

# DESIGN CENTRE GUIDE

SPRING | SUMMER 17

The Ultimate Guide  
To The World's  
Premier Design  
Destination

Influential interiors,  
inspiring people  
and prestigious  
projects

**design centre**  
LONDON



# Delivering the EXCEPTIONAL

*The world's best interiors must have it all: beauty, functionality and craftsmanship, delivered seamlessly. Emily Brooks reports on how designers rely on the ingenuity and professionalism of Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour's showrooms to create them*



Why an interior is not just great, but exceptional, comes down to a multitude of factors. First, there's functionality: is it comfortable? Is it fit for purpose? A sense of place is often important, expressed through material, colour and form. Then of course, there's sheer quality of craftsmanship, and the inclusion of hand-made, bespoke elements to make a space feel truly one of a kind.

Thrown in the needs of the clients, short lead times and an intractable budget, and the interior designer's challenge becomes clear. It takes an army to deliver a flawless creative vision – and Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour is where help is at hand, whether the requirement is for furniture, lighting, rugs, tiles, trimmings, fabrics or wallcoverings.

"They take away the pain and make our lives easy," is how Alex Holden, managing director of interior design firm Oliver Burns, sums up the service that his team receive from the showrooms. "They have an understanding of what we're going through, and know the expectation of what we're trying to deliver to our clients."

When the benchmark of quality from your suppliers is sky-high, then you are much more likely to be able to deliver those exceptional schemes. The proof is in some of the wonderful projects from around the world that have been completed lately, from superyachts to iconic hotels.

"We always look to create one-off pieces so we can add a little touch of 'us' and give each project its own distinct look," says Siobhan Farley, director of in-house design and build at Soho House, which recently refreshed the interiors at Babington House in Somerset. Farley commissioned a bespoke colourway for Lewis & Wood's 'Alhambra' wallcovering for The Playroom, its largest suite, and the bar. "I think the pattern is great, soft but sophisticated, and it adds something without dominating the space too much. It looks so different in each, a bit more modern in the bar and pretty in The Playroom," she says.

Soho Home (Soho House's retail arm) is bringing its much-admired look directly to the Design Centre. It is partnering with Turnell & Gigon to transform its pop-up showroom into a suite featuring walls wrapped in Schumacher's floral 'Ursula' fabric, with upholstery fabrics including luxurious wool and silk velvet from Clarence House and linen from Neisha Crosland.

Many designers agree that a layered approach is the key to success – a room where the eye is always stimulated without being overwhelmed, and where the more you look, the more you see. "When it comes to elevating design from great to exceptional, the magic lies in the detail and the layering of exquisite materials, whether that be a silk carpet from Tai Ping, a lapis lazuli patterned tile from Ann Sacks or hand-woven horsehair from Alton-Brooke," says Holly Beazley, senior designer at Morpheus London. "It is the continued research and dedication into finding such exquisite materials that enables interior designers to add layer upon layer of luxurious finds into their schemes, resulting in highly detailed and ever-changing original design." She describes

LEFT: Velvets from Dedar upholstery the seating at jewellery brand De Grisogono's opulent New Bond Street showroom, designed by David Collins Studio. TOP RIGHT: Designer Emilie de Bonaventura's Parisian apartment features Cole & Son's classic 'Hicks Hexagon' wallpaper, adding a graphic edge to her scheme of largely natural materials. RIGHT: Besta Heurran designed this Notting Hill apartment for a client who wanted an eclectic, well-travelled look with mid-century influences. Textiles include designs from Mark Alexander at Romo, Lefievre, Clarence House at Turnell & Gigon and Le Manach at Pierre Frey



Graham: Aekins Hughes

The Great Room at the Hague Marriott hotel – a recent project by ara Design, with textiles supplied by Rubell



how, for a penthouse apartment in St John's Wood, her client wanted "a luxurious feel without it feeling too over embellished or over the top" and this layering of beautiful materials, from stone to silk, is a way of achieving that balance. There's lighting by Porta Romana and Vaughan, a dramatic fluted headboard in a fabric from Jason d'Souza, and further textiles courtesy of Lizzo, J. Robert Scott and Chase Erwin, among others.

