

HOUSE & GARDEN

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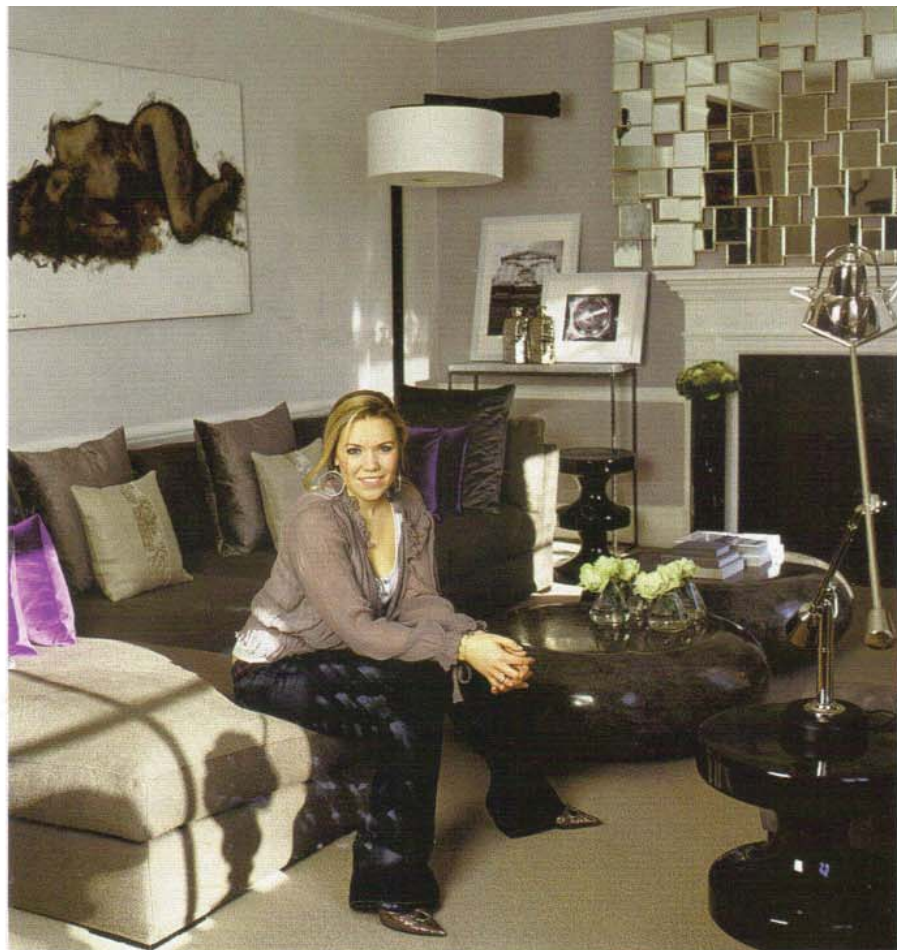
UTTERLY ENGLISH

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Designer profile Fiona Barratt

Designer Fiona Barratt explains how she has combined statement pieces and luxurious details in her Edwardian flat, to achieve a calm and elegant scheme. **By Judith Wilson**

Fiona Barratt studied interior and spatial architecture at Chelsea College of Art & Design, and while there took a year out to study interior design at Parsons School of Design in New York. After a three-year stint at Kelly Hoppen, where she became head designer, she launched her company in 2006 at the age of 25. Her first commission – for Richard Branson – was to design a luxury Alpine lodge in Verbier, which opened earlier this year. Fiona's look is chic, modern and luxurious. Current commissions include an apartment in Verbier, a house in Chelsea, and a 400-year-old mill in Surrey. Fiona lives in a flat in South Kensington.

'This flat appealed because the building is Edwardian, so the ceilings are high and everything is built beautifully. My efficient team of builders completed the renovation in just 11 weeks. For the design, my starting point was the layout. I needed space for friends to chill out, hence the big sofa, but also formality, so I've added love seats opposite the sofa. The wooden chimneypiece is original, but was painted and tiled; I've updated it by painting it white, which looks fresh and modern.

'I wanted a calm scheme, and have always been drawn to grey. It's my signature colour. The walls are painted "Chalk Blush" by Dulux, which is grey taupe. I use little pattern and colour in my designs, so texture is important. There are cushions in laser-embossed hide and velour, the daybeds are in faux suede, and the curtains are linen. I often let curtains puddle elegantly on the floor; it is a real indulgence. Every room should have a statement piece – in here, it's the mirror. I love its arrangement of squares and

In her sitting room, Fiona Barratt (above left) has combined modern pieces, such as the mirror (top right), with antiques like the Chinese cabinet (bottom right) to create an elegant and relaxed space, united by calm shades and texture (centre)

the way it divides the room into "snapshots", rather than reflecting the whole.

'I designed the console tables in hammered steel and embossed leather. I often create furniture for clients, and love to draw – I'm very visual. If clients are not used to looking at architectural plans, I create detailed sketches. Much of the furniture here is linear, so I have introduced more rounded details to create a contrast. The circular coffee tables are plaster but resemble stone, and the cast-iron wall lights have a fluid silhouette. The painting above the sofa, from *Envied'Art* in Kensington, also adds a curvaceous element.

'If I had to choose a favourite piece, it would be the rare antique Chinese cabinet, bought from a shop in the King's Road. To get it up here, I had to close the road, remove a window and hire a crane. The chairs either side have a black and silver finish. I like bespoke furniture, but my accessories are all from the high street. If you are clever, you don't have to spend a lot. The metal bottles are Habitat, the bowl and the candlesticks from The Conran Shop. I took the framed photographs myself: they depict the church roof in the Greek quarter of Jerusalem and a church in Florence.'

'I like to think clients come to me not just because they love my style, but also for an efficient service. I deliver on time – crucial for people with busy lives. Here I had the luxury of starting afresh, but most clients come with past possessions. The more I'm challenged, the better the result. I'm a big attention-to-detail person, and it is the details that make the space' □

Fiona Barratt Interiors

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