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Words REBECCA HOH

COCHRANE DESIGN

Sean Cochrane has an idfx award under his belt and is working with Meg Mathews on a wallpaper and soft furnishing range with the provocative name S&M



WINNING WAYS
The Macauley Road project (main pic) picked up the best kitchen prize at the recent idfx awards

COOL CUSTOMER
Sean Cochrane (above) describes his look (left) as 'classic and cool — comfort with a twist'

Cochrane Design, idfx award winner, is a shining example of how natural talent, hard work and just a little bit of luck can sometimes reap more rewards than having letters after your name. Sean Cochrane set up the interior design studio in 2006 and is now producing wallpaper and soft furnishings with Noel Gallagher's ex-wife, Meg Mathews. The S&M (think Sean and Meg) range will launch at this month's Ideal Home Show.

'I have no formal training whatsoever,' says Cochrane. 'I started developing by accident, really. I bought a flat, redesigned it a little and it added 25 per cent to its value.'

Cochrane carried on doing this for the next eight years and had built up a substantial portfolio of properties when Lady Luck stepped in. 'Those formative years allowed me to explore ideas with space. Then, Simon Mirren [nephew of Dame Helen] asked for my help on his London apartment so I ended up redesigning and rebuilding it,' he explains. 'As a result, Helen Mirren asked me to do her London apartment and things just started to snowball from there.'

The practice now has an eight-strong workforce. Cochrane designs and directs, assisted by the art and coordination manager and the project coordination manager. They are backed up by a team of designers, who do the CAD work, draw sketches and create mood boards. Cochrane Design has begun



work on a central London nightclub and a Soho hotel but most of the work is residential, to which it applies its ethos of 'classic, cool style — comfort with a twist'.

Previous residential projects include the Macauley Road scheme, which won an idfx award for best kitchen. 'This was one of those projects that kept on expanding,' says Cochrane. 'It was a large build to begin with — around 520m² after we added a couple of extra levels. By the time we finished, we had designed and manufactured every piece of furniture and upholstery in the house, from sofas, consoles, rugs, curtains and lampshades through to the kitchen, fitted wardrobes and the library. It was very refreshing for us and our client to start with a completely blank canvas.'

Next on the agenda are meetings in South Africa (Cochrane has another office

in Johannesburg and is the UK correspondent for a high-end architectural interior design magazine) to look at building five concessions in a number of department stores. The studio is also working on an apartment in New York, two large houses in the UK and, of course, the exciting venture with Mathews.

'Meg and I met through friend of mine and instantly hit it off,'

Cochrane says. 'We both discussed our current and future plans and we realised there was a definite synergy there. As the combination of our initials in S&M suggests, it is a fusion of our two styles and represents a collaboration between fashion and interiors. We have met representatives of Liberty of London, where Meg already sells her scarves and wallpapers, and hope to be in there very soon with the whole soft furnishings range. So I am trying to get this finished in a very limited timescale.'

It sounds like all the hard graft, combined with Cochrane's standout style, will take the studio's workload and side projects to another level over the coming months, which will, in turn, lead to more hard work. 'That's definitely true — it is so busy in the office,' says Cochrane. 'But while my workload is heavy at the moment, I wouldn't have it any other way.' www.cochrandedesign.com