

THE MEN'S ISSUE

**ASSET
MANAGEMENT**

What to do
with a pair of
breasts

**FASHION
EXTRA**

22 pages of
top clothes
for top boys

ROCK ON

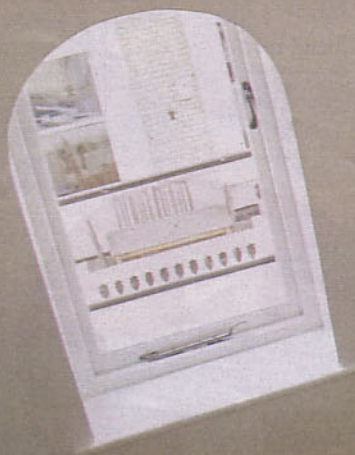
Dressing your age and living like you mean it, by Michael Stipe

style

THE SUNDAY TIMES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

Made to measure The fired-acacia floors in the living area are by Element 7 and the paint by Farrow & Ball, in Strong White. The art above the fireplace is by Steve Smulka, from Plus One Gallery. The corduroy sofas are by Minotti. The Designers Guild cushions provide a shot of colour against the monochrome palette. The rug is by Deirdre Dyson



SURFACE MALE

BEHIND THE CLEAN LINES OF THIS MAN PAD LIES A
YEAR-LONG QUEST FOR COMFORT AND PERFECT DETAIL
WORDS **JOHANNA THORNYCROFT** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL**



What men want," says Christopher Ash of the architects Project Orange, "is clean lines and lots of gadgets: multifunctional lighting, remote-control fires and fully wired sound and music systems." Add huge power showers to that, and he is spot-on.

Ash refurbished this three-storey flat for a high-flying young businessman who wanted his home to provide an antidote to the stresses of long-haul travel. When Ash's client bought the 1,700 sq ft space it was decked out in a "trite Kensington-and-Chelsea style, full of sham traditional details".

"It was hideous," agrees Isas Sastraada, the designer charged with sorting out the interiors. "My brief was to keep it light and modern, with definitely no knick-knacks. Comfortable, chill-out seating for reading and watching films was important — funnily enough, he wanted it to be a bit like a great hotel suite."

Men may love gadgets, but they have also driven the revival of fine timber finishes, dark floors and sparkling marble. This flat, though, is not all about hard edges, and there isn't a black leather chair in sight. The guest room, for example, while minimal, isn't stark. It is simply furnished with a seating unit in which a pair of low, padded chairs swivel to become a sofa or unfold to become a double bed.

The master bedroom is dreamy. A wall of black-bean-veneered cabinets contains the owner's possessions, and a marble-lined fireplace faces the bed. The wood panels extend into the bathroom, where some pivot to reveal views over the gardens below. "The idea was to imitate the shadowy atmosphere of the tropics," Sastraada explains. More wood warms up the double-height living area, where a cantilevered timber staircase forms a library, with a Corian-clad kitchen tucked behind it.

"Success is all about detail," Sastraada says. "The project took a year to complete; this kind of clean-lined architectural simplicity takes far more time and skill than people think." □

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Above The Tolomeo chrome floor light is by Artemide and the Futura sofa bed-chairs are by Luigi Recalcati. **Left** The cantilevered timber stairs form a sculptural bookcase, with an opening through to the kitchen. The Minotti leather dining chairs and the Molteni extending wenge dining table create a graphic, monochrome effect. **Far left** The Corian bath is by Antonio Lupi, with taps by David Chipperfield for Czech & Speake

SOUND AND VISION

So, where does Mr Big Spender shop for his high-spec kit? According to Andy Napthine, of Bowers & Wilkins (www.bowers-wilkins.com), the world's biggest speaker company, specialist help is essential when decking out any self-respecting bachelor pad. Not only are its Nautilus speakers design classics, but at £44,000 per pair, they still need one stereo preamplifier and eight mono power amps, all wired into your own hi-fi system. So, consult not just an audio installer, such as Angus Gibson (www.gibson-music.com), but an architect and acoustician, too (try totalacousticsolutions.co.uk). The sound not only has to reverberate correctly, but it mustn't annoy the neighbours too much.

Business, particularly at the high end of the market, is booming. Gibson says it's no longer a case of just selling the product, but of asking the purchaser: "How do you

want to use it?" And remember, size does matter: if you want the best gear, prepare to sacrifice space.

For cinephiles, this month, the smallest, lightest projector yet hits the shops. With HD and Hollywood-quality visuals, the C3X by SIM2 (www.sim2.co.uk) looks good on all levels. Screens are the last link in the chain — a reputable dealer will ensure you get what is right for your projector.

Stealth wealth is in vogue: you don't need to show off when your kit is this good. Digital and wireless technologies are on the rise, solving the problem of unruly wires, ripped-out walls and builders taking over your life. Think less Shirley Bassey, more super-bassy.

Julia Sherwood

For advice and suppliers, contact the British Audio-Visual Dealers Association; bada.co.uk