

MAY 2014 £4.90

# THE WORLD OF INTERIORS



FROM SHAKESPEARE  
TO BROWNING:  
Celebrating Literary  
Life and Death in Florence





This page: mirrored double doors from the dressing room open into the master bathroom, creating a suite of rooms that occupies the whole of the fourth floor. The antiqued mirror glass is from Dominic Schuster, and the doors and woodwork are by Dom Parish of Wardour Workshops. Opposite: the Karen Chekerdjian brass bowls, bought by Scott in Beirut, have been converted into basins, while the towel rail is from The Sterlingham, and the brass accessories are by Waterworks



## IN A DIFFERENT VEIN

Lined with expertly carved Arabescato marble, this his-and-hers bathroom – part of a six-bedroom 1840s house in London – was inspired by Le Meurice hotel in Paris. Employing unlacquered brass and antiqued mirrors, decorator Scott Maddux has created a high-glamour habitat that's anything but predictable, says Ros Byam Shaw. Photography: Ricardo Labougle





This page: the bath from *The Water Monopoly* looks ceramic but is in fact a resin composite, which is much lighter. Six- and eight-sided shapes, manifest in the fabric of the blinds and the shape of the bathroom mirrors, are leitmotifs that unite the rooms. Opposite: at either end of the marble counter are fitted cabinets with plain mirrored glass panelling the doors, and antiqued mirror cladding the sides. The brass theme continues in the edging and handles





**HOMING IN ON** a single room in a six-bedroom house is a bit like staring fixedly at somebody's nose. It isn't what you normally do. On the other hand, a nose of great distinction is worth studying. As is this mirror- and marble-clad, brass-studded, retro-chic beauty of a bathroom. And just as a handsome nose usually belongs on a handsome face, it will not be a surprise to learn that the bathroom under scrutiny is on the fourth floor of a magnificent 1840s London house complete with a bold bow of front windows overlooking the street, a view across communal gardens at the back, and a splendid stone staircase zigzagging up its spine.

It is a house that has had a lot of attention in the past half-dozen years or so, and this particular bathroom, the principal one of four, is a result of the most recent of two complete makeovers by London-based American decorator Scott Maddux. A second refurbishment in a relatively short space of time smacks of masochism, but Scott thinks that this time they have 'hit the nail on the head'. There were practical problems to be resolved: a lack of storage for clothes, and a fourth child to be accommodated. In the shunting of rooms, the previous master bathroom became a dressing room; the guest bedroom and bathroom became the new master bathroom; and the guest bedroom dropped down into the basement and ousted the former television room. The consequence is that the owners now have the whole fourth floor of the house to themselves: a bedroom at the back, which connects with a dressing room at the front, and opens into a bathroom at its side.

The largest of this trio is the dressing room, which has wraparound cupboards, including a glass-fronted pair on either side of the fireplace where a library of shoes fills the floor-to-ceiling shelves. In the centre of the room is an enormous, chest-height set of drawers, one side for him, one for her. Fitted wardrobes are rarely the loveliest of furnishings, but Scott has enlivened these with mirrored doors divided by a web of moulded glazing bars in a pattern of elongated octagons. 'What I call a soft geometry,' he says. Double doors in the same design fold back into the bathroom.

What a bathroom it is. While the dressing room impresses with capacity, the bathroom is pure, concentrated glamour. Walls are lined with figured marble, fittings glint with patinated brass, mirrors reflect marble vistas, cut-glass lampshades twinkle, and a pair of gilt-and-amber-glass chandeliers cast a golden glow. Previously a double bedroom, the room has had a slice taken out of it by the insertion of what Scott amusingly refers to as 'a marriage-saving toilet cubicle'. Clad in marble, its outer wall forms



the back of an alcove around the bath. Opposite the bath are the basins, and facing the door of the cubicle is another door, which opens into a double shower so large it has two windows, now obscured behind frosted glass, and which formerly housed a complete guest bathroom.

Inspiration came from Paris, where the owner fell in love with a marble bathroom in Le Meurice hotel. She and Scott went to a London marble yard to choose slabs of the same Arabescato, looking for pieces with the strongest and most prominent grain. Now fixed to the walls, these giant slices of stone, beautifully matched to make mirror-image patterns like the butterflies you made at school by folding paper splodged with wet paint, the dark veins swooping and swirling seamlessly around corners, flow up to a fat moulded cornice at picture-rail level and down to a deep marble skirting. 'Anyone can stick up slabs of marble,' says Scott, 'but carving it like this takes time and skill.'

While the marble is ravishing, if perhaps predictable, pairing it with brass is more exotic. 'I had been to Beirut, which is where I bought the brass bowls we made into basins,' says Scott. 'I had brass in mind because it is warm. I was thinking cool and clean, but not cold.' Also in brass, the basin stand, towel rails and mirrors were bespoke, as were the handles on the frosted-glass doors to the shower and toilet, which are versions of handles Scott spotted in the Barbican, London. Taps were from The Water Monopoly and the cut-glass lamps from Jim Lawrence. 'All the brass is unlacquered,' says Scott. 'Just the touch of a finger will darken it slightly. We decided not to keep polishing it because it looks more alive when you allow it to discolour.'

In order to make the layout work, the basins had to sit in front of the window. A blind in a heavyweight sheer filters the light and ensures privacy, its design of interlocking hexagons an echo of Scott's 'soft geometry'. Hung with great precision in order to skim the edge of the original plaster cornice, to clear the swing of the cabinet doors, and at a height somewhere between the face levels of husband and wife, the three pendant lamps provide bright but flattering illumination.

The more you look, the more such details impress: the shower has a heated pad under its marble bench; the cubicle has an entertaining wall of toile de jouy; the decorative panels of mirror are distressed, whereas the ones you might use are not; even the waste-paper basket and the tissue-box cover are brass. The rest of the house may be magnificent, but this room deserves a particularly good, long stare ■

Maddux Creative. Ring 020 3137 8073, or visit [madduxcreative.com](http://madduxcreative.com)



This page: the room-within-a-room that contains the lavatory has a wall of toile de jouy by Nobilis showing scenes of 18th-century flirtation. The 1950s Italian wall lights are from Alexandre Biaggi in Paris. Opposite: the double shower, complete with a heated seat, fills the space that once contained the whole guest bathroom