



## Home Comfort zone

Renovating a flat in an older-style building in Happy Valley was an investment one banker was confident would pay dividends.

When banker Josh Green moved into his new home – a 1,800-square-foot unit in a 40-year-old-plus building overlooking Happy Valley – he wanted to create a modern, bright and unpretentious space he would feel comfortable in day and night.

"I liked the efficient use of space, the high ceilings and the better proportions of an older building. But the view is its best feature," says Green about the vista of Happy Valley, Central and Victoria Harbour. "I used to live in Mid-Levels but much prefer the village atmosphere of Happy Valley. When I come home I feel removed from the frantic pace of Central."

Working closely with architect Ed Bilson of MAP

(Metropolitan Architecture and Planning, tel: 2877 9282), Green sought to maximise the space by raising the ceilings and knocking down partition walls. Says Bilson: "The brief was for a bachelor pad which was high quality but had a sharp, edgy design. He didn't want something that looked like a five-star hotel room."

The result is a clean, light, unfussy space that has the luxe factor of a designer hotel but none of the sterility. It is a lived-in space, with a muted, masculine palette enhanced by flashes of colour from art and collectibles.

"I wanted to keep the design simple and to incorporate natural stone, wood and glass mosaic tiles," says Green. "We

limited ourselves to a few complementary materials so it doesn't seem busy and hectic." The calm, uncluttered design is thus ideal for leisure time, entertaining and work. "I travel a fair amount," says Green. "When I've been living out of a suitcase for a while it is always a pleasure to come back to my home comforts."

Because Bilson was designing for one person rather than a family, privacy was not an issue, so he created a studio apartment atmosphere: there are few doors or dividing walls. Instead, a large sliding door (to the master bedroom) and a sliding panel (to the kitchen) divide the interior, allowing flexibility and an additional feeling of space.

Green enjoys the flat's versatility. "The sitting room opens onto the master bedroom and the kitchen as well as the view. I feel comfortable there whether I'm watching movies, entertaining or just chilling out reading a good book."

Comfort is key, especially when it comes to the spa-like

1 The large L-shaped sofa cost approximately \$20,000 from GG Interiors (26/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing Street, Ap Lei Chau, tel: 2581 9195); the white coffee table is by designer Katherine Friend (tel: 2858 2172). To the left is an LC4 chaise longue by Le Corbusier for Cassina, purchased by Green in New York.

2 A screen can slide across to separate the kitchen from the dining and living areas. The bamboo floor provides a clean visual contrast to the dark wood furniture. The 19th-century black lacquer Chinese wedding cabinet is from Art Treasures Gallery (42 Hollywood Road, Central, tel: 2543 8436; www.art-treasures-gallery.com), as is the 19th-century Ming-style horseshoe armchair. The sculptural hatstand was found in New York. In the foreground is Spike, the French bulldog.







bathroom. Green and Billson made the master bathroom part of the bedroom. A dressing room can be accessed via the bathroom and also from a corridor off the living room.

"The master bathroom with its glass mosaic tile bathtub and steam shower is central to the living space.

"The use of top-end fittings and materials [such as granite, glass and mosaic tiles] along with creative lighting gives the

bathroom a spa-like sense of luxury and simplicity," says Green.

While this may be a bachelor pad, Green did have someone else to consider: Spike, a French bulldog that shares his space. Although he may not appreciate his owner's love of interior design ("he's had a munch on some of the furniture"), he has shown good taste in his seating choice. "His favourite place is now on the Le Corbusier chaise," says Green. "Luckily it's black!"

**3** To make the most of the views across Happy Valley and the harbour, Billson created one of his trademark details: a floor-to-ceiling sliding window in the bedroom that brings the outdoors in when open. Steel wires along the exterior provide a safety barrier. The result is a balcony feeling without a balcony.

**4** At the rear of the living room, a white sliding door inset with white fabric panelling leads to the master bedroom. The Indonesian dark-wood bed is from Shambala (2/F, Horizon Plaza, tel: 2555 2997). Above the bed hangs a work by Vanessa Berlein from Cape Town, South Africa. Built-in shelving along the rear wall allows Green to store books, collectibles and accessories neatly.

**5** A big sliding door made of steel and opaque glass does double duty: it can slide to the left to allow light in through a window but obscure an unattractive view of other buildings or it can slide to the right to close off the kitchen. Blinds can also be pulled down to cover the window. The walnut veneer dining table and chairs were custom-made by Ficus, (109 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, tel: 2865 1109). Covering the large wall at the end of the dining table is an original 1960s Fiat lithograph from Gallery Somawo (7 Nickson Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, tel: 612 9699 6387).

**6** The flamed black granite floor at the entrance to the bathroom is teamed with black glass Bisazza mosaic tiles from Arnhold Design Centres (315 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, tel: 2865 0318). The Axor Philippe Starck bathroom fittings are also from Arnhold Design Centres. The toilet unit and shower are accessed through the opaque glass doors behind the sink (unseen).

**7** The dressing room is behind the bathroom and is accessible either through the bathroom or the living room. Hanging rails, teak veneer drawers and shoe racks have been custom-built to house Green's wardrobe. On the floor is a cow-hide rug from South Africa.



## TRIED & TESTED Steamy shower

To make bath time a more luxurious experience, Josh Green and Ed Billson designed a simple combined shower unit and steam room. Granite and black mosaic tiles cover the walls and a clear glass door provides access from the bedroom. A levered wooden bench was installed and can be lowered when the Kohler Steam Shower unit (from Arnhold Design Centres) is in use. Owing to the length of the space, Billson also installed two rain-shower heads for an added dose of spa luxury.

By using a clear glass door, Billson was able to create the opportunity for Green to enjoy the view out of the bedroom window while showering. Privacy was not an issue because no one can see into the room.

