

CHANNEL ISLAND CERAMICS THE DREAM TEAM

CHANNEL ISLAND CERAMICS HAVE BEEN PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF QUALITY AND DESIGN IN KITCHENS, BATHROOMS AND BEDROOMS FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES AND WE MEET THE TEAM WHO SHARE A FEW OF THEIR DESIGN INFLUENCES – AND TALK ABOUT THEIR OWN DREAM ROOMS.

SALES MANAGER JEFF LE

MESSURIER is a master woodcarver and furniture designer and for many years ran the family Guernsey Woodcarvers business. 'I am a master carver, a cabinet maker and a sculptor which has stood me in good stead when the chance came to join the design team here at CIC.'

Jeff found himself looking for a new challenge when the time came for woodcarving business to close.

'I was experienced in creating bespoke furniture and often worked on homes alongside John at CIC in fact at my job interview John (Litchfield) showed me a design of a bathroom he was putting into a new house and I had fitted out the rest of the house!'

Jeff joined the staff as a designer and tends to specialise in kitchen design. 'We all have our specialist areas but I do love to create a dream kitchen for a client and deliver exactly what they have asked for. It really is important to find out how they use the space and ensure they get the very best of the design. To me the kitchen is the engine room of the home and as such it has to work properly for the family.'

'I have a lot of experience with 3D design software and enjoy the challenges of working with difficult spaces. I also enjoy the detail involved especially when you have to cut granite work surfaces you cannot afford to be even a millimetre out.'

Jeff admits that at present he does not possess his own dream kitchen but he has a clear view of what it would be like.

'For me it is all about putting in gadgets. I am in the process of choosing a new hob for our kitchen and it has to be the best so we are investing in a new induction hob. I am also looking at a new steam combination oven which retains all the nutrients in the food and I am told bakes the very best cakes and bread. I would also like a sub-zero refrigerator but sadly we haven't got room for one!'

Jeff says his choice of kitchen is an easy decision.

'I would definitely go for an Edwin Loxley kitchen as they are made by craftsmen and take me back to my past. The workmanship is superb. For me I would have a mix of solid wood and painted cupboards to give some definition to the room and of course I would have to opt for granite worktops.'

He would also incorporate a boiling water tap by Quooker and no kitchen he says would be complete without a Gaggenau Oven.'

A kitchen has to work efficiently. Today kitchens are no longer places where you cook meals, they tend to be living spaces too so you have to give thought to things like keeping surfaces clear and avoiding noisy appliances. Always buy the best you can afford as it will pay off in the long run. Silent appliances are vital when you are spending a lot of time in the kitchen or if you are combining it with a living space.'

So is there anything else Jeff would squeeze into his own dream design?

'Well if I could get my wife to agree to it I would sneak in a radio controlled car track but I can't see that happening any time

LIKE HER FELLOW DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS KATE IWON can turn her talents to creating dream bedrooms kitchens and bathrooms but she has become the bedroom designer aficionado.

'I studied design and a lot of technical aspects of building planning and drawing, while I was studying at school in Poland. I could have gone on to become an architect but I enjoyed the creative side of the job more so I gradually moved toward design.'

Kate says that she enjoys the whole design process.

'It is all about light and space and deciding how best to use that space. The hardest thing for me is being asked to squeeze a lot into a small area as it does shrink the room down. I hate filling every single corner of a bedroom!'

For Kate the priority is making the bedroom into a restful room.

'It is important that your bedroom is somewhere that you can relax. For me, my dream bedroom would have white walls and wooden floors, oak works well in bedrooms, with lots of glass and of course lots of light. I love vaulted ceilings because the feeling of space they create.'

You can sometimes use the odd accent colour but I prefer to use shades of taupe, pale grey and shades of white. Fitted wardrobes allow you to maximise storage and of course storage is an important part of delivering a dream bedroom.'

Kate takes a lot of time to decide where beds should be placed.

