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Maurizio's love for movies and design classics is evident in his living space. The Missoni clad Eames chair is only kind in the world.



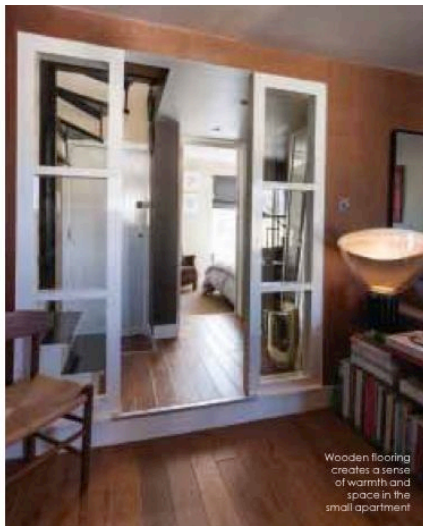
Interior designer Maurizio Pellizzoni brings an inherited Italian style to create a truly beautiful London pad with some clever space-saving details

Words: Pratyush Sarup Images: Supplied

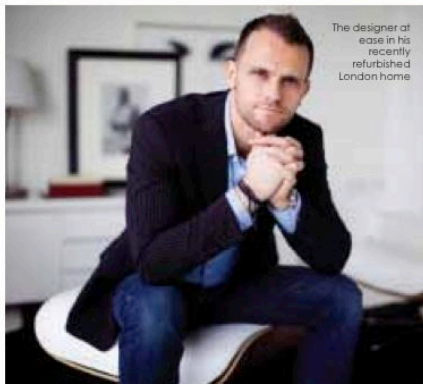
"My whole life story is engraved in my home. The space has seen my struggles and triumphs. It has seen my evolving taste and been my canvas for expressing my creativity."

Multi-use of spaces is important in small homes as Maurizio demonstrates. The breakfast nook often doubles as his home office.

Maurizio's years at Ralph Lauren Home still inspire him to create spaces that are understatedly luxurious.



Wooden flooring creates a sense of warmth and space in the small apartment



The designer at ease in his recently refurbished London home



Maurizio has utilised all the niches and corners of the home to create display features and maximise storage.

"My first years in London were spent in flat shares," Maurizio recalls of a time spent studying interior design at the London Metropolitan University. After graduation and a stint at Ralph Lauren Home, he decided to make bold changes to his life. "To have a place I could call my own was the first step in my personal development. My home gave me the stability and the strength to start a career in interior design, which was a dream I had before moving to London from Italy."

The South-East London pad turned out to be Maurizio's lucky charm.

"Fourteen years ago, I chose the property for its affordability; this was an up-and-coming area of London, had the potential for the loft conversion and it made change easy as I had friends very close by." When he set up his own design studio, MPD Studio, he worked from home. "Working from home was the best decision when starting my business, budget-wise, I worked hard to adapt the space, with sufficient storage for my inspirations." Multiple design awards and some high-profile clients later, it was obvious his stunning home could no longer contain this business. Last year he set up shop in Lots Road, a stone's throw from London's prestigious Chelsea Harbour Design Centre - but for Maurizio, home is where his heart is.

"My whole life story is engraved in my home. The space has seen my struggles and triumphs. It has seen my evolving taste and been my canvas for expressing my creativity," Maurizio explains of his his compact but full of character abode, and his taste for timeless classics, like vintage Italian movies (he cites the original Italian poster of 'What Happened to Baby Jane?' as his favourite art piece in his home) or iconic design pieces.

Creating the right look did not come easy, considering the limited space and Maurizio's wealth of ideas. "When I first bought the flat, it was a one-bedroom flat on one level," he recalls. "As I also owned the loft, I redesigned the space to create an open-plan living space, adding a guest bedroom; and converted the loft into a master bedroom with walk-in closet." Two years ago, he decided it was time for an overhaul. "You have to refresh the energy of your space if you have been in it far too long - trust me, being a designer, the pressure is on. I chose a new colour palette and some beautiful wallpapers to add some texture, which transformed the whole spirit of the flat - it now feels far more elegant and refined."

The Charles Eames lounge chair and other design classics remained, getting a face-lift to keep up with the times: "I upholstered my Eames in Missoni fabric to give it a signature style that connects me to my heritage!"

His years at Ralph Lauren Home may be long over, but that distinct stamp of understated luxury is something Maurizio has made his own. "Working for Ralph

Lauren Home was for me an education in the real definition of luxury. I first worked with them as a freelancer during my college years and then after graduation, they entrusted me with the coordination of the Home Collections floors across Europe. It was there I learned to pay attention to the finer details and to identify the most subtle elements of luxury and elegance, which are the strengths of my designs."

Like a true Italian, Maurizio loves his home full of family, friends and happy banter. He made sure his renovations took account of his love for entertaining. "Being Italian, I love cooking and entertaining, so when I designed the flat, I decided to open up the kitchen so I could socialise with my guests while cooking," he says.

Adding a guest room was to accommodate friends and family to stay over at weekends. "A few Christmases ago, when my family decided to come over for the holidays, we spent the full week together. This was the first time my family visited all at once in London; the space was crowded but a lot of fun, it reminded me of our winter vacations with my brothers in the Alps when we were kids."

Maurizio's status as one of London's most coveted designers has often seen him trying to strike a balance between work and home, but it's not always perfect. "I literally sneak away - be it for a long weekend or squeezing in an extra day on a business trip - you have to do it and spend it with people you love, doing what you love to keep your head screwed right on your shoulders."

Me-time often takes him back to his home town, Lake Como. "I have so many beautiful memories of family friends and natural beauty. It is what inspired me when I was working on my home. One day I hope to work on a design project by the lake. Fingers crossed!"

Maurizio's shares his small home secrets:

Check the floor plan in detail and consult structural engineers to see if you can remove unwanted walls or corridors to improve the flow.

Invest in built-in cabinets to fit seamlessly with your space. They may seem expensive initially but will make the most of your available space.

I recommend an open-plan kitchen to creates a sense of a larger, more sociable living area.

Use a light or monotonal colour palette so corners disappear and the space looks light. Texture is important so invest in accessories, throws, cushions to create a luxe ambience.

Invest in good lighting to lend depth and warmth so your small spaces will no longer feel that way.

An open-style kitchen is ideal for small spaces, bringing together the cooking and entertainment areas seamlessly



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