

Q&A: Doyenne of Hotel Design Tara Bernerd on Beating Jet Lag and Where She's Traveling this Year

With projects in London, Hong Kong, Ibiza, and Gstaad all opening this year, the prolific interior designer knows a thing or two about traveling in style.



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British designer Tara Bernerd has become a household name among the design faithful in recent years. With projects ranging from high-rises and yachts to hotels all around the world, Bernerd brings a timelessly elegant—yet always of-the-moment—richness to each of her projects. This year will once again prove landmark for the London-based [Tara Bernerd & Partners](#), as the firm puts the finishing touches on projects in [London](#), Hong Kong, Ibiza, and Gstaad. Here, the globe-trotting design guru shares with *Robb Report* some of her most exciting upcoming projects, her favorite getaways, and how she bounces from city to city in flawless style.

Which project has you most excited right now?

I shouldn't have favorites, but the Belmond Maroma Resort & Spa in Playa del Carmen is a real gem. It has been there for decades and is beloved by guests who have been going there for years, so we're not knocking down or destroying the essence of the resort. Instead, we're remodeling all of the interiors to give it a fresh and new look with special fabrics, artisan chairs, wood carvings, and mustards and teals. It's very special to me because it's moving away from the contemporary looks

that we do that are associated with a loft or penthouse in Hong Kong or other cities.

You're also working on an Equinox Hotel with architect Frank Gehry. What is it like working with a legend?

It is an absolute honor. [Frank Gehry](#) is leading a huge project in Downtown Los Angeles that will include apartments and residential, and within that will be the Equinox Hotel, which will have 300 guest rooms and suites and a huge number of restaurants and public spaces. The philosophy of the hotel is that health is the new wealth, so the emphasis is on great living—from keeping the aesthetics just right to ensuring a great night's sleep.

Do you have any upcoming projects in your hometown of London?

We are terribly proud to be working with Barry Sternlicht of Starwood Capital on the [Principal London](#) at Russell Square. The building is set in the heart of Bloomsbury and has quite a legacy, so we have tried to respect that, marrying the old with the demands of the new. We've reinstated the iconic Palm Court and have reconfigured the lobbies and reception as well as 334 bedrooms and suites, so it's been a mammoth task over the last few years. The next steps are to complete construction this year, and then that incredible moment of reopening the doors in the hope that London will embrace her once more.

What is your go-to vacation to get away from it all?

When I am not on a plane, in an airport lounge, or at my home in London, I am usually at my Swiss chalet in Gstaad. Our family has gone there for many years; it's my country retreat. Gstaad is known for its snowy mountains, but it is actually incredible in the summer. It has that Heidi look of glorious mountains and cowbells. I do a lot of hiking and, at night, have dinner at incredible hotels like the Olden and [Gstaad Palace](#).

What are your must-haves when traveling?

Charlotte Tilbury's Magic Cream is a lifesaver, and I always travel with it. However, as long as I have my passport, my phone, and a credit card, I'm usually good to go! I also always try to keep up my routine whilst I'm away to sidestep any jet lag, so choosing a hotel with a good gym is important. Most hotels have their gym in the basement, but at the [Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong](#) they have the most amazing workout space with views over Kowloon and the whole of existence.

You're getting married this year—where does the doyenne of hotel design stay on her honeymoon?

I am so busy organizing the wedding [in Switzerland] that I have left the honeymoon to my fiancé. But we're planning to go in the summer, and I can't imagine we won't end up in Italy on the Amalfi Coast, in Ravello or Positano. The [Belmond Hotel Splendido](#) in Portofino is impeccable, from the people who work there to the setting. [Belmond](#) is a brand to be reckoned with, and as well as being a huge global player, it is my ultimate go-to when I'm in Italy. I traveled last summer to Ravello and stayed at the brand's [Hotel Caruso](#), which was epic—possibly one of the most beautiful places in the world. It's a magical setting and, on a personal note, holds some special memories.