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Characterful DINING ROOMS

Where we gather with family and friends to partake of food and lively conversation needs to be inviting, comfortable and practical, with layers of texture, flattering lighting and storage for tableware and linen

Creating a sense of occasion need not necessarily translate to an overly formal environment. Where dining rooms of old may once have played a role in creating a distinct shift between the familiar kitchen supper and elegant dinner parties, today their form responds to the demands of their environment and designs are more flexible. Smart separation of spaces may of course still stand for those wishing to implement a distinct change of mood for special events, yet elsewhere careful encompassing of adjoining areas affords opportunity to create flow and synergy throughout home interiors. Here we speak to experts for their advice and ideas on creating dining rooms with style.

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DINING ROOMS
Case Study One

Dramatic Porta Romana overhead pendants are one of several lights in the room that allow for a multi-layered lighting effect. Underfoot, the overscaled Floor Story rug provides an arresting visual focus, and was specially sized to fit the proprtions of the room.

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Pale-pink upholstered armchairs echo the soft pink velvet curtains and chime with hues used in the rugs by Floor Story. Vibrant accents of colour in the lampshades and scatter cushions create a layered look.

Natalie Stephenson and Juliette Wright, founders of Stephenson Wright

Bold colour and accessories create a dynamic entertaining space that mixes heirlooms with contemporary touches.

The brief

"Our client is a young actress living between London and Los Angeles who entertains frequently. Our brief was to update her classic London penthouse apartment and inject a feeling of fun whilst adding a soft and feminine edge. She had inherited a few antiques, such as the Fornasetti dining chairs, and wanted her strong personality to show through other pieces interwoven with these."

Considered use of colour

"We were delighted that our client embraced colour. We combined soft blush velvet curtains with bolder emerald and cerulean blues on the rug, and warmer tones of peridot greens and cream around the room. The colours made the monochrome Fornasetti chairs stand out, and tonally pulled everything together. We loved how her taste in quirky three-dimensional knitted art by Lucy Sparrow (the artwork above the fireplace) added texture."

Creating synergy

"The space has an interesting open-plan set-up: at one end of the dining room in front of an open archway is a comfortable seating area with armchairs, the backs of which can be seen by guests at the table. To avoid the furniture looking too heavy in the line of sight, we used light-coloured upholstery with wide panels down the back of the armchairs in the same brocade from the sofa scatter cushions to add unexpected interest. To replicate the synergy at the front, we used the same brocade on the armchair cushions to tie the look together.

"Two super-large rugs sit in each end of the room – one almost six metres long, in wool and art silk for a subtle lustre. We enlisted Floor Story to rework one of its designs to fit proportionally. We also recoloured parts of the rug, darkening some areas and playing with colour in others. The Floor Story design references the carnival-like atmosphere of Venezuela – to us this just ticked all the colourful boxes even more!

"The furniture styles are quite a mix, which we love as it's a great way to add to the personality of the room. A contemporary perspex and gold cocktail cabinet sits next to an antique brass claw-foot dining table and a reclaimed teal mantelpiece. The lights are modern with colourful shades – everything has a warmth to it.

"The sculptural shapes of the Porta Romana wall and pendant lights are so interesting, and we like how slightly overscaled they felt. Combining overhead lighting with wall sconces and table lamps allows a layered lighting effect and many scene-setting options. When specifying a coloured lampshade we will usually include a reflective lining to help the light to bounce more effectively – although in a dining room its nicer to have a softer less bright light."

