



Rural ideal

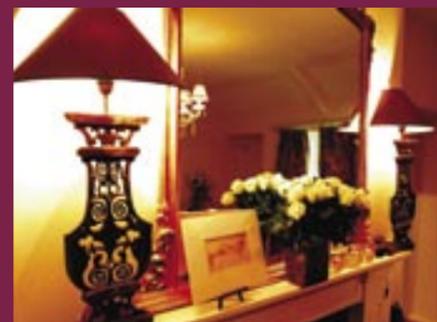
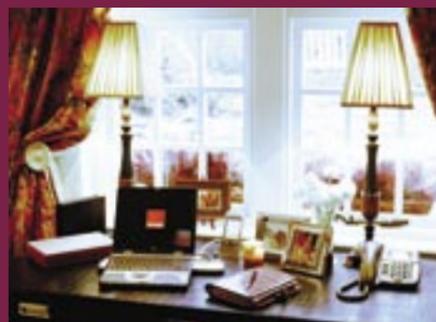
Ian Thompson has been seduced by country living and an 18th century rural love-nest

PHOTOGRAPHS: KHARA PRINGLE

This charming rose-covered cottage nestled deep in the rolling countryside of Killinchy Co. Down really is picture perfect. "My wife Cheryl always dreamed of living here with her ideal man... one out of two aint bad!" quips the interior designer noted for furnishing the late George Best's Donaghadee des Res. Ian Thompson has been described as 'an esteemed connoisseur of antiquity' >>



"The house provides picturesque tranquil seclusion for the couple and their children as well as their pets"



A characterful but uncluttered group - Flat des French lamps a collection of Victorian match strikers and an etching by a London artist.



« by The Book of Interiors and 'A premier league designer' by Belfast Telegraph. A visit to his Interior Designer showroom - in an old church off the Lisburn Road - is an almost cinematic experience complete with curtained entrance and eclectic mix of hand selected pieces has become an essential port of call for those wanting to make a design statement in their homes. When this cottage came on the market eight months ago the couple jumped at the chance to realise their dream - the house provides picturesque tranquil seclusion for the couple and their children as well as their pets...a big friendly bear of a dog and some cats. According to Ian it is also the perfect place to entertain. "Our friends love to come here and tend to stay for ages...there is a warmth and character about the place that is very restful, nurturing and inspiring." The house, a Georgian Gate-lodge, also presented a unique canvas on which for Ian to experiment and create a look that blends contemporary with country styling. Structurally little work was necessary but Ian has pulled out all of

the stops to create his dream home through clever colourwashes and hand-painted wallpapers, the inclusion of period against starkly contemporary furniture and beautiful fabrics and lighting. Says Ian: "Many rooms (like the living room) were quite dark so obviously the challenge is creating light and space. Here I re-painted the fireplace using rich and Fireball colours...nice pieces like the Parisian wrought iron lamps and Ralph Laurent fabrics help create a look that is 'rustic with cashmere chic.'" In the kitchen an over-scaled settle gives an illusion of space while traditional touches like a deep Belfast sink and a dark green aga create warmth. Bespoke rustic French kitchen units are hand-painted and aged with coffee. Ian says that it is "A practical room - inspired by Maggie Jones - a restaurant in London where we have enjoyed beautiful food and many a happy evening." Andrew Martin fabrics in faded toile and traditional baskets and pottery complete an eclectic country look. Ian and Cheryl love to share their home with friends and dinner



