

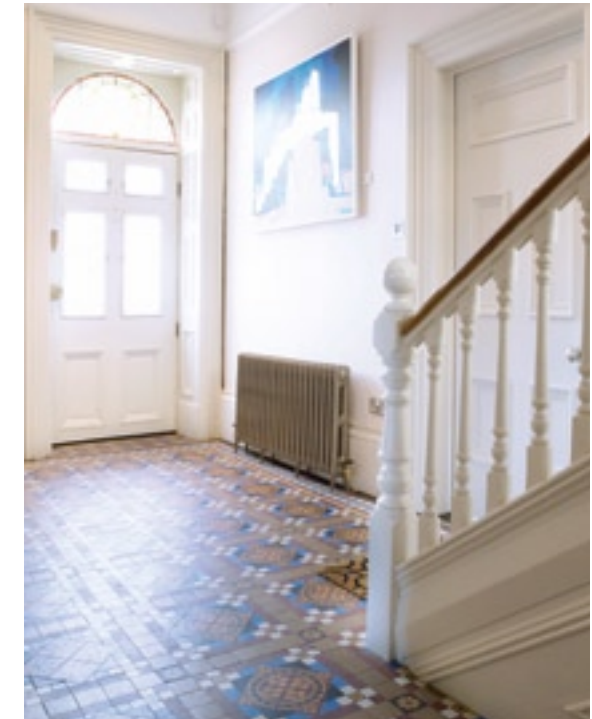


Words Jennie Musgrove Photography Eleri Griffiths

THE ULTIMATE BACHELOR PAD

Imagine if your job required that you live in a beautiful Victorian house filled with cutting-edge technology, from a dedicated cinema room to integrated audiovisual systems in every room...

LEFT Old meets new in this period property living room, where a traditional fireplace stands alongside a speaker concealed as artwork.



THIS PAGE A contemporary kitchen with state-of-the-art integrated appliances ensures Simon can entertain guests in style. **TOP RIGHT** Original floor tiles and striking artwork create an entrance hall to remember! **BOTTOM RIGHT** Neutral yet warm colour schemes were employed throughout the house, creating a relaxed atmosphere.



“IF I HAVE FRIENDS ROUND THERE CAN BE PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT ROOMSWATCHING DIFFERENT THINGS. IT’S TURNED OUT EXACTLY AS WE WANTED IT TO; IT’S PERFECT”

As one of three directors of Leeds-based audiovisual company Finite Solutions, Simon Mathieson is passionate about technology. Integrated sound systems, concealed HD televisions that are revealed at the press of a button and rooms with remote control panels instead of light switches are all part of his working life. So when the company decided to open a fully-furnished showhome, Simon jumped at the chance to live in the hi-tech house. “We were looking for a property we could refurbish and which looked grand enough to suit our company,” he says. “We found this a year-and-a-half ago and myself and my partners invested in it, but for me it’s a home.”

The house, in Yeadon, Leeds, dates back to the 1890s and originally belonged to the owner of a local mill. When Simon and his business partners bought it,

the building was structurally sound but parts of it needed restoring or replacing altogether. “All the exterior stone work was completely black because of the mills that were round here,” says Simon. “As soon as we stripped it off and had the walls repointed, it was like a ‘brand new’ old house!” Internally, the house features original Victorian corning, fireplaces and encaustic tile flooring in the entrance hall. “We knew we’d bought a period house and we wanted to keep it quite ornate, as it would have been when it was originally built, but we also wanted to combine that with really modern audiovisual equipment. It was important that we had traditional-looking rooms with hidden technology,” says Simon.

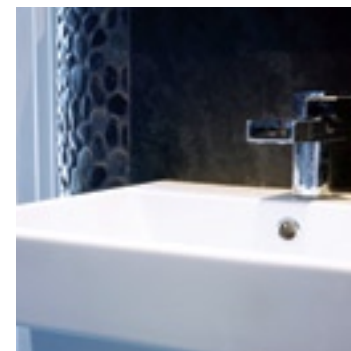
And when it comes to technology, the house has been kitted out from top to bottom with every gadget imaginable – including the latest HD televisions, »»»



