

LIVING THE DREAM

Reviving this grand London villa fulfilled a long-standing ambition of both the designer and the owner, creating a luxe family home in the process

Photography James Balston
Words Anna Burnside



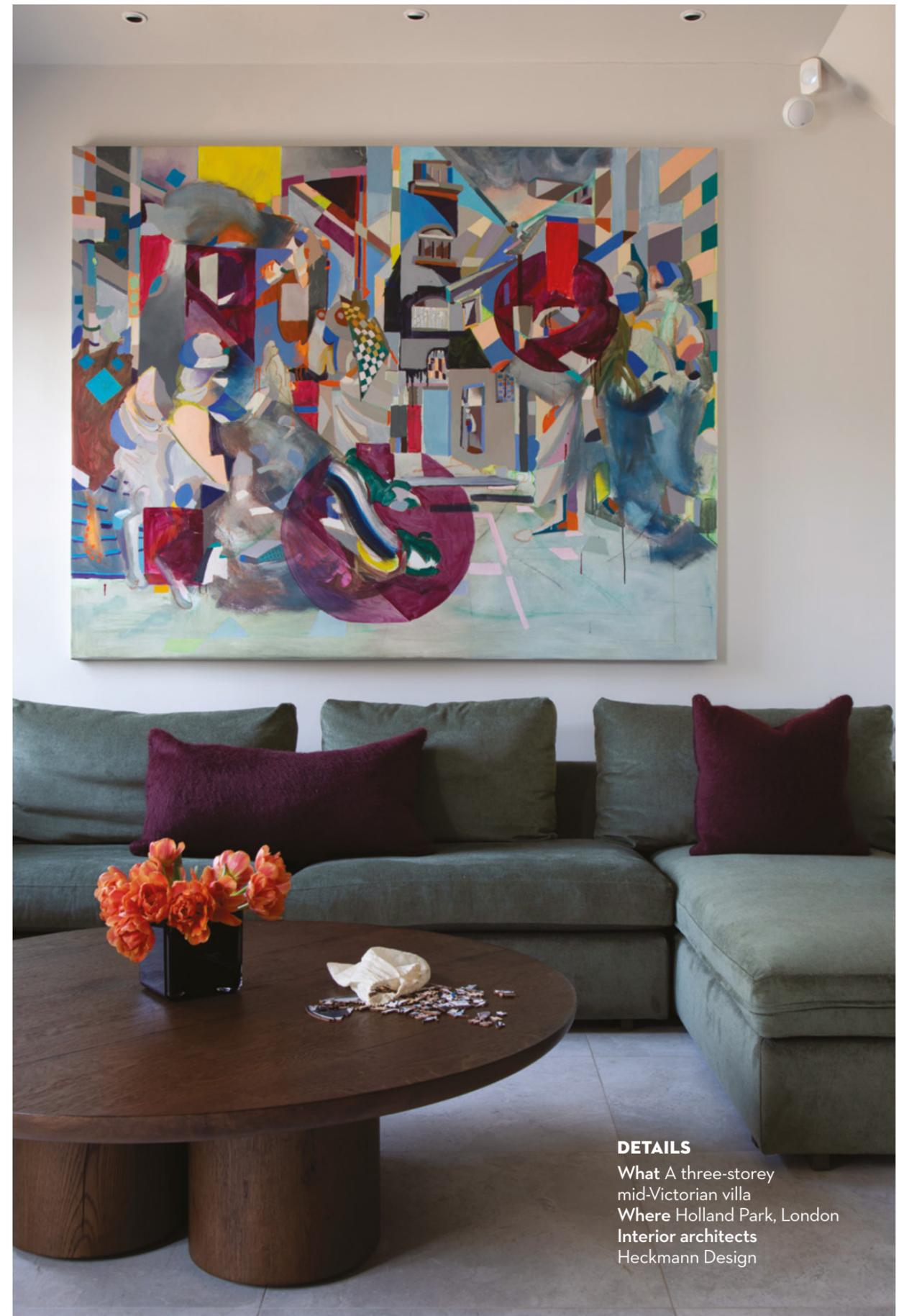
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ight years ago, Tatiana Hebel and Anna Saroukhanova were having a coffee in London's Holland Park. Wouldn't it be great, the two friends agreed, to renovate one of these grand stucco villas together one day?

