

A grand AFFAIR

This former family home in Lisbon has been transformed into a stylish boutique hotel, complete with a luxurious master suite

PHOTOS Francisco Nogueira | WORDS Yvette Murrell



**ROOM WITH A VIEW**

This master suite has an open-plan living space with a freestanding roll-top bath that's central to the design

**CLASSIC BEAUTY**

A traditional-style bath and shower mixer sits on an H-stand and mirrors the silvery tones of the bath itself

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pace is the new luxury, that's been our motto,' says Gail Curley, owner and designer of Palácio Príncipe Real boutique hotel in Lisbon, Portugal. Gail and her husband, Miles, already owned several apartments across the city when, four years ago, they came across this 19th-century property, which spans 25,000 square feet. And while they weren't planning on investing in another property at the time, they fell in love with its architecture and decided to restore it and turn it into a 28-bed hotel.

Once the necessary planning permissions were approved, Gail set about designing each of the rooms, and the couple visited a furniture fair in Valencia for inspiration and to meet suppliers. 'It was a very organic process, which was a real treat,' says Gail. 'Many of the people I met came from family-run businesses, so were able to recommend others to us that they knew and trusted.'

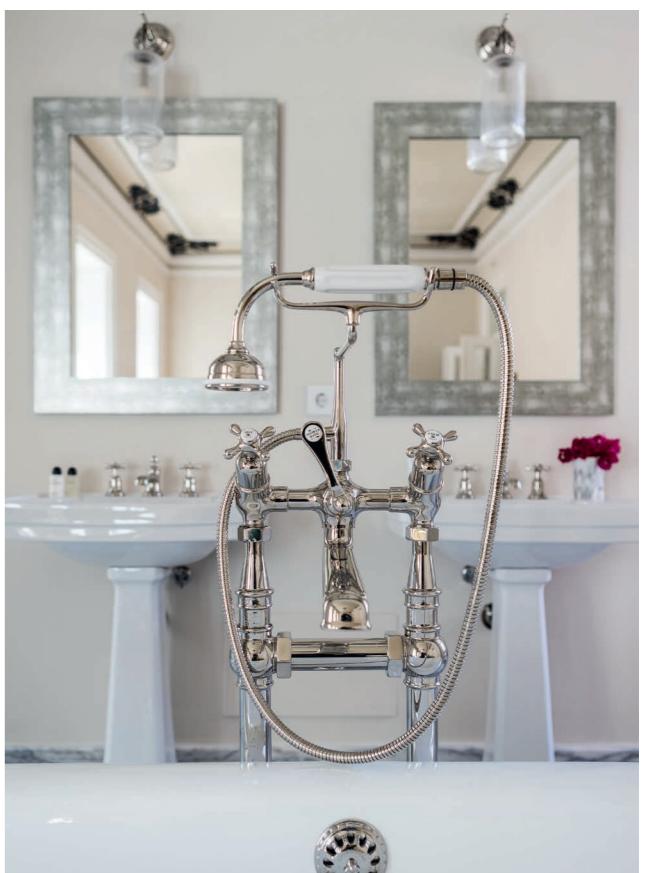
The master suite is particularly striking. 'The space used to be a ballroom where lots of parties were once held,' explains Gail, 'and we wanted to bring it back to its former glory.' Modern features, such as air-conditioning, heated flooring and a powerful shower, were installed to add to the sense of luxury, and a divide to hide the shower and toilet was added for privacy, while keeping the space open plan. Ensuring the décor sympathetic to the original features of the building was important to the couple, so a greyscale floor – against pale peach walls – was applied to reflect the ceiling's black detailing. 'We opted for Pele de Tigre, which is a local Portuguese stone that has distinctly dark veining,' explains Gail.

A freestanding east-iron bath was a must-have in the scheme, with plenty of space surrounding it so that guests would feel relaxed in the light and airy room. 'We could have made this into three or four standard-sized rooms, but we wanted to maintain the spaciousness people would have had when this was a family home.'

A labour of love, after several years of renovating and decorating, the hotel opens this month. The master suite has a calm and elegant feel to it, with light flooding through large windows from both sides. 'The window nearest to the shower overlooks the beautifully landscaped gardens,' says Gail. 'It really is a serene place to be.' **EKBB** palacioprincipereal.com

**BATHROOM PROFILE**

A freestanding roll-top bath with polished exterior from Drummonds takes centre stage in this hotel suite, where it is teamed with a Portuguese marble floor and nickel brassware.

