

WORTH WAITING FOR

Perseverance is a virtue, as the owners of this house on Edinburgh's outskirts will testify. It took years for them to create the home they wanted, but their determination and persistence are now being handsomely rewarded

Words **Fiona Reid** Photography **Paul Zanre**

DETAILS

What A five-bed new-build house

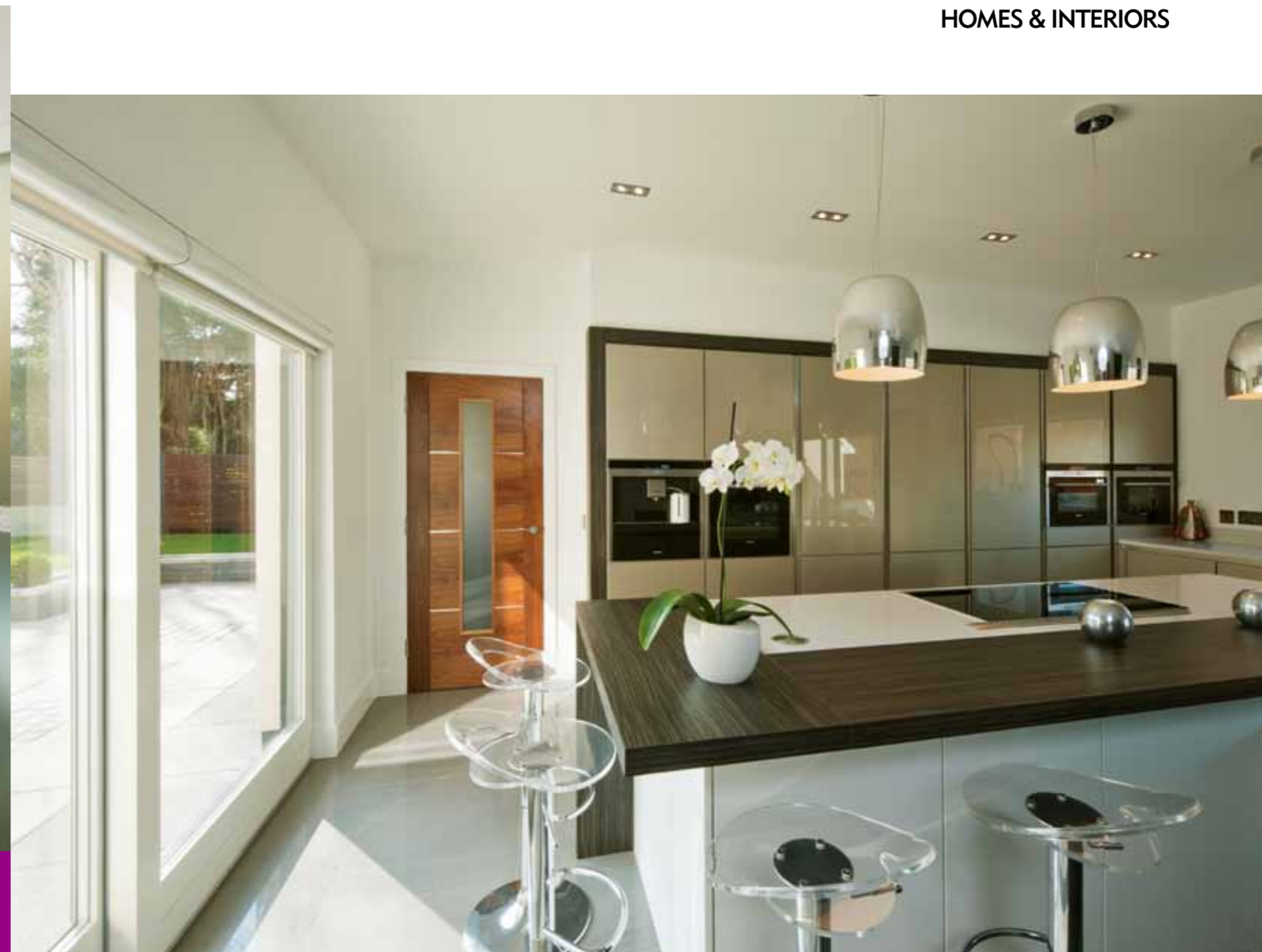
Where Cramond, Edinburgh

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. That determined mindset certainly worked for the owners of this house in Cramond, Edinburgh. Building his own home had been a lifetime ambition for Mike, whose first attempt to buy the plot his home now stands on was ten years ago. He was pipped to the post by a builder who intended to put a number of townhouses on the site. It never happened, and when the plot was offered for sale again three years ago, Mike jumped at the chance.

