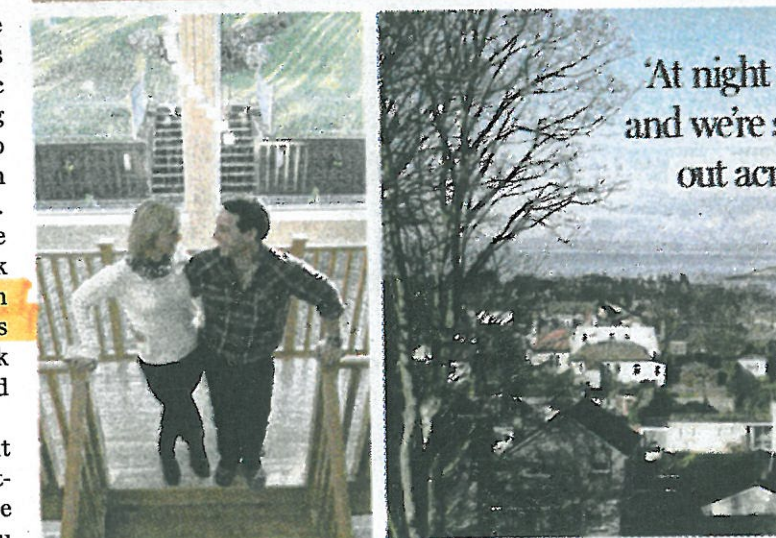
There is something of a Scandinavian influence to Marlyrise: in the simplicity of the materials and in particular the use of timber, and in the connection with the landscape. The front veranda, with its Douglas Fir posts and solid timber balustrade, also suggests a more rustic American style. James and Tom shied away from using reconstituted stone for the exterior: “We wanted to do something different, which is why we used brick, with this subtle pinkish shade to the render,” James explains.

Helen was closely involved with the design of the kitchen and bathrooms, and the resulting spaces speak for themselves in terms of style and quality. The kitchen is by RWK from Kitchens International and combines streamlined white and oak units, with a glass splashback and granite worktops, where the space circulates around the large central island.

The master en-suite bathroom is another highlight with its gorgeous oval bath, and with twin basins mounted on a wenge vanity unit with timber-effect Roble Cognac tiling behind. “When you’re building a house you do have to invest more in your master suite, and again we wanted to choose things that would be slightly different,” says James. In the adjoining bedroom, a freestanding oak headboard places the bed within the room as opposed to against a wall – which wouldn’t have looked right in a space of this scale.

“On Sunday mornings we’ll lie in bed with a coffee watching the ships,” says James, while Helen adds: “I don’t think people realise what a difference having a permanent view like that makes to your quality of life. It’s something you never get tired of.”

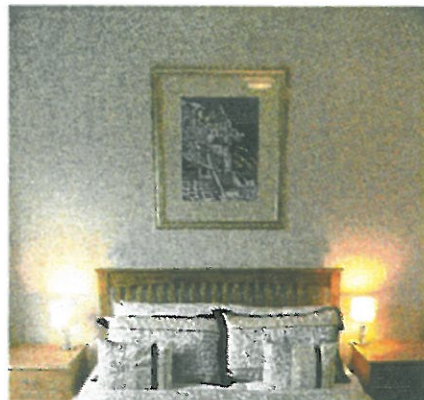
Given that James has lived in North Berwick all his life, it’s fair to say that the family won’t be moving far. As Helen says: “Once you’ve



ist Edward Gage and his wife, and when Jenni and Aidan viewed the house, the walls were filled with artworks, while two rooms at the rear had been combined to create a studio. There was also a family connection, as the Gages' artist daughter, Anthea, had attended Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design with Aidan's father, Ian, so it seems fitting that Ian Ruthven's artworks now hang on these same walls.

Although the house was in need of refurbishment, its period features were intact, from the plaster cornicing to the fire surrounds and the deep skirtings, architravings and panelled doors, while the staircase is illuminated by a large cupola, the height of which demonstrates the scale of this house. "We were really mindful of these features when we viewed the house as reinstating those can be expensive," says Aidan, whose background combines new build with restoration, conservation and refurbishment work, and who launched the development company Strawberry Scotland in 2004 with fellow architect Jim Johnston.

Aidan set about the process of upgrading the house with new wiring and plumbing, along with a gas supply and



central heating, and with new flooring and redecoration throughout. A rear outshoot previously housed the kitchen - a typical feature with properties of this age - but was also removed. Even before missives were concluded, Aidan had a concept for how the layout could be improved and had calculated costs.

Crucial to the plans were three key changes. What is now the master ensuite on the first floor was previously the main bathroom, but it was small, with a water storage tank built into a bulkhead in the ceiling, while the existing cupola was in a poor state of repair. This space was stripped out and the entrance from the landing was closed over while a new entrance was created from the master bedroom, creating today's contemporary en suite.

The smaller of the four bedrooms upstairs became a family bathroom, with ample space for a curvaceous freestanding bath and a separate walk-in shower enclosure set behind two glass screens, and featuring a wall-hung walnut vanity unit and sculptural pebble-like basin. The fittings and tiling in both the bathroom and en-suite are by Porcelanosa, with a gorgeous combination of India Arena and Mini Block Ruggine Caldera in the bathroom - with the latter, in chocolate brown, as a feature wall behind the toilet - and with large profile India Grafito tiling in the en suite, as the light from the cupola allowed for this darker graphite palette. The quality is obvious.

Downstairs, the former studio has been reinstated as two rooms, as it would have been when number 6 was built, creating a kitchen and dining room with French doors from the latter leading onto a large decked area. The couple might have retained the single room as a generous dining-kitchen had it not been for the impending arrival of Jack, now aged ten months. "We realised we might need a guest bedroom downstairs," Aidan explains, and the dining room did indeed become a fourth bedroom.

Had the couple been staying there was a second phase of work planned in the form of an extension onto today's kitchen - and planning permission is in place for this - to create a larger dining-kitchen space connected to the garden. Think cedar cladding, with folding and sliding glazed screens opening to an external dining area.

"It would be a simple extension but immensely useful, and it will be for whoever decides to go ahead with the plans," Aidan reflects.

The contemporary aesthetic displayed in the bathroom and en-suite is reflected in the kitchen from the RWK range, which the couple sourced from Kitchens International, with dark walnut units and pale Zodiac® Quartz worktops, combined with cream floor



from main: the kitchen; pastel pinks soften Mia's bedroom; the bathroom; orchids by the sink; the guest bedroom; the master bedroom; the freestanding curved bath

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