

**SITTING ROOM**  
A Regency-style fire surround acts as the focal point here. Scott limestone mantel, from £700, Real Flame (020 7731 5025, realflame.co.uk). Pigeon estate emulsion, £26.50 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball (01202 876141, farrow-ball.com). Delancey ottoman, £1,322 plus four metres of fabric, designed by Michael Reeves for Osborne & Little (020 7352 1456, osborneandlittle.com). The curtains were made up by Alice Constable Maxwell at ACM Interiors (020 8740 0959, acm-interiors.com) in Victor, £95 per metre, Marvic Textiles (020 8993 0191, marvictextiles.co.uk)

# Talking POINT

Tom Kenyon-Slaney revamped his maisonette, with the aim of setting tongues wagging

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN PHOTOGRAPHY MARCUS PEEL



■ THE OWNER

Tom Kenyon-Slaney, who is managing

director of a motivational speakers recruitment agency

■ HIS HOME Top-floor maisonette within a Victorian conversion

■ LOCATION West London

■ ROOMS Sitting/dining room/kitchen, study, bedroom, bathroom

■ PURCHASED 1988

■ PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'Before I moved here, I used to rent a house in Perthshire,' says Tom.

HOME TRUTHS



**KITCHEN**  
A glass splashback reflects light across the living area.  
Bespoke cabinetry, SM Furniture (020 8589 9111, smfurniture.co.uk), Deco Glaze (020 8569 8585, decoglaze.co.uk) is a good source of comparable glass splashbacks, price on application

Spread over the top two floors of a West London terrace is a bachelor pad that was designed to be 'suitable for a Prime Minister'. The maisonette's owner, Tom Kenyon-Slaney, may have said this slightly tongue in cheek, but he's not far off the mark. 'I needed somewhere for entertaining the many politicians and celebrities I work with,' Tom explains, 'rather than always taking them out to restaurants.'

bachelor, Tom had a bottle of champagne in the fridge and not much else, which indicated to me that the kitchen was hardly ever used.

'Being such a long, thin and very dark area, one could see why,' Alice continues. 'It was divided from the sitting room by a wall, so there was hardly enough space to open an Indian takeaway let alone cook. The remaining living zone was elongated and cramped.'

Her first task was to have this wall pulled down, then design one large room centred on the fireplace. The new plan allocated space for a dining area along the wall facing the windows, leaving the kitchen in its original place. Alice picked out some solid-beech units for the top cupboards and for the base run, a cherry lacquer similar in colour to the red leather associated with gentlemen's clubs. 'It was important that the kitchen should become a visual asset smart enough to look right in the context of an elegant sitting room,' she says.

Freed from the constraints of the old layout, Tom and Alice sourced some stylish furnishings to dress the rest of the room. These include an ▶

With his speakers' bureau having a roster that includes former US President George Bush Snr, Sir Richard Branson and Alastair Campbell, dinner parties at Tom's maisonette tend to be lively affairs. As a result, it was important to create a feel that would be conducive to this form of socialising.

Not having an expert eye for interiors, Tom enlisted the help of designer and artist Alice Constable Maxwell, whose paintings, as Tom puts it, 'display a healthy mix of tradition and off-the-wall quirkiness, so I guessed her schemes would be similar.' When she first saw the property, it looked 'tired and dated.' 'There was poor use of space,' says Alice. 'As a typical



**DINING AREA**  
Tom's collection of period prints adds some subtle spots of colour to this striking black scheme.

The black-lacquer table and chairs are discontinued lines from Orchid (020 7384 2443, orchidfurniture.co.uk); the company's Mandarin collection, £1,390 for a table, £230 for a chair, are finished in a similar style



### BATHROOM

A calm yet contemporary wallpaper makes a striking impression here.

**Watermark wallpaper**, £64 for 10-metre roll, Neisha Crosland (020 7978 4389, neishacrosland.com)

**MASTER BEDROOM**  
Deep sage-grey walls create a restful feel.

**Bedhead** designed by Alice Constable Maxwell at ACM Interiors (020 8740 0959, acm-interiors.com). Paint & Paper Library's (020 7823 7755, paintlibrary.co.uk) **Tarlatan** emulsion, £32 for 2.5 litres, is a match for the wall colour




Oriental-style dining suite which, through its striking dark tones, adds a sense of masculinity to the decor. A comfy sofa acts as a divider between the kitchen and the reception area, where accent shades picked out in the curtains, cushions and the artwork on the chimney breast offset the grey-painted walls.

Upstairs, there was a tiny bathroom located on the landing, which Tom agreed to move after much debate. 'It meant sacrificing the second bedroom in favour of a decent-size bathroom,' says Tom, 'but in freeing up the landing, I acquired a nice little study.'

Because of Tom's lofty stature, there were issues with height here and there. 'As well as having to enlarge the doorways, we felt it was only right to install taller kitchen units,' says Alice. 'We also had to find a headboard that

matched the proportions of his huge bed – backed with an antique mirror, this old screen makes quite a distinctive feature.' With its palette of taupes, the bedroom complements beautifully the sophisticated wallpaper introduced into the new bathroom.

For Tom, coming back to his renovated home each day is a simple joy that he will never take for granted. 'It's an experience that always lifts the spirits,' he says. 'Before the revamp, I felt as though I was living in a motel, but now this place has definitely got five stars. My collections of paintings and books are happy reminders of my travels, and I particularly enjoy working from the study. Moreover, I find that I dine out much less than I used to, but my close friends still insist it's about time that I learnt how to cook properly!' 

### OPEN-PLAN LIVING

Demolishing a partition wall gave Tom a great room for socialising, where he has created defined areas for cooking, dining and relaxing. These are our top tips for opening up your living space.

■ If you're thinking of knocking two rooms into one, consult a structural engineer before any work is carried out. They will be able to advise on whether a wall is load-bearing.



■ Try to incorporate alcoves, recesses or even the floorspace beneath a staircase (as shown above) into your living area – these can be used for seating, a study or displaying objects. Shelving units that can be accessed from either side are another great idea. Hi-gloss finishes work well, as they help bounce light around the room.

■ Consider the natural light sources for an open-plan room. Find out if it's possible to knock through to install a porthole, lantern (as seen below) or glass tiles, to introduce more light, and a feeling of space.



■ Think about lighting carefully: select a combination of task, mood and accent lighting to give a different atmosphere in each part of the room.

■ Finally, a harmonious use of materials and a clean, unfussy look is key, as are features and accents to add character. It's also vital to create a sense of flow between zones.