Natural SPIRIT

A palette of gentle hues and harmonious textures combine to create modern simplicity in this master bedroom suite

PHOTOS **PAUL CRAIG** | FEATURE **AMELIA THORPE**

WOOD WARMTH
Panneau black walnut cladding covers the wall, adding modern rustic warmth

MODERN CLASSIC
The Beak Chair was designed by Danish furniture designer Ole Wanscher in 1951

After growing up in Siberia, there's one thing that instantly reminds Valentina Druzhinina of home. 'The smell of nature – of wood, trees and greenery,' she says. So when it came to refurbishing the master bedroom suite in the 1990s-built north London home she shares with husband Alastair Bennett, a business coach, and their two children, Charlie, 3, and Chloe, 2, Valentina had a clear idea of what she wanted to achieve. 'My plan was to create a room that felt fresh and natural, with a sense of space and beauty that I remember from the outdoors of my childhood,' she says.

Valentina is quick to point out that although the Siberian landscape could be very inspiring, living in a 'block of scary grey Soviet apartments' was less so. 'I came to London in 1996 and there were so many beautiful things – every corner seemed to offer something exciting,' she says. It led her to train as an interior designer, a career currently on hold while she raises their young children, so the master bedroom project was an opportunity to flex her creative muscles again. 'I loved creating mood boards with my ideas, and it was a good way of showing Alastair what I wanted to achieve,' she says.

The starting point in the bedroom was to strip out the dated fittings, including the once white, but yellowing, painted wardrobes and old carpet. 'To create a natural feel, I decided to clad the whole wall behind the bed in wood, using walnut panels that fit together rather like a jigsaw and create a beautiful texture,' explains Valentina. New fitted wardrobes replaced the old ones, with a slender panel of mirror, oak finger channels and a section of shelving used to add interest to the wall of doors.

Following up a recommendation, Valentina met Joe Mühl of Ocean Bathrooms, asking him to help design the new en suite. 'The space isn't huge, but Alastair and I really wanted to replace the over-bath shower with a proper walk-in rain shower, so working out the layout was a challenge,' she recalls. The resulting scheme is clean and simple, in keeping with the style of the bedroom. 'We love this space,' she says. 'It feels so peaceful and serene.' ***EKBB***

'Creating mood boards with my ideas was a good way of showing what I wanted to achieve'

STORAGE SOLUTION
Wardrobes are recessed into the wall to reduce their dominance in the room, while the generously sized double cupboards are supplemented by the mirror section, a practical feature which also conceals another cupboard

'To create a natural feel, I decided to clad the whole wall behind the bed in wood, using walnut panels that fit together rather like a jigsaw'

GREY MATTER
Above The bed is dressed in soft shades of grey, with subtle interest added by stripes and stitching

SENSE OF HARMONY
Left The light and dark palette, enlivened by touches of blonde wood, unites the bedroom and bathroom schemes

SPACE SAVER
The en suite sliding door provides privacy whilst also acting as a space-saving replacement to the inward opening door of before

Design profile

Natural materials and tones, including wood, leather, cotton and wool, combine to create a sense of harmony in this master bedroom suite. Luxury comes from tactile finishes and considered design, while an en suite bathroom is simple and contemporary, thanks to the choice of matt black fittings, concrete-effect tiles and clean-lined styling.

JOE MÜHL
DESIGN, SALES AND TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, OCEAN BATHROOMS

Q&A

How did you resolve the layout challenge? By replacing the old WC and bidet with a shower toilet, and by replacing the door that opened into the room with a sliding version which disappears into a side pocket, we were able to create more space to include the items on Valentina and Alastair's wish list. These included a walk-in shower and a generously-sized basin unit and wall cabinet, as well as a new double-ended steel bath in the same position as the old version.

Can you tell us about the contemporary style fittings? Valentina chose matt black brassware to add a touch of industrial style to the room, paired with a basin vanity unit in a dark grey finish. Its wall-hung design increases the sense of space, as do very large format wall and floor tiles, because they have minimal grout lines.

And the design of the shower? We used floor-to-ceiling transparent glass panels to enclose the walk-in design, their black framing and fittings chosen to echo the finish of the shower head and controls, and add another contemporary touch. The rain head offers a drenching shower, creating a luxurious experience important in a sanctuary-style en suite like this.

ON THE WALL
Above top Geometric wall-mounted furniture is space saving and easy to keep clean and also provides much-needed storage capacity

IN THE MIX
Above The Dornbracht Tara wall-mounted lever-handle basin mixer has a matt black finish to add a contemporary touch to the room

Stockists

FIXTURES AND FURNISHINGS

BEDROOM Bespoke **wardrobes**, designed by Valentina Druzhinina and made by Sygnet Style. Alf Allen **bed**, from £1,877, Italia Home. Valencia **side tables**, from £289 each; Lugano **sideboard**, from £1,869; all BoConcept. Anglepoise Original wall-mounted **lights**, £185 each; Marset Ginger **table lamp**, £589; all Atomic Interiors. The Beak **Chair** OW124, £2,569, The Conran Shop. Martini white **side table**, £159, West Elm. Similar **pouffe**, Flattened Braided, £89.99, Zara Home. Muuto Folded **shelf**, £109, Nest. Stonewashed Linen **curtains**, priced to order, Prêt À Vivre. Panneau Black Walnut **wall cladding**, priced to order, V4 Flooring. Lewis Abbott Quick Silver Herringbone **carpet**, £35.99 per sq. m, Brocklehurst Carpets. Linen **bed linen**, from a selection, Piglet. Quilted **bedspread**, from £39.95, Futon Company. Raine and Humble Grey Pom Pom **cushion**, £39, Trouva. Crosscut **coat hooks**, £77, SCP.

BATHROOM Majestic Monaco **shower panels** with matt black metal fittings, £1,300 per panel; Majestic **wet room kit**, £1,000; Dornbracht **Rain Shower** with handset and Tara controls in matt black, £2,700; Bette Starlet **bath**, £700; Dornbracht bath **hand shower**, Tara controls and waste filler in matt black, £2,400; Duravit Vero **basin** and Ketho **vanity unit** in Graphite matt, £1,150; Dornbracht Tara **basin mixer** in matt black, £1,200; Duravit Ketho **mirror cabinet** in Graphite, £770; Geberit AquaClean Sela shower **WC**, £2,300; Geberit Omega 30 **flush plate** in black and frame, £460; Radox Radiators Hercules **towel warmer** in bespoke colour, £500; Grespania Coverlam Gris 3x1m porcelain **floor and wall tiles**, £300 per tile; all Ocean Bathrooms.

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ADD DEFINITION
'Just as mascara frames the eye, so black details draw attention and add definition here,' says Valentina