



Clean lines

Battersea resident Kelly Hoppen is one of a new breed of celebrity designers. Here she speaks with **Rowena Carr-Allinson**

A glamorous 43-year-old redhead, Kelly Hoppen has twenty five years' experience in interior design, having famously started her business

...I have always had an eye for better spaces. When I was little I kept changing my bedroom around, which was my parents' crazy. I finally set up my first interior design studio when I was 17, after having spent some time away from home, with some friends, that my father had left me. Since then my business has naturally evolved into other areas like publishing and commercial

...The favourite side of her job so far? Designing homes is what comes naturally to me and I truly enjoy getting into people's heads and understanding their needs into something that shows them away."

...Working with big names, missing out on socialising with them, the designer soon became a bit of a celebrity herself as Sienna Miller's mother and later girlfriend of a Chelsea footballer. But she is adamant it didn't make her career. "My work is never about the fact that I count names to my clientele. What has given me the trust of all my clients is my reputation as a perfectionist and my love for what I do. The luxury market is one that requires a lot of time and attention to detail, not just with what you do but also with who you work for and I make an important point of keeping my clients' details confidential. Once you have established longevity in your style, you will be able to work for the people you like to work for."

...She herself is inspired by the ethos and the values of the Eastern world. But she says, you can be inspired by anything around you. "The key is to make sure you don't just open your eyes but all your senses to what goes around you."

...A trailblazer in the Classic contemporary style, Kelly set a minimalist trend and is set to democratize her style further thanks to

her new range at BHS. After meeting Chairman Sir Philip Green at a party Kelly designed the first three collections which hit the stores in October.

The two separate furniture and accessories ranges: Glamour and Classic are sleek and contemporary with a hint of the eastern including a stone Buddha, exotic dark woods and mother of pearl accessories.

"I am known for introducing the 'East meets West' philosophy to Interior Design. The classic Kelly Hoppen look is defined by using straight lines and symmetry to create balance within your home. It is also famous for the use of a very neutral and subtle colour palette that combines the different textures and materials of a home.

"Knowing that people, who followed my style and design philosophy, but could not afford to purchase my high-end goods, had to put up with what was available always disappointed me. Now I am finally able to offer those people the real thing for amazing prices. It was such a great experience to be able to bring something like this to life, especially with someone like Philip Green backing you."

Faithful to her 'Perfect Neutral' colour palette, Kelly's BHS designs are "quintessential Kelly with an elegant colour palette of neutrals including taupe, mocha and cream, with furniture in dark wood, while the 'Glamour' range takes the same neutral palette but gives it a glitzy twist with gold, the energising accent colour".

Her basic rule of thumb is: "Using a neutral base in your home will always allow you maximum flexibility with the space you create."

And space was what she was after when she moved home from Chelsea to Battersea last year. With a New York style loft apartment in mind, Kelly found her new home here fast - and moved fast. "I saw this space and immediately fell in love with it. It had only been on the market for four hours and I had to act quickly. I would have never been able to find such an amazing space for the same value in Chelsea."

She admits she isn't spending much time at home, spending full working days in her Kensington offices and enjoying weekend escapes to her cottage in Oxfordshire, "the perfect retreat away from the city", but she is clearly enjoying her new home saying the neighbourhood "has a great variety of people. Quite a few of my friends live around there and I definitely think that it is becoming a more and more trendy area to live in."

She has described herself as shy and puts a lot of importance on privacy. Me Time is important to her, whether it's heading to the sun for Christmas, or escaping London at weekends. Bizarrely for someone who treasures her privacy, she is set to become an even more familiar face on TV.

Asked about joining the ranks of the UK's favourite TV designers and having her very own show, she admits she's been solicited many times but, she says: "There are so many out there and they all seem to be the same! I think it is missing something punchy with a twist. If anyone thinks I can deliver that, I am up for it!" Indeed, she reluctantly admits that there is the twinkle of a project in the pipeline. But, careful, she keeps her cards close to her chest.

Can we know more? 'No' she says simply laughing. Watch this space. ■



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