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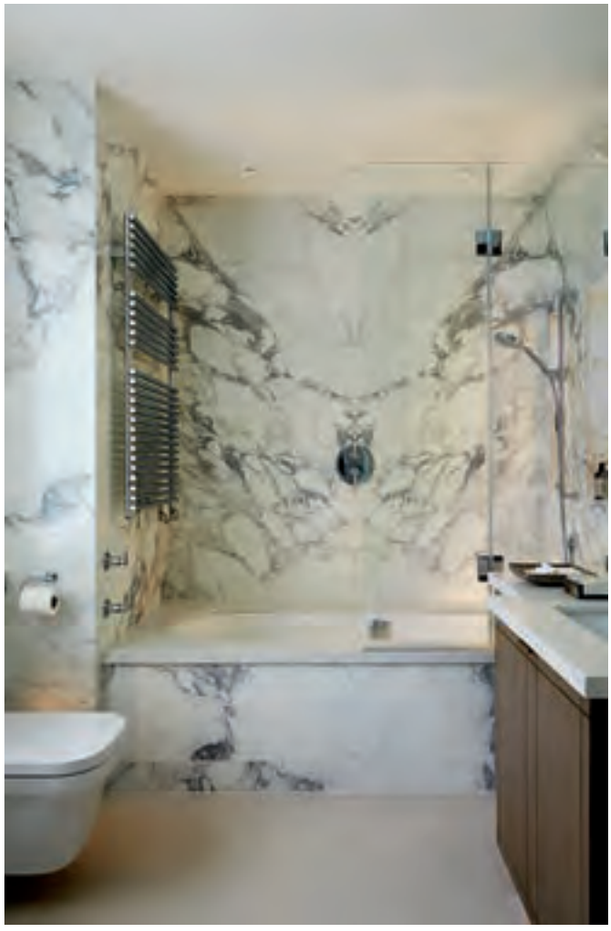
EN SUITES &
DRESSING ROOMS
Case Study Three



Natalie Stephenson and Juliette Wright, founders of Stephenson Wright

A calm elegant flow and carefully considered details combine in this master bedroom and en-suite bathroom in an apartment in West London.

The brief

"When we were tasked with transforming a smart, lateral, second-home apartment in Kensington, our brief was to create a luxurious 'home from home' for our client. Located in a large, attractive mansion building, the property dated from the 1930s, and we were commissioned to undertake a full refurbishment and remodel the space entirely for a better sense of flow. Loving clean lines and no-fuss elegant fixtures and fittings, our client wanted us to create a bedroom suite which would be simple and chic, whilst also giving a cocooning sense of calm."

Creating a stylish synergy

"The master bedroom suite was the most important part of this apartment to 'get right' for our client. We were emotionally driven here – she wanted to feel enveloped by this room, and to feel relaxed, familiar and safe.

"Bespoke, contrasting Fromental hand-painted silk panels frame the headboard and provide a background for the bronze Holly Hunt swing-arm wall lights that leave the bedside tables free for books and so on, whilst a floral painterly-style fabric frames the windows to emphasise the fresh greenery of the private gardens just outside. The client's collection of artwork also deserved attention and one such piece takes centre stage above the headboard and introduces a wonderful cobalt blue to complement the ochre and cream tones.

"To create flow into the dressing area of the bedroom, we selected a subtle silk wallpaper throughout for a seamless connection that tied the space together harmoniously. The wardrobe doors are beautifully detailed with silk paper, and aged brass used in the handles and trim, and the interiors of the cupboards are also covered in silk.

"We also worked closely with the client to understand her practical needs. For instance, the mirror at the dressing table has hinged panels either

ABOVE LEFT Bronze inlay detailing on the vanity unit in the en-suite bathroom echoes that of the wardrobe doors and dressing table in the bedroom. Cleverly inserted in the large mirror is a For Town mirror cabinet by Kallista in which to keep personal items.
ABOVE Bookmatched marble on the wall and bath panel and warm off-white porcelain floor tiles create eye-catching pattern and a simple chic feel.

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side to conceal storage for products and accessories, and there are hidden sockets and charging points, and a bespoke drawer for the hairdryer."

The en-suite bathroom

"Although not extensive in its proportions, we managed to pack plenty of stylish features into the en suite. Mid-tone timbers in the vanity unit and mirror frames create a sense of warmth and an illusion of space, and the bronze inlay detailing on the doors echoes those of the dressing room. We used a large-scale porcelain tile in a warm off-white palette for the floor and the marble on the wall behind the bath is bookmatched to produce a striking pattern.

"With practicality, ease of use and storage all key, we opted for a mirror cabinet by Michael S Smith for Kallista, set into the larger mirror, to house personal items, whilst the deep drawers of the vanity unit have compartments of precisely the right size for toiletries.

"The space was finished with features such as the elegant Waterworks Sargent sconces fitted on to the mirror and wall-mounted user-friendly taps from the Grohe Atrio range, all accomplishing the pared-back elegance our client was so keen to achieve."

ABOVE Bespoke hand-painted silk panels by Fromental add interest and are teamed with equally painterly floral curtains and bronze Holly Hunt wall lights.

LEFT The mirror above the dressing table has hinged panels either side to access concealed storage. Hidden sockets and charging points and a bespoke drawer for the hairdryer keep cables out of sight.

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