



The giant antique mirror came from the Clignancourt flea market in Paris. The Taraxacum ceiling light, by Flos, and the Darsena sofa by Seven Salotti, are both from Minima. The Chelsea wingback leather chair is from Wilson's Yard in Co Down. The paintings are by Fionnuala ní Chiosáin. The Eero Saarinen coffee tables are from Design Classics Direct. The original Eileen Gray glass table belongs to Cian.

GROOMED for SUCCESS

A NEW PAMPERING PLACE FOR MEN IN A GRACIOUS GEORGIAN SETTING IS THE RESULT OF GLOBAL RESEARCH AND A LOT OF COMMON SENSE

PHOTOGRAPHY PAUL RAESIDE WORDS AMANDA COCHRANE

Property developer Cian McDonald and film producer John Erraught, who met and became friends while working on some of Neil Jordan's films, had often thought about setting up a business together.

"This project was something we were both keen to do, although we have no background in the industry," says Cian. "When I told my sisters about the project they asked 'what would you know?'," adds John with a roar of laughter, pointing to his mane of hair, "but actually we think it's all about common sense."

Cian had first thought of the idea to set up The Grooming Rooms for men when he was visiting Melbourne and his girlfriend bought him a voucher for a massage. He was delighted with the gift and wondered why something similar didn't exist in Ireland.

Fast-forward several years and Cian and John finally put their plans into action. They travelled widely to gather inspiration for The Grooming Rooms, looking at existing operations such as Trumper in London. From Paris to the US and Australia, they tried to select a high point from each establishment, but improve upon it in some way, and the result is the glorious restraint of The Grooming Rooms. They offer classic barbering, as well as facials, massages, pedicures and other services, all in a setting evocative of a splendid gentlemen's club.

"We had no pre-conceived ideas and we were coming at the idea completely fresh," says Cian. "We took the best parts from all the places we saw and we are pretty sure that what we have is better than that."

They looked at a few premises in the city centre, but as soon as they spotted this five-storey, 4,000 square foot Georgian building in South William Street, they knew they were onto a winner. "Our biggest bit of luck was that the building was available when we needed it," says Cian.

They were also fortunate that the fabric of the building was still intact. With high ceilings, beautiful cornicing and a stunning staircase, they were already onto a good start. The pair have worked with the existing architecture to create a beautiful premises, which is a perfect execution in restraint, good taste and attention to detail. "Some people said we were mad because the waiting room is so big and they thought it was a waste of space," says John, "but we want it to be a calm place for clients to relax."

They have big plans for the brand and are considering opening a second premises in Hanover Quay and eventually moving into Cork and Galway. And the idea of going global hasn't escaped them. "When we were coming up with The Grooming Rooms we weren't just thinking of this one shop, but with the idea of creating a brand," says Cian. "Even though we only have one shop we want it to be high-end right from the start."

The future looks bright for this well-groomed pair.

The Grooming Rooms, 16 South William Street, Dublin 2, 01 679 0777; www.thegroomingrooms.com



BESPOKE DESIGN



ABOVE LEFT John Erraught and Cian McDonald. ABOVE The existing architecture gave them a good start when designing The Grooming Rooms. BELOW Cian and John sourced the barber chairs in the States. BELOW LEFT The reception area desk is actually an old bar, which they found in the C flea market in Paris. The mirror is by Fassbinder & English.

