

# The ideal designer



MONACO INTERIORS

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We caught up with Monaco Interiors' Joanna Lopez at the Christmas Ideal Home Show in London's Kensington Olympia last month. 2016 has been a busy year for Joanna. She has worked with a number of property developers on stylish show homes around the UK, and her Atlantis-themed room set made the finals of the Grand Design Awards back in May.

She remarks: "It's always a pleasure to take part in the Christmas Ideal Home Show. There are smiles everywhere – a real festive atmosphere! Once again I was delighted that Lawrence (Llewelyn-Bowen) came by to visit the set. He is such a funny, down-to-earth guy and had some really nice feedback. Lawrence is a big influence on me so it was great to have his input."

### What was your inspiration for the interiors?

The theme I was given this year was 'countryside'. I'm a city girl at heart so I knew this was going to be a challenge, but I enjoyed trying a different approach and experimenting with some new ideas. I wanted something really 'Christmassy' and rural but contemporary at the same time.

Snow globes were my main inspiration, I called my room set 'A Touch of Frost', setting the atmosphere with plenty of white drapes and accessories.

### Do you adapt your designs for the market you are appealing to?

Yes, very much so. I have my own style and way of working, but when working with a client I'm always clear that the design needs to be about them (and their target customers), rather than my own design preferences. This is really important when working on show homes, as you need to understand the developer's target market in order to set the tone of the property correctly. My background in marketing has been really helpful in this regard.

### What are your favourite elements of this particular interior?

I have a soft spot for decorating Christmas trees! Some of the decorations this year were really cute. I especially like the penguin! I also enjoyed creating the soft-blue, wooden half panelling. This offsets the 'chilliness' of the white and makes the room-set feel really homely. ■



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