

Miracle cure

A once-derelict mill has been transformed into a unique home filled with creative ideas and luxurious individual touches

Report: Fiona Reid Styling: Alison Gibb Photography: Douglas Gibb



When considering the vast dining-kitchen in John Burke's home on the edge of the Ochertyre Estate in Perthshire, it's hard to imagine this space as it looked when he bought this Grade B-listed 19th-century former watermill two years ago. At the time the building was an empty, derelict shell with a leaking roof. "This area was very dark and damp, with old stone slabs underfoot," he recalls. Likewise, what is now the master bedroom suite used to be a pigeon loft. "The building was a complete wreck," John admits.

Yet the challenge was counterbalanced by the fact that John is managing director of his own building firm, Corryard Developments, which is based in nearby Crieff, and which also offers a free interior design service for clients requiring building work. "I knew I could rely on the contractor to achieve the quality of finish I wanted here – as the contractor was me!" he smiles.

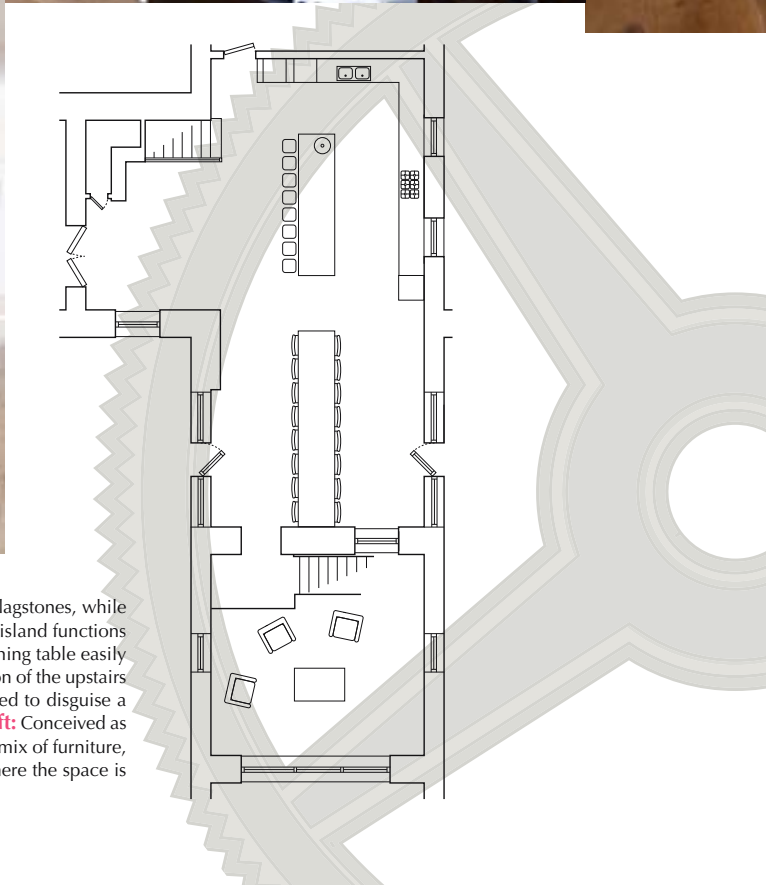
From the outset John was determined to blend the character of the mill with the comfort, functionality and creative design he wanted from a contemporary home. From a renovation perspective this was a huge project – in fact Locherlour Mill has been nominated in the prestigious Master Builder of the Year Award 2010. The mill was stripped back to its stone walls and then rebuilt internally, and the entire roof was replaced while John installed a ground source heating system, requiring 1.5km of geothermal pipes to be laid in the surrounding land. Today this investment is evident in the comfort of underfloor heating, and the fact that seven of the eight bedrooms are ensuite with ample hot water waiting for everyone.

With an internal floor space just short of 5800sq ft, the design might have included more bedrooms. However, as John points out, "I wanted the luxury of space; I wanted areas just to hang out," he says. These include spaces like the orangery with its dramatic Mirror Ball pendants by Tom Dixon, and the library overlooking the dining hall where John used 'Genuine Fake Bookshelf' hand-printed wallpaper to disguise the doorway into a guest wing.