**FIRST LIGHT**

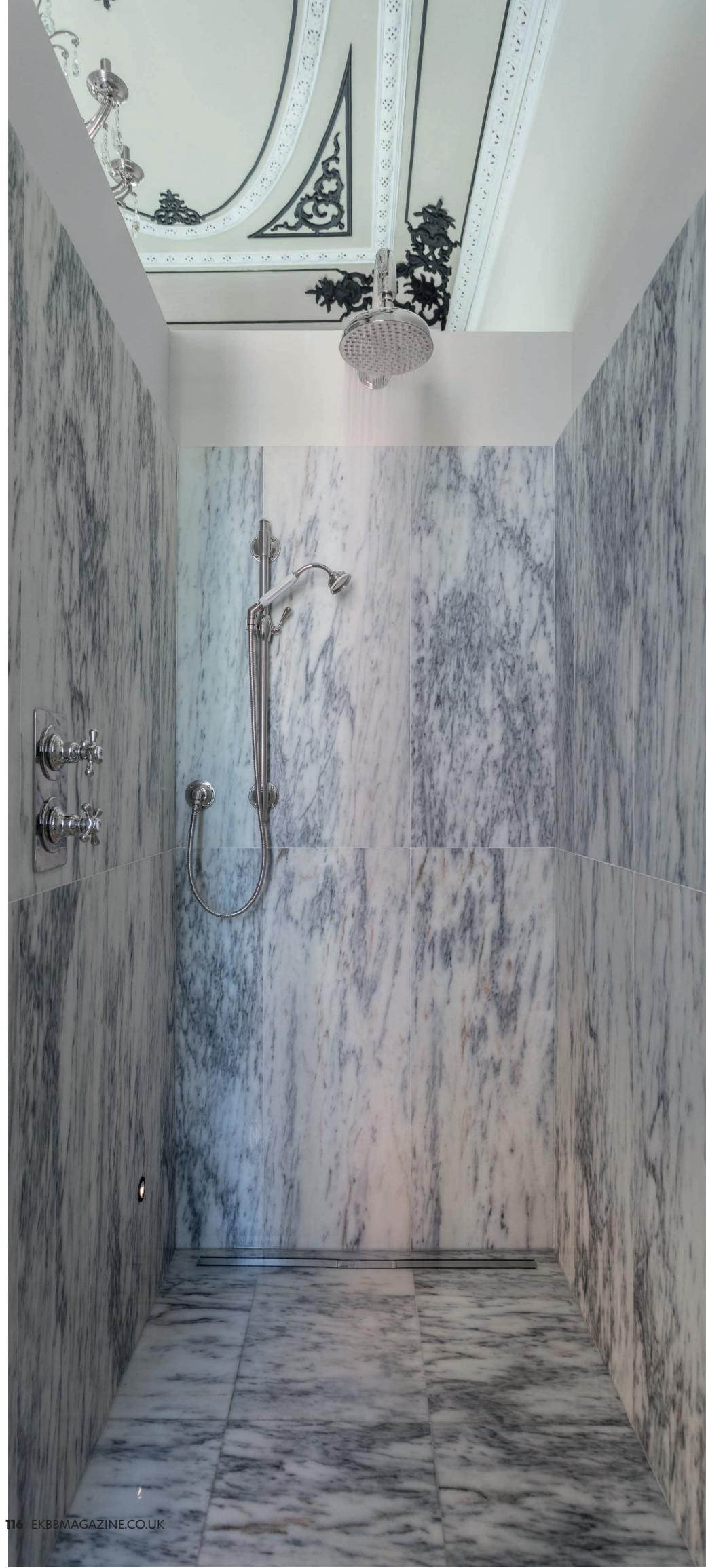
Left Large original windows on both sides of the room allow for daylight to flood through the space

SILVER PLATE

Above Polished nickel finishes on all the brassware give a consistently glamorous look to this master suite

PERIOD DRAMA

Below Sophisticated décor is sympathetic to the building's original 19th-century features, while different levels help zone the space



TIGER STRIPES

Left The shower enclosure is clad with a Pele de Tigre marble, a local, dark-veined Portuguese stone

TEST OF TIME

Above Traditional fixtures in the bathroom offer a classic look in keeping with the grandeur of the building



Q&A

MILES AND GAIL CURLEY

OWNERS

How did you plan the layout? It was always our intention to maintain the original features of the house, so we had to work around them. We wanted to create a feature of the bath, which is placed in the middle of the room where a piano used to be. We raised the floor in the bathroom to add heated flooring, which also helps to distinguish the area from the bedroom. The shower and toilet are hidden for privacy.

Where did you draw inspiration from? Over the years we've lived in Madrid, Singapore, London and now Lisbon, and we've tried to bring what we feel is the best from each place. I don't believe you can beat the bathrooms in Britain, so that's why we went to Drummonds. All of our bed linen, furniture, wardrobes and stone has been sourced locally from various specialists in Portugal. And we learned about service from our experiences in Asia: you are well looked after there and that's what we aspire to achieve.

Any challenges along the way? It took time to get all the planning permission we needed, and there were restrictions we needed to work around. For example, the ceilings are so high that we were unable to put pipework up the walls, so all of the water, electrics and air-conditioning systems had to come up through the floor.



PROJECT DETAILS

FIXTURES AND FURNISHINGS

Tay bath with a polished exterior, from £5,580; Mull three-hole basin mixer, from £1,170; Mull Classic bath and shower mixer on H-Stand, from £2,628; Single Dalby light with fluted glass shade, from £456; 200mm Grand shower rose, from £330; Grand wall-mounted shower arm, from £540; Classic hand shower & riser bracket, from £534; Mull Classic thermo & two-way shower plate, from £1,656; all Drummonds. Bespoke wardrobes, tables and chest of drawers, all Ronfe. Bespoke chairs and headboards, X8 Chairs & Tables. Lighting, Vistaverde. Chandeliers, Copenlamp. Rugs, Ferreira do Sa. Similar ornate large mirrors, £2605 each, Sweetpea & Willow. For stockists and contact details, see page 144

THE BIG SOAK

With a polished exterior, the Tay bath by Drummonds creates a stylish design statement