

Design/life



Kieran McCarthy:
Director KMC Homes
Design and Build

INTERVIEW
BY
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When Jobs' style is just the job

What's your background?

I qualified as a civil engineer in UCC in 1996. I then worked for several of Ireland's largest building companies including John Sisk & Sons, PJ Hegarty & Sons and The Murphy Group (UK), as well as some smaller building companies such as Joseph Lanes & Sons in Cork.

I set up KMC Homes in late 2003 which specialises in building architecturally-designed, bespoke homes.

What's a typical work day like for you?

I get up reasonably early and hit the office once I drop my children to school. I usually spend an hour or so on the business end of things before heading to a site or two. Afternoons are generally a mix of client meetings, new design reviews or pursuing some new business development idea.

Tell us about a recent project or design/ favourite project or design you have worked on?

We recently completed a high-end house renovation and extension in Douglas. The open-minded clients were immigrating from Europe. There was a healthy budget so we could push the design and try out some new styling ideas (Art Deco parapet detailing), as well as installing a retro-fit, under-floor, air to water heating system. It turned out great. We're currently building a house that is classically styled as a European villa complete with single roman roof tiles we are importing from the South of France.

What's your design style?

It depends on the context. In an urban area, I like a modern interpretation of classical theming, like Arts and Crafts. Then in a rural setting, more of a pared back, modern cut on the traditional Irish countryside cottage/farm house. Both with contemporary living spaces, of course.

What/Who inspires your work?

Music; architecture; being by the sea; great books and following inspiring people on social media and YouTube.

What's your favourite trend at the moment (if you have any)?

I'm not gone on trends — timeless design is everything to me — as is keeping it simple.

What's your most treasured possession?

Probably my surfboard or my guitar, I don't use either as much as I should though. I used to surf a lot in the winter but it's a bit harder

“He strived for perfection, beauty and simplicity. You can't beat that.”

to get my head around it now. I'm looking forward to getting back in the water in spring.

Who would be your favourite designer, or style inspiration?

That's easy, Steve Jobs. He strived for perfection, beauty and simplicity. You can't beat that.

What would be a dream project for you to work on?

I don't really look at it like that. I am really working on a dream project right now. Our goal is to make beautifully designed homes more accessible. It has taken some time to develop the business model and the team but it's really starting to gel now, so this is the dream project for us, it's what drives us every day.

Have you any design tips for us?

You can't simplify things enough. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Make sure your living space can make the best use of this light — everything else is secondary. Oh, and ensure you put aside plenty of space for a big utility room. So many houses in Ireland have tiny utility rooms — this needs to change.

■ KMC Homes is running a new Home Information Seminar at its sales outlet in Ballyseedy Home & Garden Centre on March 25 next. email admin@kmmhomes.ie for further details or check out: ■ www.kmmhomes.ie ■ www.facebook.com/kmmhomes @kierankmmhomes



A cantilevered stairs leads to a light-filled mezzanine landing while outside 65 concrete fins support canopies, providing views of the two-and-a-half acres of landscaped gardens.



A spacious prep kitchen/pantry in this new build by KMC Homes allows the kitchen and living space to remain uncluttered and free. Concertina folding doors are out of shot, but provide for a seamless connection to the outside, while steps lead down to a family room.



Featured here is a contemporary high-end house in the western suburbs of Cork, which KMC Homes built two years ago. Kieran says: "Though budget allowed the mix of architectural detail, it was tempered with simplicity which was wonderful".