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OLIVER STALLWOOD

Roll out the barrels, roll in the spa...

Oliver Stallwood visits a pub that's been transformed into the ultimate luxury pad

FOR over 150 years, the Bromley Arms, which sat in the shadow of the BT Tower, played host to the kind of laddish revelry you would expect from a central London boozer.

Having changed to a more humdrum existence of offices around 2002, it seemed the most exciting things this former Charrington's Ales establishment would be hosting would be dress-down Friday and the annual secret Santa. But now 84 Cleveland Street is getting a new lease of life, becoming the ultimate bachelor (or bachelorette) pad.

Renamed The 1826 after the year it became a pub, and retaining the original pub façade, the property has been transformed into four flats. And this ground-floor duplex is an exclusive apartment where a lot of the action takes place underground. When Ravi Pankhania, managing director of Nacropolis Group, bought the property last year, he found an abandoned office space strewn with papers and old filing cabinets.

But perhaps overlooked by other viewers of the property were the vaults downstairs. Once a barrel store for the pub, these huge, narrow rooms

were now unwanted and had been used for random storage over the years. Ravi saw an opportunity. 'A lot of places have these under the building, however they are rarely used,' he says. 'But they should be.'

The plan was to build a vaulted underground spa for the duplex apartment. It would be tiled in large format rectified natural porcelain tiles and glass mix mosaics, including a five person bespoke Helo steam room, four person Jacuzzi pool spa, and rain shower with body jets, all finished with Phillippe Starck fittings. But before all that, there was the less glamorous job of getting the

spades out. The floor had to be dug out for extra space, but because of the complex location underground, much of this was done by hand. The Jacuzzi itself took 12 people five hours to slowly manoeuvre into position.

'A number of skilled tradesmen and professionals were employed and worked in unison to create this unique boutique building,' adds Ravi, who admits he didn't do too much shovelling himself.

The spa wasn't the only choice for filling the vaults. 'Originally someone even suggested putting in a mini

And relax: The flat's underground spa has a Helo steam room, Jacuzzi and rain shower, and a home cinema at the entrance (inset)

bowling alley, but I thought let's be sensible,' he laughs. The spa is open from one end to the other and uses a lot of glass to create a cavernous feel. This was key to stopping it feeling cramped.

'If you fill it with too much it could feel claustrophobic,' explains Ravi. 'Now you have views from either end - less is more in this instance.' Mood lighting completes the spa, with four different settings, from dimly lit and chilled to 'party zone'.

While downstairs is the perfect after hours lair, upstairs is the polar

PHOTOS: NICK CALLAGHAN



opposite. The large windows - reflective on the outside for privacy - let light flood into the open-plan space. A reinforced concrete staircase had to be relocated, creating a better sense of space.

Kitchen supplier Pedini London worked with the natural light, using a combination of high-gloss lacquer and light aluminium within the furniture highlights and quartz composite worktop.

The light, contemporary theme runs through to the bedrooms, with bespoke Bright White wardrobes

featuring a black glass line, handleless finish and interior hand-constructed hessian carcassing. All bedrooms have been wired to offer the resident Sonos sound and Lutron lighting.

Serving as an entrance to the spa is a home cinema with 5:1 Dolby Atmos surround sound and Sonos multi-room audio. This is also linked to a small external courtyard.

Ravi says that while the property was aimed more towards the male buyer, it has had a lot of attention from female house hunters too. 'Everyone walks in and their jaws

drop. It can't be long before someone is relaxing in the hot tub or having a raucous party in the basement.'

Simon Bray is from estate agent Hudsons, and is charged with getting the £2,850,000 asking price. He says this type of property is quite rare in Fitzrovia. 'It will be a real trophy apartment for a bachelor who wants to have a few parties, and it's a basement, so it won't disturb the neighbours. It's had quite a journey - from pub, to office to playboy's lair.'

■ The flat is available from Hudsons Property and CBRE, the1826.com



Light and airy: The state-of-the-art kitchen was supplied by Pedini London



Popular: Ravi Pankhania says the jaw-dropping flat has had a lot of attention



Slice of history: The development has retained the original Bromley Arms façade

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