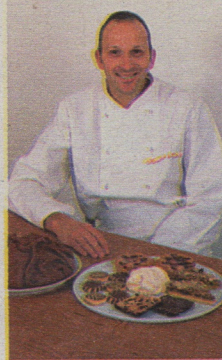


## INTERIORS

*When a pastry-maker moves into a Regency house you can expect to see something light and airy.*

*REBECCA TANQUERAY samples the mix of traditional and trendy in an area tipped to become London's very own Left Bank*

# RISING TO THE OCCASION



Double vision: main picture, the dining area, right, and kitchen, far right, seen from the sitting room. French doors and a glass roof guarantee maximum light. Below, from left, a contemporary candelabra puts a new twist on lighting; chic seating; bright ideas for storage give a real sense of space. Bottom right, the garden where potted plants contrast with the linear paving and seats. Above, the owner, Gerhard Jenne



**W**aterloo, it seems, is on the up. It may come as something of a surprise to those who jump in a cab as soon as they're out of the London station, but to the people who live just over the road, in terraced houses that haven't changed for almost 200 years, it's not quite so unexpected. They are accustomed to sharing their streets with film crews shooting Dickensian dramas and speculators passing on their way to eye up loft apartments at Bankside. They are used to curious Parisians and smart city gents peering through their windows on the way to lunch at the Oxo Tower.

While the sudden popularity of the area has a lot to do with the regeneration of the South Bank as a whole (it is, we hear, becoming London's very own Left Bank), it's also due in no mean measure to a small, plum-coloured patisserie called Konditor &

Cook. Set up by Gerhard Jenne in December 1993, this stylish little bakery on the corner of Roupell Street and Cornwall Road not only provides the locals with delicious bread, cakes and pastries, it also attracts a wider, more cosmopolitan clientele. Linda Evangelista buys her gingerbread men here; Felicity Kendal and Julie Christie are regular customers.

Jenne's cakes, like his shop, have style. His chocolate gateaux are dark and sculptural; his biscuits, mini works of art. More like a couturier than a baker, Jenne creates custom-made cakes for the rich and famous. Most recently and notoriously, he was commissioned by The Sun to fashion a shapely, lifelike sponge for one of the Spice Girls' birthdays.

In this neighbourhood, however, it's not just Jenne's cakes that get tongues wagging. His home, just seconds away from the shop, has been the talk of the town ever

since he bought it last year. From the outside, it looks just like all the others — diminutive, cottagey and postcard-perfect — but inside it couldn't be more different. Instead of the low ceilings and boxy rooms you'd expect of such a period property, there's a brilliantly modern, streamlined interior.

The architects of this transformation were Ferhan Azman and Joyce Owens, of the two-woman practice Azman Owens. The pair had previously modernised the shop for Jenne and had always been eager to get their hands on one of these little Regency houses. Indeed, it was Owens who half-persuaded Jenne to buy the place. "I wasn't sure at first," he says. "I thought it was too close to work and I didn't think I could live with such small proportions."

Jenne need not have worried. After Azman and Owens got to work, the original dimensions of the house disappeared. Or

so it seems. In the place of dark, poky rooms, there is now a series of sleek white spaces that are the very antithesis of claustrophobic.

Downstairs, the sitting room, dining room and kitchen, which lead almost seamlessly into one another, are spacious and bright; upstairs, the bathroom and two bedrooms are flooded with light.

By replacing brick with glass in strategic places, Azman and Owens effectively did away with the margins of the house and blurred the distinction between inside and out. The ground floor, bordered at the back by a series of french windows, merges with the garden; the kitchen, topped by a sloping glass roof, seems to stretch up to the sky. "I'm very in touch with the elements," says Jenne, poetically. "I can really feel the rain and see the most subtle changes in the light."

Azman and Owens also did up the





Photographs by Michael Mack

garden for him, strengthening this connection between indoors and out. Like the interior, it is rigorously modern, with concrete slabs where you might expect to find grass, and a sleek concrete bench running along one side. Jenne, who loves gardening, was shocked at first. "When I saw it, I thought, 'Oh God, I've got no green left,'" he confesses. But now that the bench is covered in pots of herbs and architectural plants are dotted around the garden, he's converted. "I love the way it ties in with the interior," enthuses Jenne, pointing out that the flooring is the same both inside and out and the concrete bench an echo of the wooden one in the sitting room. "When all the doors are open, it just feels like one big room."

How, you may be wondering, did Azman and Owens get their radical plans past English Heritage, who, as you might imagine, are anxious to keep these little

terraces intact? Luckily for them, when Jenne bought the house, it had already been tampered with; the kitchen extension was in place (these days, you can't get planning permission) and most of the period features had been removed. There were, however, some vestiges of the original structure — the wooden flooring and the panelling, for example — and these had to be retained.

Azman and Owens were unfazed. They are adept at working with old buildings and relish the chance to create a modern interior in a historical context. Mixing old and new, in their opinion, produces a subtle, timeless kind of minimalism that's far more successful than anything purely contemporary. Here, the original features are so much part of the scheme you hardly notice them, but once they are pointed out, you can see that they temper what might otherwise be a stark aesthetic. ➤➤➤

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