



Claudia Donohue was excited about the prospect of moving from her tiny apartment in the centre of Dublin to something larger but a little further out. 'I didn't want to be too far out of town as I work in the centre and

enjoy socialising in the same area after work,' she says. 'I like new houses, but realised buying an affordable one meant moving further out of the city.'

Having looked at several properties, she finally found a place just outside Dublin that seemed to tick all the right boxes for her and her son, Owen, 6. 'Importantly, it had easy access to the city, plus a spacious and well-laid-out interior with a good-sized, high-quality kitchen and bathroom,' she recalls.

Sticking to a strict budget was a necessity for Claudia, who knew that moving from a small apartment with very little furniture would mean she'd have to put aside a certain amount of money for furnishing and decorating her new home. 'Knowing things would be quite tight definitely influenced my decision to buy a three-storey house,' explains Claudia. 'I knew that would allow me to

DESIGN TIP

'Use wallpaper and furniture to add pattern, texture and colour. That way you'll be able to easily tweak your schemes in the future'

rent out the top floor, which was ideal as it meant I could then afford the extra space I really wanted.'

When it came to decorating, Claudia was in need of inspiration. 'I wasn't sure how I wanted things to look, but I knew I wanted a modern style with some traditional elements to add character,' she says. 'I went to several interiors shows to gather as many ideas as I could, and luckily enough, I ended up meeting interior designer Deirdre Hardiman. I really admire her work – it's sophisticated and original, but wonderfully laid-back, too.'

Deirdre suggested looking at high-street stores for furniture rather than designer brands, which helped Claudia make savvy purchases. Each room's main colour scheme was kept neutral so that vibrancy and interest could be incorporated via striking wallpapers, fabrics and accessories. 'I love stripes, so I went for a dramatic bold design in the sitting room,' says Claudia. The theme continues in the bedrooms, while the use of natural materials creates an inviting, relaxed feel.'

'It's still early days, so I'll be adding finishing touches over time, but I'm delighted with how it looks so far – not to mention the extra space!' 25

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MASTER BEDROOM
Pristine white toile curtains allow light to stream into this serene space. Stamford chandelier, £85, Next. Vivan curtains, £10 a pair, Ikea



BATHROOM
Grey floor-to-ceiling tiles create a sophisticated, sleek look. Crema porcelain tiles, £22sq m, House of Tiles



GUEST BEDROOM
This cosy room handily doubles up as a study. Linnmon/ Finnvard table, £75, Ikea. Islington 6 light, £65, Next. Borastapeter Marsrand wallpaper, £49 per roll, Select Wallpaper



OWEN'S BEDROOM
Stars and stripes add a playful feel and will span toddler to teen style. Hennes day bed, £260, Ikea. The Merino Lambswool Jacquard Navy Blue and White Reversible Star throw, £89, The Sofa Throw Company, is similar. Printed storage boxes, from £10, Dunnes Stores