

# Designs for life



Jane Reddy's interior design clients range from offices and bars to nursing homes

## Paula McGovern reports on the inner workings of the interior design profession

FORMERLY the profession of the rich for the rich, interior design is increasingly becoming an area of interest for many. As TV programmes such as *Beyond The Hall Door*, *About the House* and *Changing Rooms* bring the profession increasingly into focus, it is often an area people return to study following years working in another industry.

"In the past few years our course has become more popular," says Neville Knot, course co-ordi-

Griffith College Dublin (GCD) also offers a two-year, full-time diploma course in interior design, which can be followed on with its one-year, full-time degree course in interior architecture.

Many other private and post-Leaving Cert colleges also offer certificates and diplomas in interior design, including the Portobello School and Liberties College in Dublin to name but two.

### Interior complex

Graduates from an interior design degree course generally go into a large architect's practice, an interiors consultancy or a building firm. "Certainly at the moment, due to the boom in the construction industry, interior designers are in demand and there are jobs available," says Knot.

Interior designers may specialise in residential or commercial interiors, or both. They also could work with a builder designing show houses. Jobs can include restoring a piece of ornate furniture for a client, designing a house restoration and planning an office complex. It's a technical job with the need for a great eye for detail, as well as an ability to see the bigger picture and to be able to mix functionality with aesthetic appeal. As it's very much a client-based job, designers ideally should also be good with people.

"Good interior designers work in both the retail and domestic sector," says Sue Williams of GCD's

## A DAY IN THE LIFE: Jane Reddy Interiors

Jane Reddy has worked in interior design for the past 20 years. When she began working in the profession there were no full-time college courses to study so she completed a distance-learning course instead.

She set up her own practice, Jane Reddy Interiors, in 1984 and combines residential and commercial design. "I have a varied profession, which I enjoy thoroughly. I design private houses, offices, bars, hotels and even nursing homes.

My day depends on the particular project I am working on and I

often work on a few together. I spend 50pc of my time in the office, completing paperwork, designing layouts, designing furniture and deciding on colour schemes. I then spend the other half of my time onsite, meeting clients, shopping for accessories. No two days are the same."

Reddy tries to keep her hours roughly 9am-5pm. Her clients usually contact her based on word-of-mouth recommendations and she charges €70 plus Vat an hour. For more details visit [www.janereddy-interiors.com](http://www.janereddy-interiors.com).

## The money pit

Salaries for interior design graduates are roughly the same as a junior architect. "They can expect a starting salary of €28,000 a year," states Williams. "Employers will hold preference for degree graduates, but will also employ diploma students with a lesser starting salary."

With increased experience comes increased wages, however, and interior designers often branch out into their own practice after a few years working with an experienced designer. If you make a name for yourself in interior design or even become an interior designer to the stars, you can make huge amounts of money. So though it may be hard times starting out in the profession, the sky is the limit in relation to a self-employed interior designer's income.

design faculty. "They are resourceful, imaginative and creative and they also need to be practical, organised and businesslike with strong technical skills."

Though hiring an interior designer was once seen as the sole preserve of the filthy rich, this attitude is changing drastically in

Ireland. With increased affluence comes increased vanity, it seems. "At the moment the Irish are totally preoccupied with their homes," states Knot. "People are investing huge sums of money in their homes or apartments and they want to have them looking as good as possible."

**Due to the boom in the construction industry, interior designers are in demand**

nator of the BA in Interior Design at the Dublin Institute of Technology School of Art, Design and Printing.

"Due to the technical nature of our degree, graduates have numerous options after finishing the course," Knot explains. "As the course is technical and teaches students computer-aided design, graduates can work as interior architects in architects' practices as well as in more design roles."