



luxury briefing

Exclusive interview with Bobbi Brown

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plans for a pine-filled forest cinema

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LIMITED EDITIONS



The **DAZZLE** Factor

LIMITED EDITIONS: Theo Woodham Smith speaks to architect and interior designer Carolyn Trevor, a safe pair of hands who understands her clients and the way they want to live.

Architect and interior designer Carolyn Trevor, has a remarkable gift for creating an instant dazzle factor, with attention to every essential detail for down to earth comfort. There will be fantasy chandeliers, an outside piece of abstract art and rich bespoke carpets, as well as advanced bathroom technology, and enough organised storage to please the most dedicated hoarder or collector. Many of her projects involve rebuilding, conversion, or refurbishment of crumbling, impractical, sometimes historic listed buildings. She has worked on projects for Dustin Hoffman and the Sex Pistols, and today her clients tend to be high fliers in finance or industry.

Her most distinctive quality, a strong visual imagination, will sense the potential in a space beyond dark walls, grim bedsits and decades of clutter in every corner to see how sumptuous, elegant design for today's living could emerge.

She transformed a derelict embassy in Belgrave Square to create grand two storey apartments, and has brought light and space to unpromising mansion flats in 1880s and 1890s buildings, creating new ceiling heights, rearranging rooms and restoring period features. Her practice has also been commissioned to design and build new extensions in a modernist style, even a boat house.

As a child, Carolyn Trevor excelled at drawing and painting and describes herself as always being “the perfectionist”. “I was good at sciences as well as art,” she tells me, so “architecture seemed the right combination”. She studied at the Bartlett School of Architecture, followed by the Architectural Association. A line of qualifications, reassuring for clients, follows her name: BSc. AAdipl ARB RIBA BIID and SBID. After graduating, she worked for established architects Julian Wickham and Rick Mather, designing restaurants and bars, office refurbishments, and private houses.

From 1998 until 1995 she worked for John Stefanidis, as a member of his architectural team. Stefanidis is one of the most admired, sought after interior designers of our time. He is celebrated for his bold use of vibrant colour, a master of luxury without ostentation. He gained the confidence and lifetime loyalty of such clients as the Duke of Westminster, the Getty and Weston families.

Carolyn Trevor has found him an endless source of inspiration. His strength, which informs her own approach, is to regard each project as unique, with no particular ‘look’. Stefanidis uses rich textures, vivid colours, combining antique and modern elements, but can turn to rustic all white simplicity for a holiday house by the sea. While Carolyn worked on the architectural shell of his projects, there was inevitably a crossover. She acquired a total knowledge of the whole creative process, the techniques of structure together with interior furnishing. This led to her mastery of both disciplines, rare in the profession.

“TLA Studio clients tend to be affluent, demanding people, reassured by the Trevor package”



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At John Stefanidis she was working on houses and apartments in London, Windsor, Wiltshire, the Bahamas and New York, from 1985 to 1986, and later from 1988 to 1995.

In 1995 Carolyn set up her own office, with one part-time assistant. They worked on new residential developments and a private club in the French concession of Shanghai. Two years later, her husband Patrick Lahiff, who studied architecture at Queensland University, joined her, and they were soon employing a team of seven, working on refurbishment for Berkeley Homes. Their first important refurbishment was in St James's Square, where they converted offices into apartments.



TLA Studio (company official name) clients tend to be affluent, demanding people, reassured by the Trevor package: impeccable structure, followed by sumptuous, welcoming interiors. Atmosphere can be understated, minimalist, neo-classical or high contemporary gloss. Carolyn has an eye for dramatic pieces of artwork: photography, painting or sculpture. She insists on the highest quality materials, from gleaming timber to finely veined marble. The architectural element is always evident in how she divides space to create intimacy in a vast room, and the practical efficiency of her media rooms, studies, kitchens and spectacular art deco style bathrooms.

She has her private heroes, especially Bess of Hardwick, an Elizabethan powerhouse, who married four times, bore eight children (Carolyn has five), became enormously rich, and achieved lasting fame for her building projects, especially Chatsworth, seat of the Dukes of Devonshire, and Hardwick Hall, known as 'more glass than wall' for its multitude of windows. Carolyn also has a penchant for glass, choosing a vast glass table on wheels for her own kitchen in Camberwell. Architect idols are the neo-classical yet eccentric Sir John Soane,

Facing page: Living Room
This page, clockwise: Oakhill House
(Hampstead) Dining Room; Long kitchen with
dining area and large skylight in Hampstead
House; Ebury Place (Sloane Square) TLA
Robsjohn Gibbins chair and footstool



and the Arts & Crafts mediaevalist Sir Edwin Lutyens. For sheer glamour she admires the star furniture makers of 1920s and 30s such as Emile Jacques Ruhlmann, master Art Deco who used rare woods with precious materials like ivory, and Jean Michel Frank, still adored by top designers today, for minimalist interiors made sumptuous with exotic textures.

Most recent projects are a house in the South of France where she refurbished the pool with ink blue tiles and in the tradition of architect designers of the past, she has been working for the past five years on the developing and changing needs in a family flat in Chelsea.



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T: +44 (0)203 772 4850

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