Fast forward to 2025, and Tatiana now lives in the Ladbroke Conservation Area, a highly desirable spot between Holland Park and Portobello Road. The magnificent home she shares with her family has been gutted, extended, renovated, air-conditioned and generally dragged into the 21st century by Anna and her partner Ralf Heckmann. The couple work together as Heckmann Design and Anna is particularly proud of the fact that, although she and Tatiana are great friends, the studio won this job through a competitive tendering process. "It feels like we deserved it."

Knowing each other since they were teenagers meant Anna had a lot of useful insights into what Tatiana would like from her home. She's tidy and practical: her dream house would be streamlined and efficient as well as elegant and chic. And, sure enough, this was ▶

Previous pages, top row An Ian Kirby landscape photograph in the upstairs living room; the 'secret' bar, with its leather-finished Verde Oasis quartzite; the stucco villa is in the Ladbroke Conservation Area. **Bottom row** One of the new en-suites, with built-in cabinetry; the study opens to the entrance hall whose tiles are the same green stone as the bar; the console and mirror are by Julian Chichester; built-in carpentry (usually storage) is in every room. **Below** The dining room's chairs are by Bontempi and the pendant lights are by Bert Frank. The painting was a gift from the owner's father. **Right** An artwork by Alejandro Ospina entitled *Well Established Tactic* hangs above a tactile green sofa. The cushions are covered with a mohair from Rubelli



DETAILS

What A three-storey mid-Victorian villa
Where Holland Park, London
Interior architects Heckmann Design



Above Anna found the 1960s yellow chairs and the coffee table with its brilliant Yves Klein blue top on vintage furniture site Pamono. The table by the window is a Tom Faulkner design, while the curtains are Kieffer's Reloaded jacquard. **Opposite, top** The alcove bar area, off the living room, with bespoke carpentry and more Verde Oasis stone. **Bottom** Opening up the door gives a view of the new staircase, its banister stained a hand-mixed shade of green



reflected in the brief, with Tatiana requesting “a house that works like a well-made German car”.

So Ralf, an actual German, got to work on the alterations that would inject some *Vorsprung durch Technik* to the three-storey mid-19th-century property. This involved a discrete upwards extension to create more headroom, while also being conservation-area friendly, en-suites for all the bedrooms, a dressing room off the master bedroom, a new staircase, underfloor heating and enlarged doorways and windows.

“The house was full of character, but as a building it was tired,” Ralf recalls. “We needed to give it some of the soul of its new owners. They are modern, they like everything to be tidy and put away. The way they live is very different to the previous owners.”

It goes without saying that the family’s lifestyle was carefully considered. Tatiana’s husband needs an office for working from home. They entertain for business as well as fun. Their three sporty children are also social animals. And Anna loves her friend enough to give her something that she’d like herself: a dressing room with a designated place for every single item. “It’s every girl’s dream to have a room like that,” laughs Tatiana. “It makes me feel like the queen of the castle.”

Her favourite feature is a rail to display a range of outfit



Left The kitchen has extensive built-in storage for the very tidy Tatiana. The customised Gaggenau gas stove merges with the worktops and splashbacks, all of which are Caesarstone’s polished quartz in the Moorland Fog colourway. **Opposite** A Poul Henningsen desk, custom-made in burgundy. The drawers on the other side are in green leather. Above it hangs *The Bear* by Dean West. **Below, left and right** The kitchen is a streamlined, elegant space. It leads to the lower-ground entrance hall, which is lined with storage

