

Q&A CATHERINE MILNER

Model turned interior designer

My style is... Classical beauty, juxtaposed and blended with a contemporary aesthetic.

From fashion to interior design, was that a natural progression? The two worlds have always been blurred. Both include elements of style, romance and fantasy, therefore it seemed a natural move for me to go from couture fashion model to interior designer. My couture fashion background has certainly had a huge influence on my design aesthetic; I often use beautiful fashion shoots in my design concept mood boards.

What are your influences? Art, history, nature, film, travel... where to begin? I am influenced by a variety of architectural and design periods, from Palladio to Pre-Raphaelite and Art Deco. For me, inspiration starts as soon as I see the space.

Design dislikes? Designs that entirely reflect the trends of the moment – as they are soon outdated. As Givenchy once said, ‘When you are in style, you are already out of style.’

Who would you choose to design your home? Jacques Grange, the acclaimed French designer. Since the early 1970s, his work for Parisian clients such as Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé has established him among the most imaginative of his generation of designers.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Belgravia Mews project; Catherine Milner; classical handles; bathrooms inspired by the Imperial Villas

And if you could design anybody's home it would be... Queen Rania of Jordan's. She embodies the classical female image of grace, charm, beauty and intelligence, which she uses with great integrity for her advocacy work in education, health and community empowerment. I instinctively feel she would appreciate and understand my designs.

Common mistakes? Rushing into a project and buying at random without thinking through the design concept as a personal story. Avoid the readily available and opt for a few unique, timeless objects.

Favourite room in the house? I love designing bathrooms using beautiful pieces of marble, onyx and Bisazza shimmering white gold mosaics, as I often take elements of the ancient Roman baths found in the Imperial Villas, which were designed to be utterly opulent and luxurious.

Most striking building? Chiswick House is perfectly formed. I love that it was designed purely for entertainment and as a showcase for works of art. How decadent.

If you could redesign the interior of any building... I would love to design an ultra-civilised, highly contemporary boutique hotel in Cornwall.

LITTLE BLACK BOOK

Steal Catherine's contacts



FASHION DESIGNER
Alberta Ferretti for romance (albertaferretti.com) and Armani for sleek tailoring (armani.com)



PAINT
Paint & Paper Library.
paint-library.co.uk



STATEMENT PIECES
Birgit Israel (birgitisrael.com) and Valerie Wade for Art Deco (valeriewade.com)



STATIONERY
Christian Lacroix. amara.com



LIGHTING
Hervé Van der Straeten.
vanderstraeten.fr



LITTLE LUXURY
Peonies in white or dusky pink