

A WARM WELCOME

Don't let a tight deadline stand in the way of luxury interior design

Christine May Interiors was originally contacted back in 2008 by the owners of this six-bedroom property in one of Hadley Wood's most prestigious residential roads. The client had decided that it wasn't practical to manage a toddler and plan her wedding, as well as update the design of the house that she and her intended had just moved into.

She had already started on the living room and kitchen but felt that the house lacked colour and warmth to make the vision of her dream home come alive. She didn't know how to do this and realised that she needed professional help, so after interviewing a number of interior designers, she appointed Christine May Interior Design.

At her clients request Christine and her team embarked on a rolling programme of works that include plumbing and wiring, a new heating system, replacement windows and other miscellaneous building works working on one area of the house at the time while the client continued to reside there. This rolling programme allowed her client to budget and pay for the schemes as Christine progressed.

The client had already installed an expensive Bulthaup kitchen but the stark white walls against the sleek white of the kitchen cabinets made the room appear cold and uninviting. Christine had established that the client was uneasy with



bold colours and that her natural inclination was towards the cooler end of the colour spectrum, so together they chose Green Blue from Farrow and Ball paints for the walls. Christine then suggested adding additional lighting including wall lights and accent lighting above the tall cabinets housing the cooker, fridge freezer and larders. Over the dining table in the adjoining vaulted ceiling extension, she installed two Caboche pendants by Foscarini. A seagrass mat under the table was also added which helped to eradicate the noise of scraping chairs against the tiled floor. The later addition of made to measure window shutters added character to the windows while the final additions of framed family pictures on the wall help make the room one that the whole family now gravitates toward.

Once the kitchen and dining areas were complete (and the client was really pleased with the way the look and feel of the rooms had changed under the guidance of a trained professional) work began on the formal dining room. This was a blank canvas and after some persuasion, the client agreed to a darker colour on the walls than she would normally be comfortable with; the grey blue tones were picked up in the Tim Page carpet and silk curtain fabrics from Beacon Hill. The furniture was commissioned from Julian Chichester and lighting from Porta Romana. The resulting room is glamorous and, at night it

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becomes a dramatic backdrop for entertaining; the client and her husband are delighted.

The loft rooms were next on the list. This large space at the top of the house, previously with no function, is now a spacious guest bedroom and guest bathroom and has added thousands of pounds to the value of the house. The clients' trust in Christine May meant that by now Christine could suggest deeper colours, which in the sun drenched room look cheery and pretty. The furniture, designed by Christine, includes a bespoke four poster bed finished in antiqued white. The new shower room is lined with frosted glass tiles and mosaics from Fired Earth. It has a slight Moroccan feel to it which allows guests staying over to feel like they are on holiday.

After tackling the hall, stairs and spacious landing, the master suite was the next and final area to start. By now the client was expecting their second child and Christine and her team worked against the clock to deliver a sumptuous suite before the client delivered her baby. The brief was to create a luxurious but understated space that would be a quiet refuge in the months and years to come. The bedroom suite leads off the main landing and comprises an inner hallway with the bathroom first on the right; next, an open arch leads into the semi open plan bedroom area while further at the end of the inner hallway are the dressing rooms, his on the right and hers (sunken) on the left.

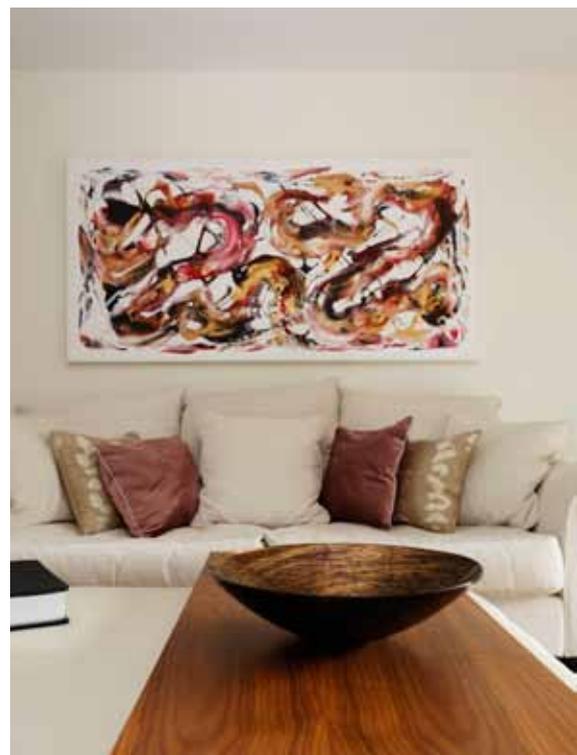
The existing bathroom was clad in beige marble and was a mix of classical details with a 1980s spa bath and a very modern, trough-style basin. The clients' brief here was to install a freestanding bathtub, create storage and install a shower that didn't flood the floor each time it was used. The team realised that



by removing the stud walls, they were able to add another 400mm to the overall size of the room. This was a key factor if all the requested elements were to be included.

In keeping with the clients' wish for a modern subtle design, matt ceramic tiles in natural bone were used to clad the walls and floor with texture added by using matching bush hammered listello tiles. The glass finish vanity unit and large mirrored cabinet provide much needed storage space while recessed open shelves, backed with mirrors and internally lit, provide stylish open storage. The composite stone bathtub which overlooks the rear garden adds glamour and is the focal point of the room and gives the room a wow factor.

In the bedroom the walls are silk lined and with meticulous attention to detail, the edges are piped in matching silk. A clear acrylic curtain pole and finials from Tilleys and table lamps from Porta Romana



add sparkle and modernity to the 'classic with a modern twist' scheme. The colour scheme for the master suite is a pleasing combination of taupe, silver and grey with ivory silk curtains. The cabinet furniture in a smoked oak finish adds weight to the scheme. Helping the luxurious timeless design to flow, silk carpet in oyster is used throughout the bedroom suite with the selection of coordinating fabrics adding texture and definition.

The clients' requirements were always uppermost in the minds of the design team, so the dressing rooms were planned to allow for maximum storage. The drawers are finished in lizard effect leather and lined in soft grey suede. All the wardrobe doors are mirrored to reflect light and create the illusion that the rooms are larger than they are. All the handles are hand forged in nickel from Minimo. The Gracie lights on the dressing table and on the wall either side of the hall mirror are designed by Kevin McCloud who before Grand Designs was a lighting designer. The huge mirror in the hallway is framed in the same lizard effect leather used in the dressing rooms, as too is the bed base.

The finished master suite is harmonious and elegant; the clients are thrilled with the finished result and they were able to move back into their bedroom almost exactly nine months after the whole process began and—just one week before the birth of their baby daughter. In fact, everyone delivered on time and exactly as planned.