



ALL THAT Glitters

Award-winning design agency Bernard Interiors give L:J Andrew an exclusive tour of one of their villa projects on Marbella's glamorous Golden Mile

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The Golden Mile is one of the most in demand areas in terms of properties for both residence and second-home use due to its unrivalled location between Marbella and Puerto Banús. Arguably the most iconic area of Marbella, distinction, privilege and luxury are the best definition of this sought-after region sprinkled with spectacular sea-view villas and plush penthouses surrounded by abundant flora and mature gardens. With an international reputation for creating exceptional designs, UK-based Bernard Interiors was commissioned to design and project manage the redevelopment of a luxury second home on the exclusive Golden Mile for a private client.

The focus of the brief was to create a light and comfortable family residence with a contemporary European feel, that also encouraged relaxation and had space for hosting informal family and social gatherings.

Jen Bernard, founder and managing director of Bernard Interiors led the design team for this project. "Having worked with the client on their primary UK residence we were delighted to be asked to redesign their family holiday home where they spend most of the summer," she said. "We have worked closely with the client for many years and understood their vision for a luxurious, colourful and inviting space where the design for outdoor living is as important as the interior."

Making the most of the villa's coastal location was paramount for the client, so the three main ground floor areas - living, dining and kitchen - were combined and now connect to the outside terrace with views across the gardens to the sea.

The open plan dining space is elegant and sophisticated, featuring a soft and calming colour palette. Bespoke dining

chairs upholstered in a small-scale geometric pattern by Metaphores bring a subtle warmth and texture to the space.

The client also required a workspace that was functional yet did not conflict with the luxurious style of the interior. Bernard Interiors made clever use of the hall space and created a neat recessed desk with concealed cupboards. The walls are covered with lacquered wood and a cream leather inset desk top creates the perfect working space. A bespoke brass framed mirror adjacent to the desk hides a cupboard for the AV equipment.

The terrace is multi-functional and works exceptionally well as an open plan social space for lounging or dining. A combination of comfortable seating surrounds a bespoke coffee table where family and friends can socialise with drinks or watch tv. The screen is concealed in a bespoke kitchen unit with a motorised lift. The outdoor kitchen houses everything needed including a fridge, freezer and storage for crockery and glassware.

Jen continued: "We worked with local talented and very skilled tradesmen. The detail of the flush tile and plaster finish in the bathrooms was executed to perfection. Around 80% of the furniture, doors and cabinetry is completely bespoke. A locally-based furniture maker was commissioned for the pieces designed by Bernard Interiors using materials including highly glossed timbers, inlaid antique brass and leather. The bespoke cocktail cabinet in the kitchen is perfect for entertaining and has been designed so it can be cleverly concealed when not in use."

When selecting art for a private client, the process is collaborative and deeply personal. The brief from the client was to create an uplifting yet tranquil space with a timeless feel. Artists were commissioned from across the world, with

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one of the key bespoke pieces being imported from the US. The outcome is a unique and eclectic collection – abstract, sculptural, mixed media – reflecting the client's dynamic personal taste whilst complementing the interior scheme and the Mediterranean setting.

Asked about Bernard Interiors' favourite part of the project Jen said: "We loved every inch of it, the way in which everything flows seamlessly makes for a calm, comfortable luxury retreat."

On working on projects internationally Jen commented: "There can sometimes be language issues, and there's more likelihood that a project team is working together for the first time. It's therefore important to pay attention to building relationships and ensuring communication lines are clear, which after all is best practice for all projects, wherever they are. It's imperative to communicate the design effectively through clear drawings and instructions as it's not always possible to be on site. Being appointed at an early stage on this project gave us the opportunity to liaise with the Spanish based project manager on M&E, room layout and hard finishes from the outset."

The procurement and operations team at Bernard Interiors coordinated the acquisition of products from across the globe. The frames and carcasses for the outdoor furniture were made by hand over a three-month period in Richmond, Virginia. Regular meetings with their British representative in London ensured the correct finish and style envisaged by the client was achieved. The upholstery fabric for this furniture was selected and purchased from Italy, before being flown to the UK for appropriate fire retardancy treatment.

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After coordinating the transfer of the fabric from the UK to the US for final upholstery, the finished furniture was then transported directly to Marbella, for a white glove delivery. The final installation was coordinated on site by senior members of the Bernard Interiors team, alongside a delivery team who were located in Marbella for the duration of the final install. This ensured that furniture was appropriately received, unpacked and checked thoroughly by experienced designers, with a keen eye for detail. The team then instructed the position and placement of furniture and soft furnishings, before styling and dressing for client handover.

Delivering a project abroad without a doubt brings a certain set of challenges, but with a positive mindset and dedicated team of designers and operations, experts Bernard Interiors have successfully delivered and installed several exceptional schemes overseas - on time, within budget and to the highest finish and this project was no exception. www.bernardinteriors.co.uk