

BETWEEN THE SHEETS

HENRIETTA SPENCER-CHURCHILL

The blue-blooded designer's appreciation of architecture began at a very early age



IT'S A CLASSIC
Henrietta is best known for her classical and timeless style

NOT MANY PEOPLE CAN CLAIM TO HAVE GROWN UP WITH A PALACE (BLENHEIM) IN THE FAMILY. TELL US A BIT ABOUT IT. Being surrounded by beautiful architecture definitely influenced my love of architecture and design. As a child I was always curious about houses, their layouts and contents and would frequently be found exploring each room on my own.

WHAT IS THE STARTING POINT WHEN IT COMES TO DESIGNING SOMEONE'S HOME? The style of the architecture and the date of the house. Then comes the clients' requirements and whether these can be accommodated within confines you may have such as it being a listed building, structural restrictions, etc.

ARE YOU DRIVEN BY FASHIONABLE TRENDS OR WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR WORK AS TIMELESS? I am rarely driven by trends and don't think they are as relevant to interior design as they are to fashion. Fabric and some furniture companies may see the need to follow fashion but this is less evident in buildings and architecture.

WHAT'S THE FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN TENET YOU ALWAYS ABIDE BY? Good scale and proportion – applied to both rooms and their contents.

YOUR PASSION LIES IN THE ARCHITECTURAL SIDE OF PROJECTS. DOES THAT MEAN PELMETS AND FRINGING DON'T DO IT FOR YOU?



HENRIETTA'S LITTLE BLACK BOOK

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ANY ANTIQUE SHOP OR FAIR
My passion and hobby are antiques and I could spend every weekend in antique shops or at fairs, even a car boot sale will do!



The end product is what matters so curtains and fringes are all part of that and after all what most people will ultimately notice first, but they're not my priority. My time is better spent on the more important decisions which are long lasting and will add value to a property.

HAS YOUR BLUE-BLOODED BACKGROUND BEEN A HELP OR A HINDRANCE? Initially, a hindrance as when I started my career interior design was not considered a valid profession. Design Schools have done a lot to enhance the profession and having gone to the Inchbald School of Design myself, I was able to present my

case as being serious in the field, and this of course comes primarily with time, hard work and experience.

WHAT TIPS CAN YOU GIVE BUDDING DESIGNERS HOPING TO BREAK THE INDUSTRY? Go to design school or do a degree and gain work experience with established firms. Then study the history of architecture; it gives you an appreciation and understanding of buildings.

YOU'RE THE CONSUMMATE COUNTRY AND TOWN LIFER – HOW DO YOU DIVIDE YOUR TIME? I have to be flexible, as you never know what each week will bring and plans change frequently. I like to try and spend one day a week at my shop in Woodstock followed by weekends down in Oxfordshire where I ride, play golf, garden and walk the dogs.

YOUR HOUSE IS BURNING DOWN. WHICH THREE ITEMS WOULD YOU SAVE? My dogs (if that counts!), my lap top (because of the photos) and old photograph albums and sculptures I have completed not because they are any good but because of the effort I put into them!

IF HENRIETTA SPENCER CHURCHILL WASN'T A DESIGNER, SHE WOULD BE A... A barrister – I think I have a reasonably analytical mind and would enjoy standing up in court! ■

