

DESIGNED BY TRILBEY GORDON

“Ultimate decadence, playful, something exciting in every corner. And I’m not afraid to go dark,” says Trilbey Gordon, describing her idea of home.

Trilbey is an interior designer in London whose creativity is sought after by clients in fashion, art, the film world, who want a home that is as creative as their work. These are the glamorous circles Trilbey mixes in so easily, actors and film directors, Vogue editors and fashion writers. She was one of these herself though there isn’t a hint of pretension, she is such easy company, it is easy to imagine the company she moves in includes you.

She talks about an art collector’s apartment in Paris, a cool calm oasis of white and cream, light drapes at the French windows wafting in a slight breeze, sophistication in the corning, upholstered chaises and sculptures. It brings to mind the art aficionado Jacques Granges. Then she cuts to a New York apartment with a hint of rock ‘n’ roll decadence, mid-century furniture and a pop of 1970s pieces rocking the party attitude. Trilbey Gordon conjures whole worlds peopled by living breathing characters as she describes interiors.

She thrills in treasure hunting at the Paris Marché aux Puces but it is never just about material objects; in any of Trilbey’s interior designs, imagination in mixing old with new, layering a history is to give a sense of soul to the home. “I love trawling markets abroad. I’ll go to Palm Springs or Miami and fill up a container load of mid-century furniture. I never stop looking for interesting finds when I’m travelling.”

She has just designed a beautiful townhouse in London’s Little Venice, and the elegance of this house whispers someone whose cabinet of contemporary jewellery is an art collection, someone who wears swishing pleated couture while relaxing against a blush of pink décor, someone who has peonies delivered by her favourite florist.

“I’d love to show you.” Ruefully, she apologises that we can’t peep behind the closed doors of most interiors she has designed, as most of those people spend their working lives in the spotlight and relish their privacy. Fortunately for all of us who delight in a glimpse of what other people have on their mantle shelf, the owner of one house in Ladbroke Grove has thrown open his front door and welcomed us in to see how Trilbey has wrought her magic on his home.

A wall of butterflies in a glass box frames lines the hallway. The console table is a stretched argo taura parchment leather vellum by Karl Springer and gilded ram’s horns are hung above the doorway like a wishbone.



Ladbroke Grove dining room

Walls are wrapped in smoky grey and grape hues, with vintage sculptural brass wall art like the sunburst mirrors by Curtis Jere. Smoky mercury mirror tiles surround the fireplace in the drawing room, which could be a Victorian orchid collectors' private gentleman's club, with bookshelves of leather bound first editions and cabinets of collected curiosities, vivid red coral, nautilus shells and rock crystals, insects and butterflies displayed under glass domes. A collection of magnifying lenses with bubbles in the glass by Mexican artist Feliciano Bejar magnifies the sense of a collector's interest.

The house had been a rental property and the original period features had been taken out. Interior architecture is the basis for Trilbey's scheme, opening up the space, enlarging doorways, adding character with architectural detail, deep skirting boards, plasterwork and fireplaces. "I'd have liked to be an architect," she says. She went to the ends of the world, at least to World's End, to find specialists in plasterwork and selected a studded cornicing based on a design for the Cadogan estate in Knightsbridge, to bring definition to the high ceilings.

The traditional approach ends there. As soon as you step into the hallway, the stair carpet is a multi-coloured starry screen saver, made from a rug from the jewellery designer Solange Azagury-Partridge's old showroom, cut up to give each step its own constellation.

"He said "I want you to push out the boundaries."" So she did, with playful throwbacks to the 1970s in the vintage shell and glass disc chandeliers, and unexpected art, like the shamanic bunny girl painting by Sally Jane Fuerst.



Labroke Grove hallway



Labroke Grove entrance



Labroke Grove drawing room

With her serious knowledge of vintage and collectable furniture and objects Trilbey scoured antiques shops of Labroke Grove and Golborne Road, and Paris flea markets to find tales of the unexpected. "Everything has a story."

Decadent brass sculptural screens stand at the edge of wide openings into the dining room, echoing the Milo Baughman brass framed blue velvet dining chairs set around a Rizzo hexagonal pointed marble table. A vintage chandelier of blown glass discs by Vistosi ripples like fish scales above the midnight sky rug. Trilby found it in Alfie's antiques market. Strong dark colours and bold textures, reflected in a wall of mirror tiles, gives it the feel of a private club. An abstract 'painting' on the wall is over-exposed film-still photography from Eyes Wide Shut by Jason Shulman.

Studded doors salvaged from Richard Branson's house in Holland Park were restored, tinted with a teal wax, and finished with heavy bronze door handles from an American 1930s cinema.

