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## the white issue

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space in your home

SIMPLE  
RULES



# HEAD FOR

Balinese-born Isas turned an attic into a





# HEIGHTS

Elegant eyrie where the East meets West London

Words Emma Kilbey Photography Paul Massey Styling Mary Weaver



## THE PROPERTY

**TYPE** Apartment over two floors in a Victorian townhouse.

**SPACE** Kitchen, dining/living room, master bedroom with ensuite, guest room, bathroom and study, plus a mezzanine level.

**LOCATION** Earl's Court, London.

**COST** Bought in 2004 for over £1,000,000. £350,000 spent on renovations.

**LEFT** In the living room, Isas has put together two sofas and an ottoman from Minotti to create an L-shaped seating area. The coffee table is The Cesar, also by Minotti. The dining table is from Molteni & C, and the chairs are from Minotti's Roma collection. John Lewis sells a wide range of large, colourful cushions.



**LIVING AREA** This is where Isas hangs out the most – it's the centre of activity in the flat. The sitting area (previous page) is an unfussy, contemporary space with cool furniture, yet its flashes of citrus colour along with the angled and arched lower windows mean it's far from bland. The massive top window allows light to flood in and adds a dramatic accent.

The staircase was a major renovation – its direction was changed up to the mezzanine, opening up the space and providing storage underneath for books. Log onto [www.findacraftsman.com](http://www.findacraftsman.com) to find a carpenter to build understair storage similar to this.





Deciding I wanted to buy this place happened within two minutes of being shown around,' says Isas Sasraada of his serenely beautiful Earl's Court flat. 'It ticked all the boxes in terms of the basics, but most importantly, I was fired up with ideas about how I could transform it.'

Born in Bali, Isas moved to Holland at 17, working as a fashion stylist, as well as in marketing for an airline. 'I'm passionate about travel, and I learnt about style and culture across the world,' he says, with characteristic enthusiasm. Since moving to London in 2003, he's specialised in interior design.

So how was he so certain he'd found his own dream space? 'I think it was the double-height ceiling that clinched it. It allows in lots of natural light which invites the beauty of the outside in,' he explains.

Isas' ethos of putting his clients' personalities at the centre of the design process is very evident in his own environment. Think Sixties Bond-style pad meets boutique hotel – with a touch of the tropical thrown in. 'I'm definitely inspired by the French [interiors] designer Christian Liaigre – cool, clean lines and natural materials.' There's also a hint of the colonial, with the sisal flooring and shades of grey and brown set against strong, bright whites. Alongside this sit natural materials, such as limestone and wood. 'I've brought a bit of my tropical background in. Bali is very close to my heart.' Particularly striking are the sharp, acid flashes of citrus orange, a theme that runs throughout the flat, from cushions to rugs to seat covers. 'It takes me back to Holland – it's a very Dutch colour.'

Work started on the apartment in April 2004, with Isas working alongside architects Project Orange. He finally moved in in October 2005. 'I wanted to get it exactly right and not rush any of the stages.' The major renovation took place on the top floor, where an arch was removed and the mammoth task of changing the stair direction up to the mezzanine was undertaken. The effect of this is stunning – the space is instantly opened up and the dark staircase carries the warmth of the wooden living room floor up to the mezzanine, as well as providing sumptuous storage for books.

Underneath the mezzanine level is the formerly gloomy kitchen. This was opened up and connected to the living room via a wooden sliding door. Connecting the kitchen and living/dining areas was key to 'opening up the circulation of the space' – Isas loves to cook and entertain friends. 'I like my home to be full of people. It becomes very alive, friendly and dynamic.'

Isas' bedroom is a peaceful sanctuary, while the bathrooms are like those in a chic hotel, with dimmable lighting and dramatic colour contrasts. 'I took the cream carpet out when I moved in. It seems so impractical (but very British!) to have a carpet in the bathroom. And I hate clutter. At work in Holland, I was renowned for having the tidiest desk – no-one believed I ever did anything.'

