



Tara Bernerd: Bold palettes and rich colours and textures capture the nature of Hong Kong

Photo: Jason Arden



# A SENSE OF PLACE

BY REBECCA LO

PHOTOGRAPHY TARA BERNERD & PARTNERS

British interior designer Tara Bernerd has created a show-stopping duplex for Hong Kong's DUKES PLACE

**T**ara Bernerd considers Hong Kong her second home. Daughter of English real-estate guru Elliott Bernerd and ex-wife of James Archer (Lord Jeffrey Archer's son), the London-based interior designer has been travelling with her father to Asia since she was 11 years old. Upon landing at Kai Tak airport many years ago, she was immediately captivated by the city's energy and excitement. It is no wonder she looked to Hong Kong's cosmopolitan vibe for the design of a duplex in DUKES PLACE, a luxury residential project in Jardine's Lookout.

"Personally speaking, I never get tired of Hong Kong," says Bernerd. "As so many dear friends live in the city, it really feels like a home away from home. For the prestigious DUKES PLACE development, as with all my projects, the location certainly influenced the design. I strive to create spaces that are indigenous to their surroundings. For DUKES PLACE, we wanted to capture the lively nature of the city and did this by incorporating bold palettes with rich colours and textures. We also designed layouts that optimise views over the city, to bring a sense of place to the heart of the property."

Situated above Happy Valley in eastern Mid-Levels, the 22-storey DUKES PLACE boasts a total of 16 apartments ranging from 260sqm to just over 630sqm (2,800-6,800sqf). Its contemporary architecture comes courtesy of British firm PDP London, and features alternating bands of sleek Italian stone and curtain walls accented with champagne-coloured metallic trim. Echoing the luxury of the architecture within, all of DUKES PLACE's kitchens are outfitted with minottucine through local distributor colourliving, and marks the Italian brand's debut in Hong Kong. A favourite in Europe, the more than 70-year-old minottucine features minimal aesthetics combined with a high degree of customisation.

"We were immediately inspired by the architectural aesthetic of the tower and wanted to continue this narrative internally," notes Bernerd. "We integrated the curved language of the building into the plan to create a soft and seamless flow between areas. With the lifestyle of the well-travelled, design-conscious residents in mind, a rich palette of bold colours was brought to life by layering the most luxurious materials such as glossy lacquers, leather panelling and walnut joinery."

DUKES PLACE is just one of the many global projects Bernerd has on her drawing board. Others include hotel projects in the US, a resort in Mexico, a villa in Ibiza, and a new Japanese hotel brand, with the first to be built in Osaka. She first worked with Philippe Starck at his YOO Design Studio in the 1990s, and went on to establish Tara Bernerd & Partners (formerly known as Target Living) in 2002. She currently heads a team of 25 architects and designers in London's Belgravia; together, they offer their well-heeled clients bespoke interior and architecture services. Her style can be categorised as approachable luxury, with a masculine inclination and an emphasis on industrial materials. Whether she is tackling a yacht or a hotel, her approach always begins with the layout.

"Often, a hotel can be more challenging at this stage as there tends to be a lot of multifunctional areas that need to not only enhance the guest experience but also work on an operational note," she reveals. "The same can be said for yachts – unlike a typical residential building, there is limited flexibility with amending structural elements such as walls and ceilings. That said, there is ultimately a huge amount of cross-pollination design-wise between homes, yachts and hotels. I think hotels strive for the sense of atmosphere and comfort traditionally found in residential projects, while homeowners perhaps seek to inject a sense of luxury that one would expect when travelling."



'Views bring a sense of place' at DUKES PLACE, a luxury residential project in Jardine's Lookout, Hong Kong



Il Pampero restaurant at The Hari in London, where Italy meets Belgravia



SIXTY SoHo New York: Bernerd redesigned the lobbies, bar and all 96 bedrooms



Carved marble basin in Bernerd's own apartment in Albion Riverside, overlooking the Thames

**“DESIGN CAN ALTER THE WAY WE FEEL, THINK AND LIVE. WE SHOULDN'T UNDERESTIMATE ITS INFLUENCE”**

In spite of her international portfolio's demands, Bernerd is a hopeless travel junkie and finds endless inspiration from her globetrotting adventures. For R&R, she hops over to her home in Switzerland to recharge. “I always have a sense of calm and comfort when I'm there,” she admits. “The stunning views and mountain air feel so restorative and give me the chance to pause. The natural world has always inspired me, so I often leave Switzerland with a lot of ideas – it might be the way the light hits the trees during a hike, which will

inspire the palette for a hotel suite, or the shape of the landscape that we then incorporate into a rug design. I have also sought inspiration from modern architecture and have followed Richard Rogers, Tadao Ando and the late Zaha Hadid throughout their careers. I am incredibly fortunate to work with the iconic Frank Gehry in downtown Los Angeles. Many of the interior design elements for our Equinox hotel project draw upon the organic form and energy of the landmark that will house them.” The hotel is slated for completion in 2022 and is opposite Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall.

A firm believer in the power of design, Bernerd views it as a win-win for homeowners regardless of whether they are staying put or planning to resell. “Design can alter the way we feel, think and live,” she states. “We shouldn't underestimate its influence. The layout of a bedroom can impact the way we sleep, so thinking about these things and making considered choices when designing is essential. Commercially speaking, the design of a property can influence its value. Be it a home or hotel room, clever layouts combined with careful detailing will only increase its worth.” ■

[tarabernerd.com](http://tarabernerd.com)

Photos: Il Pampero: Philip Vile; SIXTY SoHo: Adrian Gaut

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