

# Living etc

THE HOME & GARDEN MAGAZINE FOR MODERN LIVING APRIL 2015 £4.10 US \$9.99/AUS \$9.95/NZ \$11.50

**GREAT SPACES**  
*Modern homes to make you go wow*

*Flower power!*  
**DECO GOES WILD**  
**LUXURIOUS BATHROOMS FOR ALL BUDGETS**

**SUPERSIZE SPLASHBACKS**  
**EVERY COOL KITCHEN SHOULD HAVE ONE**  
**THE HIP MIX**  
**PALE WOOD WITH PASTELS**  
**PLUS!**  
• ARTISTIC RUGS  
• DINING ESSENTIALS  
• HI-TECH SPEAKERS



# Spring



ISSN 0047-1802  
9 07714611918180  
RECALL 14/2015

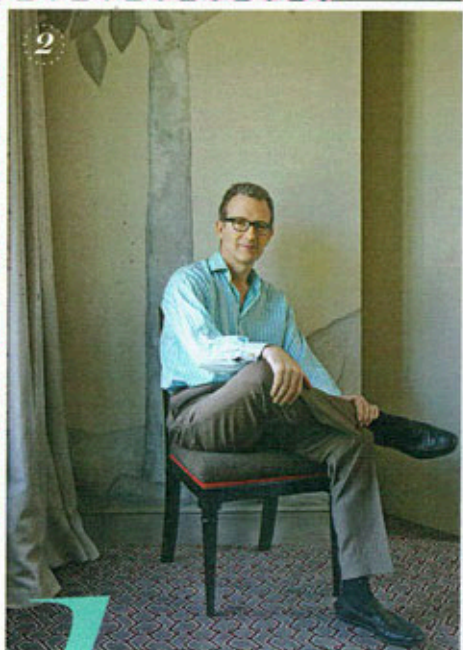


A LIFE IN DESIGN

## ASHLEY HICKS

The interiors guru and son of legendary decorator David Hicks on designing furniture in Jaipur, his love of hessian and *not* being like his dad

Interview – Charlotte Luxford



1 Hicks Hexagon wallpaper in Pretty Pink and Grey, £72 per 10m roll, Ashley Hicks for New Contemporary at Cole & Son 2 Ashley in his Piccadilly home 3 In this project, Ashley painted the walls to resemble stitched squares of sage-green leather 4 Hicks Moghul wallpaper in Bright Pink and Orange, £72 per 10m roll, Ashley Hicks for New Contemporary at Cole & Son 5 Sabre 56 lacquered table, £1,450, Ashley Hicks

Being the interior-designer son of one of the most celebrated decorators of the 20th century was always going to be a little tough. Ashley Hicks readily admits that people often say, 'Oh, hello David,' when first greeting him, but he's happy to be associated with his dad's legacy – though his own style has a very different signature. We caught up with Ashley at his new London pad, a flat in the famous 19th-century Albany apartment block in Piccadilly. The place used to belong to his father, but now he's putting his own stamp on it.

**Great place you have here. Tell us about the Albany.**

The apartment block was really designed to be inexpensive flats for young bachelor sons of Lords. I moved in relatively recently and I'm doing it up as I go.

**What have you done to it so far?**

I've covered the living spaces in hessian and painted a mural on top. Raffia wallpapers, which I love, are

super-expensive and a nightmare to hang, so hessian was a great alternative. I was also inspired by Marcel Proust's writing room. He covered it in cork because he didn't want the sound of the city interrupting his work – and I fancied a cocoon of cork for myself! So I've clad the hallway in cork tiles and painted a pattern on them, then put gilded mouldings on top to create a panel effect.

**How do you approach your interiors projects?**

I always start with the building's existing structure and the floor plan; I trained as an architect at the AA School of Architecture, so these elements are quite important to me. It's a good idea to put the furniture as close to the walls as possible to maximise the space – it's a disaster to be huddled in the middle of a room like you're on some sort of island. The proportions of furniture can also make a huge difference to one's visual enjoyment of the room. Pieces with





## DESIGNProfile

enormous curves such as Chesterfield-style sofas or modern furniture that's the wrong scale can really upset the balance.