His flair for interiors has brought him a raft of design projects – everything from friends' homes to offices. 'It's such a satisfying experience. I love the idea of making a home into someone's ideal environment, the challenge of reflecting their dreams and taste in their surroundings,' he says. With all the time Isas spends creating dream homes for his clients, seeing his own vision become a reality must be the ultimate satisfaction. 'I truly belong here,' he says. 'I know every inch of the place and I love it because I've chosen it.' >

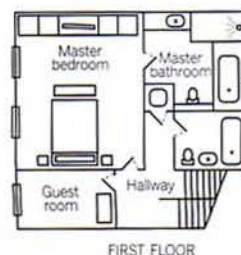
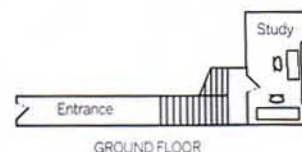
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throughout the flat, from cushions to rugs to seat covers.

'It takes me back to **Holland** – it's a very Dutch colour'





**KITCHEN** 'I love entertaining and really enjoy being in the kitchen, cooking and chatting – it's a big, connected space so it's easy to get on with stuff but still be at the centre of everything,' says Isas. 'I wanted the kitchen to be multi-functional, with eating at the top of my list – I may be tiny but I'm very greedy and can eat a lot! I particularly love Thai food and my signature dish is red duck curry. >

**LEFT** The orange leather-topped kitchen stools are by Jasper Morrison, from Capellini. The kitchen worktop is Corian and the floor is fired acacia wood from Element 7. Walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Strong White. **BELOW** The window seat was made to measure by Capellini using the same leather as the stools.

#### WHAT HE DID

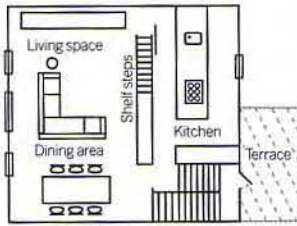
- Removed arch on the top floor and changed the stair direction from and to the mezzanine.
- Knocked through the kitchen and living room.
- Changed kitchen layout to an island.
- Moved the bath in the ensuite bathroom; created a walk-in shower. Tiled with limestone.
- Installed under-floor heating.
- Removed bath and replaced with a walk-in shower in the guest bathroom. Tiled with limestone.
- Replaced open fires in the master bedroom and living room with contemporary gas versions.
- Replaced cupboards in master bedroom.
- Painted all walls white.
- Took up cream carpets on the lower floor and replaced with sisal flooring.
- Put in dark wood flooring on top floor.



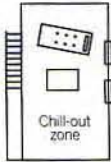
Sleek, dark wooden  
cabinets give the  
kitchen a streamlined  
look. Try Alno for similar.







