

Deep impact

Sumptuous fabrics in rich shades are used throughout this modern family home to keep it feeling luxurious yet cosy

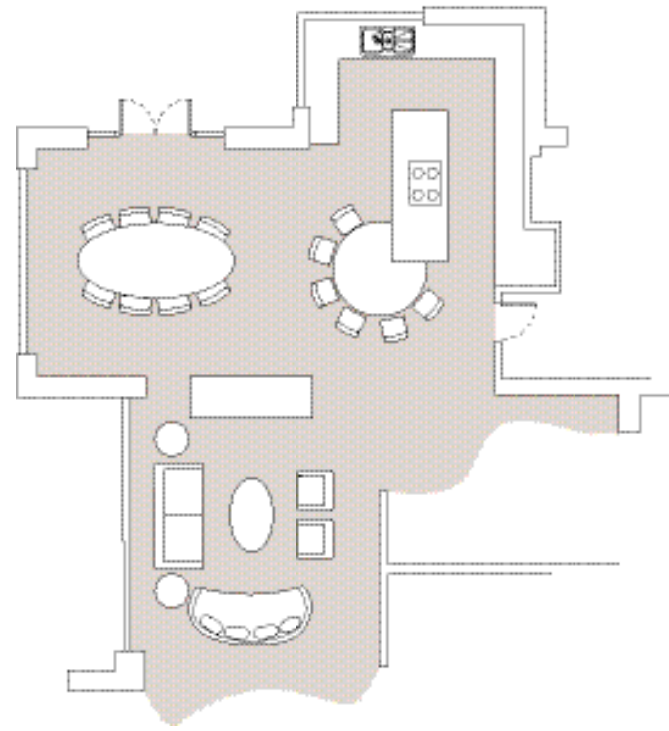
Words: **Felicity Borthwick** Photography: **Darren Chung**





"The original plan just had a bench on the back of the island, so we suggested the white, circular breakfast table instead."

"Aude didn't want the kitchen to be too stark so I suggested this lovely Zimmer+Rohde fabric for the blind, and luckily the pair were open to using colour," says designer Natalie.



Left: The elegant light above the breakfast table was chosen to complement the lights in the living room.

Opposite page, top: The downstairs is almost completely open-plan with the kitchen-dining area, leading onto an impressive, double-height sitting room accentuated by a stunning chandelier.

Bottom right: Natalie has softened the voluminous living room with exquisite sheer curtains, featuring shimmering copper tones and a rich blue that inspired all fabric choices for the downstairs.

Opening page (p141): Wood and gloss finishes unite in this Nicholas Anthony kitchen, creating the warm, contemporary vibe the couple wanted.



Helping clients design an entire house is always a mammoth project, so when Dan and Aude Look approached Natalie Rudland of Alexander James Interiors with two very different visions for their new-build in Berkshire, she knew she faced a challenge.

"Dan wanted something very modern and minimal with a mix of stark and white, whereas Aude was after a much warmer, homely feel," she recalls. "The house is vast with an open-plan layout and double-height living area so we decided to go for a contemporary look but then pull in rich colours and textures to create a cosy vibe." Luckily, they were both incredibly happy with the finished result and now have a great family home for themselves and their two children. Here, Natalie tells us more about the project...

How involved were you in the kitchen design?

Nicholas Anthony designed the kitchen, but we helped with the island layout. The original plan just had a bench on the back of the island, so we suggested the white, circular breakfast table instead. The space was big enough and, although there is a dining area right next to it, the family often prefer to eat breakfast in the kitchen.

What inspired the blue colour scheme in the kitchen-dining area?

The inspiration for the whole downstairs pretty much came from the full-height sheer curtains in the living room. They are a rich blue with silver, gold and copper tones in them, to give a real feeling of opulence. So that's why we brought in the dark blue splashback and kitchen chairs – they give the space some oomph and stop the kitchen from looking too stark by contrast. The Heathfield & Co light above the dining table also has beautiful blue crystal balls suspended from the bottom of the shade.

Yes, the lighting in here is stunning. How did you decide on these fittings?

The light above the breakfast table was chosen to complement the cascading double light over the living room, which has lots of twists. Lighting was so important in this project – it's not just about the chandeliers but also the spots and architectural lighting, such as the coffered ceiling above the dining table.

Talk us through the design of the master suite...

