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INTRICATE ART NATURAL TREASURES IN THE ELEMENTS CURATED COTTAGE VALERIE MULVIN HISTORIC SLANE MOROCCO

settle in

Usher in the new season with cosy materials and moody tones

IRISH INSPIRATION

Stylish schoolhouse, Galway

Mid-century finds, Glasnevin

Modern meets Edwardian, Belfast

Round house, Dún Laoghaire



Catch a Glint

A veritable minaudière of jewel-toned rooms, antique pieces and clever design, this Galwegian schoolhouse has been carefully considered with family living in mind.

words Lauren Heskin photography Barbara Corsico

ABOVE The original floor tiles were the inspiration for the colour palette, using Farrow & Ball's Eating Room Red on the walls and ceiling, Railings on the staircase and De Nimes in the front lounge and music room. The work of Spanish artist Carlos Sangro complements the palette, as well as a vintage Murano glass chandelier from Acquired. RIGHT A piece by Irish photographer Doreen Kilfeather sits atop a 1970s Rosewood sideboard from Fiona McDonald in the lounge.





"I didn't want to do a pastiche of chandeliers that had previously been there." Róisín had the Italian Sputnik chandelier in storage, waiting until it found its perfect home, and sourced the second one to match. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** The lacquer unit, designed by KLD and made by O'Gorman Joinery, frames the existing fireplace with a brass arch. The small portal between the kitchen and the music room was original and Róisín liked its nod to the building's past, likely used by staff passing items back and forth. The lacquered unit hides a bar, with a media function on the other side. A vintage Travertine triangular table by Up&Up from 1stDibs sits alongside two vintage chairs reupholstered in a cognac orange velvet.

walking past,

you'd hardly even know this Georgian family home is there. Tucked into a quiet Galway street, you might be lucky to glimpse a splash of Farrow & Ball's Eating Room Red in the hallway or a flicker of colour from the mid-century Sputnik chandelier in the lounge. However, for the most part, its treasures are shrouded behind simple net curtains that were in the house when it was bought a few years ago by a busy family looking for a place to call home.

"Normally, I would have ripped them out," says KLD interior designer Róisín Lafferty of the decision to retain the window hangings, "but the house had so much soul from the very moment we walked in, I wanted the design to speak to and emulate that." And once the front door is thrown open, it is awash with personality. The deep red walls are complemented by a large-scale Carlos Sangro painting and a vintage Murano glass chandelier. The geometric floor, also original to the house, was Róisín's first point of reference for the rich palette that permeates the home. Jewel tones in the hallway, front lounge, music room and kitchen, as well as in the five bedrooms on the two floors above, echo the wealth of history of the original building. Colours mellow as you move into the newly incorporated spaces of the dining room and kitchen annex, formerly part of a 20th-century lean-to addition, and the sunken sitting room, where the staff quarters had stood.

Redesigned and extended by Helena McElmeel Architects, the three-storey terraced building and collection of outhouses have been reimagined as a flowing family home. Coupled with a detailed conservation process that came with the building's protected status, addressing the lack of light was one of the key architectural challenges, especially on the ground floor. "It involved extensive historical

research and structural assessments," explains Helena. "We even recorded the daylight levels in the kitchen over several weeks to support the planning application – which turned out to be less than a quarter of the recommended minimum light standards."

However, the extended structural and conservation process allowed Róisín time to get to know the house and its inhabitants. With many original features and some unique large-scale pieces left behind by the previous owners, the house had so much to work with, but it was dark and crowded. However, there was a warmth to both the owners and the home that drew Róisín in immediately.

The kitchen, then a gloomy room at the centre of the house, was still the heart of the home. "The way they used the kitchen, it reminded me of growing up," Róisín explains. "Yes, it was dark and damp but there were always freshly made scones and a pot of tea on the table. It was the hub, and I wanted to preserve that."

"I have been obsessed with the kitchen in *The Handmaid's Tale*," says Róisín of her unusual inspiration for the space. "I used to pause the TV just to take pictures of it! It just had a settled beauty to it, like it had always been there and that was the challenge for me here; I didn't want the materials to be too shiny and new." The kitchen now has an old-world feel and yet acts like a vestibule for the rest of the house, a fulcrum that connects the old and the new, as well as all of its inhabitants. Soft monochrome marble floor tiles tumble into a textured green countertop and portal that accesses the dining room. The island, taking the lead from the owner's original kitchen table, has two ornate legs that anchor into a corner unit and a hanging brass potholder emphasises the height of the ceilings. An internal window in the original exterior rear wall, allows light to flow from a thoughtfully positioned sky light above the dining table, while folding doors in a pale limed oak draw you into the family room where everyone can congregate comfortably.

As for the sunken conversation pit, it's something Róisín had been wanting to try

RIGHT The rocking chair was the family's own, and the cast-iron doors were already in the house, leading into the kitchen annex and the glass medicine cabinet that the KLD team had redesigned to fit.





Through the tiled portal to the newer parts of the house, a metal-framed door echoes those in the original house, and leads to a utility area. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** Originally the external back wall, the kitchen window now looks onto the dining area and the family room beyond the accordion doors. The kitchen island was designed to imitate the family's original kitchen table that was once there. The floor tiles in the kitchen annex were chosen to mirror the geometric pattern in the hallway, though in a lighter, more modern hue.



for a while and seemed a perfect match for this busy family. “The kids jump down into it from the dining room – you pull the footstool over and it’s like a giant bed. It’s just a really together space, whether you’re in there or in the kitchen, they feel so connected.”

As well as the hall tiles, floorboards were simply sanded and re-stained throughout and historic pieces were incorporated into the new spaces. The cast-iron doors linking the music room to the kitchen annex were kept, as was the four-paned kitchen door. Antique furniture that came with the house was reinterpreted, like the wardrobe unit in the principal bathroom and the medicine cabinet in the kitchen annex. “In the walk-in wardrobe, we kept the original wardrobe and designed the rest of the space around it.”

Each room seems to unfurl like a decadently wrapped chocolate, and yet it’s this back and forth between old and new, between history and modern family life that draws out this home’s personality, enveloping its inhabitants and guests alike in a warm embrace.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The dining room walls are in Farrow & Ball’s Charleston Gray and the table was designed by KLD and made by O’Gorman Joinery. Off the dining room is a small courtyard, which was covered over. “The view from the kitchen, through the dining room to the sunken family room is deliberately tiered to avoid obstructions of views and maximise the feeling of natural light and an eye-level view of the garden,” explains Róisín. The modular Roche Bobois Mah Jong sofa is upholstered in Moss Green velvet and overhead is a Moon pendant by Davide Groppi from Minima.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Eating Room Red is continued in the upstairs hall, accented by a pendant light from Soho Home. In this bedroom, a pendant from Casa Gitane hangs above a brass bed frame. The boys' room maximises the generous ceiling space with eerie inspiration from Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. In the main bathroom, an antique wardrobe has been repurposed with an added sink unit.

