



22 FEBRUARY 2017 | *By Zoe Dare Hall*

Turnkey homes

Ready made interiors.

Turnkey homes in prime London have become a multi-sensory experience – places packed with fabrics to paw and Taschen art books to pore over, bespoke scents and soft music that draws you from room to room, and classic films (invariably James Bond) that play on several screens, from the walk-in wardrobe to the bathtub.

Turnkey homes provide an appealing solution to the growing band of ‘cash rich, time poor’ buyers who want to do little more when they move in than unpack their toothbrush. They also help developers stand out from the crowd in a stalling and highly competitive market.

From Battersea to Belgravia, developers are offering flats for sale that can, if the buyer chooses, come furnished down to the bespoke bed linen and bathroom soap. Occasionally, as at some of the apartments at Beau House in Jermyn Street, almost everything is included in the sale price. Usually, though, it’s the ‘tip the property upside down and what doesn’t fall out is included’ scenario – in other words, everything that’s fitted is yours. The rest comes at a price.

“You aren’t just selling a property but an aspirational lifestyle,” Simon Deen of Aston Chase says of such properties. And it can feel like as much deliberation goes into what toiletries, clothes and art to put on display as into the design of the building itself.

It’s all part of “curating” – to quote many a designer – a lifestyle for prospective buyers; the fewer decisions they have to make, the more likely they are to invest. Plus there is an added kudos that comes with a property designed by a sought-after name. Deen cites The Park Crescent in Regent’s Park, where developers Amazon Property have worked with designers Taylor Howes, DH Liberty and 1508 London, “all of whom are highly respected among this level of buyer. If they haven’t already used them in their current home, they will know a friend who has,” he says.

The Park Crescent’s show homes – once the residences of ambassadors and eminent families including the De Beers and the Bonapartes – can be bought entirely turnkey, though every element of the dressing will need to be added to the sales price, which ranges from £3.95m to £20m. On display are 200 original artworks worth hundreds of millions of pounds by Dalí, Chagall, Warhol, Hirst and more. One property alone contains London’s biggest collection by Chagall (there are ten works in the master bedroom) and the UK’s biggest display of works by Alexander Calder (30 in the triple reception room).

Each designer has a defined idea of what brands will speak to potential buyers in each project. For Taylor Howes' creative director Sandra Drechsler, these include Frette bed linen, which ranges from £625 a set to well over £1,000, blankets and throws from Oyuna (£275-£1,000 each), de Le Cuona (£600) and Hermès (over £2,000). Gaggenau is her brand of choice for kitchens – one of the ovens at The Park Crescent costs £6,500 – and she is fond of cutlery by Ralph Lauren (a five-piece set costs £65, per person) and dinner services by Hermès, who have a 'create your own crockery' service, so you can spend any amount you like, but as a guide, an 'American' dinner plate is £137.

Buyers at Battersea Power Station can opt for a turnkey service, including in the Frank Gehry-designed flats at Prospect Place, which start at around £1.3m. "We have had a huge take up for our turnkey service. People don't have the time to engage interior designers to source everything, then wait in for one item to be delivered at a time. They love the one-stop shop idea and we have seven designers, including OKA, who have put together bespoke ranges just for us," says Mark Hutton, director of Battersea Power Station Estates.

Turnkey properties make up 60-70 per cent of the new homes in the prime central London market, according to Martin Ballantine, at Carter Jonas Marylebone. Such ready-made homes aren't just a time saver; they are an affirmation of the buyer's success and status – a sort of pat on the head, once you part with your millions of pounds, to say "well done, you deserve this".

"When you are working at the top end, buyers are conscious of brands. Each one is a nod of reassurance. They are meant to be understated and subtle, but ultimately they show we understand their lifestyle," says Sharon Lillywhite, co-founder of Oliver Burns, the interior designers behind the "totally turnkey" triplex penthouse at Beau House in Jermyn Street, which is likely to be priced at around £15m when it launches in early 2017.

There are also three turnkey apartments available and everything on show – with the exception of certain artworks and sculptures, including two bronze horses by John Willis Good, costing £70,000 apiece, and a quartet of original Picasso lithographs, part of a collection of 250, procured from St James's Art Books down the road – is included in the purchase price. "As a turnkey product, the buyer is only able to purchase the penthouse as is. Once bought, if there are changes they want to make, Oliver Burns can work with them to tailor the home further to suit their tastes," Lillywhite informs.

