

Irish ‘Home of the Year’: the stars of the show

As the RTÉ series draws to a close, we look back on some of the starring homes

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Colin and Ruth Donnelly's barn-style house in Co Antrim furnished with junk shop finds



This season's *Home of the Year* offered something for everyone – whether you wanted to do a complete overhaul of your house or just borrow some clever quick-fix tricks. The level of personalisation in the homes selected as finalists show that homeowners are no longer afraid to let their personality shine through in their interiors and exteriors. Let's take a quick look back at this season's chosen designs.



Episode 7: Statement stairs and sink



Louise McGuane and Dominic McCarthy's Co Clare home with railway sleeper staircase

Louise McGuane and Dominic McCarthy set up home in the village of Cooraclare in west Clare, about a quarter of a mile from the Atlantic ocean. She got the idea for their floating staircase from a gallery in Hong Kong. The cantilevered steps are suspended from the wall and the treads feature railway sleepers, a cost-effective material that cost her €19 per sleeper, with each sleeper giving her five or six steps. The stairs have no outside handrail but there is one secreted into the wall side. McGuane, who lived and travelled across Asia working with Irish Distillers and Pernod Ricard, is in the throes of setting up an Irish whiskey brand, JJ Corry, in this corner of Co Clare. She's still waiting to find out how the environment affects the whiskey she has maturing on site.

The house was designed by a friend, Swiss architect Jean Claude Girard, and features all sorts of thoughtful details. In the upstairs bathroom set under the eaves, the wash hand basin floats above a reclaimed wood surround installed by local joiner Eugene Woods. McGuane believes it to be cedar.

"It was the dancefloor in the parish hall in Curraclare and was put down in the 1940s. My dad then sanded each single piece by hand."