

AT HOME

My Style



FOR ARTY COLLECTORS LORRAINE AND
DARRAN ROBINSON, THIS DUBLIN 8 HOME
IS NO LONGER JUST A BLANK CANVAS

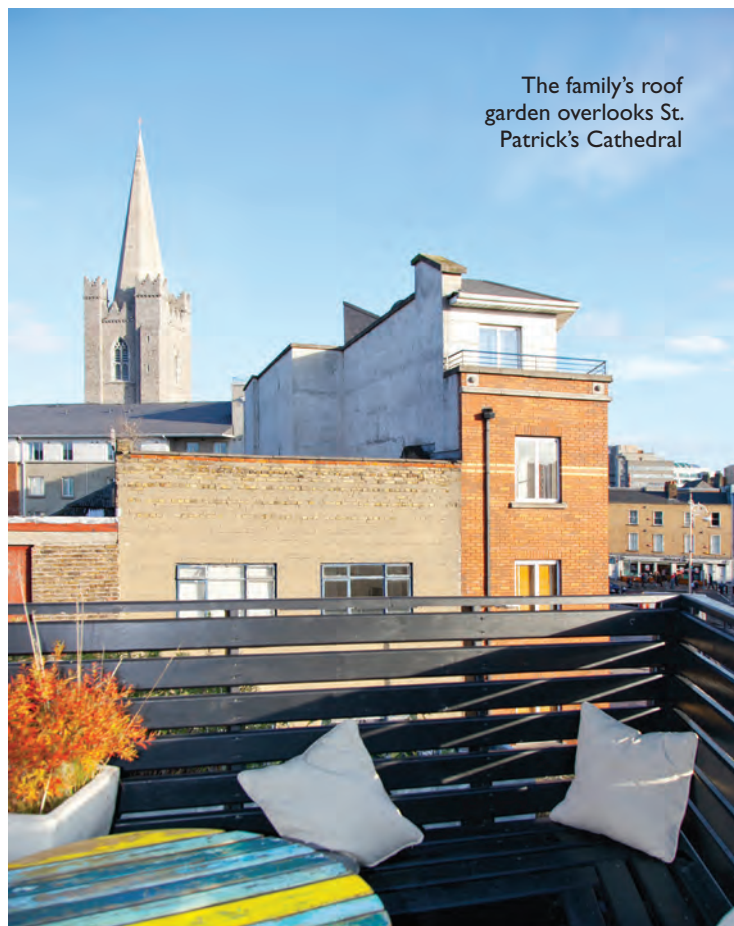
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PHOTOS: PAUL SHERWOOD



The polished kitchen is a contrast to the creative hive of the rest of the house

As any owner of a period home will tell you, renovation doesn't come without its challenges. And for husband and wife duo Lorraine and Darran Robinson, owners of Decor on Dublin's Wexford Street, renovating their three-above-basement house in hip Dublin 8 was no different. "You'd go to remove a strip of wallpaper and the whole wall would nearly fall down. We went down to our cellar one morning to find a five-foot flood in it," Lorraine says.

Now that the work has been done, the couple and their two teenage sons, Sol and Max, love the buzz of city life. "Darran says he feels like 'a young fella' again being back in town watching the world go by. We love how social it is around here," says Lorraine.



The family's roof garden overlooks St. Patrick's Cathedral



Lorraine and Darren layer dominant art works around and behind their flatscreen TV to make it less of a feature



The exposed brickwork of the original building adds texture to a glossy, contemporary bathroom



"If it wasn't so heavy to lug around, this would probably be the one thing I'd save in a fire," Darran says of his marble 'plague doctor'

Although the family have just moved in earlier this year, their nearby store Decor on Wexford Street has been a design-fan's haunt for years. The store sells art, furniture and antiques and is known for its effervescent display of wares and striking shopfront. The stock varies from peacock chairs to antique dinner gongs, Chinese wedding cabinets to whale skulls – plus Picasso, Banksy and Warhol prints.

Darran creates his own art under the name Dr. Dublin and one of his pieces, a marble figure wearing a Venetian plague doctor's mask, currently resides in the living room. It's one of the family's prized possessions, along with photos from their travels. "We also keep a few things for sale in the house on a view-by-appointment basis. We get very attached to some pieces, especially those we put so much time and effort into." Darran's pieces are a hot commodity in themselves. The day we spoke, he had just sold pieces in both Los Angeles and New York. At home, the eateries 37 Dawson Street, Pitt Bros. and Fade Street Social sought his expertise when fitting out their venues.

The Robinsons' home is as interesting and unique as you'd expect, with something

wonderful around every corner. "Really, this house is all about comfort. We like the mismatched look. We're never going to worry about a piece not matching the curtains – we just go for it," she says. This laidback attitude also extends to a willingness to travel the world for the right piece and then place it in a home, even one where a posse of pool-playing teenagers often assemble. "If a piece gets a bit banged up, all the better. It just adds to the story."

From Bali to Bruges, the Robinsons have a profound design-insider knowledge of every continent.

"Friends abroad let us know what's coming up," Lorraine says. "We just bought the contents of a school in New York so we'll have those pieces shipped in soon. In Indonesia, we work with the local craftspeople. We know where the good stuff is, but there's always more to discover."

When it comes to art, they say you either have the eye or you don't. This husband and wife duo have the heart, too, with a passion for design and collecting entirely evident in their vibrant, quirky home.

Decor Furniture Gallery, 14-14A Wexford Street, Dublin 2, 01 475 9010, Decordublin.com