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TREASURE

Interior designer Loraine Chassels' home in Glasgow is an Aladdin's cave of fabulous furniture, eye-catching art and the odd life-size statue from around the world

TROVE

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LORAINÉ CHASSELS sprinkled "magic and angel dust" on her Victorian home to the north of Glasgow. Not literally, of course, but it certainly makes redecorating sound a lot more interesting and less stressful than usual.

Lorraine's enthusiasm is easy to understand. The property is half fairy tale castle, half Aladdin's cave of furniture and art. A secret staircase leads up to a flat roof – "perfect for a picnic and a dry martini if one had the time" – a Saltire flutters from the turret and the rooms are fit to bursting with artefacts, including an original Salvador Dali wall sculpture. And that's before any new visitor even notices original features such as the Charles Rennie Mackintosh fingerplates on the sitting-room door.

"One of the hardest schemes to put together is world-travelled relaxed opulence," explains

Lorraine, an interior designer who has also lived in California. "We've got a lot of pieces in the sitting-room that we've collected over the years, but it is not overstated. It says, 'kick off your shoes, but look at some serious kit.'"

And there is a lot of serious kit to look at. The room is a riot of creams and pecans. The coffee table is by an American company, but it was handmade in the Philippines using two million-year-old fossilised stone, says Lorraine. There are only around six of them in the world. Hollywood star Sylvester Stallone has one of them.

The ornate table is positioned in front of the original inglenook, with an art nouveau fireplace complete with green tiles and a brass overhang. Two carved art nouveau-style seats sit in the snug. When Lorraine bought the property with her husband, Carlo Sambucci, in 1984, she was delighted to find that the previous owner had retained all of the original features, such as >



“We’ve got a lot of pieces that we’ve collected over the years, but it is not overstated. It says, ‘kick off your shoes, but look at some serious kit’”

Previous page: The cream and pecan sitting-room features a handmade stone coffee table and an art nouveau fireplace. From left: Burmese angels on mirrored plinths watch over the guest bedroom; the hall boasts two full-sized bronze statues of goddesses

► the stained glass, domed ceilings and wood panels. The knack was to marry them with their love of big pieces of furniture and art spanning the centuries. They didn’t want it to be “psychodrama”, she laughs.

It must have been a hard trick to carry off, but they managed it. Loraine explains that they achieved the effect by creating “vignettes” throughout the room. For example, the two Duresta cream sofas with cherry-wood feet make a square along with the most dramatic element: the black and mocha feature sofa, she says.

It would be impossible to describe everything in the sitting-room. Four 18th century French gilt chairs with the original fabric were bought in Cairo. The gold wall sculpture by Dali is from a gallery in Hawaii – Loraine has a book showing Dali handing the piece over to the gallery owner.

On the same trip, the couple bought a cross – a piece of jewellery made by Dali for his wife, Gala. Now in a framed glass box, it sits on the wall near a painting of vibrant yellow roses dating from the 19th century.

It might sound as though Loraine and Carlo are off round the world collecting pieces so often that they are never home long enough to enjoy their treasures. Not so. “We’re not throwing the Louis Vuitton on Concorde every three days,” insists Loraine.

However, that is not to say the couple aren’t busy. They work together on a variety of businesses, one of the three main ones of which is EX Showhouse Furniture, a company that buys furniture, carpets, fabrics and art to rent out for show homes, and to film and TV production companies.

Another business is XS Interiors, an ►



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► interior design firm. Among Loraine's current clients is Celtic's latest signing, Juninho, who has bought a £1m-plus home near Glasgow.

The third of their interests is Cityscape, which is selling four Cala two-bedroom boutique apartments at Glasgow Harbour from £280,000. The properties are all individually designed by Loraine, come fully furnished and have panoramic views. Maid-serviced properties for short-term rent will be available in the same development soon.

"We're able to motor on fifth gear all the time," says Loraine on the way to the dining-room to show me her bulging appointments diary. "With us, it can all happen yesterday."

She takes me via the hall, past two full-sized bronze statues of goddesses clasping Tiffany torches. The sofa was hand-carved in the Philippines and covered in a zebra fabric. Opposite, kitsch 1950s glassware sits on an antique dresser surrounded by Picasso-style vases and antique Chinese pillows. "We've got eclectic tastes," says Loraine.

We stop first in the guest bedroom and are greeted at the door by 150-year-old Burmese angels sitting on mirrored plinths. The block oil canvas on the wall was bought at the Glasgow School of Art's end-of-term show two decades ago. The bed is dark walnut and oversized, and is covered in an arctic fox spread. Meanwhile, a ponyskin Corbusier chaise sits by the window near the original fireplace.

Further down the hall is the dining-room. It is here that Loraine and Carlo meet with architects and clients round an antique dining-table. "Usually you can hardly see it - it's buried underneath so many plans and pieces of paper," she laughs.

Today, the dining chairs are high-backed and covered in chocolate leather. However, if the mood takes her, Loraine sometimes swaps them for an antique set.

On the left sits a Portuguese burr walnut dresser. Art by Glasgow artist Leslie Main decorates the walls. At the feature window sits a vast desk and behind it a chair fit for a queen. Loraine can often be found in this room juggling telephone calls and brainstorming ideas. She says her latest client, Juninho, is a

From left: The house is full of art that spans the centuries; the snug room lives up to its name; stained glass in the bathroom; Loraine Chassels; four 18th century French gilt chairs grace the sitting-room

delight to work with. "They are just a lovely family," she says. Emerging from Loraine's Aladdin's cave, you can't help but think the only thing you haven't seen is a magic lamp. Not that Loraine seems to need three wishes. By the looks of it, she has everything she desires. □ XS Interiors (0141-942 0519) Cityscape (0141-942 0519)



'Emerging from Loraine's Aladdin's cave, you can't help but think the only thing you haven't seen is a magic lamp offering three wishes'