You walk through double doors into a dressing room and then the bedroom is off to the left and the bathroom to the right. Dan often has to get up really early for work, between 4 and 5am, so the idea was that he can creep out of the bedroom and then make as much noise as he likes in the other two rooms. We wanted the bedroom scheme to be moody, like downstairs, but a bit softer and more relaxing, so we swapped the blues for warm taupes and soft whites. However, we have still brought in plenty of texture and patterns and the mirror strips on the panelled wall behind the bed help reflect light around the room.

What about in the ensuite?

The bathroom is quite sleek by comparison and has that beautiful freestanding bath in the centre. We put the shower and toilet in their own separate cubicles so that when you enter the room the focus is very much on the bath and the lovely window. Finally, there are large wall-mounted 'his and hers' basins at either end of the room with floor-to-ceiling mirrors behind them to create an infinity effect. **[KBB]**





The dressing room was designed to showcase certain pieces from Aude's fabulous collection of clothes and shoes, hence the glass-ened island and double glass doors in both sides of the wardrobe.



Above: "The bedroom boasts a double-height ceiling so, with the chandelier coming down, I wanted the impact of a full-height headboard, which is why we created this panelled wall," says Natalie. "The chandelier features thousands of glass droplets and looks stunning when lit."

Right: "We chose these hammered metal bedside lights to play on the mirror in the headboard and bounce light back around," says Natalie.



Q&A

Designer Natalie Rudland says...

What was the biggest challenge with the project?
Fulfilling Dan and Aude's seemingly contrasting brief at the same time, trying to get those two looks and bring them together to make sure they both got what they wanted.

What were the biggest expenses?
The chandeliers and also two polished plaster walls. There is one in the living room and one in the entrance hall.

Any advice for people embarking on a similar project?
It's very important to think about how you will live in the house and not just about making it look pretty. For example, they wanted to be able to have family breakfasts in the kitchen so we changed the layout from a bench to a table and, in the master suite, took into consideration that Dan is often up early.



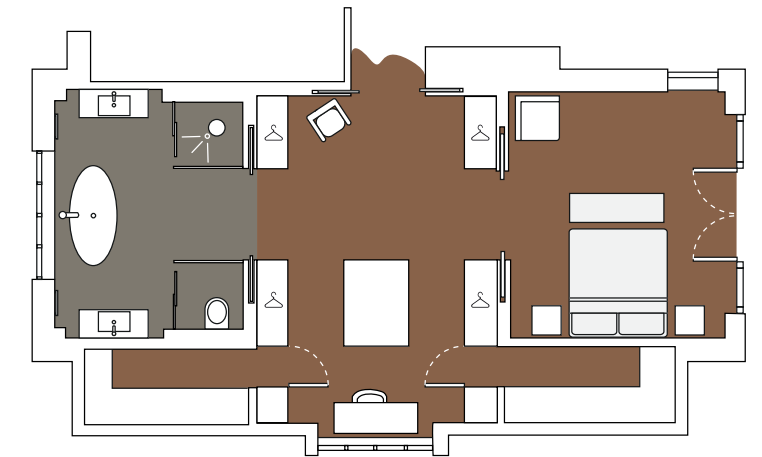


Large 'his and hers' basin consoles adorn either end of the ensuite with floor-to-ceiling mirrors behind both to create an infinity effect.



Above: The shower and WC are both concealed behind frosted glass panels to ensure the focus remains on the elegant freestanding bath and views across the treetops.

Below: The lighting in the master ensuite benefits from four different 'moods' including a soft, relaxing one for bathing, and a nice, bright setting for getting ready for work.



GET THE
LOOK

Right: Ara, Paradise collection, £181 per m, Zimmer+Rohde. (020 7351 7115 or www.zimmer-rohde.com)



Left: Melrose four-seater sofa with oak legs in Darwen Loch Blue, £1799, John Lewis. (0345 604 9049 or www.johnlewis.com)



Below: Ebersson rug by Designers Guild in slate, £1145, Heal's. (020 7896 7451 or www.heals.com)



Above: Saint-Jean cushion, 45 x 45cm in navy, £100, Amara. (0800 587 7645 or www.amara.com)



Above: Lexington 32-inch Opal Jade Pendant with 32-inch Lexington Drum shade in Dark Teal and Premium Satin and Silver PVC lining, £3178, Heathfield & Co. (01732 350450 or www.heathfield.co.uk)

