



**LIVING ROOM**

"This room changed completely once it was furnished; when you walked in before it was a bit 'something and nothing', so what we decided to do was try and create three zones; a lot of apartments now have this open plan arrangement, so what we did was look at how we could effectively create three zones in one open plan space"

"You walk in the door and immediately you've got a wow factor, but they're quite clever; they work to create the dining space"

"In fairness you could put another chair on either end which gets you up to six - yes they are in the city centre and can walk to the city centre, but if they want to invite people over for supper they've got the space to be able to do it"

"The Barcelona chair is quite iconic, it's a nice style piece, we like to incorporate things which to a lot of people are quiet aspirational - show apartments are all about creating that level of aspiration"

"We've mirrored the shape of the lamp and shape on the wallpaper - it's subtle, but it's all designed so it all comes together"



# Through the key

There's certainly a sense you're walking in the footsteps of Loyd Grossman as you enter the show apartment at Crosby's i-land, writes **Jon Perks**

**I**n the smart Poggenpohl kitchen, a cookbook sits open at a recipe for chilli stir fry; the plasma TV in the living area is showing the DVD of FBI thriller *The Sentinel*; on the bedroom floor is a packed Reebok gym bag, ready to head off for a workout. A peek into the two bathrooms shows an array of high-end men's toiletries.

So, as Loyd would say, let's look at the evidence; someone who looks after themselves and cares about their appearance, likes to cook - but also enjoys the odd action blockbuster.

The place could feel like Varosha, the Cypriot village that has remained deserted since 1974, where half-eaten plates of food still sit on tables and cars wait on garage forecourts for buyers that will never come.

Happily the show apartment doesn't feel like a ghost town, but enjoys the atmosphere of someone's home, someone who has a nice lifestyle - hopefully someone a prospective buyer wants to be.

The show apartment is the work of interior designer Andrew Henry, who has previously worked with developers Crosby Lend Lease on several projects including the recently launched Hub scheme.

After consulting with Crosby, Andrew and his small team decided on a 'metrosexual male' theme for the i-land apartment - hence the blend of artistic, creative elements

and more traditional masculine design cues.

"There's been quite a lot of PR about the metrosexual male - he could be straight, he could be gay," says Andrew as we tour the apartment at the Essex Street scheme.

"We felt that it suited this development which is very well situated because it epitomises city centre living and you're on the edge of the gay district, it sits really well.

"What we did was look at typically masculine colours but then also at bringing in lighter and softer tones and textures, so overall the apartment has got a contemporary but luxurious feel to it."

The ground floor, two-bedroom apartment has certainly got the wow factor, albeit in modulated tones. Feature walls in the hallway and each room make great use of striking wallpaper, each of which uses elements of the three signature colours of silver, chocolate and duck egg blue.

After walking round the empty shell, Andrew and his team drew up detailed mood boards to show the developers, including the wallpaper, fabric swatches,

furniture, suggestions on the artwork...

"They're very detailed," says Andrew. "We don't leave an awful lot to the imagination. A lot of what we do is attention to detail, the finishing touches."

Nothing is overused, however - the colours are used sparingly; most rooms are predominantly white with the stripped wooden floors that come in every i-land home. There is duck egg blue in the mounts of the artwork that is dotted around the apartment (each print has an aquatic theme to mirror the water feature outside); the main bedroom has chocolate and gold wallpaper, silver curtains and blue scatter cushions.



**"OUR SURVEY SAYS..."**  
with Maguire Jackson



74% of those surveyed said that, when looking for an apartment, it is quite or very important that the property has a balcony.

Source: Maguire Jackson monthly online survey, February 2008.  
Visit [http://www.maguirejackson.com/apartments\\_birmingham\\_let.asp](http://www.maguirejackson.com/apartments_birmingham_let.asp) to take part in the latest survey.

# HUB

"Hub is different," says Andrew of the other Crosby scheme he has worked on. "What we had was four apartments all on the same floor and they represented four different types of home you could buy in the building.

"We looked at themes – a classic monochrome apartment, that looked fab; they then have a city pad, it's effectively like a studio but they've made quite a clever design so the bed is separate, so we did a very funky apartment with a Pop Art theme (right), hence the jukebox and funky fabrics; we then did one which was all white and silver which was stunning; the last one, which was a two-bed apartment, has one of these bath tubs which are a kind of Oriental style, so we picked up on that and did an Oriental theme."



Liberty terrace



Kitchen

# eyehole



"Interior design is a bit like fashion, it's changing all the time and just as you have fashion collections that come out each spring and autumn, you have exactly the same for interior design, so I make sure we see all our reps on a regular basis," says Andrew, whose business is based in Bristol.

"What we try and do with the show apartment is not only to meet the clients' expectations but to try and exceed it if we can, go that little extra mile."

He adds: "I certainly feel that when somebody walks round any showhome whether it be a one-bedroom apartment or a five-bedroom house, the colours should certainly flow, but every room should hold its own interest – I want people to look forward to the next room.

"It's got to have a balance, it's got to be right for the market, we have to choose things which we feel are right for someone potentially buying this apartment, that they

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would have or aspire to have.

"Ultimately what we must never lose sight of is we are here to help the developer sell their product," says Andrew.

"The show apartment has failed if it doesn't generate sales – the best thing that I can hear someone say is 'three sales at the weekend' or 'we've had interest in the next release' – you want them to buy, it's about creating that decision to buy."



**BEDROOM**

"This wallpaper on its own, someone might say oh, it's quite dark, but you then have the nice texture of the headboard and a bit of glamour of the light and it's pulling everything together – it's one wall and everything else is white and we've picked out the three colour tones elsewhere"

"We always dress the wardrobes – in any apartment if anyone's looking round they always open a wardrobe – it's finding things that people would have aspiration to"



**76 Liberty Place**

Talking of properties with balconies, this top-floor, two-bedroom penthouse benefits from extensive city centre and canalside views from the full-length terrace – perfect for spring breakfasts and summer evenings.

A short stroll from the bars and restaurants of Brindleyplace, this apartment is the height of luxury with wood effect flooring and full length, double-glazed windows.

A secure parking space, concierge service and fully-integrated kitchen come as standard.

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Lounge



Bedroom