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NEW PENTAGRAM
TNERS TAKE US BEHIND
SCENES

NEW TAKE ON
W URBANISM
ARCHITECTURE MOVEMENT
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YOUR PAD A DOSE OF
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SPECIAL!

DARK INTERIOR INSPIRATION

Hide out from Doomsday in these cavernous (and somewhat creepy) spaces

NOV/DEC 20
$8 USA/CA

Designing in a Tight Squeeze

n extremely sloped roof doesn't hold back this igh-style master suite

Interior designer Natascha Folens' beautiful Belgian home has many luxurious design elements. Soaring ceilings, however, don't make the list. Still, Folens found a way to work around her home's intense roof pitch, using skylights, glass, and a crisp white palette to maximize the space of her master suite tucked into the cozy eaves.

DB: Space is so tight in your master suite. How did you craft your design to make sure it didn't feel cramped?

Natascha Folens: Good lighting is key. The house is very narrow with minimum windows upstairs, and due to historical preservation, we could not add more. To make the room feel bigger and allow more light, we added a glass wall between the bedroom and the bathroom, as the location that we picked for the bathroom had more windows than the bedroom.

DB: Did you look to specific sources of inspiration to get the suite's style just right?

NF: We travel all the time and stay at the hippest boutique hotels, so we took all the comfort elements that we enjoy and tried to implement them in our house. The suite's design is typical Belgian, with its white French oak and clean lines. The travertine stone surround, crisp Belgian linens, a wool rug from Ligne Pure—my boyfriend's company—and a lot of special effects lighting inject an old-world charm into the space.

DB: What was the greatest challenge in working with the sloping ceiling of the attic? How did you overcome it?

NF: All the measurements had to be perfect and everything was custom made. Closet space was the hardest element to design. We have no straight outside walls, so we had to build "interior" closets across the width of the house to get tall hanging space. Everything had to be planned out very carefully, as the slope is very present. As soon as you walk too far to either side, you end up hitting your head.

BY KATHRYN FREEMAN RATHBONE
PHOTOS COURTESY OF NF INTERIORS

Set in Stone Design

Old and new styles fuse at Neolithic Design

If you need a large, ancient stone mantelpiece for your hearth or fountain for your garden, Erwin Gutenkunst has you covered. His company, Neolithic Design, specializes in sourcing ancient stone pieces and repurposing them for new home projects. It's a niche design business, and Gutenkunst has learned its ins and outs completely on the job. The former coin shop-owner-turned stone specialist speaks here about his work.

DB: How did you get into the ancient stoneworks design field, and why did you choose to work for Neolithic Design in particular?

Erwin Gutenkunst: I was shopping for fireplaces because we were remodeling our house, and I found Neolithic Design. It was like love at first sight—they had the most beautiful architectural elements I've seen in the US market. I kept in touch with the owner of the company, since we bought more and more products from them. When they decided to retire, they offered me the chance to purchase their entire inventory, and so I bought it. I saw a great opportunity for me to begin a business in something that I was passionate about.

DB: You renamed the company when you took it over. How did you come up with Neolithic Design?

EG: The name of the company reflects our combination of old world designs and new, modern offerings. Literally translated, neolithic means "new stone", which aptly names the Neolithic period for the use of stone tools. I thought I would bring a bit of "stone age" history into my world of interior and exterior design.