

It was a grey, boxy house with nothing much to distinguish it. Now, though, following a thoughtful, creative makeover, this Glasgow home is bursting with colour, verve and joy

Photography ZAC and ZAC
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INDIVIDUAL BRILLIANCE

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ew builds all look the same, inside and out – don't they? Some do, sure, but certainly not if they've had the Chelsea McLaine treatment, like this five-bedroom property in Glasgow. Under the direction of lead designer Abigail Kinnaird, and propelled by clients who are equal parts courageous and creative, this project destroys the notion that new homes in modern estates are forever destined to be bland and unremarkable.

The owners, a couple with two young children, bought the ten-year-old house for its proximity to the family's support network rather than for its decor. They had worked with Chelsea McLaine before and knew they could trust the studio to give their home a bespoke feel. "It was a grey house when they bought it, but it's now as far from being a grey house as it could possibly get," says design director Margot Paton, who oversaw the project. "The clients were so open to designs that were unusual and very much reflected their personalities. You can see Abigail's love of colour and pattern throughout, because the clients were happy to embrace her vision. It's always lovely when people are brave."

Abigail's creativity is particularly obvious in two bright and bold ▶



DETAILS

What A ten-year-old house that lacked personality
Where Glasgow
Interior designer Chelsea McLaine

Previous pages As well as the outdoor kitchen, there's a seating area and sunbeds on the patio. The Vincent Sheppard furniture is finished in waterproof fabrics from Pierre Frey and Romo. **Left** All eyes are on that bespoke headboard, made with fabrics from Nina Campbell and Manuel Canovas. The complementary window dressings are from Romo. **Above** "How dreamy is that? Doesn't everyone need a playroom like that?" Margot enthuses. "Abigail and Kirsty (one of our designers with a stylist background) sourced all the prints. We had a cabinetmaker [Atelier James] build the shelving with that fabulous scalloped edge. We found the incredible graffiti paper [Ohpopsi] for the ceiling and then went a bit off-piste painting the skirting and the corning instead of sticking to conventional white. We just went for it! It was the room where we could embrace and channel our inner child."



bedrooms for the kids, as well as a playroom that even the adults can't help but want to hang out in. "We spend so much time there as a family, making memories that I know the kids will carry with them," says the children's father. "It's vibrant, colourful and just bursting with energy. Visually, it's pure joy."

The couple's daughter wakes up every morning in a bed crowned with an abstract headboard pieced together from a wide selection of fabrics. "When Abigail first told me about her concept for the bed, I thought, 'Wow that's a bit of a head melt!'," laughs Margot. "She took a shape she liked and translated it into this incredible array of textures, prints and colours. The end result is just gorgeous." Custom wall lights in the shape of llamas from Porta Romana were painted to the designer's specification and finished with velvet sourced especially for the project. "The velvet isn't part of Porta Romana's fabric range. It needed to be very specific to work with all of the other patterns."

A subtle leopard-print wallpaper by Alice Temperley for Romo acts as a neutral backdrop; a Julian Chichester chest of drawers squats opposite the bed, beside a suspended canopy with a padded base that serves as a reading nook for the wee one. Even the wardrobe handles have been considered: Abigail had special flower-shaped handles cast in Portugal and painted in a lustrous, pearlescent finish.

It's not just the children who are surrounded by joyful design. The downstairs powder room bursts with colour thanks to a floral-and-pomegranate Casamance wallpaper. The orange hue appears again on the Villeroy & Boch washbasin, while buttery herringbone marble tiles add a note of more restrained luxury.

Things are slightly calmer in the kitchen, but there's still something to catch the eye in every corner. "The layout is pretty much the same as when they moved in," says Margot. "We reused some of the cabinet carcasses but everything else has been replaced. The island was reconfigured to add extra storage and a seating area, then we topped it with a slab of a Dekton porcelain that cascades down both ends. The kitchen looked very gloomy originally – a dark floor and black worktops – and we wanted to give it a much lighter, brighter feel." Now, the full-height cabinets are dressed in oak and a beautiful metallic finish coats the ►

Left The massive island is topped with porcelain rather than marble, since it's almost impossible to find marble slabs in three metre lengths. The desired 'waterfall' effect has been created too, cascading vertically to the floor at the end of the island. The Charlotte James bar stools are covered in fabrics by Designers Guild, Dedar and Samuel & Sons. A pendant light from CTO was installed overhead. **Right** Two views of the powder room. Covering the bulk of the wall is a colourful wallpaper (Salvador by Casamance) featuring pomegranates and bright flowers. The paper in the walnut storage niches is Tatami by Arte. Bronze finish wall lights let the wallcoverings take centre stage





Below The kitchen layout stayed mostly as it was, but the island was reconfigured to include extra cabinets and bar seating. "The kitchen wasn't that old," explains Margot. "Plus, it had barely been used. I think the property was a second home originally, so it was in pristine condition. It was nice to be able to recycle some of the carcasses and materials. We always look for a sustainable angle where possible." There's another kitchen hidden away in a one-bedroom apartment above the property's triple garages. It was designed with guests in mind, though the owner sometimes uses the space to work, or play the guitar



others. “It looks like copper, but it’s a low-maintenance, highly functional material.”

