

THE HIGH LIFE

Fabulous views and an abundance of natural light sold this top-floor apartment to Heather and Paul Bacon

FEATURE RACHEL LEEDHAM | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

SITTING ROOM

A pair of gilded side tables and the elegant wall lights add glamour.

Interior design, LIFE Style. Mirror and gilt side tables (FTA47/L), £1,026 each, Vaughan. Nicolas wall lights, £460 each; semi-cylinder shades, from £134 each, all Porta Romana. Mounted botanical print, £1,200, Surface View

UNIQUE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Penthouse apartment in a

late-Georgian building

LOCATION London

ROOMS Hall, sitting room,
kitchen, study/breakfast room,
conservatory, two bedrooms
(both en suite), dressing room

PURCHASED 2008

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived
in Italy in a former magistrates'
court and barracks adjoining
a 16th-century castle near
Lake Como,' says Heather

CONSERVATORY

Simple fixed blinds soften the
light that pours into this area,
making it ideal for entertaining.
Bespoke ceiling blinds, Deco. Modern
Hollywood side chairs, from £1,920
each (plus fabric), Ralph Lauren Home.
Norfolk Bell glass pendant light in
antique brass, £270, Period Lighting



STUDY
A desk was replaced with a circular table so that the space can double as a breakfast room. Dakota dining table in ebonised oak with a brass base, £2,134, Julian Chichester. Wall colour, Off-White; ceiling colour, All White, both £34.50 for 2.5 litres of estate emulsion, Farrow & Ball



KITCHEN
Symmetry is a vital ingredient here. Häcker kitchen units in satin lacquer with Corian worktops in Sage Brush and coloured-glass splashbacks, all supplied by K&I Kitchens, price on application

Like a scene from *Mary Poppins*, is how Heather Bacon describes the view across London's rooftops from the penthouse flat she shares with her husband Paul. 'It's particularly magical at dusk, when all the buildings are silhouetted against the sky,' she says.

Heather and Paul have spent the last 20 years based in Italy but Paul, who divides his working life between Italy and England, increasingly felt the need for a base in the capital. Five years ago this top-floor flat came up for sale and he jumped at the chance to buy it. 'Paul's passionate about elegant architecture and this place is sited in a beautiful Georgian building,' says Heather. 'The other big draws were the conservatory and roof terrace, both something of a rarity in central London.'

The couple did little to the property until last year, when they realised it was time to replace the kitchen and two bathrooms, and give the entire flat a decorative overhaul. Paul had previously worked with interior designer Nicola Pratt, so she was called on to help with

the refurbishment. 'This part of the city is very English and we wanted to reflect that in the style of the flat, but it needed to have contemporary touches, too,' says Heather.

So the kitchen – formerly a dated timber design – is now resolutely modern, featuring minimal satin lacquer cabinets. They provide lots of storage in this relatively compact space, and work well with the natural light that pours through a rooflight above. The generous hall features two more rooflights, making it a very bright space. 'Flats often have quite dark, pokey entrances, whereas this makes you instantly feel welcome,' says Heather.

Shades of soft green run throughout, proving a good foil for some of the pieces of furniture the couple already owned, including walnut dining chairs and a caramel-coloured leather ottoman. The palette also sets the tone for a botanical theme in the form of beautiful prints and lots of plants and flowers that link the rooms with the roof terrace.

The latter, formerly an uninviting area featuring raspberry-pink painted walls and

stark railings, has been remodelled to create another space for entertaining. Here, relaxing sofas are accompanied by timber-clad raised planters with soft grasses. 'It's so peaceful that it's hard to imagine you're in the heart of the city when sitting outside,' says Heather.

The two bedrooms were the biggest challenge because, unlike the rest of the home, they were decidedly dark. Nicola brightened the spaces with pale furnishings and took advantage of the limited light to commission silk curtains, which would not have been able to withstand bright sunlight. As elsewhere, symmetry plays a key role in the bedrooms, with pairs of bedside tables and lamps ensuring a chic, tailored feel.

With the transformation complete, the apartment is now the ideal base from which Heather and Paul can enjoy London. 'A huge advantage is that so many places are within walking distance,' says Heather. And when the pair are tired, at the end of a day pounding the streets of the capital, they know they have an elegant, relaxing home to return to. 25

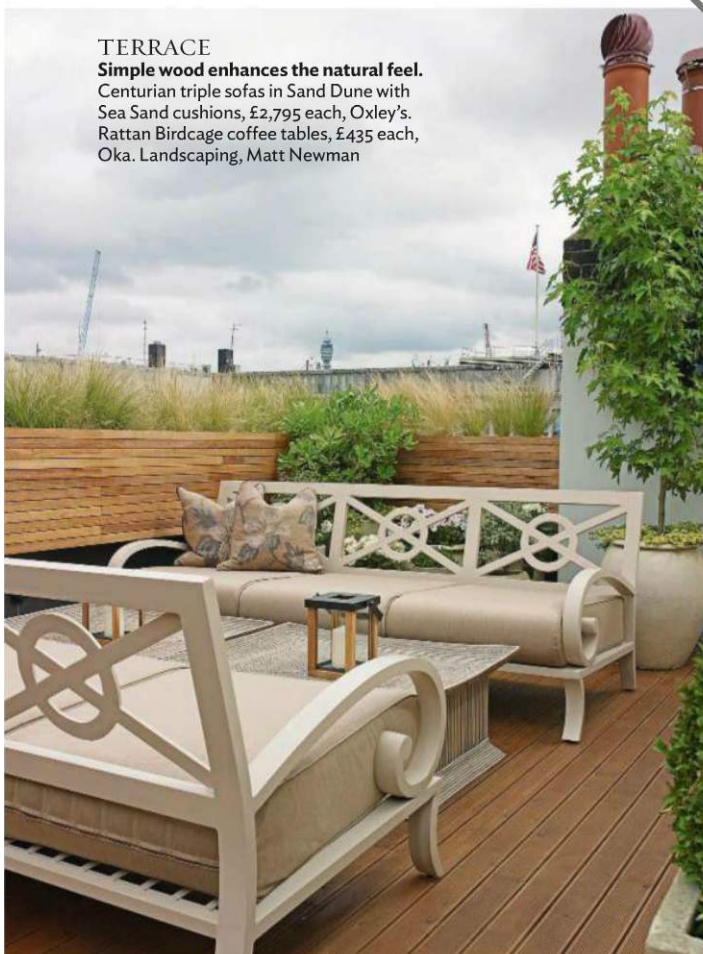
DECORATING TIP 'Painting the cornicing and skirting boards the same colour as the walls helps make the ceilings appear higher than they really are'



MASTER BEDROOM

A pale rug complements the scheme.

Mid o33 two-drawer bedside table, £488, Chelsea Textiles. For similar bedside lamps try Carlton TL 283, £995 each, Bella Figura. Cushion fabric, Flying Ducks in linen, £89m, Mulberry Home



TERRACE

Simple wood enhances the natural feel.

Centurian triple sofas in Sand Dune with Sea Sand cushions, £2,795 each, Oxley's. Rattan Birdcage coffee tables, £435 each, Oka. Landscaping, Matt Newman



BATHROOM

Shimmering mosaic tiles create a waterfall effect.

Varicor wall-hung vanity unit, £2,522, West One Bathrooms