To listen to the attention paid to every last detail at Beau House, down to the stitching in the chairs and the Lalique adornment on the bathroom taps, is enough to make you want to lie down in one of its bespoke Floris-scented bedrooms.

They report high interest from American buyers at present, but the design focuses firmly on British craftsmanship, from the Lee Broom pendants – £840 a pop – and the Aiveen Daly chairs (around £3,700 each) to the pinstripe walls that nod to the street’s tailoring heritage. Foreign names get a look in where appropriate, including Swedish brand Byredo for the bathroom products (the candles start at a reasonable £23 from Liberty). And rather than wall-to-wall Daniel Craig, Beau House has gone for Breakfast At Tiffany’s. “It fits with the vintage touches,” says Lillywhite. Though they do have a weighty James Bond tome open on the coffee table.

Turnkey designers make an art form of subliminally selling a way of life. They tell you what you’ll read in bed (F Scott Fitzgerald’s *Flappers* and *Philosophers* sits beside the bed at Beau House, while it’s *A Room With a View* at the Frank Gehry-designed flats at Battersea Power Station) and which champagne you’ll drink (it’s Bollinger on the onyx backlit bar at Beau House’s penthouse terrace, Taittinger on show at Chelsea Island). These lifestyle designers have thought of details the buyer themselves has probably never considered.

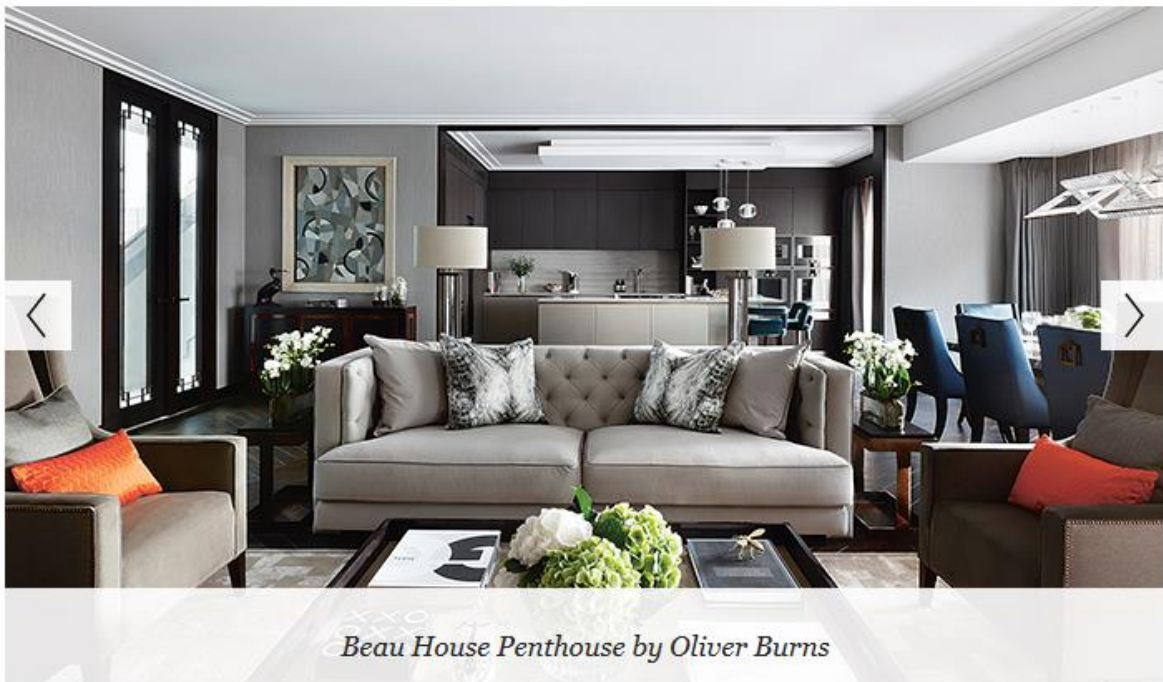
For the three-bed duplex show flat at Landmark Place, a development next to Tower Bridge with flats from £810,000 to £10m through Savills, designer Laura Leadbetter from Alexander James Interiors had someone specific in mind. “It’s someone who works hard, spends weekends at art galleries on the South Bank, has a partner but no kids,” she says of the show flat that is available to buy for £2.55m. Standard fixtures and fittings – including Miele kitchen appliances – are included in the price, but most of the dressing is available by negotiation.