Designer Beata Heuman comes to the Design Centre to source for her projects, and says that "to get that layered look, you can't just rely on one or two suppliers. There's so much under one roof, so it's so easy to find lots of different things. And with time, the showrooms learn what your style is and what you like, so the service become more and more tailored to you." Pierre Frey's Le Manach brand is one of her favourites, not least because custom-coloured versions of its weaves can be delivered in a couple of weeks. "When I design someone's home I always try to give our clients something no one else has, so that it really feels like it has been worthwhile for them to hire us. Those bespoke colour combinations are a good way of doing that."

"Many of the showrooms frequently go above and beyond to help us achieve our design ambitions for our clients," says Morphue's Holly Beazley. "For example, one fabric supplier supplied 1,000 metres of the same fabric in a bespoke colour range, with a turnaround of two weeks." This is not an isolated feat, as Lewis Taylor, design director at David Collins Studio, will attest. "Our work is about details, and we think it is this – uncompromising attention to detail, and going the extra mile to achieve it – that turns interiors from great to exceptional. For instance, working for weeks on end to create that exact colour of leather upholstery with amazing suppliers such as Edelman Leather, where we have often created custom embossing patterns and bespoke colours that become iconic elements in the interiors we create."

#### Closer look: Frankfurt airport's smart business club



With a 'work anywhere' ethos now the norm, executive travellers have high expectations of airport facilities. In Frankfurt, a major hub for European business, the Airport Club has recently reopened following a €3m modernisation. Berlin-based Reina Mehnert of Perfect Raumdesign was responsible for the scheme on behalf of the club's owners. Kotler & Kompanie; furniture from Giorgetti was specified for the reception area, a working lounge, smokers' lounge, conference room and restaurant. Pictured are 'Mobius' and 'Caddy' chairs, upholstered in leather in subdued colours described by Giorgetti as 'neo retro' that complement the gentlemen's-club styling, with paneled walls and floor lamps. Art from the club's private collection adorns the space, creating an atmosphere that feels far more personalised than the usual faceless airport business facilities.



ABOVE: In the living room of a penthouse apartment in St John's Wood, designers Morpheus have used fabrics by Rubelli, J. Robert Scott and Lizzo, with a table light by Vaughan. BOTTOM RIGHT: The Playroom, Babington House's largest suite, features a custom-colour version of Lewis & Wood's 'Alhambra' wallpaper.

### Closer look: a tailor-made penthouse in St James's

A location at the heart of traditional British retailing was the starting point for the interior scheme for the Brummell Penthouse at Beau House. Jermyn Street is particularly known for its shirtmakers, shoe-sellers and barbers, and so the interiors pay their respects to this gentlemanly heritage. The three-floor penthouse tops off the wider redevelopment of the building (a project by Dukelease), with Oliver Burns creating the penthouse interiors.

Herringbone flooring and fabrics, hand-stitched oversized headboards and decorative upholstery make understated reference to the 'tailoring' theme, and products from the Design Centre feature prominently.

The open-plan kitchen-dining-living space features side tables by Decorus and Bella Figura lighting. A Davidson dining table epitomises the project's discreet sense of luxury: in sycamore with ebonised inlay, the distinctive ripple of the sycamore brings gentle texture to the scheme. "We asked Davidson to redesign the base of one of their existing designs so it would work better with the dining chairs," says Oliver Burns' managing director Alex Holden. "At the Design Centre, people are always happy to work with you to create exactly what you want – Davidson are very willing to either create a fully bespoke piece or tweak something existing."



David Collins Studio recently unveiled the New Bond Street showroom of luxury jeweller De Grisogono, a life-size jewelbox with curved walls, timber walnut marquetry panels and a separate, sumptuous salon for relaxation. "The client wanted to use bold and unexpected fabrics for the upholstery so we used vibrant red and green Dedar velvets, which was a challenge for us," says Taylor. "The De Grisogono customer is a well-travelled, well-informed individual who understands luxury, and the vibrant colours reflect the brand identity."