Below: Valencia stool, £1205 plus fabric, The Sofa & Chair Company. (020 8993 4415 or www.thesofoandchair.co.uk)



DESIGN

Interior design Natalie Rudland of Alexander James Interiors (020 7887 7604 or www.aji.co.uk)

Interior architect Marina Demarchuk of Alexander James Interiors, as before

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Y-Line range in Gloss Crystal and Matt Taupe, Nicholas Anthony (0800 068 3603 or www.nicholas-anthony.co.uk)

Worktops and breakfast table Glacier White, Corian (0800 962116 or www.corian.co.uk), Nicholas Anthony, as before

Splashback Back-painted glass in a bespoke colour, through Nicholas Anthony, as before

Appliances Induction hob, Vario Cool fridge, Vario Cool freezer, coffee machine, oven, steam oven, combi microwave, warming drawer, all Gaggenau (0844 892 8988 or www.gaggenau.com/gb); Extractor, Westin (01484 421585 or www.westin.co.uk); Integrated dishwasher, Siemens (0344 892 8999 or www.siemens-home.bsh-group.com/uk); Undercounter wine storage unit, for similar try Neff (0344 892 8989 or www.neff.co.uk)

Sink Blanco (01923 635200 or www.blanco.co.uk)

Taps Master S-Baby tap, Blanco, as before; Fusion tap, Quooker (0345 833 3555 or www.quooker.co.uk)

Floor tiles Natural shabby white by Porcelaingres (www.porcelaingres.com)

Chairs Bespoke design by Alexander James Interiors, as before

Light above table Heathfield & Co (01732 350450 or www.heathfield.co.uk)

Blinds Ara by Zimmer+Rohde (020 7351 7115 or www.zimmer-rohde.com)

DINING AREA

Dining table Porada, Chaplins (020 8421 1779 or www.chaplins.co.uk)

Chairs and rug Bespoke design by Alexander James Interiors, as before

Light Heathfield, as before

Curtains Malic by Zimmer+Rohde, as before

LIVING AREA

Curtains Malic by Zimmer+Rohde, as before

Sofas and armchairs Sofa & Chair Company (020 8752 8935 or www.thesofoandchair.co.uk)

Cushions Z&R by Harlequin (0845 123 6815 or www.harlequin.uk.com) and Lelievre, Designers Guild (020 7351 5775 or www.designersguild.com)

Coffee table and side table Bespoke design by Alexander James Interiors, as before

Rug Calvin Klein, DSH Flooring, Alexander James Interiors (www.aji.co.uk/dshflooring)

Lighting Table lamp, Porta Romana (01420 23005 or www.portaromana.co.uk); Ceiling light, bespoke design by Alexander James Interiors, as before

BEDROOM

Bed, rug and headboard wall Bespoke design by Alexander James Interiors, as before

Flooring Wood flooring supplied by DSH Flooring, as before

Stool and armchair Sofa & Chair Company, as before

Chandelier Light Drizzle, Ochre (020 7096 7372 or www.ochre.net)

Bedside table Frato (www.frato-interiors.com)

Bedside lamps Waterfall lamp, Porta Romana, as before

Curtains Pioneer, Zimmer+Rohde, as before

Cushions and pillows The White Company (020 3758 9222 or www.thewhitecompany.com)

DRESSING ROOM

Joinery Bespoke design by Alexander James Interiors, as before

Flooring Wood flooring supplied by DSH Flooring, as before

Chairs Sofa & Chair Company, as before

Lighting Light Drizzle chandelier, Ochre, as before

Blinds Pioneer, Zimmer+Rohde, as before

BATHROOM

Bath Victoria + Albert Baths (020 7351 4378 or www.vandabaths.com)

Flooring Pentagon Tiles (01279 626662 or www.pentagontiles.com)

Basin units Duravit (0845 500 7787 or www.duravit.co.uk)

Brassware Hansgrohe (01372 472001 or www.hansgrohe.co.uk)

Shower screen Majestic Showers (0844 800 1500 or www.majesticshowers.com)

WC Duravit (0845 500 7787 or www.duravit.co.uk)

COST

Kitchens from Nicholas Anthony start from around £25,000 and a similar master suite would cost around £75,000 for a bedroom, dressing room and bathroom