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Clockwise from far left: every element of Echlin's Holland Park mansion; Kenure House, is made in the UK; Buxmead in Hampstead has garden sculpture by David Harber; bespoke copper kitchens are a feature of Tom Dixon-designed Greenwich Peninsula; Banda Properties' Radstock Street development keeps its décor strictly British

FINE AND DANDY

From a Regency style icon to the hottest designers, high-end London properties are drawing on the best of British past and present

WORDS: ZOE DARE HALL

Among the illustrious historical figures associated with Jermyn Street in London's St James's, it is the early 19th-century dandy George "Beau" Brummell who has inspired the design of a new development of apartments. Brummell, a friend of George IV, was famous for his cutting wit and even sharper creases: he believed boots were best polished with champagne and spearheaded the trend of wearing a suit with a necktie.

For Beau House at 102 Jermyn Street (carterjonas.co.uk), whose eight apartments cost from £2m, the developers Dukelease Properties called on this colourful local character and Jermyn Street's tailoring heritage to create a scheme that oozes references to quintessential Englishness. The development's Oliver Burns-designed triplex penthouse combines navys, browns and pinstripes with touches of oak and walnut, leather walls, herringbone floors, antique mirrors and handcrafted chandeliers in a tribute to the area's reputation for bespoke luxury.

"The tailoring-inspired details woven throughout the interior design and architecture all nod to the people, couturiers, fashions and crafts of

St James's," comments Richard Leslie, CEO of Dukelease Properties. "Homes in the area are a rarity and we want buyers to feel they are purchasing a part of St James's history." Last year, a report by real estate company Colliers International found Jermyn Street to be the most "British" shopping destination in London. "It's synonymous with British luxury," says Leslie, who adds that Beau House will have British fashion house DAKS — which holds three royal warrants — on its ground floor.

While controversy rages over the number of high-end new homes in central London that attract absent overseas investors, focusing on the best of British is one way developers are appealing to a sense of familiarity among wealthy local buyers. Englishness is something that wealthy Chinese, Americans and other long-haul nationalities aspire to buy into and trying to recreate it themselves can easily go wrong.

"It reminds me of a website I read about, which helps Chinese couples choose British names for their children as they think it will help them in their future careers, but they pick names such as Cinderella and Gandalf," says Sam McNally, design director of Echlin London, a design studio



with impeccable establishment credentials; its co-founder, Mark O'Callaghan, is a former executive at Burberry, Harrods and Mulberry. "The innate sense of Britishness and authenticity is about the quality of craftsmanship, attention to detail and sense of space and light. They can be hard to recreate if you don't understand the principles," says McNally.

Echlin's latest project is Kenure House (knightfrank.co.uk), a huge Holland Park mansion on sale for £8.95m. Almost every element of the interior fit is made in the UK. "Our design reinterprets traditional British qualities into a more contemporary language," says McNally.

Iconic British design is springing up in new developments all over London. Tom Dixon has left his sought-after touch on Greenwich Peninsula (knightdragon.com/greenwich-peninsula). Its 41 apartments at Upper Riverside, which include bespoke copper kitchens, sold out quickly. According to the developer, Knight Dragon, this was partly due to "Dixon fans", but mainly because of UK buyers.

Banda Properties keep it British for their developments, including the latest: eight lateral apartments costing from £3.65m at 12-18 Radstock



“Overseas buyers are also drawn to British design and craft for its status as iconic, luxurious and stylish without being overtly lavish”



Clockwise from left: Beau House in Jermyn Street has a triplex penthouse designed by Oliver Burns; fantastic views across the river from the living room at Greenwich Peninsula; the master bedroom's ensuite spa, which opens out onto a private terrace, in Echlin's latest project, Kenure House

Street in Battersea's Creative District (bandaproperty.co.uk). The décor ranges from vintage pieces sourced from an antiques dealer in Highgate in North London to textured linens woven by a graduate of the Royal College of Arts. “People care more deeply about the provenance of products in their home,” says Rebecca Wakefield, creative director at Banda Property. “Overseas buyers, particularly those from the US, Russia and the Far East, are also drawn to British design and craft for its status as iconic, luxurious and stylish without being overtly lavish.”

In the show flat at One Tower Bridge (onetowerbridge.co.uk), where remaining flats cost from £1.45m (for one bedroom), Johnson Ribolla has taken its design cues from different fashion designers for the three bedrooms: a Burberry master suite; the Paul Smith second bedroom and the Alexander McQueen boudoir. Elsewhere, the apartment pays a subtle nod to Savile Row in the soft furnishings.

Among the mansions on The Bishops Avenue, Hampstead's “billionaires' row”, Buxmead (buxmead.co.uk) is a rare new development of luxury apartments in which every detail is about being British and bespoke.



Main image: one of three bedrooms inspired by fashion designers (Paul Smith, Burberry and Alexander McQueen)

at Berkeley Homes' One Tower Bridge. **Above:** living room in Mount Anvil's Keybridge tower in Vauxhall

“It's about knowing where to hold back so the room doesn't feel stuffed full of trends or designer labels”

There are signature scents by Alexandra Soveral, garden sculpture by David Harber and the project's developers, Harrison Varma, set up London's biggest joinery workshop to make the furniture. So far this bespoke British offering is attracting local millionaires. Two of the first three buyers of these huge lateral flats are “downsizers” from large family houses in Hampstead. The other is from Kazakhstan.

The underlying theme behind all these attempts to convey “Britishness” through design is understatement. “Layered and luxurious yet restrained and tasteful,” is how designer Sophie Paterson describes it. “It's about knowing where to hold back and where to use statement pieces so that the room doesn't feel stuffed full of trends or designer labels, but has a quiet sophistication.” It's this “London look,” she says, that she has channelled for penthouses at Horizons in Canary Wharf (elfordhomes.london/horizons), where properties cost from £995,000.

Keybridge (mountanvil.com/keybridge), a new residential tower in Vauxhall from Mount Anvil and FABRICA, is British to its core. The architects, Allies & Morrison, have harnessed the essence of London's heritage to create what will be the tallest residential brick tower in the UK. “Brick-built homes are synonymous with the UK's residential vernacular and we hope to perpetuate the building craft for generations to come,” comments Jon Hall, sales and marketing director at Mount Anvil.

Inside, UK design stalwarts Honky have packed out the Keybridge apartments, which start at £595,000 for studios, with references to great British design. These include overhead lighting by Lee Broom, rugs by Vivienne Westwood, coffee tables by the Howe-based Dare Studio and Ebury Trading Ltd chairs upholstered by Designers Guild.

Whether it's about dotting these luxury properties with the best of British or providing the ingredients for the perfect Bloody Mary, it's all about making wealthy British buyers feel at home — and making those from overseas wish it was their home.