

Carpenter's daughter Maggie carving out a name in interior design



Good design does not have to cost a fortune. That's the philosophy of interior designer Maggie Brady who combines influences from her late father along with her former home of New York state. A devotee of colour and vintage furniture, the Rathfriland woman tells **Andrea McKernon** of her journey towards her vocation.

Maggie Brady, founder of Pearl Redesigns, loves upcycling and transforming homes for less
Picture: Divine Photography

When interior designer Maggie Brady travelled to an old rectory outside Jonesborough for a consultation, the client began to wax lyrical about the remarkable workmanship he'd had carried out by a carpenter some years before. What the client said next meant from that moment on, Maggie knew her decision to set up Pearl Redesigns a couple of years earlier was the right decision.

"The client was speaking about the amazing workmanship carried out and the special wood features in the property. He said he'd had the best carpenter in the country who did the best work and there had been nobody like him. He then said the man had lived in Silverbridge.

"That's where I grew up. My father was a carpenter," she explains. With her hands on the rectory wood panelling, she asked the carpenter's name.

"He said Derek Clarke - my father's name - and I nearly fainted. It was one of those moments in your life you just can't believe. I got goosebumps.

"Daddy had died shortly before. It was an amazing and life-defining moment." And for the mother-of-two, there was no better spiritual message she could have received in that old rectory.

"I already knew I was doing something I loved and was good at. Now I knew I had the blessing and guidance of my father," she said.

"And as I did the work in the place where my daddy had worked some years before, I felt safe and protected. It was amazing." It was even more significant because the years prior had not been easy for Maggie (54), including the breakdown of her marriage.

She had just moved home after 25 years in America and was recovering from cancer.

But she knew she had a talent and a passion for design - a passion developed in upstate New York over many years. While living Stateside, she had also enrolled in an interior design course and got to develop her craft further.

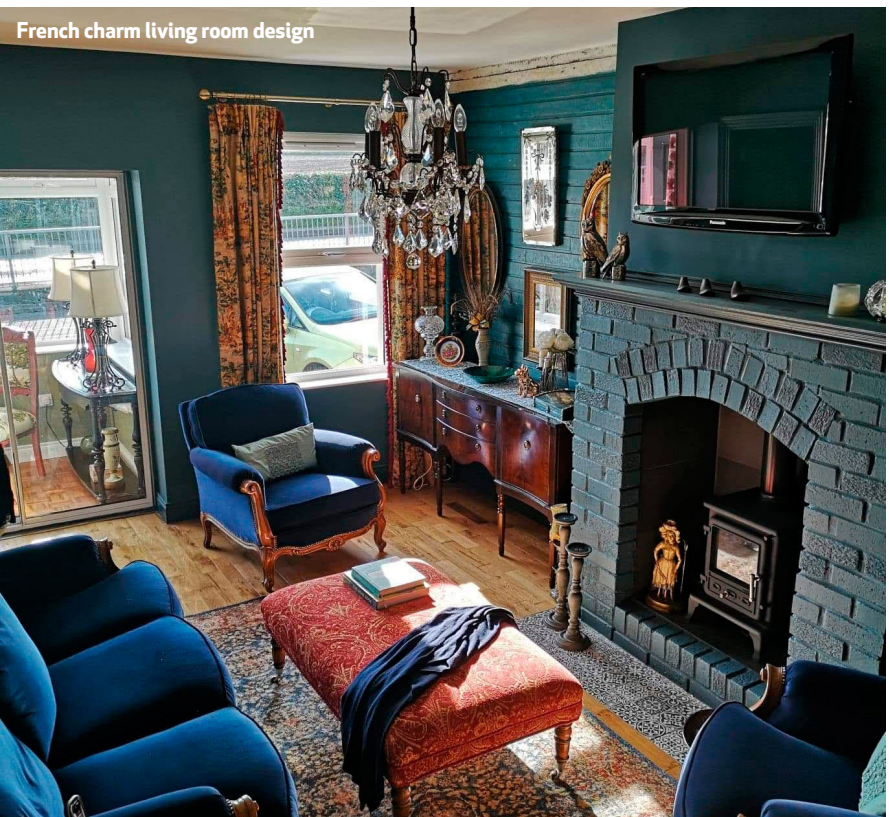
Back and on track

On returning home, Maggie got her life on track, developing a unique approach to helping people transform their homes without breaking the bank.

Clients get a walkthrough of their home and Maggie is on point with the current drive towards reducing waste.

Tasteful upcycling is proving a major hit among householders for the business, says Maggie.

"My motto is good design doesn't have



I would find fabulous, quirky things. When I decided to come home, I couldn't part with them. I brought them all home in a shipping container and trailer."

Coming back home Maggie took the big step of setting up in business.

She knew interior design was primarily about the people she would work with and the amazing spaces she would create

would always be an influence which had the added advantage of cost benefits.

"Good design doesn't have to cost a fortune. Pearl Redesigns is all about colour and bespoke design. I'm not flatpack modern. There is a place for that, but I love the richness of colour and vintage. Like my father I appreciate good workmanship and the quality of vintage furniture.

"I very much want to know what the person wants, but I'm keen to show them colours and styles that they may not have seen before in Ireland. Everything here is quite small and much the same and that often looks great, but I'm about so much more when it comes to creating beauty, tone and texture. I suppose in that way I'm just like my dad. I'm a dyed in the wool designer, it's in my genes and I'm indeed my father's daughter."

pearlredesigns.com



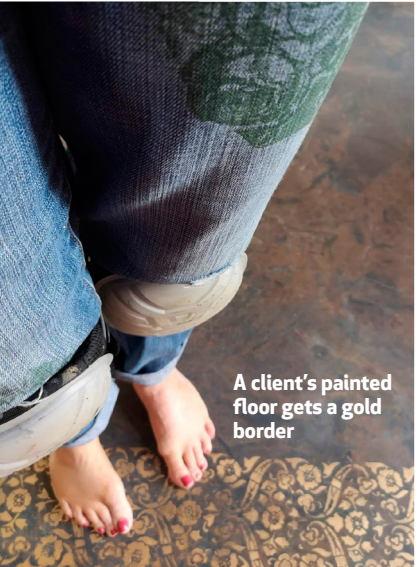
to cost a fortune. My influences were so varied and wide ranging in the US," she explained.

"With so many countries represented, the fabrics, furniture and designs are vast and varied. There are so many different styles even in New York.

"I had an apartment and in America they want you to leave interiors the way they have been done for renters but I'm a colour person and I just couldn't live with magnolia. I always had to design the place to what I wanted and then I'd paint it back to magnolia when I left."

Maggie's ability to see and draw from many influences widened the scope of her designer's eye.

"Every state has a different style and inspiration. I would go to car boot sales in Manhattan and the huge, open air Stormville Airport flea and vintage market.



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