

# HOME AND AWAY

Tasked with creating a home from home, Irina Townsend of Keir Townsend, has opened up this compact London apartment to give her clients a chic and classically styled space.

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Photographs: Jake Fitzjones



Irina Townsend of Keir Townsend was tasked with creating a home from home in her clients' London bolthole. They asked her to create a classic yet sleek scheme that complemented their metropolitan surroundings.

Situated in the heart of South Kensington and set in a typical 19th century Victorian mansion block conversion, a forty square meter one-bedroom pied-a-terre presented a tricky challenge for Interior Design Studio Keir Townsend – it was by far the smallest project they'd ever undertaken.

Devoid of original features and faced with an awkward, compact layout, the brief Keir Townsend received was to open up the space and make it feel like a home away from home. The owners – a mature British couple – spend most of the year abroad and visit London several times a year in between their travels. They hoped the designers would create a hotel-style suite with the advantage of being able to leave their belongings behind, cook their own meals and be surrounded by items they love.

Within walking distance of Harrods, Hyde Park and a plethora of trendy bars and restaurants, Bramham Gardens is the epitome of glamorous London life. The owners were keen to have a design that reflects their surroundings: an aesthetically pleasing, relaxing and stimulating space.

Irina Townsend of Keir Townsend took the project on and explains that the owners were predominantly after a classic, but sleek and functional scheme – a signature style for the firm. Although a small space like Bramham Gardens would not allow for a mock-period look, Irina introduced subtle classical aspects with a damask-based pattern for Roman blinds and traditional detailing on a few pieces of furniture, as well as a selection of antique accessories, including a collection of vellum-bound books dating back to the same period as the building itself. Combined with the clean, sharp lines of the furniture and the elegant monochrome scheme, both decorative elements help merge classic and contemporary styles beautifully.

Faced with a modest space comprising a kitchen, dining room, sitting room, bedroom and en-suite bathroom, Irina's brief was to make the apartment a comfortable pied-a-terre with functional circulation, as well as coming up with innovative ways to increase storage space. The original subdivision of the property made all living spaces seem extremely small, so Irina began the transformation by knocking down walls to create one harmonious room for the main kitchen and living areas, making movement around the apartment as fluid as possible.

Initially, the entrance door opened into a very narrow corridor, leading through to the cloakroom positioned between the kitchen and the living room – hardly the most welcoming of views as you step into the apartment. Plus, bulky radiators throughout made the snug space feel even smaller, and would inevitably interfere with any clever furnishing plans; so plush underfloor heating was the obvious solution.

Filled with beautiful natural light, the kitchen is a pleasure to be in. The bespoke



Bespoke kitchen cabinets were in order of the day for this small but perfectly formed kitchen. The pale décor is continued through to the sitting room to make the most of the natural light.



Beautiful splashbacks, made from bronze-mirrored glass, add a touch of luxury and help light bounce around the room.



Keir Townsend's beautiful attention to detail, evident in the smart piping on the dining chairs, gives the décor a classic look. The beautiful bespoke chandelier provides a real talking point.

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The neutral colour palette continues in the bedroom, while textured bed linen adds a dash of hotel chic.



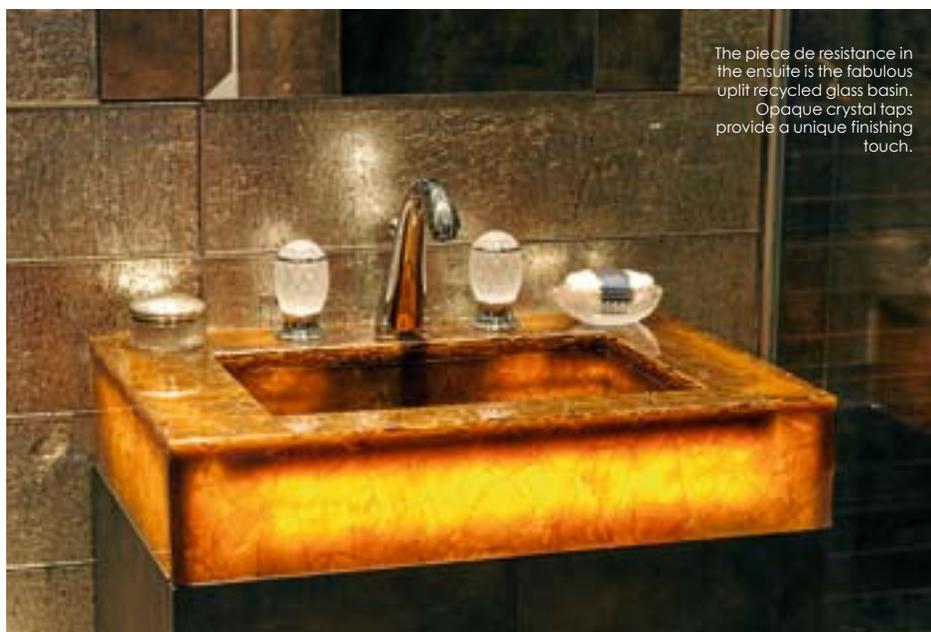
kitchen cabinetry was designed by Keir Townsend and crafted by its joinery department, while the stunning splashbacks are made from antiqued bronze-mirrored glass, specifically selected to create a perception of depth in the kitchen. Plus, the mirrored effect helps bounce light around the room, is easy to clean and the clever flecks help disguise any cooking splashes; perfect when entertaining. The dining table and chairs with their en vogue black piped edges sit beneath an exquisite chandelier, all bespoke and commissioned by Keir Townsend.

Stepping into the bedroom, you quickly discover the overall theme is easy-to-live-with monochrome, featuring a variety of textures and finishes to create that covetable feeling of space in a relatively small bedroom. Every inch has been cleverly utilised to create maximum storage with the help of bespoke wardrobes either side of the bed, while the beautiful leather floor tiles add to the feeling of luxury. Irina kept the lines clean and all colours within the same complementary palette to optimise the space without making it feel cluttered.

The first thing you notice in the en-suite bathroom is the eye-catching basin area. Beautifully made from recycled glass, Irina chose warm LEDs to dramatically illuminate the basin from below. The taps are crystal, the cabinets bespoke and the wall tiles are glass backed with silver and antique-gold leaf, giving the whole space a boutique hotel vibe. Used in all other rooms apart from the bedroom, the floor tiles are Emperador ceramic with a warm textured wood effect - their clever continuation helps increase the perception of space while also appearing chic and cohesive.

Filling the space with furniture, lighting and accessories is made to look effortless as Irina blends classic upholstery with contemporary shapes seamlessly. She chose a simple palette of neutral and monochrome tones in a variety of materials and textures to create the illusion of space - polished plaster being her favourite as it reflects light so naturally. Irina points out that a common misconception is that the fewer pieces of furniture and features you have in a space, the bigger it looks, when in fact the opposite is true - the trick is to zone off areas correctly and choose the right size furniture, fabrics and lighting. Splashes of colour have been introduced via soft furnishings, which can be changed as trends come and go. What's left is a stunning space filled with luxurious and practical touches that will stand the test of time.

For more information please contact Keir Townsend, [www.keirtownsend.com](http://www.keirtownsend.com)



The piece de resistance in the ensuite is the fabulous uplit recycled glass basin. Opaque crystal taps provide a unique finishing touch.