
Cover Story

Main: the central kitchen area with its white stone panel over the breakfast bar was inspired by a sushi restaurant. **Inset:** Maggie Mitchell with son Charlie





Andy Cumming and Maggie Mitchell loved the space in their Cramond home, but couldn't wait to get rid of its holiday-villa look

WE THINK the original architect must have been inspired by package holidays to Portugal and the Alps," says Andy Cumming of his four bedroom detached house in Cramond. Andy and his wife, Maggie Mitchell, were commuting from Glasgow to Edinburgh when they decided to move their young family to the capital eight years ago. This late 1970s house was the first one they looked at. "We saw this house on the ESPC and I didn't like it," says Maggie. "But Andy said 'Go and look at it to get an idea.' So I came and actually really liked it."

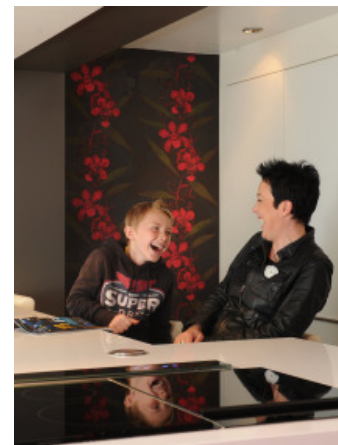
Entering the house, you walk into the dramatic double-height, split-level living room, overlooked by a galleried landing. "I thought this would be a really good party room and it has been," says Maggie.

The house was structurally sound when Andy and Maggie bought it, but dark and dated. "Blue linoleum, navy blue carpets and a blue toilet," recalls Maggie.

The first task was redecorating and replacing the carpets with wooden flooring. Maggie says the staircase and landing overlooking the living room were "pinetastic", so she set about painting the wood white to tone down the Alpine chalet feel.

The living room also had an Artexed feature wall that was near the top of Maggie and Andy's hit list. They created a feature wall of their own with recessed box shelves lit to display family photographs and favourite art works. It makes good use of the open corridor from the hall to the kitchen.

The seating area in the room is down two steps to a lower level. Wall to wall windows with patio doors onto the colourful garden, along with Velux windows, allow lots of light into the room.



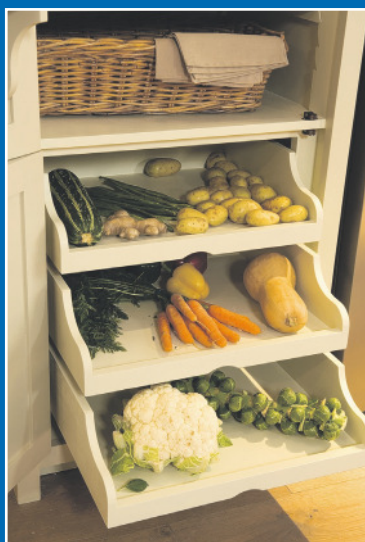
In the corner, a curved wood-burning stove by Scan keeps the room cosy in winter. Making the most of the double-height ceiling is a long spiral contemporary chandelier. "It is a nice house in the winter because it's all twinkly lights" ➔

The whole package

Words **Laura Bird** Photographs **Neil Hanna**

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♦♦ and candles,” says Maggie. “We go down to the river and collect loads of ivy to wind around the banisters.”

The living room leads through to the kitchen, Maggie’s most recent renovation project. It was designed and fitted by Kitchens International. Maggie says the designer, Kieron Bell, had been hanging out in a sushi bar when he devised the wraparound worktop that runs up and over the ceiling above the table.

After the cathedral-like sitting room, the low ceiling in the kitchen feels cosy and conspiratorial. The worktops and units are white with minimum detailing. The stone worktop runs from the island hob in the middle to a breakfast bar-height table for six.

Overhanging the table from the white stone ceiling panel are three iridescent glass lights. Although the fittings are all gleaming white and ultra modern, there is something warm and maternal about having the table in the middle of the kitchen.

Maggie was adamant that she wanted a table there. “It works really, really well,” she says. One side of the room is for food preparation while the far side comprises storage cupboards. “Everything is accessible if I’m cooking and I can talk to whoever is at the table without having to squeeze past them.”

Also on the ground floor is a garage that the couple converted into a games room. “A friend gave Andy the pool table and we used to play pool in here, but the garage was horrible, so we thought ‘lets convert it’” Maggie’s son Charlie, stepdaughters Poppy and Ellie, plus various nephews all enjoy hanging out in here.

Upstairs there are four double bedrooms and the family bathroom. The bathroom was designed by Ghohami Bains architects.

“The house is built into the hill at the back,” explains Maggie. “I thought having a door up to the back garden would be brilliant, but we needed planning permission.” An architect friend helped with sorting out permission for the door and ended up designing the whole room. “I’m usually quite strong minded and know exactly what I want, but they were great at persuading me.”

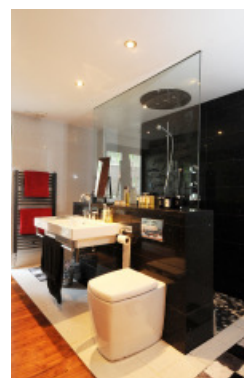
The room is divided by a glass wall, behind which is a large walk-through shower with an 18in waterfall shower head. Black glittery tiles sparkle in the shower enclosure. On the opposite wall, black wallpaper embossed with silver dragons is the backdrop for a large bevelled mirror and oriental-style cabinet from The Works in Glasgow.

Maggie sourced the tiles from Scot Ceramics and the fittings from Scope Bathrooms, both in Glasgow. “For somebody who agrees to do something and then changes her mind at the last minute, Scot Ceramics were just brilliant,” says Maggie. “I ordered all the tiles, had them delivered and then I changed my mind. I phoned them and they were ‘oh fine, bring them back’”

The master bedroom also has an en suite. This spacious room with a huge leather sleigh bed has wall to wall windows and patio doors out to a generous roof terrace. “Inspired by a Portuguese villa,” reckons Andy. Warm yellow wallpaper, embossed with gold flowers creates a focal point in a room that is otherwise calm and pared down.

Living on a country lane where all the neighbours know each other has worked out well for self-confessed urbanite Maggie. “I always thought that living out in the suburbs would be dullsville. But it’s not, far from it. There are a lot of very good fun people here.” *

Kitchens International (www.kitchensinternational.co.uk)



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Clockwise from above: the double-height living area now has a wood burning stove and a galleried mezzanine level, which the couple painted white. A new wall underneath houses recessed box shelves; a spiral chandelier hangs in the expansive main living area; the games room was created from the former garage and is a great place for the kids to hang out; dramatic black and white wallpaper features on one wall in the bathroom; the master bedroom has a leather sleigh bed and gold-embossed wallpaper; the bathroom has a walk-in shower with glittering black tiles



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