



Above: Annette Stone and her husband, Anthony van Laast, in the mezzanine of their Mayfair home house

Right top: the gym and living area open onto unfiltered terraces

Right: the kitchen has cutting-edge design ideas, such as a built-in coffee machine

Far right: the main living area opens outwards into the kitchen and spreads to the mezzanine level



The detailing in Annette and Anthony's home mixes glass, wood and steel

There is tomorrow's mews, today

The art collectors who love New York and the buzz of loft-style living have found it all in Mayfair. By Fay Sweet

THE high energy of New York has always appealed to Annette Stone and Anthony van Laast. Their work in theatre and film often takes them to the big apple. Just so, when looking to move home in London recently they knew they had found the perfect place when they saw a newly built mews home in Mayfair that was charged with all the hallmarks of the metropolis.

"As soon as I stepped through the door, I had a great feeling: lots of natural light, plenty of space, lovely details and it is right in the middle of town," says Annette, who is now able to walk to her office in Soho. "We love the Upper West Side of Manhattan, the neighbourhoods and cafes and easy access to everything, and we found that again here."

Annette is an agent who represents a cast of theatrical stars and musical supervisor Stephen Sondheim. She also represents her husband, Anthony, a choreographer and director who has worked on huge hit stage productions in London and New York including Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and Mamma Mia. Anthony is proud to start making the film of Mamma Mia this summer starring Meryl Streep.

One of the great features of the new home is the artwork: the couple have a tremendous collection of vibrant, colourful paintings that add red and drama to the interiors. And each work has a story "right from my early career as a dancer. I've always collected paintings," says Anthony who was awarded an MBE in 1999 for services to dance and choreography. "Every time there was an opportunity to collect such as a new project, I'd mark the occasion by buying something. For example, there's a painting by Stephen Marston to mark the opening of 'Jazzman' in London, and another by James Fallon for *Flamingo Dreams*. There's the lovely Mary Fiddon painting of a Corbin horse that Annette and I bought each other when we got married."

While they are delighted with their new place — "we're never far from each other," says Annette — the couple's move was entirely unplanned. "We lived in a converted gable in St John's Wood, there was plenty of space and an excellent view, I

suppose I must have been looking for a change." Annette recalls her first sight of the mews made such an instant impact that Annette made an offer almost immediately. "I came home one evening and was told we'd bought a new house," chides Anthony. "It's easy to see the appeal of the place; it's a quiet road, close to Baker Street, it forms part of a new terrace of six homes (outpost by architect Mark Fisher) and built by a developer, which has worked on a number of elegant town houses across London. Before it found fame as a residential street, the mews was home to some of the best luxury cars. It was there, in 1988, that Walter Bentley began working on his motorcar prototypes.

Today, the street is mostly residential. From its unadorned

'The rooms in the house are so lovely, we didn't want to fill them up'

entrance the new house opens into a four-storey town house where Annette and Anthony have a gym and cinema room complete with huge Vertigo motor car and an office on the middle two floors above this, the stairs culminate in a light-filled open-plan living and living space opens onto a large outside terrace with views of the urban cityscape, and a further mezzanine level with large wrap-around sofas makes the perfect chill-out space. Placing over the top of this space is a vast glass-glass ceiling with a perfect screen made of wide 'tim' that can be angled to provide light on the hottest days.

The palette of materials is luxurious and restrained, with oak and limestone flooring, American black washed oaks and light to orange glass lots of glass. Frosted-glass panels include the fireplace, TV fitted into the wall above the tub of the main bathroom, kitchen appliances such as the built-in coffee machine, and a double-washer that rises from kitchen to kitchen — ideal for taking spoons up and rubbish down. "The grandchildren are fascinated by it," says Anthony. "So, in fact, we've managed to keep them out of them."

When it came to furnishing, the answer was to keep it simple.

The cinema room is decorated in a minimalist style, with different kinds of wood adding warmth to the muted palette of colours

"Because the rooms are so lovely, we didn't want to fill them up," says Annette. "The couple have retained the temptation to buy all new furniture, instead opting for a comfortable mix of their own pieces — a low level site-covered coffee table from Conran, a big table, an oval side table, a dining table that they had made. "We often have big family lunches, so with our four children, their partners and two grandchildren, a big table was essential." Says Anthony: "But it had to pack away for those times when I'm just the two of us here, or when we have a party."

The most delightful element in the decor is the art collection, which is almost all modern and by Scottish artists. It is a brilliant idea to mark key significant moments in their high-profile careers.

The latest challenge is to find a place to mark working on the film of *Mamma Mia*, which is due to be released next year. "We are thinking of moving away from paintings," says Anthony. "It could be something more sculptural. I think what we really like is a contemporary chandelier."

Q Development: 001 222 2200; www.greycharters.co.uk. **The price:** for a two-bedroom house in Mayfair, the new one in this market for between £2 million and £2.5 million. **Q Development's current projects include:** a 150 apartment scheme in Windwardmill with Crossin & Partners, a mixed-use scheme including a hotel, a building in Church Hill Road, and five new town houses in Chelsea.

WHERE TO BUY THE STYLE

- **Chairs by Poggenpohl:** www.poggenpohl.de
- **Appliances by Miele:** 01293 564500; www.miele.co.uk
- **Sofas and coffee table from the Conran Shop:** www.conran.com
- **Weston glass mirrors in dressing room from Liberty:** www.liberty.co.uk
- **Classy footed bar stools from John Lewis:** www.johnlewis.com
- **Favorite galleries include:** Richard Rogers in Worcester (www.richardrogers.com), and in London, John Martin (www.johnmartin.com) and Thompson (www.thompsongallery.com)



The restrained use of colour and tone in the bathroom and dressing room (below) continue the contemporary look



Pictures by Morley von Sternberg