Rather than Diptyque or Jo Malone bathroom products, Leadbetter has gone for the Danish brand Meraki. “Not a typical off-the-shelf product as Landmark Place is not a typical new home,” she says. And confident this apartment will appeal to a British buyer, she has paraded work by British craftsmen throughout, including bespoke joinery with ebonised vellum (parchment made from goatskin), made by William Cowley, UK’s oldest vellum maker, who has been doing it since the 1840s. There are the necessary designer touches too: a Lulu Guinness handbag, next to apparently hastily discarded heels, in the sumptuous master bedroom. In the wardrobe are pieces by Vivienne Westwood, Ralph Lauren and Brooks Brothers. “They’ve dressed 39 out of 45 US presidents,” Leadbetter says of the latter.

“For failsafe winners we would procure pieces from brands including Oswald Boateng or Kathryn Sargent, Georg Jensen for table settings and for exquisite accessories such as personal jewellery, Tiffany or even Cartier,” says Leadbetter.

All these new-build turnkey properties are putting the pressure on private landlords to keep up, according to Carter Jonas's Martin Ballantine. "It is difficult for them to achieve the same specification as the turnkey operators, but the influence is evident in the quality of the fixtures and fittings we're increasingly seeing them install," he says.

Marie Beirne, who deals with lettings for Aston Chase, advises landlords that it is not just about the high-quality furnishings and details, but about the services too. "You need to provide gardeners, cleaners, a parking space and use of a vehicle," says Beirne. Catherine Cockcroft, head of lettings at Aylesford International, adds that turnkey tenants, like buyers, want "Sonos sound systems, wiring for Sky, excellent wifi and a very professional property manager".



BEAU HOUSE PENTHOUSE BY OLIVER BURNS

A DIRECTORY

£3,500.40

Brabbu kitchen stools: An elegant pair of Brabbu bar stools upholstered in teal cotton velvet with aged brass details and matte oak-walnut legs sit around an island with a quartzite Calacatta worktop. £1,750.20 each

POA

Bespoke credenza: Crafted for Beau House from dark-stained oak detailed with high-gloss burr walnut. This piece takes inspiration from the cigar humidor. As well as serving a practical purpose, a cigar humidor has decorative appeal, showcasing exquisite skill and craftsmanship.

POA

£9,675

Rug designed by Emily Todhunter for The Rug Company: A hand-knotted Tibetan wool and silk rug in a subtle houndstooth pattern features in the reception room. Crafted by weavers in the Kathmandu area.

£12,500

Art by Tim Woolcock, supplied by The Ransom Gallery: Modern British painter Tim Woolcock's Lunar Splendour adorns the wall of the reception room. Muted shades of soft grey and cream reflect the understated base palette of this room.

£12,198

Ipe Cavalli Visionnaire sofa dressed with silk cushions by Roberto Cavalli: A key feature in this room is the IPE Cavalli sofa from Visionnaire,

exquisitely tailored in grey fabric with contrast piping. Pure silk cushions with a delicate feather motif finished with gold-cord detailing add the finishing touch. Sofa £11,122; Cavalli cushions, £269 each

£3,069

Decorus side table customised: The Angulus side table by Decorus is made from antique nickel and features a dark smoked oak top.

£7,400

Aiveen Daly dining chairs: Aiveen Daly created a set of eight bespoke, handcrafted dining chairs in a metallic-blue peacock vinyl for this development. Featuring a chevron pattern with slender dark-wood legs, these pieces subtly nod to British craftsmanship. Circa £3,700 each

£13,600

The Edbury table by Davidson: The dining room features a bespoke Davidson table in sycamore stone with ebonised detailing and customised base.

£21,026

Windfall crystal chandelier: An exquisite crystal chandelier from Windfall's Jewel collection is suspended above the dining table and is lit from above by recessed lighting.

£1,680

Lee Broom pendants: A trio of decorative pendant lights by Lee Broom, crafted from Carrara marble and lead crystals, are suspended above the kitchen worktop.