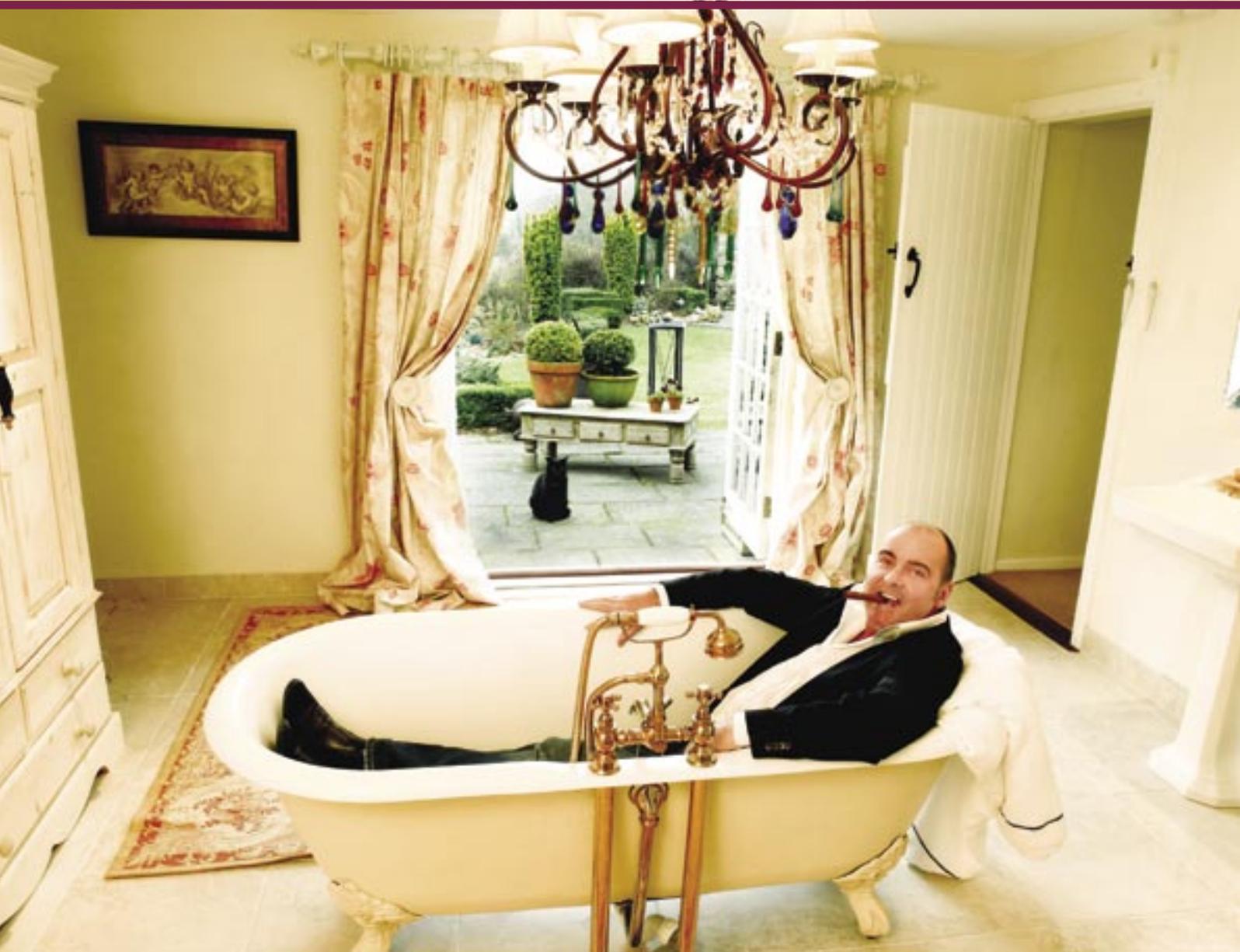
Art Deco cabinet with roses



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parties are occasions to be relished. He says "We always dine by candlelight - the candlelit atmosphere is reflected in the large mirror and even by the gilt detail of the Louis and Wood hand-painted wallpaper. We fill this room with flowers and candles ... entertaining is about making an effort, guests love to know that they are worth it." Here guests eat from antique dinner services and french cutlery found at Portabello Road market. The resulting mood is rustic yet relaxed and elegant. Cheryl works from home so it was vital for Ian to create a peaceful but effective study area. Her office is located in an area

overlooking gardens, which is often frequented by wildlife such as squirrels and birds. The contemporary leather Andrew Martin desk the perfect contrast with a pair of ornate black/gold French lamps with silk shades. Originally a study, Ian decided to maximise the fabulous view looking towards the Mourne Mountains converting it to a bathroom. He colour-washed the walls for a warm cottage feel and boldly placed the freestanding bath in the centre of the room framing the views through the doors with drapes of Bennisso Fabric bought in London. A final flourish of decadence - the »



“Outside a wall of antique stone leads to a secret garden planted with David Austen roses and lined with box trimmed hedges”

« overhanging chandelier has been further accessorised and customised with the addition of cobalt blue, ruby and emerald antique crystal drops. The bedroom claims Ian “was an odd shape” presenting challenges to creating an illusion of space and warmth. A sumptuous upholstered sleigh bed takes centre stage bedecked in rich textured throws while two chests of drawers act as bedside tables. A rich Mulberry wallpaper and a large oriental cabinet houses the home entertainment systems give the room an oriental feel. Outside a wall of antique stone leads to a

secret garden planted with David Austen roses and lined with box trimmed hedges. Fortunately the gardens are a sun trap affording Cheryl – who Ian lovingly and jokingly describes as being “like Martha Stewart on acid” lots of opportunity for planting. The efforts of her labours are now bearing fruit in the first appearance of spring bulbs. The devil claims Ian is in the detail and living the dream needn’t cost the earth. This is a home that boasts individual style in basket-loads (if not buckets!!) with no apology for decadence and even a healthy amount of sentiment thrown in.