



Straight from the start

Space for friends and family to stay, a library and a cosy space with a woodburner - the vision was clear for the busy couple who bought a second home on the edge of Looe. The task for **Camellia** was to make it a reality...

This is the story of how a busy couple bought a three-storey property on the edge of Looe with the intention of creating a second home for their family that they could escape to periodically to enjoy a slice of relaxed, coastal life.

Their vision was clear - a space for large groups of friends and family to stay, as well as hosting large parties. Bespoke wine storage was a must alongside a purpose-built bar, with room for a pinball machine and a football table for all the family. For quiet times, they requested a library space and to reinstate the wood-burning fireplace for the family to gather around after a winter day on the beach. Idyllic. But realistic? Particularly when the couple work over 200 miles away in London.

The biggest first step is finding the right contractor. They purchased the property in Looe via local estate agency, Jackson-Stops in Truro. The buyers had very little history on the build and after some dead-end conversations with builders, turned to Ben Standen of Jackson-Stops to recommend a designer. Camellia Interiors were brought in to realise their vision.

Design director, Elaine Skinner visited the house with the buyers and listened to what they wanted for their new home. "After taking me through the whole house, I asked them if I could tell it to them straight. To achieve what they were after they needed to reconfigure the layout. The kitchen needed moving and new bedrooms with en-suites installed. We offered them a better solution from day one and as a result, got the job."

Elaine and her clients were very open and honest with each other from the start. By being transparent, the designer-client relationship worked and they understood each other perfectly. "I get on with you because you talk straight to me and because you care. We see your passion for our project and it inspires us" said the client.

Camellia were pleased, not just because being straight from the start saves time, money and angst on all sides, but also because this property was particularly special and perfect for their portfolio. Sea-facing, the house is built virtually into the cliff-face above the beach. The architecture and huge potential generated an immense challenge and a lot of excitement for the practice, but what also pleased the

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team was how savvy and design-aware these buyers were. "They wanted to buy somewhere and have it look how they wanted it to look. We knew they would be great people to work with," Elaine says.

Camellia's client planned to spend their first Christmas in Cornwall at the end of 2014, utilising all the entertaining facilities they'd stipulated in the brief. There is no deadline that galvanizes a team like the client's family Christmas. As busy, time-poor individuals, their clients didn't have time to oversee the project and needed a practice that could manage the entire process for them, within time constraints. "After speaking with Elaine we were reassured that everything would be taken care of. We could then go back to our busy lives in order to pay her!" Camellia complied, starting the project by knocking down walls, ending it by buying cutlery, almost all but laying the table, and all in time for Christmas.

Camellia designed with the clients' vision in mind, around the unusual architecture and to their budget. "We understand that just because our clients have bought an expensive house doesn't mean they have lots of money to throw at it." Elaine says, "We want to make sure you have a return on investment. We are revenue aware, business minded and design around your brief and budget. We do charge for our advice and we're not the cheapest, but we don't mind stating this either because we do give you a return on your investment."

Whatever the cost of this project, the client was clearly happy. They've since instructed Camellia to begin another project - the family's personal beach house.

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