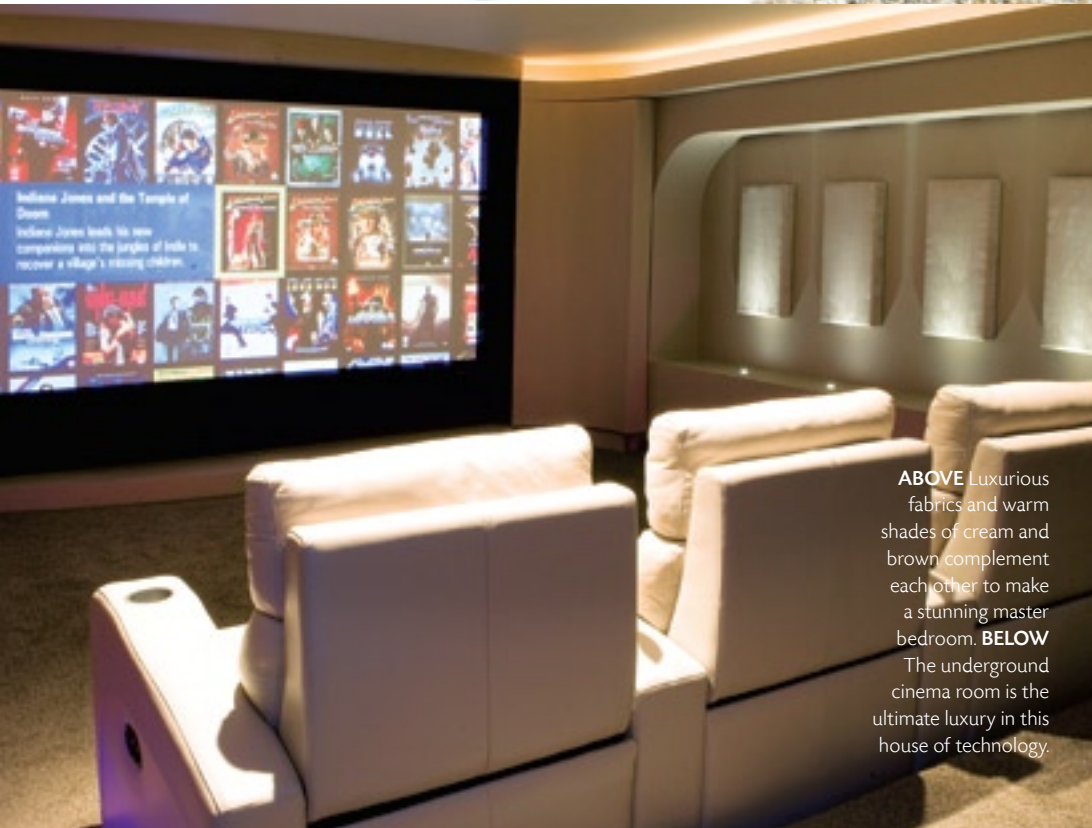
THIS PAGE This elegant dining room can become a board room at the flick of a switch thanks to a projector screen which rises automatically from the floor. **TOP LEFT** Restored stained-glass windows by the traditional staircase add to the property's period charm. **BOTTOM LEFT** Black slate and blue lighting create one very dramatic bathroom.

projectors, recessed speakers and mood lighting – as well as a few surprises. In the sophisticated living room, large speakers on either side of the TV are disguised as pieces of art, and the dining room contains a projector screen which rises up from the floor to transform the room into a boardroom. Simon's favourite part of his new home, however, is the basement cinema room. Two rows of luxurious seating face a large projector screen, and the room features a sound system to rival that of the local multiplex, with acoustic panels and an audio diffuser enhancing the cinematic experience. "The cinema was a dream come true because we've been designing rooms like that for quite a while and I've always wanted one," says Simon. "It's absolutely perfect, I probably watch about three films a week down there – it's better than going to the cinema!"

After deciding where all the hi-tech equipment would go (or rather, be hidden) in every room, Simon and his partners enlisted the help of York-based interior design consultants David Long Designs, who chose the colour schemes, floors and furniture throughout the house. The result is a glamorous combination of traditional features with a few contemporary touches. Rustic wooden floors and relaxing colour schemes in the ground-floor rooms complement the home's Victorian heritage, with the kitchen adding a modern twist. Upstairs, the cream, grey and black colour scheme continues but this time with plush cream carpets and decorative fabrics creating stylish bedrooms and further living rooms. Ilkley-based company Verbeia created the main bathroom and master en-suite wet-room, neither of which would be out of place in a luxury boutique hotel, >>>>



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ABOVE Luxurious fabrics and warm shades of cream and brown complement each other to make a stunning master bedroom. **BELOW** The underground cinema room is the ultimate luxury in this house of technology.