In-house manufacturing can be a fantastic resource for designers, streamlining the process of having something made from scratch. When Campaign Design was seeking a supplier that could digitally print its own design on to fabric for the fitting rooms at Selfridge's Designer Studio, they approached Creation Baumann – one of the few companies that could print on a 3m-wide fabric – ensuring that the 13 fitting-room curtains were seamless.

"We understand that there can be time restrictions, and because we have our own mill, we can turn things around very quickly," says Vivienne Griffin, Rubelli/Donghia's UK director. The showroom works with some of the world's finest hotels, including, recently, the Visconti Palace Rome, the Grand Hyatt Amman and the Hague Marriott, all by ara Design. "It's the second time I've done the Grand Hyatt Amman, and it's nice when people come back. Over the years you develop relationship with the client and they come to trust you on what you're going to do for them. That's really important, especially with hotels," says Griffin. She refers to herself as "the nuts and bolts of the design industry" although it's much more than that. "Designers tend to go for something from an aesthetic point of view, but we'll also look at the practicality of it. And if a fabric is needed in a more durable or a Trevira version, we can do that." She has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the design guidelines of the various big hotel groups, each having subtly different rules for matters such as fire-resistance – what designer wouldn't be comforted to know that this side of the job was being competently addressed by a supplier?

Designer Katharine Pooley says that the Rubelli design team "are unsurpassable in their product knowledge and helpfulness," and recently sourced from there for her prestigious Ennismore Gardens residential project, in addition to a number of other Design Centre suppliers. "We knew that for a timeless and sophisticated take on opulent glamour, Samuel and Sons create beautiful trichaks and trimmings in contemporary colours, and the Hermès range of interior fabrics stocked by Dedar includes some beautiful mid-size patterns – perfect for statement cushions as in this interior," she says.

Designers of new developments always have to be at the cutting edge, especially when it comes to anticipating and reflecting changing lifestyles. As home working continues to rise, more attention is being lavished on an appropriately luxurious home office space, for example. At Berkeley Homes' multi-award-winning Goodman's Fields penthouse in London's Aldgate, The BOX66 Group turned to the bespoke capabilities of Gallotti&Radice to create a library-like space. An 'Elle Plus 10' boiserie was made in custom dimensions for an exact fit, with an 'Air' desk 1 in smoked 'grigio Italia' glass and a suspended 'Air' unit that cantilevers out from the wall. BOX66 has created a scheme that is detailed and dramatic but doesn't shout, exactly what the Italian furniture brand is known for. "Gallotti&Radice has an attention to detail and flexibility unrivalled by many," says Fiona Ashford, BOX66's architectural and creative director. "They have been very accommodating, and that goes such a long way to cultivating good relationships with manufacturers. If they get it right, it leaves the designer, at the end of each project, wanting more. Gallotti&Radice did that for me."

Then there's the sheer convenience of having everything in one place, and the corresponding time-savings – not to be underestimated. "When we start on the decorating side of a new job, we always take our clients there, and they can't believe it," says Tor Vivian of Tor Interiors. "We spend half a day there, and by the end they've chosen almost everything and you never need to go back again. Their whole house is done in that one visit."



### Closer look: Grosvenor House's sumptuous Royal Suites

Hotel design commissions are rarely more prestigious than Park Lane landmark Grosvenor House, part of JW Marriott's storied portfolio. GA Design International has already redesigned several areas of the hotel, and these projects have now been joined by two 170 square metre Royal Suites. Fit for royalty in their sumptuous attention to detail, the suites feature fabrics from Lelievre in the shape of 'Miroir', 'Nabab' and 'Sultan' gracing the sofas and chairs. The brief was "to bring the history of the building and the location together as a narrative, and the Hyde Park/Park Lane location and wonderful heritage gave us lots of scope for creativity," says Steffi Backhouse, GA Design's senior FF&E designer. "Lelievre's rich and fresh-toned velvets and satins suited the grace of the period." A sense of place has been instilled via the palette, inspired by the natural colours of the park in spring and autumn: "When the guest looks out of the window to park beyond, they are surrounded by an underlying layer of that within the room," says Backhouse.

