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TikTok's million-dollar teens

Inside the 24/7 party houses creating content for the internet's fastest-growing app

Ready for Christmas?

Shake off your lockdown lethargy to get festive fabulous

Perfect puddings

Nigel Slater's scrumptious cakes and delicious tarts

Gemma

How Gemma Arterton rose from Bond girl to equal rights champion

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Rock the casbah

Moroccan memories come alive in an Edwardian house in Dublin



Maura McLaughlin's house – a handsome, red-brick semi-detached in Dublin – has been known to stop passersby in their tracks. “Sometimes, if I’m unloading things from the car, and I’ve left the front door open, I do see people walk past, then walk back to take another look,” she says.

They will have caught a glimpse of McLaughlin's dusky magenta hallway, which has been laid with geometric tiles and has a huge starburst chandelier hanging above a luxuriously upholstered bench. Perhaps they've also noticed that the treads of the stairs have been covered in floral wallpaper. “That was my ‘wow’ moment – when I walked into the house after the hallway had been painted,” McLaughlin recalls.

McLaughlin bought the house in 2018. “I was a bit of a Goldilocks about it,” she admits. “I wanted somewhere spacious, but not too big for just myself.” What she found was an Edwardian house that had a “natural, circular flow” to it; a home in which to settle indefinitely. She then enlisted the help of a professional interior designer to make it “just right.”

McLaughlin, who is a partner at a law firm, came across Róisín Lafferty (founder of Kingston Lafferty Design) by chance. When she saw her portfolio, she breathed a sigh of relief: “I could see that they did big ideas and bold colours, but their homes were completely liveable, too.”

The house was in good condition when McLaughlin moved in but, she says, “It had been decorated in pretty much one colour – and that colour was cream.” The brief she gave Lafferty was inspired by her travels to Morocco. “I wanted something glamorous and colourful, warm and welcoming. Róisín did



a fantastic job of transforming all that into the house itself.”

Work began in 2019 and took a year to complete. Upstairs, they knocked through two of the five bedrooms to create a master suite. “I now have this lovely bedroom with a walk-in wardrobe of dreams, and an ensuite bathroom with a free-standing bath. One thing Róisín was adamant about,” continues McLaughlin, “was that the space should be designed not for resale value, but for how I want to use it.” There are two guest bedrooms, and a fourth room that has been transformed into a home office.

On the ground floor, the kitchen – a narrow room at the rear of the property – has been fitted with bespoke cabinetry and painted in deep aubergine. Brass



Inner circle: (clockwise from above) a marble floor focal point in the kitchen's seating area; a starburst chandelier in the tiled hall; the Moroccan-inspired bathroom; bold blues in the living room; and practical but glamorous drawers in the kitchen

the peacock-blue sofa prevents the space from feeling like a narrow thoroughfare. “It encourages people to experience the space, not just walk through it on the way to the garden,” says McLaughlin. “That’s one of the things that has pleased me about the house. I feel that everywhere you turn, there’s a detail that is different.”

In the formal dining room, Lafferty has designed and installed bespoke panelling in high-gloss blue. The fireplace and dining table have been painted bright red and the floor laid with tiles that cleverly straddle the Moroccan/Edwardian aesthetic. The curved detail in the panelling is continued in the built-in bar area and echoed in the brass display cabinet. “This is probably my favourite room in the house,” says McLaughlin. “Sitting here on a summer evening with the doors open to the garden and the light bouncing around the walls – it’s just a lovely space to be in. It almost makes my cooking seem glamorous...”

In the main living room, a combination of high-street and vintage furniture gives the house a sense of having evolved over time when, in fact, McLaughlin moved in with “40 boxes of books, loads of paintings and prints, and one armchair.”

“Pretty soon after I moved in, I had my whole work team over for drinks,” McLaughlin recalls. “Someone commented that, despite the interiors being brand new, it looked as though I’d lived here for years. That was the result of a really successful collaboration.” ■