

SENSE of PLACE

Discerning home-buyers are not interested in bland, cookie-cutter spaces — and developers, and the designers they work with, are cottoning on to this. Tamsin Bradshaw speaks to three international designers making their own very distinctive mark on some prominent residential projects

As Tara Bernerd, Simon Rawlings and Philippe Briand show, good design is all about individuality. Using colour, craftsmanship and materials in unique ways, each brings a particular style to their design firms, creating spaces that feel special, different — and like home.

And “home,” it seems, is a buzzword for developers and hoteliers alike. There’s a blurring of the lines between the spaces we inhabit as we work, travel, play, sleep and eat. In Hong Kong, companies such as Couture Homes, Grosvenor and New World Development are recognising the new direction required to entice design-savvy Hongkongers to buy apartments in their properties.



TARA BERNERD
TARA BERNERD & PARTNERS

Projects in Hong Kong: Highcliff on Stubbs Road; 47-49 Perkins Road, a luxury residential development at Jardine’s Lookout; The Hari Hong Kong hotel in Wan Chai

There’s something about Tara Bernerd. In person, and even in pictures, the British interior designer has an intangible quality about her that can only be described as presence. It’s something that comes through in the luxury property developments she and her team at Tara Bernerd & Partners design around the world, as well as the hospitality projects they’re working on. They all have character; there’s nothing vanilla about them.

Take, for example, the 3,500sqft penthouse she created for Highcliff on Stubbs Road. Decked out in warm, earthy neutrals, what sets it apart are the rich materials Bernerd used— the smoked oak, the bronze, the

veined marbles—and the bursts of vibrant colour. Then there’s the penthouse she created for The Westminster Terrace in Tsuen Wan. This 7,000sqft home is also beautifully layered, with grainy woods, dappled stones, bespoke rugs and a back-lit, onyx staircase that appears to float up to the home’s second storey.

Tara Bernerd & Partners works globally, with a portfolio of global luxury hotel brands including such names as The Principal, The Hari, Rosewood and Four Seasons, as well as residences for the Four Seasons in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

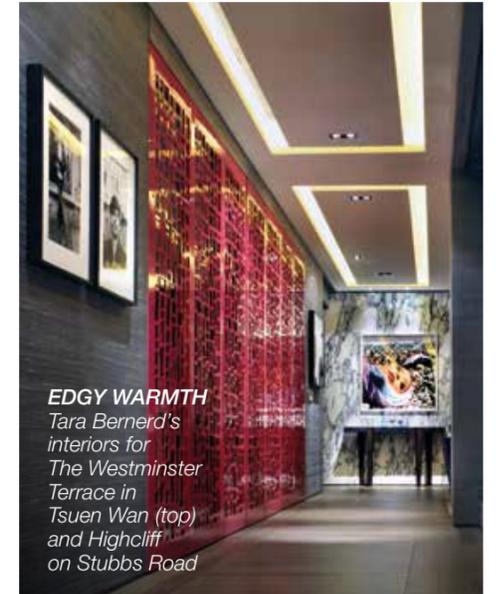
Bernerd herself frequently returns to Hong Kong to work on private residential projects, homes and developments. A current project is 47-49 Perkins Road, an apartment building development in Jardine’s Lookout by Mico Chung’s Couture Homes, Grosvenor Asia Pacific and Asia Standard International.

“The direction was to do something that still has that feeling of home, and a warmth, but to produce something that is slightly more contemporary and has that edginess,” says Bernerd. “When you look at the palate, you start to see how we brought in that mustard and peacock blue and that really warm blue-grey stone and the smoked wood.”

Perkins Road will consist of spacious lateral and duplex apartments, a penthouse that’s still in progress, and an impressive furnished duplex that will be ready in November 2018. “It’s not going to be your traditional Hong Kong show flat. In terms of finishes, there’s been a lot of thought to giving it layers, playing with mood, so

you can see you’ve got a sort of DNA to it,” she says.

“I wanted it to have a personality, because I think today when you look at homes all over the world, you don’t necessarily want something that looks like a furniture showroom suite,” she says. “I feel we’ve learnt so much from the hotels we’re doing around the world about where lifestyles are. Developers and hoteliers are saying the same thing: they want it to feel like home. They want the layers, the attitude and the character.”



EDGY WARMTH
Tara Bernerd’s interiors for The Westminster Terrace in Tsuen Wan (top) and Highcliff on Stubbs Road





PHILIPPE BRIAND
PHILIPPEBRIAND.COM

Project in Hong Kong: The Blue Pavilion clubhouse and its facilities at The Pavilia Bay in Tsuen Wan

If you're looking for a new superyacht, London-based Philippe Briand is your go-to guy. The French designer has spent the past 40 years designing some 12,000 dynamic, precise luxury sailing vessels.

Does that make him an odd choice for a residential development in Hong Kong? If you think about it, not really. There are few people with the knowledge of luxury lifestyles he has, so who better to define "resort-style living standards" than the designer of some of the world's most famous superyachts?