"I did some sketches at the start, and when you look at the

finished product, we haven't deviated from my initial ideas much," he says of the spacious five-bedroom home he now shares with his wife Adele and two sons.

This clarity of vision arrived through a mix of experience and research. "Every holiday home we'd ever rented has this living arrangement," says Adele of the expansive kitchen-living space that forms the light-filled core of this house. Glazed pocket doors open this area into the adjoining dining room, creating a superb entertaining zone, while sliding doors on both sides of ▶



[Clockwise from top left] A Tom Schneider table in the dining room; the RW Kuhlmann kitchen from Kitchens International, lit by Prandini Notte pendants from Blackmoon Lighting; the splendid Mozart chandelier; the Faber Glance fireplace



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the kitchen-living space allow the household to spill out on to the terrace and garden on warm days.

"We looked at lots of showhomes and picked elements that worked best," says Adele.

They weren't simply drawing inspiration from the overall style of these interiors, as Mike puts it: "It was about detail. I like to see a nice hinge when I open a door, so I went around taking photos of hinges. We went to see one showflat that had great electric blinds in the kitchen, so we added those here."

Likewise, they intended to use oak for the internal finishes until they spotted some walnut doors in another development. Mike ordered the same internal doors here, along with walnut flooring and a bespoke walnut staircase, immediately creating a rich warmth to set against the crisp white walls.

The build process was relatively simple as the couple

went for a timber frame kit from Scotframe. This was then redesigned on one side, forming the kitchen-living and dining spaces, along with a utility room and shower behind. (To put these alterations in context, today's kitchen was a garage on the original plans.) "To start with a blank piece of paper would have been difficult, and we liked the look of this house outside," Mike explains.

"We didn't want a house that would look too modern," Adele adds. "I might love it now, but would I love it in ten years' time? We wanted a house that wouldn't date."

The two-year build process brought its own challenges, not least for Mike who was project-managing while running his own business, but he readily gives credit to the talented team of contractors including David Neave of Braidwood Building Contractors ("He gave me a lot of advice and help"); Sean Meaney of Beechwood Joiners & Builders for the quality of the joinery work; and ▶

"OUR AIM WAS NOT TO SKIMP. IF WE COULDN'T AFFORD TO INSTALL SOMETHING AT THE TIME, WE WAITED UNTIL WE COULD"

Dean Stevens of MPact Building Services for attention to detail on the electrical and IT installation.

This interior signified a change in direction for the couple. "At first, I didn't think I'd be able to live with a totally white interior," says Mike, "but I'm liking it." Yet while the walls are white, this interior is filled with warmth in the gorgeously subtle hues and finishes.

Kieron Bell, a designer for Kitchens International, came up with the concept for the kitchen. Having given him a single specification – for a large island – the couple were immediately hooked on the design he showed them from the RW Kuhlmann collection with its quartz worktops and Siemens appliances. While other designers had suggested a ceiling-mounted extractor, Kieron specified the Wolf downdraught extractor, which rises from the worktop. "I like that it's quite James Bond," laughs Mike, "but the way it opens up the room is good too."

The slate-clad wall was a later addition after the couple decided to include a double-sided Faber Glance fireplace (from Firegroup in Edinburgh) between the kitchen-living space and the dining area. Indeed, this entire wall was moved once Mike reconsidered the floor plans and decided to extend the kitchen-living zone. As Adele says: "We eat in the dining room at weekends, but we live in this space all the time."

It's clear they were prepared to invest where it counted, splashing out on some high-tech features. An integrated Sonos sound system extends throughout, and there is intelligent lighting from Legrand's innovative Arteor range. The ground floor is heated by Rehau underfloor heating. "Our aim at the start was not to skimp," Mike acknowledges. "If we couldn't afford something at the time, we waited until we could."

