



Home is where the heart is

Do you have your dream home in mind? How about a property overhaul? Need someone who can create, manage and complete your project? Fret not, as Balham-based Clara Bee is your answer, writes *Francesca Lee*

The phrase 'I don't know how she does it' springs to mind when I meet Claire Burrage, director of Clara Bee. Described as 'the busiest bee in Balham', Clara Bee is a one-stop-shop for property improvement. From creative planning to detailed design, sourcing suitable contractors to project management, Claire has the know-how to make any project a hassle-free success. Whether it's a one-room overhaul or a complete renovation, Clara Bee has done it all. Her love of interior design started many moons ago, but it was in 1995 when Claire purchased a three-bedroom flat where she put her skills into practice. 'I took a lot away from that project, gaining contacts and learning on the job,' she tells me. Claire's passion for transforming properties and advising her clients on the financial rewards they can reap is clear for all to see, after all, property is usually one of the biggest assets one will ever have.

Indeed Claire, who focuses her business in south-west London, which she knows 'like the back of her hand', not only advises clients on interior design but



also how they can make money if they want to sell, or how using her services can improve the rental yield of their property. But she will, of course, only offer advice that she feels is best for the owner. 'I have had clients, for example, where I've advised them not to extend as it may not be financially viable in the long-run or it may not be necessary for their lifestyle in the foreseeable future,' she tells me.

It is this bespoke service and project management that makes Clara Bee so successful. From the initial planning stages with the architect to advising on layout, finding contractors to making sure that every job is done to perfection, Claire thinks about every step 'three to four stages in advance'. 'It's so important to get a job done right in the first place, otherwise it can be costly in the long run,' she says. 'With every project, I am on-site and I oversee everything – it takes the stress away from the client knowing that their property is in safe, experienced and knowledgeable hands.' As well as providing a complete service, Claire can also access trade prices for her customers. 'It's another way in which I can save money for my clients,' she says.

Claire is an admirable lady indeed and with her husband Trevor leaving his City job to join her in partnership, she's in demand – they will be quite the formidable duo indeed. If you're in need of a property overhaul, Clara Bee will do it all. ■



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