“THE CINEMA WAS A DREAM COME TRUE BECAUSE WE’VE BEEN DESIGNING ROOMS LIKE THAT FOR QUITE A WHILE AND I’VE ALWAYS WANTED ONE”

ADDRESS BOOK:

All the audiovisual technology and lighting throughout the home is by Finite Solutions, a market leader in the world of home entertainment systems. www.finitesolutions.co.uk or 0113 255 4765

David Long of David Long Designs designed the interior of the house. www.davidlongdesigns.co.uk 01904 673 710

Think Design architects designed the loft and basement conversion. www.thinkdesignleeds.co.uk 01943 604 448

TJ Pybus carried out all the building and construction work. www.tjpybus.co.uk or 0113 267 4222

The bathrooms and wet room are by Verbeia. www.verbeia.co.uk or 08709 192 840

The stonework, fireplaces and kitchen worktops are by J Rotherham. www.jrotherham.co.uk or 01430 861 047

Bernard Hobson made all the joinery work for the bathrooms. www.bernardhobson.co.uk or 01274 596 633

The kitchen and cabinets in the hidden cinema room are from Custom Made Kitchens. www.customkitchens.co.uk or 01405 812 625

The Antique Glass Studio restored the property’s original stained-glass windows. www.antiqueglassstudio.co.uk or 01274 683 888

The artwork throughout the home and on the speakers is by Marcus Levine. www.levine-art.co.uk or 0113 815 5636

with their monsoon showers, subtle lighting and beautiful finishes – not to mention waterproof TVs and recessed speakers in the ceilings.

Although the house is used as an example of what Finite Solutions can do and is often visited by prospective clients, it is Simon’s home and he loves living in such a future-proof property. “Irrespective of the business, I think the house is awesome,” he says. “It’s got everything I would want it to have and the technology makes it very entertaining. When I have friends and family round there can be people in different rooms watching different films, also there’s one button to switch all the lights and technology off when you leave the home, which helps cut down on electricity bills. It’s turned out exactly as we wanted it to; it’s perfect.” Living in a showhome isn’t always easy, however, as Simon explains: “It’s a double-edged sword. On the one

hand, it’s amazing because I love the technology and I love using it every day. The downside is that I never get any complete separation from work.”

Another potential problem is keeping the home clean and tidy for when people visit; the Finite Solutions team solved this by making sure there was a room visitors would never see. “There’s another basement room which we haven’t renovated to the same standard as the rest of the house,” explains Simon. “We’ve put lino on the floors and a bar down there – so if we do ever have a more raucous party, we can go there and drink and spill things without worrying!”

So the pros far outweigh the cons, and Simon lives in a house worthy of a James Bond film, with a super-stylish interior and state-of-the-art gadgets adorning every room. His verdict? “I’m single and in my 20s so I’m very happy here!” ☺



««« **LIVING ROOM**

Treat yourself to a statement chair. This classic ‘Versailles Mummy’ piece from The French Bedroom Company, £295, is a great catch so splash out and get yours today.

BATHROOM »»»

For hi-tech bathing check out this waterproof television complete with remote control. Available from Aqua Vision prices start from £999.



STEAL THEIR **STYLE**

Simon Mathieson’s trendy pad includes some of the latest stylish accessories and furniture pieces around. For a look that’s timeless simply introduce our best buys into your home. For stockist details see page 128



KITCHEN »»»

Add a sleek contemporary radiator such as the ‘Stradivari’, from £6,334, Aestus. It’s the perfect heating option with the added bonus of taking up minimal space – perfect in a kitchen leaving plenty of room for cooking.

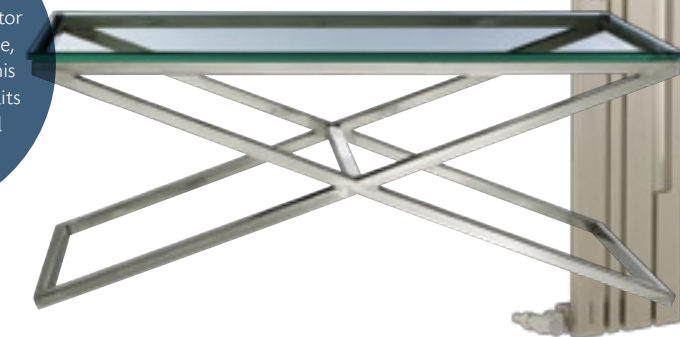
««« **DINING ROOM**

Simple accessories can change a room in an instant and Simon has used clear vases with bold flowers throughout his home to great effect – create the look with our pick of vases from LSA International, starting from £25.



LIVING ROOM

Create an instant wow factor with the ‘Mia’ coffee table, £375 from John Lewis. This multi-functional design suits both contemporary and traditional home alike.



LIVING ROOM »»»

Simon’s house is all about style so get the look with this feature floor lamp. The ‘Now & Then’ lamp, £199.99, from Amode is ideal for adding a touch of glamour.