

Roaring success

A luxuriously refurbished bedroom and bathroom evoke memories of this apartment's glamorous past

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The Art Deco credentials of this mansion block in central London are apparent even before you step into the building. Sadly, though, its penthouse apartment fell prey to the 'modernisation' inflicted on many homes in the closing decades of the 20th century.

The new owners however, were keen to decorate their home in a style that is sympathetic to the building's era. After removing the false ceilings and the shagpile carpets, designer Lisa Weeks of W Design International set about creating rooms that had strong elements of Deco, "but pared back, stripped down," so that they did not become a pastiche.

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Entering the bedroom via the small corridor that is used as a dressing room, you encounter two floor-to-ceiling built-in wardrobes. Their doors are walnut-veneered and solid walnut inside. They are a tantalising taster for those in the bedroom itself, which are bordered with satinwood and support an elegant dressing table, also in satinwood, with delicate walnut-trimmed drawers. The wardrobes' gleaming French-polished doors reflect the natural light from a glazed balcony offering enviable views over central London.

The nearby Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) influenced the design of the wardrobes and convinced the team to source veneered wood dating from the same period as the apartment block. Lisa, the client, and furniture designer Stuart Scott decamped to RIBA on a regular basis to gain inspiration over a cup of coffee. Stuart then used his comprehensive knowledge of wood quality and finishes to work on designs and finishes until the perfect combination was achieved.

Topped by tall, elegant lamps in stained wood and nickel plate, the satinwood bedside cabinets differ from one another not only in the



Above: A false wall houses the radiator. Like the nickel-plated knobs and hinges on the wardrobes and cabinets, the grille covering the radiator is bespoke. **Below left:** One of the bedside cabinets conceals a secret compartment – a surprise treat for the client's husband. **Below right:** Carefully chosen décor and accessories – silk-clad walls, an antique chest of drawers and an oil painting with a history – are the perfect complement to the bespoke pieces.



Above: Captured in the dressing table's mirrors, the warm, intimate mood of the room is exactly what the client sought. **Below left:** The magnificent walnut and satinwood wardrobes are the result of close collaboration between the client, her interior designer and the furniture designer. **Below right:** Topped with a trio of gleaming, bevelled-edge mirrors, the dressing table has beautifully crafted drawers with walnut knobs.



pattern of the veneer of their doors; but one has a panel that swings out from its side, revealing a hidden compartment. The client's husband has been fascinated by secret drawers since childhood so, as a surprise, she challenged Stuart to build one into his cabinet.

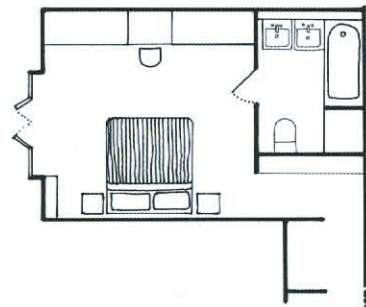
The attention to detail on this project is impeccable – even the polished nickel knobs and hinges on the wardrobes and cabinets are custom-made. "Once you have a client who is requesting French polishing and bespoke brassware," says Stuart, "you know they are committed to excellence."

While the quality and beauty of the wardrobes and cabinets make them the undisputed stars of the bedroom, it is the surrounding décor that seals its opulent mood. Gentle blue silk-clad walls and curtains contribute to the intimate atmosphere, while the antique French oak flooring, laid in a chevron formation, looks as if it has always been there.

A false wall houses the radiator and provides a cubbyhole in which to display favourite objects. The nickel-plated grille obscuring the radiator has been custom-made to match the originals in other parts of the apartment. The finishing touch, oil paintings on the silk-clad walls, are a mixture of flea market and antique shop finds – the picture hanging above the period chest of drawers is thought to be a portrait of the composer Liszt's mistress.

The deep bath, expanse of marble and nickel-plated fixtures make the ensuite bathroom a luxurious retreat, redolent of those found in the grand hotels of another age. Indeed, a bathroom in London's Claridge's hotel was the inspiration for this room when the client stayed there shortly after giving birth to her son. The mirrors above the substantial washbasins, and the faceted, mirrored tiles that surround them, are pure Deco. Only the shower with its modern glass door places the room in this century.

In a throw-away society, where home interiors change with the seasons, these two beautiful rooms are not only an evocation of the dazzling Art Deco period's decorative design and grand architecture, but they are also a reminder of the enduring appeal of quality materials and craftsmanship.



Far left: The mirrors above the basins conceal storage, ensuring nothing detracts from the bathroom's elegant lines **Left:** The nickel-plated taps and spout above the bath capture the era of the grand hotel perfectly **Below left:** Above the large period washbasins, faceted mirrored-glass tiles are pure Deco

Q&A: HOMEOWNER

What advice can you offer other owners undertaking a similar project?

"Take your time – and don't accept what's on offer if you don't like it. I kept being shown the same tiles everyone has and so I sourced the tiny marble mosaic tiles from the US. The despatch was prompt and the exchange rate favourable."

How did you choose your design team?

"I've worked with Lisa before, she knows how to make everything balance, and I'd seen a cabinet that Stuart had designed in an issue of *KBB*."

What's your favourite detail?

"My wardrobes had to be special because I look at them every day and it's a small room. I also really enjoy locking myself away in my bathroom at the end of the day."