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OCTOBER 2008 / £4.99



AMBASSADORIAL SPLENDOUR

WORDS REBECCA HOH PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON COLLINS

Over-sized furniture and a clever use of pattern have turned the office interior of this vast former embassy into a home that is grand yet cosy

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Charlotte Crossland does not seem fazed by the whys and wherefores of this Wimbledon property as she explains the work she and her team carried out to transform the former Gabonese Embassy into a luxury home for property developer Rob Canning. Crossland clearly took the vast project which houses a swimming pool and gym — in her stride. And luckily for Crossland, Canning gave her a free reign in design terms, an almost unlimited budget and a very clear idea of what the client literally handed it to her on a plate to get on with. 'When we came on board a lot of the room had already been decided, no work had been done but such as it was sorted on paper. We were responsible for everything from the swimming pool and the garden to the sheets on the bed. The client had very little involvement and just wanted it to be transformed into a beautiful home that essentially could be put on the market for huge amounts of money'. The 1930s embassy had never served as a home so Crossland was initially met with an 'ugly office interior. This had its advantages — once this was all pared back it gave the team the luxury of gigantic rooms to work with. It's a consequence. Crossland was faced with the rare task. Instead of working to create space and bring in light — a common job for interior designers — she needed to devise ways to divide up the large areas, inserting partitions to create nooks and crannies and bring a sense of cosiness to the vast space. Notable examples of this can be seen in the drawing room, where Crossland has added a custom-made slatted screen, and particularly in the master bedroom. 'The master bedroom was really quite tricky because it's almost ridiculously big' she says. It's important for a

GRAND SCALE
Large pieces of furniture, such as George Smith sofas and a bespoke bed, were used to create a sense of scale in the grand master bedroom





MASCULINE LOOK
Left: gold, black, silver and charcoal make up the palette for the main living space, which features a Chisney's Chiswick armoire and Fox Linne. Bottom left: the Boffi kitchen, with steel and black granite surfaces, was installed by Alternative Plans.

FLOOR FILLER
Above: Sinter Tile supplied all the carpeting for the project, including this rug in the recreation room. The Ferrand floor in the same room. Bottom right: the dining room scheme is brightened with hints of gold.



...to be lying in bed and feeling overwhelmed by the...
...to divide the bedroom into two zones...
...bathrooms...
...gives the master bathroom the wow factor...
...Calacatta marble from Limestone...
...honed marble covers...
...the window is upholstered in...
...used cleverly throughout the property's vast scale...
...a bespoke four-poster bed, which was...
...and built by her father, Craig Buschell...
...when specifying the huge curtains, which...
...supplied all the carpeting and rugs, which...
...cost a fortune — and...
...a custom-made silk rug with a subtle pattern in...
...cream. Above, in the lofty ceiling space, hangs



Thinking space

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interiors
NEC Birmingham 24-27 January 2010

United Business Media
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... mainly grey, gold and black — was created with the house by De Ferranti and is one of the favourite parts of the project.

... she says. It's just that I believe it's important to a building. If you walk into a property and the space doesn't impress you, it's a really bad start. Different spaces create an impact. They look as if they will be original to the era when the house was built.

... which was added to the house, contains a swimming pool, media and study room, gym and spa. Crossland, who says she 'hates the feel of a swimming pool, added large sliding doors to the outside area to open up the space. A fresh palette has been chosen here for the pool area and there is more stone tiling from de Ferranti. The lighting is by Kate Beard.

... drama needed to fill such a sizeable property. The scheme has warmth and character and strong patterns that marry other luxury houses on the estate. In fact, the client was so taken with the home she moved in to enjoy the surroundings while he was on the inevitable sale. **enq**

COSY UP

Middle right: slate and monochrome makes a statement in the second bathroom; a double-height fireplace from Chesney's gives the huge master bedroom a cosy feel

PRETTY PATTERN

Right: Cutler by Nicola Crossland, the interior designer's sister, adorns many of the rooms. Her Murin wall behind the headboard in the second bedroom



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