



Soaring Stone

AFTER FINDING THE PERFECT LOCATION, A COUPLE RETURNING FROM LONDON TO IRELAND WERE KEEN TO BUILD A MODERN FAMILY HOME THAT MADE THE MOST OF THE VIEWS OF THE DINGLE PENINSULA.

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Having spent many happy childhood holidays in Kerry, Sharon Beggan, an interior designer, and her partner Declan McEvoy were keen to buy a property in the county. "We both love the landscape and the dramatic scenery of the area so really wanted to find somewhere that had spectacular views, so it was the location that drove our search," says Sharon. After looking for some time the couple happened upon a site near Dingle that had the views they were after.

The site came with a builder already allotted to it; he was keen to build the house without the use of an architect. This didn't worry the couple as Sharon, with so much creative flair and energy of her own, was eager to have a say in the finished design. "Building a house from scratch is no mean feat and can be a daunting prospect but we weren't deterred and wholeheartedly embraced the project, excited at the prospect of building our own home. I ended up designing the house and



getting an engineer to draw up the plans," explains Sharon.

Luckily the couple was blessed with a straightforward build. "We were actually living in London while the building work was going on. Being so far away meant we couldn't be on site to check on progress. It could have been a disaster but the builder was fabulous and really listened to us and worked with all our ideas so that everything went according

to plan," she says. "We bought the site in 1999 and the build was completed early in 2002. With three children I wanted the house to be easy to live in, so I designed it to be divided into three different areas. The social area is made up of an open plan kitchen, living and dining area; the sleeping quarters and bathrooms run off a corridor to the front of the house and there is a loft space which provides an area for the children to chill out with their friends."



THE ENTRANCE HALL HAS PLENTY OF SHOE RACKS FROM IKEA FOR THE FAMILY'S BOOTS AND SHOES. THE COAT RACK IS FROM HABITAT.



Orientated to make the most of the views over the Blasket Islands, the house had to be as light and as open plan as possible with a lovely spacious feel to it. "As it's not a huge house we didn't want it to feel cramped, so by incorporating high cathedral style ceilings it really has that feeling of space that we were after and the large windows maximise the views and ensure it is flooded with natural light," says Sharon.

Keen for the house to have a modern look, she was also eager to introduce some character. "For visual impact I decided to use stonework on the interior walls, taking ideas from the vernacular. I noticed a lot of the houses in the area had used stone on the exteriors so I thought it would be interesting to use this idea internally. This combined with the wooden beams adds texture and a rustic charm to the interiors."





SHARON HAD A WALL OF GLASS BRICKS BUILT SO YOU CAN'T SEE DIRECTLY INTO THE KITCHEN FROM THE MAIN EN-TRANCE. THE GLASS ALLOWS THE LIGHT TO FLOW THROUGH SO STILL KEEPS THE SPACE LIGHT AND BRIGHT.

To accentuate the sense of space and to create a fresh bright feel the decor has been kept as neutral as possible with the use of off-whites from Farrow and Ball and light maple wooden floors. "I stuck to subdued tones as it makes the space more flexible and easier to keep, and introduced subtle tones with my choice of accessories, with chunky knit throws and cushions that keep the look comfortable and welcoming." For practical reasons Sharon opted for leather sofas in the sitting room, which were chosen by Declan. These came from The Sofa Factory, and she has teamed them with a chunky coffee table from Christopher Wainwright and a contemporary style rug from Ceadogan Rugs.

The entrance hall has plenty of shoe racks from Ikea for the family's boots and shoes. The coat rack is from Habitat. The double doors along with the dresser were originally pine and Sharon decided to paint them to give them a more modern look. The doors are painted in Off White and the dresser in Mouse's Back, both from Farrow and Ball. Sharon found the unusual cabinet under the stairs in Portobello in London, "I fell in love with this





piece and simply had to have it. I knew I had the exact spot for it: it fits perfectly under the stairs."

Sharon had a wall of glass bricks built so you can't see directly into the kitchen from the main entrance. The glass allows the light to flow through so still keeps the space light and bright. The magnetic notice boards from Ikea are perfect for hanging important notes and messages.

When it came to heating the house Sharon opted for large traditional style radiators, which she sourced in Dublin. "I knew if I had white radiators it would detract from the look I was so keen to achieve so I opted for large industrial looking radiators which were enamelled in gun metal grey. Not only do they look the part but they make the house really cosy, which is important as the weather can be quite harsh, particularly in the winter," explains Sharon.



LARGE SLATE TILES FROM TILESTYLE SURROUND THE BATH BLENDING IN NICELY WITH THE TONGUE-AND-GROOVE PAINTED IN MOUSE'S BACK BY FARROW AND BALL.

The simple kitchen that flows off the living space was planned to have as much storage as possible and Sharon had it made and fitted by a local carpenter, with the period style sink from Fired Earth. "As this is a relatively small area I wanted this space to be practical and as uncluttered as possible so opted for pale wooden units and simple stainless steel appliances. We also fitted a utility room off this space which offers extra storage which is perfect for hiding away clutter," says Sharon. The lovely light dining area enjoys stunning views of the surrounding countryside. She found the pine table and chairs in The Pine Loft and painted them in Slipper Satin by Farrow and Ball.

In the master bedroom colourful cushions from Ikea and an Orla Kiely duvet cover inject colour into the neutral scheme. In the daughter's room, the pretty floral cushions and blue throw create a relaxing and inviting look. The throw and side tables are from Ikea while the cushions and curtains were made by a local curtain maker.





IN THE MASTER BEDROOM COLOURFUL CUSHIONS FROM IKEA AND AN ORLA KIELY DUVET COVER INJECT COLOUR INTO THE NEUTRAL SCHEME.



When it came to the family bathroom Sharon decided she wanted something a bit different. Large slate tiles from Tilestyle surround the bath blending in nicely with tongue-and-groove painted in Mouse's Back by Farrow and Ball. The mirrored cabinet came from Heals. "I didn't just want an ordinary bathroom so asked the builder to set the roll top bath into slate, I was very specific about what I wanted and am so pleased with the end result. The room has drama and interest; it's certainly far removed from your standard white

suite." The pretty little basin is simple yet smart and Sharon introduced a flash of colour with an Orla Kiely hand towel and a rug from Ceadogan Rugs.

"We are thrilled with how the house turned out, it functions perfectly for the family, and the views are to die for. You can sit at the dining table admiring them at any time of day. Even when the weather is bad there is always some dramatic cloud formation, or driving rain to be admired. We love it."

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Source Directory

- Shoe racks: Ikea, T: 01 5413300, ikea.com
- Coat rack: Habitat, T: +44 344 4991111, habitat.co.uk
- Mirrored cabinet: Heal's, T: +44 207 8967451, heals.co.uk
- Chunky knit throw: Marks and Spencer, marksandspencer.ie
- Striped cushions: Dunnes Stores, T: 021 4835341, dunnestores.com
- Rugs: Ceadogan Rugs, T: 051 561349, ceadogan.ie
- Paints: Farrow & Ball, T: 01 6770111, farrow-ball.com
- Glass bricks: B&Q, T: 021 4972199, diy.com
- Radiators: The Radiator Shop, T: 028 9181 3460, radiatorshop.co.uk
- Sink: Fired Earth, T: 01 6636160, firedearth.com
- Slate tiles: Tilestyle, T: 01 8555200, tilestyle.ie