The pièce de resistance among her treasure finds is a pair of doors dotted with multicoloured Murano glass portholes like melted boiled sweets baked into a gingerbread house. These doors with their coiled serpent kundalini brass handles, were reclaimed from a brothel in Paris. The master bedroom dressed in cool blues has a quieter sophistication than the vintage chandelier of red glass discs in the entrance hallway declares, or the Pigalle brothel doors to the bedroom suggest.



Labroke Grove sitting room

Deep teal walls and a thick pile rug softens a dark wood parquet floor, a pair of squasy armchairs by the fireplace reupholstered in aqua velvet by Dedar, and a hand-crocheted quilt of butterflies made by Tibetan monks, from Kokon To Kai, on the fine framed four-poster bed. “I wanted it to be sexy, elegant and a bit eccentric,” Trilbey explains. Another bedroom is dressed as a Moroccan souk, with a tented bed and long couch piled with silk cushions.

The bathroom goes a shade darker with Bisazza tiles in the walk-in shower and sauna, brass pipework, and a freestanding bath on a plinth made from railway sleepers to bathe by an open fire.

A wall of vast crittal glass doors opens out onto the garden, where there are sculptures reclaimed from a stately home, and archways spilling with night flowering jasmine. “It was the first garden room I’d designed,” Trilbey enthuses. A dining table in the garden is set for al fresco entertaining. Inside, the living room walls are wrapped in smudgy dark purple, with silk panels of tropical vegetation creepers and twining snakes hand-painted by artist Anna Glover. It’s a room that invites you to relax on the oversized sofa that’s designed like a stack of giant marshmallows covered in tactile crushed velvet, set on a raised brass dais.



Labroke Grove hallway



Labroke Grove bedroom



Labroke Grove sitting room

The kitchen enters a dream world. Enclosed at the heart of the house, with no windows for natural light, Trilbey devised a raised ceiling, hand painted by Henry van der Vijver, washed with lighting to create the impression of daylight. Smoky antique mercury glass covers the side walls mirroring the custom antiqued mercury glass tiles by Rupert Bevan around the Lasso fireplace in the drawing room.

The standout feature of the whole house is the kitchen’s central island of Tiffany blue marble amazonite, a veined semi-precious stone, uplifted on a brass base. The rippled blue and green amazonite stone continues behind the cooker under the brushed brass wall cupboards. Back-lit mirrored wall cabinets with brass doors bring to mind a pharmacy filled with vintage etched wine glasses which she truffle-hunted in vintage shops.

The home exudes a polished aura of someone cultured and wonderfully creative. “Yes! That’s the soul of him. He has amazing taste,” says Trilbey.

“A client has a strong and distinctive voice and it’s my job to be a good listener. I like a home to feel like the people who live there.”

Trilbey Gordon has just designed her first show flat at Chapter House, a luxury development behind Drury Lane in Covent Garden. She was approached by the developer Londonewcastle and was persuaded that they wanted her creative approach.



Chapter House



Chapter House sitting room

“I like to create a story of who would live there,” says Trilbey. Her first moodboard for Chapter House was a bachelor pad with a whiskey room, cork wall tiles and a cherry light feature as 1970s as a maraschino cherry garnish in a cocktail. Unsurprisingly it did not see the light of day. “It was a bit Marmite,” she laughs. “It had to have a wider appeal.”

Instead she turned to a sophisticated mood. Trilbey brought in her own joinery team to line the walls with bespoke walnut asymmetrical panelling inlaid with brass lines, to add a strong architectural feature to the apartment. She divided the open space with mirrored panels.

The furnishings play with contrasting textures and curves to offset the square boxy structure. Textured vinyl wallpaper by Phillip Jefferies, and “woolly teddy bear” fabric by Pierre Frey on a vintage chair, add interest to the touch. Gold and black silk Pierre Frey fabric curtains pool luxuriantly onto the floor of the bedroom. The bed has a curved bedhead with bolster cushions in celadon green silk, and a fringed artwork on the wall adds an Art Deco feel. A Hermès throw layers and adds depth.

Trilbey searched high and low for the right chandelier to make a statement piece, and eventually discovered a vintage Murano find in Berlin with chains that match the chainmail wall designed by the developer’s architects. She designed a fixed swivel stand for sculptures and books and filled up a bookcase with interesting objets and small sculptural pieces to bring character and a talking point to the apartment, as if someone lives there.

“I go to Ibiza, to La Grandja, when I feel a need to escape to regroup and recharge. I can really relax there. It’s calming and there is soul.” Paris can wait. There will always be another house needing studded doors salvaged from Richard Branson’s skip or a brothel in Paris.

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