

# INTERIOR DESIGN 2018 YEARBOOK



Edited by Jade Tilley

Foreword by Charles Leon, President, BIID

PETRA ARKO



## Colour

By **Petra Arko**

Petra Arko, **Bergman & Mar**

Petra Arko founded Bergman & Mar, a creative interior design agency and curated furniture shop, just over a year ago after working for a renowned interior design agency in London. Working with London's finest developers and their private clients, Bergman & Mar designs luxurious, bespoke interiors packages for discerning investors who have chosen to buy in the city's premier developments. Driven by exacting standards and high aesthetic values, Bergman & Mar aims to maximise the beauty in any given space. The studio is recommended at some of London's finest developments, including Gasholder in King's Cross and Lillie Square in Earls Court. Here, founder Petra discusses the delicate balance of colour palettes in interior projects.

In the endless choice of colour tones, picking out the hue that will work best is one of the most important choices we make in interiors. It narrates the story of the space as well as suggests complementing textures and materials.

We may have over twenty shades of green velvet, for example, yet only one would be the right choice and texture. The decision is vital; this is why choosing the colour scheme always takes the longest. We don't like saturating the space with the colour, so we spend time choosing the right tone, patterns and texture. Colour leads the eyes to the object. It demands immediate focus from the person entering the space. Overusing incredibly saturated colours can overpower



*Beecham project | image courtesy of Sarah Hogan*

the space, confuse the eye and be uncomfortable to live in. We aim for our interiors to be calm and mature, colour helps achieve that. Colours that mimic nature, earthy tones, and slightly de-saturated, muted colour hues are our favourite choices.

As an example, we absolutely adore Liberty Fabrics. Their colour hues, especially in velvets, are fantastic and can be combined with anything. Not only does Liberty have quality fabric and patterns with intense colours, its fabrics will never date. Trends, on the other hand, can be an interior designer's trap. It is important to be aware of them, but you must only take on or integrate the ones that really inspire your choices. Designers who try to follow them all, risk creating a space that dates quickly and does not feel like home. We like to see trends as sparks of freshness to inspire, rather than a narrow, constrictive guide. Bright hues, for instance, are too fashion-led and always date quickly. We find many colour pops too jarring. Conversely, we have a real aversion to white walls. It is such an easy transformation of the space! We like mixing subtle shades with darker tones and use only de-saturated colours on walls as they offer a great base for the interior.

Considered, intentional and meaningful colour choice helps us create homes that are light, relaxing and homely. Texture, materials, pattern and colour all carry equal weight in the space; carefully combining them creates a happy equilibrium and helps ensure a harmonious home. We are able to design a space where residents can move in and happily add their own belongings.

We recently completed two apartments above The Ivy Grill



*Southampton St project | image courtesy of Edmund Dabney*

in Covent Garden. These wonderful, luxurious apartments have dark floors, dark kitchens and heavy stone bathrooms. To soften the space, we introduced lightness through organically shaped furniture, like curved sofas. To create a homely feel, we steered clear of attention-seeking colours, instead using unsaturated earthy tones and silk and velvet textures for the rug and cushions. Just a door down, on Southampton Street, we

furnished the newly renovated David Garrick house, a listed Georgian building that Capital and Counties have beautifully restored to its former glory. The gorgeous, high windows, panelled wall and airy space inspired an entirely different colour scheme. We thought it was important to retain the apartment's light and highlight the striking interior architecture. We thus chose to introduce spikes of colour through upholstery and carefully curated

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art pieces made by our artists. Our favourite colour choices at the moment include the season's hit combination is tones of red with blue. You have two choices: go dark and rich with the red and choose burgundy paired with sky blue. Or choose powdery, dusty peach with midnight blue.

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I won't be using magenta and lilac, but one of our favourite colours at the moment is deep plum. This luxury tone, once used only in the most distinguished residences due to the pigment cost (it was found only in ancient Phoenicia), adds warmth and interest. Shades of plum can work really well with shades of green, another enduring colour we often use. In fact, one of our clients says green is our signature colour. One cannot go wrong with green. It is never out of fashion and is definitely the most timeless colour. Navy blue with tan lather and warm metals like bronze or brass mix is also a sure winner. This classic mix creates a modern, mature and slightly masculine space that is both durable and sophisticated.

**bergmanandmar.com**



*Beecham project | image courtesy of Sarah Hogan*