Briand's ability to create rich, original, efficient and perfectly constructed spaces was probably what caught the eye of Adrian Cheng and his team at the

Artisanal Movement, a New World Development brand. They brought him on board to design the extensive clubhouse and its facilities at The Pavilia Bay in Tsuen Wan.

The result is Blue Pavilion which was, says Briand, inspired by "the mainsail of a sailing yacht during its wind propulsion." Inside, Briand has applied the sort of artisanal details that distinguish superyachts, in features ranging from the bespoke relief map of the world that runs alongside the spiral staircase to the carefully crafted carbon fibre on The Flag Pole and The Bridge.

Carbon fibre, says Briand, "is known for its unique combination of high-strength and lightweight qualities. Due to its complicated fabrication process, it's rarely used in real estate projects.

"The Bridge and The Flag Pole are one-of-a-kind creations each involving multiple steps, from moulding and resin infusion to casting, all of which require perfect, precise and attentive handling."

In addition, Briand created the facade of the podium at The Pavilia Bay, using 650 steel plates, hand-crafted in a similar process to that used to make superyachts, to give the exterior the look of a superyacht at sea.

He and his team also hand-picked designer furniture for the pool deck. "This provides a staycation-like ambience for residents to escape from the hustle and bustle [of the city]. This is what a residential space should be," says Briand.

"We're happy to be the pioneer in incorporating superyacht design in property," he adds. "It's a new design trend for all real estate developers."



SHIP AHOY
The podium (top) and pavilion deck at The Pavilia Bay



SIMON RAWLINGS
DAVID COLLINS STUDIO

Project in Hong Kong: Three-storey show home at Mount Nicholson on The Peak

in contemporary buildings," he says. "If I forced the same design ideas into all of them, the outcome would be unpleasant and unliveable. Connectivity with one's surroundings really gives a sense of place."

For Rawlings, creating that sense of place begins with him "exploring, spending time and being inspired" by the locations where his London-based studio is designing, which range from London and Milan to Riyadh, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong and Bangkok. And it's an approach that comes through in the imaginative, thoughtful, graceful spaces David Collins Studio creates—no matter whether it's working on a boutique for Alexander McQueen in Tokyo, a hotel for Le Méridien in Seoul, a set of luxury apartments for The Ritz-Carlton Residences in Bangkok, or a stunning show home at Mount Nicholson on The Peak in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong show home is one of 19 houses and 48 apartments that make up Mount Nicholson, a project by Wheelock Properties, The Wharf Limited and Nan Fung Group. David Collins Studio was one of a selection of high-end international

design studios invited to work on the homes within the development; other designers include Yabu Pushelberg, Alexandra Champalimaud, Robert AM Stern Architects and Three Living Architecture.

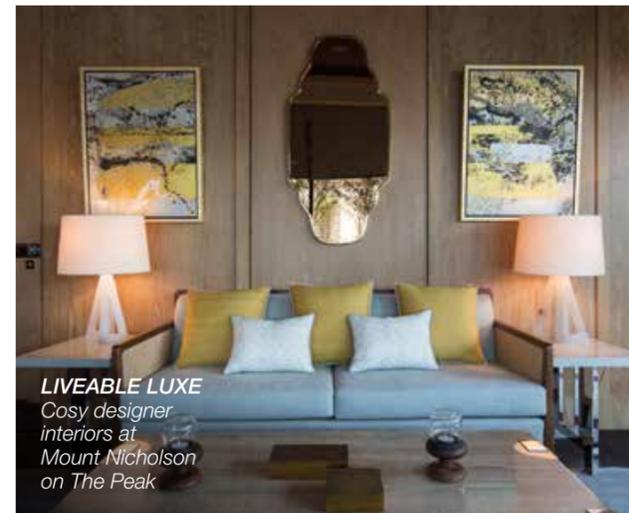
The David Collins Studio-designed home has been particularly successful: this three-storey house, which has four bedrooms, an elevator and 9,178sqft of indoor space, sold for HK\$1.16bn at the end of 2017.

"I still feel the success of the home remains in the fact it's not only very special, but also truly liveable. That, to me, is the marker of great residential interior design," says Rawlings. "We had a very accommodating client who trusted our vision, and we collaboratively created a unique house.

"I like our show homes to be designed with a real point of view," he adds. "I avoid 'beige-friendly crowd-pleaser.' I really want to promote a lifestyle through design that potential buyers have never experienced before. When moving to development interiors, one has to be a little more restrained yet still aspirational, unique and thoroughly luxurious." 🗨️

What matters most, says Simon Rawlings, creative director of David Collins Studio, is the feelings inspired by the show homes and luxury residential developments he creates.

"City dwellings in historic buildings in Europe should feel emotionally different to those in exotic climates



LIVEABLE LUXE
Cosy designer interiors at Mount Nicholson on The Peak

