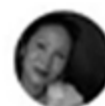


Post Magazine

The joy of duplex

When the owners of a Mid-Levels apartment were presented with an opportunity they couldn't refuse, their creative juices began flowing



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Sometimes opportunities fall into your lap. That's what Michelle and Charles Wan realised when a real-estate agent told them the apartment beneath theirs was for sale. Before considering turning their Mid-Levels home into a 6,000 sq ft duplex, the couple had thought about moving, but the appeal of staying put and doubling their living area proved irresistible.

Appointing architects to create a bigger home was simple; the couple turned again to Jason Caroline Design (JCD), which had renovated the single floor they moved into in 2003. Michelle Wan had found the company through the pages of Post Magazine.

Faced with so much extra space for the couple and their two sons, both of whom study abroad, the JCD design duo determined not only how to make the best use of the lower floor - after a feng shui master had determined the orientation of the rooms - but also what could remain untouched.

'I didn't want to change too many things upstairs,' says Wan, showing off her former bedroom, which her eldest son now uses when he is home, and the well-equipped kitchen in which she spends most afternoons cooking. She decided on a different look for the level below, though.

'This floor is white and silver,' says JCD's Caroline Ma, who works with her husband, Jason Yung. 'The floor above is black and gold.'

The original flat is as classical as the new space is modern but the duplex nevertheless feels one of a piece. Features linking the two levels include distinctive wallpaper, a curved black-and-white staircase, a commissioned piece of art behind the stairway and a three-metre-long chandelier of glass bubbles.

With space to spare, Charles Wan built a large home theatre and a capacious wine cellar. On an even grander scale is the new master suite, which takes up the area of three rooms above it. This self-contained space, which enjoys glorious sea views, contains the bedroom, an en-suite bathroom and a his-and-hers walk-in wardrobe bigger than most boutiques. Just outside the bedroom suite is a small, open kitchen-cum-bar with aluminium cabinets and all the mod cons necessary to cater to the parched or peckish.

The existing client-company relationship made life easy. 'She knows me so whatever she recommended, I liked,' says Michelle Wan about Ma. 'They also knew all the artwork we had.'

That included a heavy stone carving that hangs on a reinforced wall above a 'window' made of privacy glass (see Tried + tested). The window-wall, which was moved to enlarge Charles Wan's existing office, allows him to see into the living area and makes his workspace seem more spacious.

'When my husband makes conference calls at night, sometimes I'm sitting outside waving at him,' jokes Michelle Wan.

Gold highlights add a luxurious touch to the new sitting and dining area on the top floor. 'I'm not afraid to use gold in a tasteful way,' says Ma, pointing out that she avoided shiny, gaudy metallic hues.

Wan says she was given free rein to design the new level: 'The second time around [Charles] was too busy, so he told me to decide on everything.'

How does he like the addition? Wan recalls with a laugh: 'He said, 'You did a good job.''

Opposite the curved bar (HK\$80,000, including installation), designed by Jason Caroline Design (39 Wellington Street, Central, tel: 2517 7510; www.jasoncarolinedesign.com), is a wine cellar made with low-emissivity glass. Jason Caroline Design built the cellar in consultation with Hong Kong Wine Vault (6/F, Ha Lung Industrial Building, 52 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Aberdeen, tel: 2870 1800) for HK\$180,000. From Magazzini (1/F Ruttonjee Centre, 11 Duddell Street, Central, tel: 2521 3282) came the Promemoria Mogador sofa and the Giorgetti coffee table, while the Cassina Auckland armchair (prices on request) came from Anterra (5 Blue Pool Road, Happy Valley, tel: 2525 9874). The rug (HK\$111,240) was sourced through Fort Street Studio (room 305, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, tel: 2889 5150) and the Lucecrea Class chandelier (HK\$110,797) and La Palma bar stools (HK\$4,300 each) were from Desideri (6/F, Capitol Plaza, 2 Lyndhurst Terrace, Central, tel: 2950 4026). The Schifflini kitchen cost HK\$550,000 (including sink, countertop and Miele and Siemens appliances) from colour.living (333 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, tel: 2891 9648). At the entrance to the master suite is a Ju Ming sculpture, purchased from Alisan Fine Arts Gallery (315 Prince's Building, Central, tel: 2526 1091). Behind it is a wall featuring diamond-metal basketweave tiles from Altfield Interiors (shop 1102, 9 Queen's Road Central, tel: 2524 4867) that cost HK\$6,300 a square metre, including installation.

