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HOME: INTERIORS

Britain's top 30 interior designers

Tired of manicured monochrome? Colour and character are back. Here is our pick of decorators who dare to be different

Katrina Burroughs Published: 12 May 2013

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Slideshow: Top 30 interior designers



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Clean and modern: Atlantic Interior Design

Ever thought of getting in a professional interior designer but worried the result would be like living in a showhome? You are probably right. In the boom years, many decorators aspired to work for luxury developers, and more recently have targeted the influx of foreign investors in London's super-prime postcodes, so the trade has gained a reputation for the type of intercontinental, manicured monochrome that these clients, who have multiple homes, love.

Giles Kime, deputy editor of Homes & Gardens and deep thinker on the subject of decor, says: "The seamless join between interior design and property development has spawned a polite, homogenous style that is more about investment than inventiveness." But that, Kime adds, is only half the story. While it's still possible to commission a domestic interior that resembles a hotel lobby in Dubai, the design of easygoing family spaces, full of colour and individuality, is flourishing again. "There's a new generation of designers — as well as stalwarts who have stuck to their guns — injecting schemes with a spirit that focuses more on the tastes of their clients and issues such as craftsmanship and sustainability." So, in honour of this revival, Home has identified the top 30 designers who are doing inspiring work in real homes.

Let's say some of the pictures on these pages tickle your aesthetic fancy. The rooms look casual, effortlessly pulled together, artfully cluttered. Why would you pay a decorator for something that looks simple enough to do yourself? Sue Timney, designer of interiors and textiles and president of the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID), the decorators' professional body, says: "We are incredibly creative as a nation, but being creative isn't the same as getting a good interior-design job done. People start a project and find they get stuck and give up, or call in a professional, because an amazing amount of the job is technical or boring. The average homeowner might not want to work with the builders consolidating health and safety issues."

She adds that there are safeguards for those using a BIID designer: "Our members are professionally qualified, have years of experience and high levels of insurance. If a client isn't happy, they abide by our complaints procedure."

Money is the real issue for most of us. An interior designer is only an option if you have a job in mind, and a sum of money reserved to carry it out. Apart from the folk in our Best on a Budget section, few decorators will work on projects with a value below £25,000. But if you have a substantial makeover or alteration to achieve, a good designer will anticipate and avoid the common but costly pitfalls and squeeze out the last drops of value from your cash, through canny sourcing and use of trade discounts. "Even with a low budget, a designer can save you money and a lot of heartache," says Timney.

Clean and modern

Atlantic Interior Design

The pitch "Comfortable contemporary living spaces with classic balance and symmetry."

Our take Louisa Keating and Georgia Bulmer have perfected a sophisticated mix of pared-back forms and pattern.

Projects The team take on commissions from furnishings to complete building refurbishment, from two-bedroom apartments to six-bedroom homes.

Clients Entrepreneurs, media or financial folk, all with a passion for design.

Budget From £60,000.

Location London and the southeast.

Contact 020 7243 6364, atlanticinteriordesign.com

Full article can be found at: <http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/>

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