



A LIVING EXPERIENCE

The original compartmentalised layout of this 120-square-metre Ibragg apartment did not suit the client's lifestyle and the interior was in desperate need of a facelift. Enter Forward Architects... fast forward... and the end result is very personal, a true representation of the owner, and something he can look forward to coming home to.

PHOTOS: JEREMY DEBATTISTA
STYLING: ENRIKA PIZZUTO

The state it was in before Forward Architects intervened:

When approached by the client, the apartment had a typical 1970s interior, with separate rooms on either side of a central connecting corridor. The rectangular plan, with windows on three sides, guaranteed natural daylight throughout the day. The compartmentalised layout did not suit the client's lifestyle or brief and the interior was in desperate need of a facelift.

What people are looking for in their homes these days:

People will always try to maximise use of their space at home and tailor it to the lifestyle they aspire to.



The clients' brief:

The client was keen to create a large open-plan space for cooking, living, entertaining and dining. The brief was to give this main area priority of space and views, and to limit the size of the sleeping quarters. This led to the complete elimination of the central corridor to add this space to the main living area, which overlooks a mature garden and distant sea views. One bedroom was converted into an office space, partly screened off from the kitchen with custom plywood built-in furniture. The master bedroom and spare bedrooms were concealed behind bespoke flush doors to draw the least attention possible to their presence.

What makes this apartment stand out in terms of interior design, and in view of the excessive number of apartments being built and on the market:

Generally speaking, apartments within a block are based on a standardised template. Therefore, unsurprisingly, many lack individuality and soul. When dealing with a private client, the idea is to work closely with them so that the architecture and interiors evolve as a reflection of themselves and their





THE PROJECT

lifestyle. This is a collaborative process and involves close and regular communication. Once the client is fully understood, guidance is offered on the best way forward for them. In the case of this apartment in particular, the result is a very personal one, and a true representation of the client.

THE APARTMENT FORMS PART OF A BLOCK, AND THE AMOUNT OF ALTERATIONS REQUIRED WHERE SUBSTANTIAL ENOUGH TO REQUIRE STRUCTURAL THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

The trademark Forward Architects touch:

Forward Architects does not have a trademark style. The individual approach, understanding of the client's brief and attention to detail could, in a sense, be considered the firm's typical way of working, and something to take pride in. Indeed, this approach produces very different tailored results and it is sometimes hard to understand how they are products of the same firm.

The most challenging aspect of the project:

This was probably the structural solution. The apartment forms part of a block, and the amount of alterations required where substantial enough to require structural thinking outside the box.

How working within the four blank walls of a modern space differs from tackling a property full of natural features to play around with:

When a property is rich in natural or manmade features, one needs to be sensitive enough to recognise and incorporate them into the design, so that the final result is enhanced by them. The flip side to this is that those same features might also determine or condition the design. With four blank walls, one starts at zero and needs to be creative from the outset. On the one hand, there is nothing to latch the design onto, but on the other, one has full design freedom.

The look and feel of the apartment and how this was achieved in terms of materials, colours, textures chosen and used:

The apartment is personal, tranquil and rich in textures. Natural oak flooring was used throughout, except for the bathrooms, where a micro-cement flooring was introduced. All colours chosen are light, or earthy tones. The plywood bespoke shelving in the home office gives it a particular warmth and creates an intricate play of light as the south sun casts its





THE PLYWOOD BESPOKE SHELVING IN THE HOME OFFICE GIVES IT A PARTICULAR WARMTH AND CREATES AN INTRICATE PLAY OF LIGHT AS THE SOUTH SUN CASTS ITS SHADOWS THROUGH THE WINDOW BLINDS ONTO THE NATURAL WOOD SURFACES OF THE ROOM



shadows through the window blinds onto the natural wood surfaces of the room. A speckled granite was used for the kitchen surfaces and splashback, which contrasts well with the simple kitchen and bespoke steel breakfast counter, extending from the central island. Other materials include a warm blue wallpaper in the entrance hall and a rough grey plaster backdrop to the living room's fireplace wall.

The end result:

Apart from what it looks like, the true end result is the quality of the living experience that the space is designed to provide. One would need to put this question to the client, but the thinking is that it serves his lifestyle and gives him something to look forward to coming home to each day. ■

