

# DESIGNERS' INTERIORS

This month we talk to Saddleworth-based designer

## Lorraine Howell of *Renascent*

### HOW ARE YOU?

Busy, but happy doing what I love doing.

### WHAT LED YOU INTO INTERIOR DESIGN?

Art College at 16, then work for a lot of years in unrelated fields. Then the realisation to return to creative work, retraining, lots of hard work and determination and now never regretting taking the plunge.

### DESCRIBE A TYPICAL WORKING DAY, IF THERE IS SUCH A THING?

Not really. At the moment, lots of time is spent on the telephone, chasing, sourcing and liaising, etc. Also, I have to drive a lot to clients and suppliers...the list is endless.

### WHO OR WHAT ARE YOUR INFLUENCES?

Art, architecture, nature, costume and fairy tales. I suppose the biggest influence for me regarding interior design has been costume. As a child I was fascinated by period costume. I bought *Fashion* by Mila Contini, pored over it for hours, then reproduced costumes to scale in perfect detail. This has translated into a love of the sensuality of fabrics...being in a showroom of exquisite textures definitely does it for me! I also liked being taken around stately homes as a kid—subliminal stuff.

### WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF TV INTERIOR MAKEOVER SHOWS AND THEIR EFFECT ON VIEWERS?

Very mixed. There are some really awful results with really cheap and tacky effects. Lewellyn-Bowen is good—intelligent and humorous. I think the effect on the public has been enormous... it's big business. Anyway, it's official... *Verdict* reported that women now spend more on home related items than clothes.

### DOES GOOD DESIGN NECESSARILY MEAN EXPENSIVE DESIGN?

Not at all. Innovation doesn't really have a price. Nevertheless, it is great to have a budget to be able to acquire lovely things.

### WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISTAKE THAT YOU FEEL PEOPLE MAKE WHEN RE-STYLING?

Lack of clarity of vision.

### WHAT'S THE BIGGEST PROBLEM YOU COME ACROSS IN OTHER PEOPLE'S HOMES?

I have never come across any problems—honest!

### WHICH PERIOD OF HISTORY DO YOU CONSIDER MOST INFLUENTIAL?

My two biggest loves are the 18th century and Art Deco. Very contradictory, therein lies eclecticism.

### TRENDS? WHICH DIRECTION ARE WE MOVING IN AND DO YOU FOLLOW THEM?

Now, the prevalent look is 1950s inspired, very chic, classic and restrained, Italian and Scandinavian designer-influenced. I like this look because it's classic in a contemporary way and will stand the test of time. I'm not into fads.

### ARE THE BRITISH TOO CONSERVATIVE?

We live in a fast-moving society and I think people generally are embracing modernism, because it is a response to the simple, tasteful surroundings we need to reflect our lifestyle.

### HOW DOES YOUR HOME LOOK? DO YOU PRACTISE WHAT YOU PREACH?

It generally reflects my style: light, airy and minimal, but I've a couple of rooms desperate for updating. At the moment, home lies a long way down the list of priorities.

### THOUGHTS ON DESIGN?

Too many—especially at 4am in the morning.

*For advice or information you can speak to Lorraine on 01457 878877.*

## I'M NOT INTO FADS.