Through an original archway is the dining area with its sculptural Tom Faulkner dining table and bar. The latter was designed by Abigail and built by a local cabinetmaker. The edges are purposely curved: “Apart from the aesthetics of it, we didn’t want the kids running into sharp corners, so we created that lovely curve on the drawers.” An imitation leather wallpaper (Ténére by Arte) covers the space behind the shelves, and the marble splash-back is from Mandarin Stone. A drinks fridge hides beneath the bottle rack on the left.

Completing this part of the house is a living area where the

kids can chill out as dinner is prepared. A section of antique mirror stretches between the bar and the TV room cabinetry. With the patterned wallpaper, bespoke joinery, statement chandelier, mixed-material dining chairs and decorative radiators, this space could feel overwhelming, but it doesn’t. “I think it’s because everything is so considered,” suggests Margot. “It’s a similar story in the other rooms: each has its own identity but works within the overall design scheme.”

Upstairs, the principal suite is relaxation exemplified. The emperor-size bed is so big the design team had to source linens from the States. Abigail designed the huge headboard, which was then made by Charlotte James. “The metal frame made it

incredibly heavy,” reveals Margot. “It took four or five installers to bring it in. It was quite a feat getting it up the stairs.”

The luxury continues in the en-suite, where the sanitaryware is by Armani. “Our clients were the first people in Scotland to have it,” says Margot. “Sourcing it was a challenge but it was absolutely worth it. The result is pretty special.” And not just for the bragging rights: the pieces have an unusual textured finish: “It’s matt, sort of burnished rather than high gloss.”

The suite is completed with a generous dressing room. Repositioning one wall and inserting a pocket door created more space and allowed a central island to be installed, which serves as a comfortable place to pack a suitcase. The designers made sure ▶

Left Most of the curtains and blinds are electronically operated. “We worked with Lutron,” Margot says. “The lighting is also tied into the system so everything can be programmed for day-to-day use or for holidays. The curtains can be set to close at different times – from a security point of view, it’s perfect.” **Above** Bespoke joinery was used in the drawing room to counteract the enormous television. The green sofa came with the family from their previous house. A variety of textiles and colours has been used in this room as well. “It’s all about the balance,” advises Margot. “It’s about laying it all out and figuring out what works and in what proportions. Proportions are really important! If you want to clash patterns, it shouldn’t be a spur-of-the-moment thing. It needs to be well considered, not done on a whim. I think that’s where people can come unstuck.”



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Opposite, top left Even the hallways had Abigail’s full attention. The carpet, for example, is a bespoke design from Ferreira de Sá. **Top right** A reshuffle upstairs meant the dressing room could be expanded. The island provides a neat spot for the owners to pack their bags. The pendants are by Bella Figura. **Bottom** Check out the Armani basins and brassware. The unusual colour looks particularly luxe when paired with the custom walnut joinery. **This page, top** The floor and wall tiles in the principal en-suite are Mandarin Stone’s Polar design. The floor tiles were laid at a 45-degree angle: “It’s just more interesting,” says Margot. “It’s another layer of detail and gives a really bespoke feel.” Instead of skirting, the cabinetmaker installed a slim timber trim which frames the wallpaper and makes the room feel furnished. **Below** The designers played with proportion in the main bedroom. The fully bespoke Porta Romana bedside lamps are well over a metre tall



Below The outdoor space was designed by Chelsea McLaine and built by a local contractor. As well as the seating here, there's an uncovered area on the patio with seats upholstered in custom waterproof fabrics. The interior designers also created bespoke covers for all the furniture

to incorporate some open storage: “She has a beautiful collection of handbags, and he has the most exquisite suits, so it’s nice to have some of those items on display.”

The clients had stayed in homes abroad with outdoor kitchens, and they wanted one for themselves. Glasgow is not the tropics, though, so it had to be designed for the Scottish climate, with heating, a weatherproof roof and timber battening (which allows airflow while preventing the structure from moving or being damaged by high winds). There’s seating for twenty, plus a pizza oven, a firepit, multiple fridges, a sound system and even a TV.

The whole garden had to be levelled to build it but the owners insist the upheaval was worth it: “It’s usable all year round and it’s

not just an outdoor kitchen – it’s a full extension of our lifestyle and personality,” they say. “Some of our best moments happen out there, especially when it’s snowing! It’s honestly one of the parts of our home that we love most.” It’s safe to say that this is a sublimely sociable home with family at the heart of every design choice.

“We have travelled extensively and have experienced some incredible hotels, and we didn’t want to compromise when it came to comfort and luxury in our own home,” say the owners.

“The team at Chelsea McLaine helped us to create what feels like a personal five-star penthouse. They didn’t just decorate the rooms, they delivered a home that was fully realised, right down to the smallest, most immaculate details. It’s a dream space.” ■