Blackmoon Lighting supplied the striking hand-blown glass Prandina Notte pendants suspended over the kitchen island, as well as the glamorous Mozart chandelier by Dar Lighting over the stairwell.

In the master bedroom, the couple extended the ceiling height into the attic. "With a 2.4m-high ceiling this space would have felt enclosed," Mike reflects, but the 3.2m ceiling height gives a wonderful sense of volume. This is echoed in the overscaled headboard upholstered in chocolate velvet with Swarovski crystals (made bespoke, as was the bed, by A&M Robinson), which in turn reflects the glittering Rome pendant by Impex Lighting. "I wanted these warm colours in our bedroom," says Adele. The rich palette flows into the en-suite with its large walk-in shower and Porcelanosa vanity unit. ▶



BEST BUY

Mike: "The Mozart chandelier over the staircase – not in terms of price, but as something we like, it's fantastic"

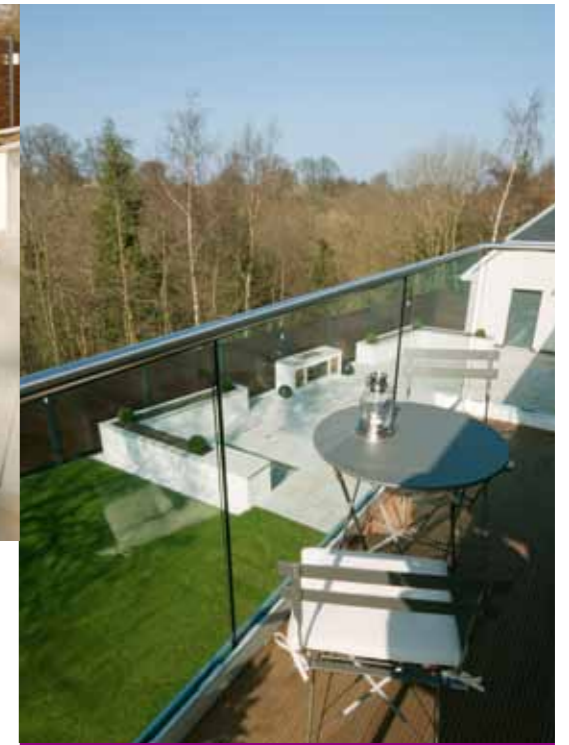


[Above and below] The master bedroom opens on to a balcony and has an oversized velvet headboard from A&M Robinson to complement its generous dimensions. [Opposite] Tiling in the bathrooms is by Porcelanosa, with shower enclosures by Matki and sanitaryware by Keuko and Villeroy & Boch, all from Boscolo Bathrooms



BETTER THAN EXPECTED

Mike: "The kitchen. I'm still amazed that I actually own this space. At dusk, when you're on the patio looking back into the kitchen, it's beautiful"



The couple also added the balcony from their bedroom to gain a view to the terrace below, which Mike designed. With its linear built-in planters, water feature and external fireplace – place a griddle over it and it becomes a barbecue – and sandstone paving by Marshalls, this entertaining zone complements the clean-lined, graphic nature of the house.

No detail was too small: Mike's company manufactured the fence, which he bolted together, panel by panel, over a period of weeks. "It was a labour of love!" he admits, and the same could be said of this house. "A few times, Adele told me, 'You're going into too much detail,' but I don't think you can," he reflects. "The devil is absolutely in the detail."

The result is an immaculately conceived home that's also a functional family zone for the couple's two sons. The ground-floor snug and lounge are still a work in

Sharp lines and geometric shapes keep the garden and terrace looking neat. The outdoor fireplace doubles as a barbecue and views can be enjoyed from the balcony

progress in terms of finishing touches, but they promise much. Mike and Adele may have kicked their heels for years while the plot owner dilly-dallied and a further two years while their home was being completed, but it seems good things really do come to those who wait. ■ **Braidwood Building Contractors, 0131 440 4044, www.bbc-ltd.co.uk**

