

# THE CREAM OF THE

# CREW

With an incredibly high standard of interior design thinking in Ireland today, **Nuala Ryan** recognises some of the great home grown talents and gets their top tips on home renovations



MARIA  
Mac  
VEIGH  
DESIGN

Interior designer Maria MacVeigh typifies the incredible level of excellent design thinking in Irish design today. Having been short-listed, highly commended and winner at last year's Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) awards for her work on three separate projects, Maria is a force to be reckoned with in national and international interior design.

Maria qualified with a degree in Interior Design from DIT before moving to Barcelona immediately after qualifying to work. Having spent 13 years abroad, she returned to Ireland six years ago to set up her own practice.

Maria undertakes both commercial and domestic work, and approaches each project with a firm understanding of her client's requirements. She takes time to meet with each prospective client, showing them her incredible body of work and explaining how the practice works. These discussions determine whether the practice will be suitable for the client's needs and, if so, the project can begin to move forward with foundations laid for a successful venture.

To date, Maria has worked on such

commercial projects as the redesigning of top chef Ross Lewis's Chapter One restaurant and Chefs Table in Dublin, a project that she particularly enjoyed, and that was shortlisted for an IDI award.

According to Maria, each project has its own narrative.

"Nearly all the work that I do is in the refurbishment of old or existing buildings and all projects offer various opportunities for redevelopment. Finding out what this is can be as much a surprise for me as for my clients, but I really enjoy this process of understanding the existing building in order to bring it to a new stage in its life."

Most of Maria's projects have required an extension of the existing space, which she has also designed. She works closely with engineer David Maher, developing and detailing the finished project to ensure that a thorough service is delivered to the client.

So, what advice would Maria give to anyone thinking of renovating his or her home?

"Appointing the professional most suitable for the job is the beginning and end of a good project. Search through magazines and the IDI's website ([www.idi-design.ie](http://www.idi-design.ie)) for listings of designers. And remember that professionals are very happy to meet you and show you what they do in order to help you make an informed judgment."

**Maria's recent work on a Mews house in Dublin won her a 2009 IDI award. Her work on the restoration and renovation of an Edwardian house in Sandycove was highly commended at this same award ceremony. Visit [www.mariamacveigh.com](http://www.mariamacveigh.com) for further details.**



MARIA FENLON  
INTERIOR  
DESIGN



my client's quality of life is definitely one of the most rewarding parts of the job."

For anyone thinking of renovating their home, Maria recommends you start out by looking at the structure and space of the room and list all the needs for the space. "See if the space is being fully utilised," Maria advises. "It's amazing how many rooms in people's homes can look like separate spaces. You should think about how to link the room to the rest of the house and best use the space and the light."

Maria recommends you next consider what storage space is required, as well as your living needs, and how you plan to accommodate these. Think about the style of the room and how you might carry this style throughout the house. If you can achieve a unified look throughout your home, you can make it feel bigger and more organised.

Using her background in sculpture and model making, Maria provides her clients with a 3D model-making facility. This has proven to be a very useful tool in helping clients and builders to visualise the space they are working with, which in turn saves time and prevents people from making expensive design mistakes.

**Maria was recently commended at the IDI awards for her work on The Mill House in Carlow, a magnificent and traditional thatched structure with working wheel on the banks of the River Slaney. Visit [www.mariafenlon.com](http://www.mariafenlon.com) for further information on her work and projects.**

Former art and design teacher Maria Fenlon started up her interior design business in 2002, specialising in creating functional, comfortable and stylish homes that perfectly suit the owner's lifestyle and needs. By helping clients to focus on their preferred style, Maria designs a living space that will best suit this style.

According to Maria, design is all about newness, innovation and creativity. Research and product sourcing are a very important part of this process and Maria spends a lot of time abroad researching new designs. However, even though new trends are an exciting part of the business, Maria is a firm believer in the timeless quality of classic designs that will always retain their elegance and beauty.

At the end of the day, however, it is the client's home and so it is important to listen to the client's needs and ideas before offering expert advice.

"Even improving storage space in the home can make a huge difference to people's lives. We cater for their needs, help them to identify their preferred style and work to create a unique and seamless finished interior.

"Seeing how my designs impact on

Project by Maria MacVeigh, photography by Barbara Corsico

