

REGENCY VILLA

THIS redesign of the interior of a Regency villa was masterminded by the Russian architect/interior designer Igor Falkovsky, of London-based Studio Dar. His clients—a couple with two daughters—bought Southview in Buckinghamshire in 2006, attracted by the fact that they could combine a traditional-looking house in a beautiful setting with a completely modern interior. This was because, although listed, the house had been completely gutted, so there were no restrictions on what they did inside. They left all the decisions to Igor and his colleague Antonia Stewart, who supervised the soft furnishings and decoration.

‘The modern aesthetic works very well with the clean lines of the original stucco house,’ says Igor, who completely remodelled the 1970s pastiche Georgian interior. ‘There are no cornices and mouldings; instead, where two materials meet, they’re separated by a shadow gap; the whole effect is very controlled. For the plan, I adopted a systematic approach, changing the flow of space to suit the family needs.’ The southern half of the ground floor is now dominated by one open-plan living/dining room, connected to a large kitchen on one side. Upstairs, there’s a bedroom suite for each of the family, plus one for guests.

‘We used a limited number of timeless natural materials for the principal surfaces,’ says Igor, who worked closely with specialist builders Symm. ‘Wooden floors are of limed oak—plain and clean with no knots or cracks—and vertical planes, such as doors, are of stained oak; other floors, and the specially designed drum- and oval-shaped bath and basins, and chimneypieces, are of limestone.’

The stair hall creates a dramatic central space, with a staircase that Igor describes as ‘a modern take on a Classical design. It has no winder or newel post, but it turns after four wider stone steps and continues on up in limed oak, supported by a steel structure’. Each step appears to be floating, an effect



The dining room has smooth limed oak floors, and the table follows the recurring oval theme

emphasised by underlighting, and the balustrade is of glass, with no fixings visible. Down the wall, which is finished with a grass fibre cloth, hangs a curtain of light made of fibre-

optic threads, which conduct light from a concealed source at staggered speeds, so that it resembles a shimmering cascade.

The dining area of the main living space was created in the original south-facing bay, which is canted and therefore best suited to the recurring oval forms. The dining table has an oval glass centre lit from within, and sits on an oval disk of brown leather, crisply finished with a steel trim. Minotti chairs are upholstered in a blue-grey fabric, a colour echoed by the linen wall hanging and silk curtains. ‘Throughout the house, we’ve used a subtle, understated palette that co-ordinates well with the hard materials in terms of colour and texture to give an overall effect of simple luxury: warm and chic.’ MM

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The clean white Regency villa had been gutted inside, allowing the designers a free rein

