boldly go

Maura McLaughlin’s once-magnolia Dublin abode is now a daring riot of colour and pattern that is pure joy.

PHOTOGRAPHY Barbara Corsico

WORDS Claudia Baillie

LIVING ROOM

‘I adore this room,’ says Maura. ‘It’s a snug space where you can curl up, listen to music, read or watch TV.’


livingetc.com
The Owner
Maura McLaughlin, a corporate lawyer specialising in mergers and acquisitions.

The Property
A three-bedroom, three-bathroom Victorian semi-detached house in south Dublin. On the ground floor is an entrance hall, a living room, dining room and an open-plan kitchen and seating area that leads out onto the garden. There is also a utility room. On the first floor is a study and on the second floor is the master bedroom with en suite plus a further guest bedroom and a family bathroom. On the third floor is another bedroom with en suite.

It didn’t really need any work, which is why everyone thought I was crazy,’ laughs Maura McLaughlin as she describes how she decided to bathe her new home in vivid colour. The Victorian semi had been rented out for about 10 years, then decorated to sell, so the walls were magnolia, the floors were cream and the kitchen was plain white. ‘It was all fine,’ says Maura, ‘but after years of looking for the right property it wasn’t quite what I was after in the way of a home from a decorative point of view. After such a long wait, I wanted to make sure I created a house I really loved.’

Maura could see plenty of exciting possibilities in the four-storey, red-brick property that ticked so many other boxes. Located in a quiet, tree-lined street close to local shops, restaurants and a park, the house is only a mile from Dublin city centre. ‘And all the neighbours know each other, which is lovely.’ When it came to introducing a bold colour palette, Maura, who is a lawyer, knew she would need help. Quite by coincidence, one of her clients suggested she look at Dublin-based studio Kingston Lafferty Design. ‘I had spent a while searching for someone I felt would relish the brief,’ says Maura. ‘And Roisin Lafferty and her team did. It was also attractive to me as a woman in business to hire another woman in business, so the female-led studio was the perfect choice.’

A keen traveller, Maura’s brief for Roisin was heavily influenced by some of her favourite countries, including Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt. Another stipulation was that her collection of treasures and artwork picked up from expeditions would be woven into the schemes. ‘Pastels and muted colours aren’t my thing. I like bold shades, pattern, tiles and geometric shapes,’ says Maura. ‘The studio was able to take all the things I love, which is a lot, and use them in the project. It has made this place feel very personal.’

Upstairs, layers of green evoke a soothing atmosphere in the generous master bedroom, while a change to the original layout means the small fourth bedroom has been turned into a large en suite. ‘Many people would think I’m mad having a bright-green, polished plaster bathroom,’ says Maura. ‘But all the good feelings from my travels are tied up in that aesthetic. To have something so indulgent and beautiful “just because” is such a luxurious thing that gives me a lot of pleasure. It’s one of my favourite places in the house and has made it a truly wonderful place to live.’

Check out the work of the designers at kingstonlaffertydesign.com
KITCHEN DETAILS
‘I’d seen an aubergine kitchen in a house I’d viewed,’ says Maura. ‘It was so distinctive and something I wanted to emulate. When you switch on the lights, there’s a wonderful twinkling effect as light bounces off the tiles.’ The circular marble ‘rug’ (far right) defines the kitchen’s living space and echoes the shape of the teal sofa.

Bespoke joinery, Moore & O’Gorman; painted in Farrow & Ball’s Brinjal; Tilde pull handles, Alice Tacheny; Wall tiles, Mosaic del Sur. Custom marble floor tiles (far right), Rocca Stone.

DINING ROOM/LIVING ROOM DETAILS
‘Initially, the idea of panelling filled me with horror, but when Roisin showed me the curved design I was all for it,’ says Maura. ‘You can’t place it in a particular era, so I feel it won’t date.’ The circular brass shelving was a vintage find. The Betty dining table is from Made and was sprayed pink in a custom finish.

“Roisin and her team encouraged me to do things that I wouldn’t have dared to otherwise”
KITCHEN
‘The brass cabinet at the end of the worktop was originally going to be a wall,’ says Maura, ‘but we changed it to make the most of the garden view.’
Bespoke joinery, Moore & O’Gorman.
The curved sofa (just seen) was made to order by Orior Furniture.
Lalegno chevron flooring, Floor Design.
Tables, Zara Home.

HALLWAY
A rug based on a Josef Albers modernist painting is used as artwork and ties in perfectly with the blue in the living room.


Walls in Aged Wine SW6299 and Copenhagen Blue CP1033, both Fleetwood Prestige.

Moroccan encaustic floor tiles, Best Tile.

Walls in Aged Wine SW6299 and Copenhagen Blue CP1033, both Fleetwood Prestige.
HOME TRUTHS

IF YOU COULD GO ANYWHERE TOMORROW, WHERE WOULD IT BE?
Marrakesh. Love the colours, the architecture, the sounds and smells that all transport me a million miles away.

FAVOURITE MUSIC TO LISTEN TO AT HOME?
Classic Motown. The Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder. The Temptations - it’s like listening to sunshine.

THEATRE OR GIG?
Gig. I love it when a crowd gets swept up in the music and the whole venue comes alive with the energy.

IF YOU WERE A PIECE OF CLOTHING WHAT WOULD IT BE?
Such a difficult question to answer! Hopefully a Hermes scarf - colourful, classy and comfortable to have around.

BEST PLACE IN DUBLIN FOR A FUN NIGHT OUT?
No Name Bar pre- and post-dinner is a great place.

GO-TO DINNER PARTY MENU?
Curries and casseroles. Anything that goes in the oven and lets you focus on the guests and not the cooking!

BEDROOM
‘I had no idea what to do in this attic space,’ says Maura. ‘It was very plain and I doubted we’d be able to fit a bed in, but it has turned out to be amazing. Builders discovered the brick wall and Kingston Lafferty suggested we make a feature of it and add the amazing wallpaper to the walls and ceiling.’

The wallpaper is Color Field by Gio Pagani for Wall&Decò. Reema bed, Made. Hexagonal crystal hanging lamp. Out There Interiors

SHOWER ROOM
Maura’s love of Moroccan style is evident in the rich tile colours here. Tiles Mosaic del Sur. Fired Earth has similar shower fittings

MASTER EN SUITE
‘The bathroom makes grey Mondays so much easier,’ says Maura. ‘You get up and think, “This is pretty cool!”’


LANDING
A rich blue wall colour provides a strong statement background for art and objects. Walls in Copenhagen Blue CP1033, Fleetwood Prestige

MASTERS BEDROOM
‘Kingston Lafferty designed the headboard to wrap around the bed,’ says Maura, ‘which makes it feel cozy.’


PLANS