As well as being a social house for friends and family, John also lets the mill as a five-star holiday home, and this influenced his approach to the design, as he wanted the interior to have maximum impact. Although plans were in place when John purchased the mill, he altered these to improve the flow of the interior. On these plans the kitchen and orangery were linked by an external pathway, so you had to leave the house to go between the two spaces. Instead, John built the double-height dining hall here, which is open-plan to the kitchen. ▶

The kitchen and dining space is over 40ft long and creates a vibrant social hub to this former mill. The double-height dining hall allows views to the library space above, while the dining table is almost medieval in proportions

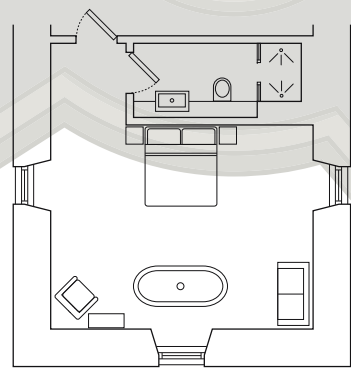




Top: The kitchen blends clean lines with warm, organic textures seen in the walnut worktops and stone flagstones, while the mirror copper pendants by Tom Dixon cast a warm glow that complements the timber. **Above:** The island functions as a prepping zone and doubles as an informal spot to grab a bite or have a drink, while the elongated dining table easily sits 16 – creating a great party space in this vast room. **Opposite page, top:** John highlighted the function of the upstairs library with this quirky Genuine Fake Bookshelf wallpaper by Deborah Bowness. This feature wall is used to disguise a doorway into a guest wing. The chair and sofa were auction finds that John had reupholstered. **Bottom left:** Conceived as a space to simply hang out, the orangery features Tom Dixon’s Mirror Ball pendants alongside an eclectic mix of furniture, including Arne Jacobsen’s classic Egg chair. **Bottom right:** The orangery as seen from the first floor where the space is given character by its exposed stone walls.



Above: The scale of the master bedroom allowed John to be extravagant when sourcing key pieces such as the four-poster bed from Lombok that sits beside the copper and tin freestanding bath. **Right:** Luxurious finishes and materials create a decadent feel including this gorgeous silk quilt from The White Company. **Below:** While the palette feels quite masculine, interesting textures and details add softness to the master bedroom. **Opposite page:** The master ensuite was designed with functionality and simplicity in mind using a combination of large profile and mosaic tiles. Twin Grohe Rainshower showerheads feature in the wet area, which is defined by slender glazed screens.



This dining hall sits 16 people comfortably, but John also created a smaller, more intimate dining area alongside the staircase. "Whenever I have a few friends round this is where we sit," he elaborates. "It's a really cosy spot." The reclaimed teak tables reflect the casual mood. "You can spill beer and it doesn't matter. It's not like fine dining – that's not the style I wanted for this space." The elongated island seats a further six perched on stools, and guests tend to congregate here while food is being prepared. The cream Magnet kitchen is combined with walnut worktops, while gorgeous iridescent mosaic tiles from Fired Earth form the splashback and reflect the hues of Tom Dixon's Copper Shade pendants. "I wanted light here, which is why I chose the pale units, but the kitchen also needed to have warmth," John says. "Granite would have

felt too cold, so the combination of the ambient lighting and the walnut surfaces gives a much softer feel." John's favourite space in the house is the master bedroom, with its vaulted beamed ceiling and views towards the hills from the freestanding copper and tin bath positioned at the foot of the four-poster bed. While the bath was an extravagance, as John explains, "every room is designed to be a bit special and it's lovely lying in the bath looking out to the hills." The furniture and lighting, moreover, reflect this sense of elegance and luxury. "Really modern furniture wouldn't have worked here. It needed to have a blend of pieces that would add to the individuality of the house." The integrated lighting system was also important to the overall design. "It was one of the first things I considered as lighting is crucial in a space," says John. In the master ▶



bedroom, lighting illuminates the vaulted ceiling at night, while within the ensuite shower room an internal space feels bright and uplifting. "I wanted to keep the ensuite simple and functional as I don't like fussy detailing in a bathroom," John explains. Instead the focus was on clean lines and high-spec fittings and finishes, like the two super-sized Grohe Rainshower showerheads within the wet area or the combination of large profile and mosaic tiling.

