



DECORATOR INDEX

TARA BERNERD

The British interior designer has made her mark around the world creating hotel-style luxe with handsome appeal

Who is she? Bernerd's first passion was films and she studied at film school before working as a trader in commercial property and then moving into interior design. She joined Philippe Starck's YOO studio in the 1990s and became a partner before leaving in order to set up her own practice, Tara Bernerd & Partners, in 2002, for which her first project was a loft in London's Battersea. The interior designer has since gone on to forge a global reputation for her high-end commercial and residential work.

What's her style? Bernerd describes it as 'handsome elegance with a warm but industrial edge'. Her designs feature walnut, marble and burnished brass combined with a comforting palette. She credits architecture, in particular Pierre Chareau's Maison de Verre in Paris and the work of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, as her main source of inspiration.

Tell us about her recent projects... They include a major refit of the Kimpton Fitzroy (lobby, top right), formerly The Principal London, where her intention was to merge its traditional 19th-century English aesthetic with something more contemporary. Its Palm Court (below) looks suitably refreshed. There is also a private chalet in Gstaad, Switzerland and a penthouse at the Highcliff building in Hong Kong (right).

What is she currently working on? Bernerd has a number of international hotel projects on the go, including the Four Seasons Hotel London

at Park Lane and Four Seasons Hotel at Fort Lauderdale in Miami, The Hari hotel in Hong Kong and Thompson in Hollywood. Residential work includes a luxury villa in Ibiza and several apartments located in Hong Kong's prestigious Jardine's Lookout neighbourhood, including the breathtaking penthouse flat in Highcliff, with a rooftop pool and deck.

She says: 'I've always been drawn to the visuals of films and, for me, the role of an interior designer is much like that of a film director - you work to pull together many creative talents and inspirations, creating a cohesive and exciting whole. I'm currently working on the Equinox Hotel in LA. It's a dream project, working with legendary architect Frank Gehry. I can't wait until it opens and I can see the vision come to life. It's a fantastic life at the moment, travelling all around the world, designing hotels.'



EXPERT ADVICE

Tara Bernerd's rules for using lighting

Create a statement Lighting is a great way to add attitude and impact to a home. For the chalet in Gstaad, we introduced a chandelier by Italian brand Lollie Memmoli to add colour and texture to a structured staircase and landing. Juxtaposed against the traditional pine panelling, it creates a feature point and really draws the eye. It's important to balance grander fixtures with subtler lighting elements to ensure a softer, more intimate atmosphere. Additions such as spotlights, bidirectional wall lights and table lamps support the chandelier, creating layers that add depth to the space and increase the feeling of warmth.

Enhance existing architecture You can use lighting to transform often overlooked architectural features, such as staircases, into something memorable, drawing out small details and highlighting the shape and structure. Flush-fit lighting beneath each of the stair treads is a chic and alluring, not to mention practical, way to do this. This discreet addition will add a glow to a space that can often suffer from a lack of natural light.

Zone a space Lighting is also an ideal way to subtly indicate the different functions of certain areas, especially within an open-plan layout. Carefully consider using up-lighting and table lamps, while spotlights are a great way of drawing the eye and highlighting key objects or pieces of art.

Set the mood When creating the tone of a room, lighting is one of the main factors and can be transformative in terms of ambience. An understanding of how you wish to use the space is key - do you need to concentrate and work, or relax with soft, diffused light?

