

CARTE BLANCHE

A fresh canvas and inspiring surroundings
resulted in this timeless en suite.

PHOTOS TONY TIMMINGTON WORDS SHARON SMITH



Large slabs of marble create a seamless look, while light grey lends a warmer hue to the room than white.



Thomson Carpenter's brief for a Grade II listed 16th Century manor house set in 700 acres of Sussex countryside would be the envy of any interior designer. 'After around 30 years of living here the owners, a retired businessman and his wife, decided that a total overhaul was required,' says Tom. 'I more or less had free rein on the design. My clients wanted certain things but were very much open to my suggestions. I came up with ideas and they decided if they wanted to go ahead with what I proposed.'

The starting point was the owners' desire to change the master bedroom's en suite bathroom. Originally this lacked privacy by being totally exposed to the room, so Tom suggested moving the master suite to the other side of the house, creating a new bedroom with a dressing

room and turning an existing staircase, hallway and two small bathrooms into a spacious but private room. It was a major undertaking that entailed structural reconfiguration, including demolishing and rebuilding walls and reconstructing the ceiling to make it higher.

'For the en suite, my clients requested a large bath and separate, walk-in shower, two basins and plenty of hidden storage, but that was it. It was left to me to make suggestions on style, design, fixtures and fittings, as well as the best layout to bring out my clients' taste.'

Tom decided to combine a traditional style, in keeping with the age of the property, with state of the art comfort. He also wanted to complement the gold and cream colour scheme of the master bedroom while emulating the grand glamour found in bathrooms at top hotels such ➔

Above Sited beneath a window for an indulgent soak, The Paris Bath was chosen as much for its length and depth as for its sophisticated style.

Right Unique accessories include a 19th Century Indian marble bowl used as a soap dish and a Georgian-style footstool upholstered in Mulberry velvet to store towels.

BATHROOM PROFILE

This deluxe bathroom is a blend of tradition and beauty, its symmetry and wood panelling offset by Calacatta marble and chic French fixtures and fittings. Behind the splendour lies discreet modern comfort, such as concealed heating and generous storage in recessed cupboards hidden behind mirrors. A large vanity unit fulfils a practical function but also makes a statement as it vies for centre stage with a freestanding bath. Thomson Carpenter Interior Design, Shillinglee Park, Chiddingfold, Surrey GU8 4TA/62 Cambridge Street, London SW1V 4QQ. Tel: 07918 099656. thomsoncarpenter.co.uk. Expect to pay from £50,000 for similar, excluding installation.



‘Traditional styling calmly conceals essential comforts.’

as Claridges, The Berkeley and Le Bristol in Paris. ‘I’m a big fan of high-end hotel bathrooms because of their size and because they are assembled so well,’ he admits.

The layout illustrates another of Tom’s fundamental design tenets. ‘I like symmetry,’ he explains. ‘My favourite periods are Queen Anne and Georgian because you have this in abundance, plus fabulous proportions with high ceilings. I tried to impose some of that onto this project so chose to position the bath centrally beneath the window as it offers the bather a chance to enjoy the splendid view. The basins and vanity unit were placed opposite the door because I wanted them to be the first thing you see when coming into the room and a specially built brick pillar conceals the wc. A sense of balance is maintained by putting the walk-in shower on the other side of the pillar.’

Luxurious white marble was chosen for the floor, shower and vanity unit surface, while mirrored shower walls and white wood panelling maintain an inviting ambiance. These belie discreet modern comforts, such as heating underneath the floor and behind the shower walls. ‘A bathroom can be stylish and high-end but comfortable too. You don’t have to have one without the other,’ says Tom.

The four-month project ran smoothly. Not even the weight of the slabs of marble and the large bath presented a problem to the builders, who hauled it all up via a trolley rigged up on the master bedroom’s balcony.

Now that the master suite is finished and ready for occupation, is everyone pleased with the results? ‘Yes, I’m happy with it. There’s nothing I would change,’ says Tom. ■



STOCKISTS INFORMATION

CONSTRUCTION

Building work, EPOA, at Brian Capewell.

FIXTURES AND FURNISHINGS

Neptune Chichester **vanity unit**, from £575 for a curved base cabinet, at Surrey Furniture. Calacatta **marble**, EPOA, at Margrasil. The Paris **Bath** (without feet), £7,000; Bespoke floor-mounted **bath mixer** with diverter and hand-shower, EPOA; **Basin mixers** with straight spout and drain, from £1,436 each; Wall-mounted 30cm **shower head**, from £1,678; Concealed T4 **thermostatic valve**, from £3,033; **heated towel rails**, EPOA, all Carpe & Lyre collection, at The Water Monopoly. Kew close coupled **wc**, £600, at C.P. Hart. Bullet **wall lights** in hand-plated nickel, £1,500 each, at Soane. 15-inch waterproof LCD **TV**, £699, at Luxurite. Georgian-style paw **footstool**, £1,200, at English Georgian. Strong **White emulsion** 2001, around £36 per 2.5l; **Skimming Stone emulsion** 241, around £36 per 2.5l, both at Farrow & Ball.

**Prices are approximate. For stockists, see page 162.*

Above Mirrored finish shower walls exude glamour and enhance the sense of space.

Right The Carpe & Lyre brassware range used throughout has been hand-plated in nickel for a truly bespoke twist.