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THE INTERIORS BIBLE

A Jewel to Behold

Interior designer Mark Howorth details how he produced a bachelor pad that could have been taken right out of Miami and placed in the heart of London's Mayfair.

"If I had to describe this house in three words I would say it is breathtaking, bright and unexpected," says Mark Howorth. "It is an old mews house in the heart of Mayfair and, like most mews houses, it is small in size. The whole house was gutted and opened up to create a very modern and fantastic interior design." Mark Howorth is owner of Callender Howorth, a firm based in London that has been overseeing architecture and interior design projects for over 12 years. While Callender Howorth has managed many projects in its home town of London, including a retail space on Regent Street, the firm has added a ski chalet in Switzerland and a number of properties in France to its impressive portfolio of work.

Words: Emma Hill / Photography: Robert Sanderson





But despite this body of work, Mark was more than surprised, and pleasantly so, when he entered this Mayfair mews for the first time. "When you walk into the house you get quite a surprise because it is very bright despite the small size. There are three main levels in the house. The back of the house opens out onto a courtyard and so the clever use of glazed windows on all levels makes the back of the property open up." The result is a home that gives the sense of having been an open-air house since its birth; with glass walls and the use of bright colours contributing to the airy feel. "It is almost like something you would see in Miami," says Mark. "It is such a bright space which feels very contemporary. The client wanted something with a 'wow factor' for entertaining and I think that by having this light, bright house with all the glazing, it really opens up the space to allow not only exquisite furnishing and art, but also quite intensive lighting designs throughout the property. So it definitely has a wow factor."







In addition to taking on board the brief given by each client, Callender Howorth goes one step further by visiting the client's existing property to garner a better understanding of what interior design decisions they have made in the past and how they make use of their living space. "It is very important to us that we create an interior that very much reflects each individual client. We don't have a house style that we try to adhere to; we like to see the client's personality reflected in the final design."



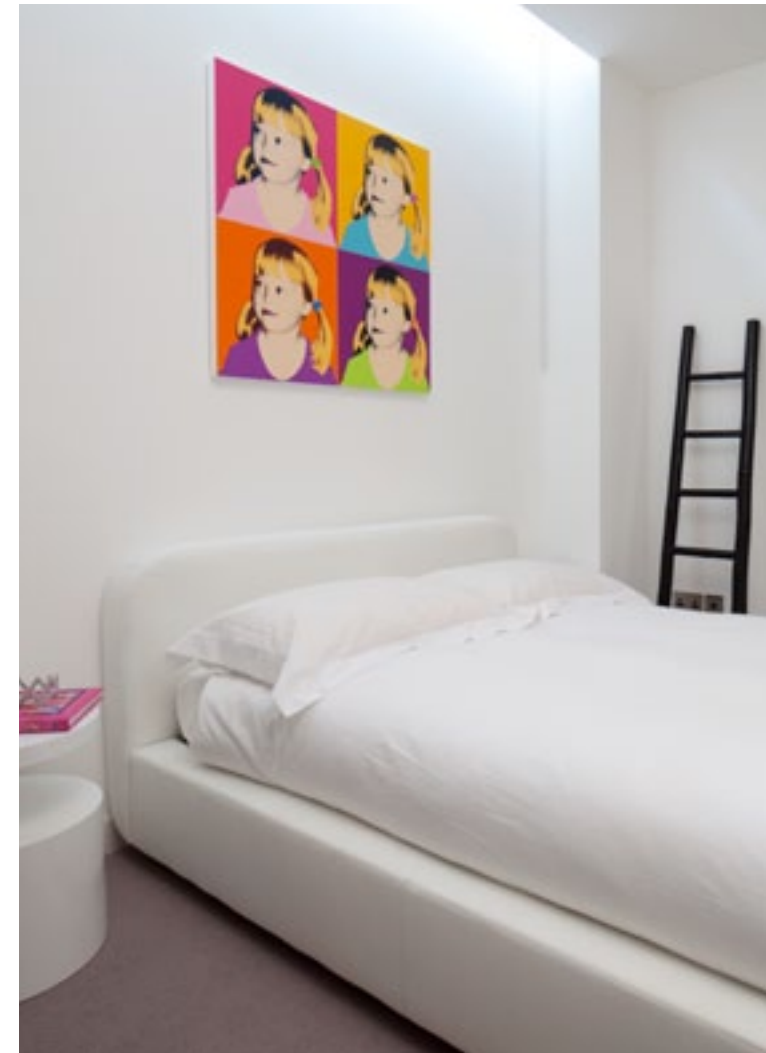
The client in question was a single man to whom entertaining was very important. One possession which struck a note with Mark upon his visit to the client's existing property was a very large vintage James Bond poster. Mark describes it as "very sassy, a bit retro, quite glamorous, and quite funky" and the starting point from which the whole interior was designed.

"James Bond is really quite a fun way to think of a concept and from which to build a brief because, as a result, there are a lot of gadgets around the house. For example there is a wine fridge in the bedroom, a very impressive cinema, and everything is automatic, including all the blinds.



“Even the interesting ways in which the house is lit makes it very much a boy’s toy kind of house for a guy who entertains a lot.” Upon entering the front door one is met by a staircase which leads down into the lower ground floor. This floor houses the kitchen and separate dining area which both give access to the cleverly designed white marble courtyard. The lower ground floor also holds a guest suite, laundry room and the ever-important wine cellar. “The design for the kitchen was an interesting concept because the client loves to entertain without cooking. To cater for this we designed a kitchen that has much more of a club-like feel. The centre culinary island is underlit with LEDs, as well as all of the cabinets, so at night time the mood can be set for evening entertainment.”





The dining room leads off from the kitchen, again giving access to the courtyard. The breezy tones of the kitchen are continued in this room with added touches to incorporate the retro feel. "We created these mirrored niches with retro smoked grey glass in which we placed some carefully chosen objects which help to set the mood and the atmosphere. The lighting was very important to us in this design – we made sure that at night time the house is properly lit to mirror the brightness the house is afforded throughout the day. And the result is that you get these very dramatic affects."



Lighting was also important when taking into consideration the many pieces of art throughout the house. Callender Howorth embraced its client's interest in art and accompanied him to a number of galleries where he purchased some beautiful pieces, all of which are perfectly lit. The ground floor of this Mayfair mews comprises a living room with a mix of deep browns and floods of natural light. The glass wall between the living room and the hallway, the floor-to-ceiling window overlooking the courtyard and the oversized white couch all perfectly offset the deep browns of the wall and rug. The ground floor's study area continues the trend of wall niches and beautiful art while the cinema room is a much cosier affair with a deep comfy couch and an oversized poof.



“We did a little restructuring work on the top floor,” says Mark, “to accommodate a very large master suite. This room has a platform area for the bed with illuminated steps and there is a mirrored dressing room off the bedroom with a custom bar inside it, as you do.” There is also another bedroom on the top floor. Callender Howorth sources furniture and soft furnishings from Italy and New York as well as the UK in an effort to create a unique look for each individual client.

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“This house has a very large mixture of furnishings and art. I always think it is better to have such a mixture so that you get that funky, eclectic look. I really don't like what I call 'potato print design,' where the design is a bit like a hotel interior and doesn't reflect any personality. The mixture of art very much reflects our client's personality and he really enjoyed being involved in those decisions. “It is a very inspiring and uplifting house. There are so many different things happening with the finishes and furniture and the lighting so it is a very interesting place to be in. It's a real jewel to behold.”

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