'I also like to feature big beds, they look more luxurious and of course they cry out to be dressed

beautifully. For me my wish list would include a huge walk in wardrobe and a dressing room. I enjoy having my own space where all your things can be simply stored out of sight.'

'I listen to my customers and try very hard to give them the bedroom they want. If a bedroom looks good and welcomes you in then you will be able to relax and enjoying spending time there. Everyone has different tastes and I enjoy the challenge of creating a dream bedroom from their brief. It is always rewarding when someone sends you a card or an email or a bunch of flowers for a job well done.'

Kate is delighted that her love of design has been passed down to her student daughter Daria who is 20 and in her first year at university.

'She is as design student with a real interest, and a talent in textile design and she is about to have a placement year at Burberry and she was delighted to meet the head of design Christopher Bailey who is one of the top designers in the country.'

'I am so proud of her and art and design does seem to run in the family, my late mother was an artist and was very talented but unlike me, she was not able to follow through with her talents.'

Kate suspects that Daria will probably leave household design to her mother and possibly go into fashion.

'My only problem is that people tend to think I am younger than I am even though I have 20 years experience in this industry! I just enjoy working to a brief, meeting the challenges of creating dream spaces for different people with different tastes and budgets and giving them what they need to create the most stylish and relaxing space possible.'

is vital that you to listen to your client, gauge their needs, find out how they live and how they want to use the space. I also take into account the number of family members who will use the space and how it will fit into their lifestyle.'

Rachel says that bathroom designs are now very diverse.

'Some people want light and bright and airy, others go for the more traditional designs while certain clients want a more moody theme with low lights giving them a spa experience.'

She says she has noticed a move toward using more colour.

'There is more of a call for using gold, nickel and rose gold is also becoming popular. Manufacturers are now using very advanced finishes that allow us to use things that in the past would not have been so durable. For example Hansgrohe has physical vapour deposition (PVD) process that is harder than conventional chrome so it gives a very polished and very hard wearing finish that will not tarnish.'

So, with all this experience and talent at her disposal does Rachel have her own dream bathroom?

The question has her laughing and shaking her head.

'Right now our children's education is top priority but when funds allow I know exactly the sort of bathroom I will design. For me it is all about technology and the latest things to give you a wow factor that will last.

I would definitely go for the new Villeroy and Boch toilet that automatically warms the seat, has a subdued lighting system that gives the bathroom a gentle glow in the night, and a seat that you can set to open for a female or male! It also has a special silver antibacterial glaze that makes it easy to clean and kills any nasty germs.'

Rachel would choose to install one of the state of the art Rain Shower units.

'It's like a soft mist but it really does soak you and it is so relaxing to stand under it.'

Lighting she says, is the final and vital detail to get right in bathroom design.

'You have to make sure you have proper light subtle and when you are lying in the bath you should feel like you are having the ultimate spa experience. Finally I would invest in a Keuco mirror so when you are applying your makeup you can opt for daylight or night light setting so you always have the proper light!'

RACHEL BARCLAY

is an experienced designer who combines a busy family life with creating dream bathrooms for her clients.

A former finalist in a national Bathroom Designer of The Year competition, Rachel has worked for CIC for 17 years.

Rachel is passionate about design, and she has a very clear view of what makes the perfect bathroom.

'I did a degree in interior design and the course was a very technical one which encompassed things like air conditioning and disabled access as well as the aesthetic aspects of design. Over the years this has helped me tremendously. I worked as a teacher in the UK and became head of art in a senior school in Cambridgeshire but once I relocated to Guernsey with my husband, a job like this seemed to bring all those strands together.'

Rachel says that she had applied to a variety of companies, but her first interview was with John Litchfield at Channel Island Ceramics. She was impressed by what she saw and John was quick to take her onto his design team.

'At that time I was designing everything from Mark Wilkinson kitchens to offices and bathrooms, the role was very diverse. But it became clear that bathroom design was my real forte.

I enjoy creating amazing bathrooms and I find it a real challenge. You can create an amazing space moving walls and putting a concept together that will really work for your client. I think it's because there is an opportunity to add to the structure of the room.'

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