

DIY SOS has been airing for fifteen years now. What do you think is key to the programme's success?

I think it is truly representative of how this country is, rather than how the media portrays it. If you read the papers, all builders are rogue traders, whereas in actual fact 99% of builders take real care and consideration in their work. It is the same with the majority of working class people, who mostly do the best for their children and their family. I think there is a real shortfall between how television portrays working class people and how they generally are. In DIY SOS we go out and we ask people to give up their time, money and materials to do something for the most disadvantaged people in the community, and people regularly do. It's not for advertising, as they are not allowed to advertise on the BBC. They get nothing out of it apart from the benefit it brings to the family involved, and that is essentially what makes it different I think.

Have you always had an interest in property?

I have actually been a property developer. I've renovated property and I have a great interest in architectural antiques.

How does this role compare to game shows?

I am extremely fond of DIY SOS because it has meant so much to so many people over the years. I do really enjoy doing the quiz shoes though, as I am a bit of a nerd, and it is nice to have a mixture of things to do. I think if I was doing the same thing over and over again I'd go slightly mad.

What in your opinion makes a house a home?

The people in it. There is no doubt about it. You could be in the ugliest house in the world, but it is the people in it that make it your home.

What is your ideal property?

Georgian probably, because the proportions are so lovely, with high ceilings and big windows letting in lots of beautiful light. There is real architectural beauty around the mouldings and around the doorways. As well, I think I make the association with my childhood and watching Christmas movies set in Georgian homes.

How do you like to relax when you're not working?

I play guitar, play rugby or read. I also do a lot of historical research and I write as well, so a real cross-section of things.

What other projects are you working on?

We recently completed a Children in Need build*, which is the largest build we ever attempted. We knocked an entire building down and started from the ground up, all in nine days. It was one of the toughest things we ever attempted.

*www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/childreninneed/posts/DIY-SOS-The-Million-Pound-Build-for-BBC-Children-in-Need

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