### Which interiors piece would you splash out on?

For me, it would be a really nice sofa. It's expensive, but it makes all the difference – especially as I'm a real sofa-dweller. However, it's best to avoid all-leather seat cushions. It's really luxurious, but from the moment you sit down, it just looks awful. In my own sofa, I've used foam padding wrapped in feathers so it still feels comfortable, but keeps its shape.

### What other style tips do you suggest?

When it comes to pattern, vary the scale. I find small, subtle patterns can be treated more like a texture. It's nice to mix it up and have something very modern paired with older designs. At home, I have a bold geometric carpet and an upholstery fabric that's a 14th-century pattern from the V&A archives.

### Have you always had a flair for design?

When I was 15, I decorated my bedroom in our Oxfordshire farmhouse. It had black walls and ceiling and black carpet, and all the furniture was white, so it was completely monochrome. My dad thought it was good, but odd.

### How does your style differ from your dad's?

I consciously try to depart from my father's style in my own work. For example, my new Chainmail carpet design for Alternative Flooring is a bold geometric pattern like his, but it's also asymmetric, with a *trompe l'oeil* style of shading, which he would have been absolutely against. However, I still do designs for the David Hicks by Ashley Hicks collection such as carpets, tiles and fabric. My dad was keen on using one fabric on everything in a room, which looked marvellous in photos, but a little unfriendly in person. It's a bit like how everyone loves a man in uniform in theory, but, in reality, they're a bit intimidating!

### Where do you find inspiration?

My daughter always says I want to live in a museum, which I absolutely do. There are quite a lot of historical references in my work and I love visiting museums and heritage properties.

### You've also designed a furniture range – how did you get into that?

I started designing pieces back in 1997 for the Gem Palace in Jaipur. My first design was a take on the Klismos chair – basically, an Ancient Greek easy chair – which was built by some local village carpenters. I had a little company called Jantar Mantar, which was the nickname for the Jaipur Observatory – but it also can mean something like 'abracadabra' in Hindi, which the carpenters found very amusing! My personal favourite piece is the X-Frame ottoman, which I've just put in my London flat.

### What's your favourite interior space that your father designed?

When I came to London as a child, we stayed in his house in St Leonard's Terrace in Chelsea. He dedicated the whole top floor to one big bathroom-cum-dressing room for himself and there was a bed in there I used to sleep on. The entire room was covered in khaki tweed and the floor was made up of plywood tiles. To me, it was extremely beautiful.

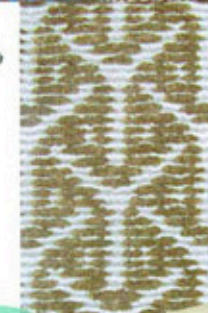
Find out more about Ashley's work at [ashleyhicks.com](http://ashleyhicks.com), or follow him on Instagram @ashleyhicks1970



6 In this Oxfordshire bathroom, Ashley designed a glass-covered wall with a print of Giambattista Nolli's 1748 map of Rome 7 Ashley placed brass detail against a black stained-oak door in this Notting Hill home



8 Coral nickel handle, £118, Ashley Hicks 9 Wye wool-mix carpet, £180 per sq m, David Hicks by Ashley Hicks at Stark Carpet 10 X-Frame leather ottoman, £2,585, Ashley Hicks



11 Ashley's design for a black-painted courtyard in a Sardinian beach house 12 His guest bedroom has walls of chocolate-brown gloss lacquer, which make the small space seem large because of their reflective nature!



*'I love Instagram – it's my new favourite thing! I put up lots of pictures whenever I see something cool on a day out'*







13 A study in London's famous Somerset House, created by Ashley for The Campaign for Wool initiative. This is the Quirky B Chainmail in Panther wool carpet, £95.85 per sq m, Ashley Hicks for Alternative Flooring  
 14 Hicksonian wallpaper in Dove Grey, £79 per 10m roll, David Hicks by Ashley Hicks for GP&J Baker