Often, the design of a room would start with one chance find. "I like finding a bargain at auction that can be transformed with

fabric," John continues, "and it also means you have something totally unique." Old armchairs were reupholstered in fabrics by Designers Guild, while John picked up the traditional beds in the twin bedroom for a mere £20 each and chose everything else to complement them. Yet, it is the floral feature wall that really gives this room its stylish character.

With a building of this character and scale, it pays to think outside the box and John's flair and experience in design has breathed new life into every individual space. KBB

Above: John designed the twin bedroom after finding the single beds at an auction, which he complemented with glamorous wallpaper and accessories from Designers Guild

SourceBook

DESIGN

Build and Interior Design Corryard Developments Ltd (07981 623552 or www.corryard.com)

Rental For information on letting Locherlour Mill visit www.locherlourestates.com

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Magnet (0845 123 6789 or www.magnet.co.uk)

Worktops Walnut, Norfolk Oak (01485 600555 or www.norfolk oak.com)

Mosaic tiles Fired Earth (0845 366 0400 or www.firedearth.com)

Flooring Strathearn Stone & Timber (01764 684836 or www.stoneandtimber.co.uk)

Appliances All appliances, sink and tap, Magnet, as before

Bar stools Norfolk Oak, as before

Table and chairs Large and small dining table and chairs, Lombok (0870 240 7380 or www.lombok.co.uk)

Staircase Structural work, Arc Steel (01764 664210 or www.arcsteel.co.uk);

Glazing on staircase, McLeod Glaziers (01738 626170 or www.mcleodglaziers.co.uk)

Pendant lights Tom Dixon

(020 7183 9730 or www.tomdixon.net)

LIBRARY

Wallpaper Deborah Bowness (07890 744972 or www.deborahbowness.com)

Sofa and armchair Re-upholstered in fabrics by Designers Guild (020 7893 7400 or www.designersguild.com)

Lighting Sparkling Ball Chandelier, Graham & Green (0845 130 6622 or www.grahamandgreen.co.uk)

ORANGERY

Pendant lights Tom Dixon, as before

Seating Wing back chair and striped chair reupholstered in fabric by Designers Guild (020 7893 7400 or www.designersguild.com)

Flooring Oak, Strathearn Stone & Timber, as before

Glass staircase Arc Steel, as before

MASTER BEDROOM

Bed Contemporary four-poster, Lombok, as before

Bath Roll-top bath. For similar, try the Enchantment copper bath, TC bathrooms at Victorian Bathrooms (01924 267736 or www.victorianbathrooms.com)

Stool Lombok, as before

Quilt The White Company (0845 678 8150 or www.thewhitecompany.com)

Bedside table and lamp John Lewis (0845 604 9049 or www.johnlewis.co.uk)

Sideboard and lamp Laura Ashley (0871 230 2301 or www.lauraashley.com)

TWIN BEDROOM

Cushions and throws Designers Guild, as before

Bedside tables Hartnell Interiors

(0845 290 3778 or www.hartnellinteriors.co.uk)

Lamps John Lewis, as before

SHOWER ROOM

Tiling Novabell (www.novabell.it)

Shower controls Rainshower showerheads and controls, Grohe (0871 200 3414 or www.grohe.co.uk)

Screen Bespoke glazed screens, Corryard Developments, as before

WC and basin Duravit (0845 500 7787 or www.duravit.co.uk)

Brassware Grohe, as before

COST

A similar kitchen would cost around £25,000. A similar master bedroom would cost around £10,000 and a similar ensuite would cost around £8000. A similar twin room would cost around £2000