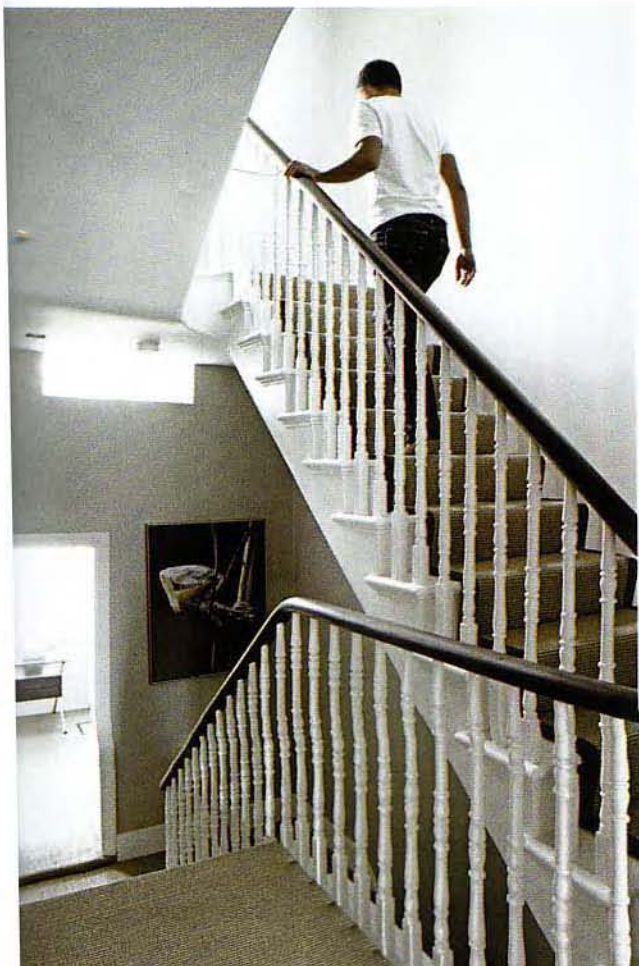
SECOND FLOOR



MEZZANINE FLOOR

**STUDY** 'As I spend a lot of time here I chose this room for its large window and view of the London rooftops – it's amazing how inspiring it can be.' Isas has kept the study cool and simple to aid concentration. 'The retro chair has moved everywhere with me but I can't remember where I bought it.' Twentytwentyone does similar chairs by Eames. Square recessed lights with adjustable beams are used throughout the apartment. >

**RIGHT** The desk with the computer on is by Le Corbusier; the other desk is by Albine from The Conran Shop. For similar framed prints, try [www.banchorygallery.co.uk](http://www.banchorygallery.co.uk). **BELOW** The corridors are painted in Farrow & Ball's Hardwick White.



'I am a **minimalist**. At work I was renowned for having the tidiest desk. No-one believed I **ever did** anything!'





**BEDROOM** 'I wanted this to be a place to rest and dream – a comfortable, peaceful sanctuary,' says Isas. He renewed the existing fitted cupboards and updated them with floor-to-ceiling, chic and unobtrusive versions. 'They're functional and great for easy living. The gas fire with its marble surround adds a cosy focal point, and the purple chair and footrest makes for a relaxed feel.'

The dark brown woven leather bed is from the Bartlett collection by Gordon Guillaumier for Minotti. The bedside tables are also from Minotti. The purple Metropolitan armchair and footrest is by Jeffrey Bennett for B&B Italia.

**BATHROOM** There's a serenity about the ensuite bathroom. Pristine white Corian bathware sits on limestone tiling, and the warmth of the dark wood is an elegant contrast. It's timelessly luxurious with the bonus of being low maintenance.

The Corian bath came from Antonio Lupi, while the taps are by David Chipperfield for Czech & Speake. The wood used here, and in the bedroom, is imported Australian black bean.



## HOME TRUTHS

**What's on your CD player?** Boy-and girl-bands like All for One, as well as lounge music and R'n'B. One of my real pleasures is to really go for it and dance round the flat on my own!

**Favourite architectural style?** I really like the houses in Amsterdam, factories transformed into modern loft apartments. They're so unusual – old buildings that have a unique, contemporary feel.

**Ideal holiday destination?** I love Bangkok, the noise and the hustle, and there are so many lovely bespoke shops. The people are great and I feel so safe there, even though it's so crowded and crazy.

**Guilty secret?** I invariably get rid of presents that people buy me. My friends know especially not to buy anything for me for the home. I'm so fussy and have a very specific taste. I'd much rather be taken out for dinner or to the theatre for a treat.







ABOVE Cushions, £52 each, Ligne Roset. LEFT Flow cup and saucer, £18, Villeroy & Boch. BELOW Sofa, £2,400, John Lewis.



### Wet and wild

Isas's bespoke window shutters give the bathroom a distinctly graphic look. William Garvey specialises in designing and manufacturing products for wet areas. The teak is polished with Timberfect, a resin that fuses with the wood to form an exceptionally tough layer, making it suitable for the bathroom. For details on this bespoke service go to [www.williamgarvey.co.uk](http://www.williamgarvey.co.uk).



## ideas to steal FROM ISAS'S HOUSE



FROM LEFT Rice baskets, £350 each, Snapdragon. Flooring, from £88 per sq m, Element 7. Nishi bed, £1,295, Heal's.



### Slide rules

If you love the idea of open-plan space but still want the option to close off an area, pick a sliding door. Isas fixed one between his kitchen and living room to keep out the noise of clashing pans and unwanted cooking smells. This quick fix also establishes zones to create instant privacy. Spaceslide does a similar door system. Prices start at £660 for a 2.5m wide door.