The bubble chandelier (HK\$80,000) was designed by Jason Caroline Design and made by Zodiac (70 Morrison Hill Road, Wan Chai, tel: 2882 9082). The artwork, made of old Korean mulberry paper, was a special commission by Chun Kwang Young. The curtains (HK\$11,000) were made by Arredo Interiors (shop D, Lucky Building, 39 Wellington Street, tel: 2724 1804) with fabric (HK\$10,774) from Cetec (18/F, 6 Duddell Street, tel: 2522 6515).

The living area on the top floor was renovated to create a larger study, which can be seen through the glass panel. Sourced through Magazzini were the two purple Promemoria Gacy armchairs, the Promemoria Aziza chaise longue and the Giorgetti Artu coffee table (prices on request). The Petal carpet cost HK\$82,400 from Fort Street Studio. The Lolli Memmoli Ugolino chandelier (HK\$120,800) came from Andante (shop D, Ruttonjee Centre, tel: 2537 9688). Above the EcoSmart fire (HK\$19,885) from Design Link (11 St Francis Street, Wan Chai, tel: 3113 8728) is a panel of gold-hued metal tiles, which cost HK\$6,600 a square metre, including installation, from Altfield Interiors. The divider accommodates a stone carving the owners bought years ago from Artisans d'Angkor in Cambodia (www.artisansdangkor.com).

The wall behind the bed features Ulf Moritz pearl wallpaper, which cost HK\$2,000 a square metre, including installation, from Grand Collection (room 407, 4/F, Winning Centre, 29 Tai Yau Street, San Po Kong, tel: 2952 2552) and Wollsdorf Leder padded squares supplied and installed for HK\$14,000 by Sankon (23/F, Lucky Building, tel: 2543 3880). The bedside tables (HK\$14,448 each) came from Desideri and the bedside lamps (HK\$10,070 each) were from Manks (2 Kennedy Terrace, Mid-Levels, tel: 2522 2115). Fort Street Studio supplied the Sparkler carpet (HK\$82,400) and the Egmond Hollywood chandelier (HK\$44,880) was sourced through Zodiac. Adler Wood oak (HK\$2,700 a square metre, including installation, from Equal Plus, room 302, Ming An Plaza, 8 Sunning Road, Causeway Bay, tel: 2881 7066) was used on the floor.

Taking pride of place in the en-suite bathroom is a tub that cost HK\$214,600 from Boffi (81 Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley, tel: 2577 5764). Also from Boffi is the cabinet (HK\$106,900). The Travertino tiles cost HK\$1,000 a square metre, including installation, from Pixel (shop 311A, Lockhart Road, tel: 2185 7036).

The home theatre was designed by Jason Caroline Design in consultation with Excel Home Theatre (11/F, 10 Queen's Road Central, tel: 2530 3881). The Eileen Gray side table came from Desideri (HK\$2,900). The Lutron roller blind cost HK\$30,000 from Lumen Arts (room 103A, Block B, Seaview Estate, 4 Watson Road, North Point, tel: 2803 4501). The carpet cost HK\$750 a square metre, including installation, from Arredo.

TRIED + TESTED

Smart glass An UMU smart window was installed in the wall separating Charles Wan's study and the living area. When transparent, it makes the work room seem larger and allows visual interaction. By flicking a switch, however, the liquid crystal sheet between two pieces of laminated glass turns translucent, providing privacy. The product is available through Fujita Glass (room A, 8/F, 302 Des Voeux Road, Central, tel: 2390 7023; www.fujita.com.hk).