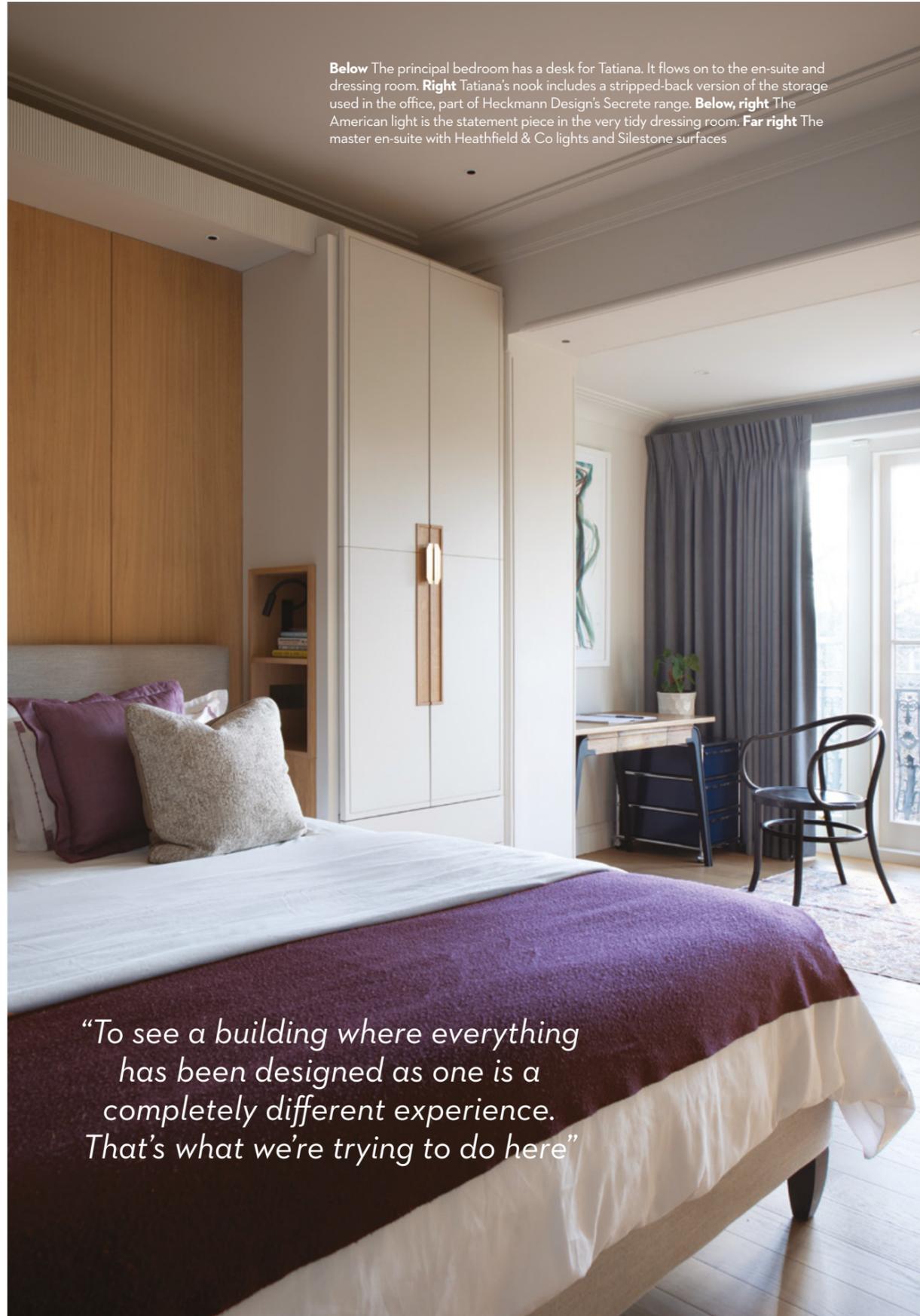
options. There are also built-in pockets to stash clothes that have been worn but don’t yet need to be washed. Ralf says he loves the way it works with the master bedroom and bathroom. In fact, the whole house flows in a way that is both aesthetically pleasing and highly functional.

The lower ground floor, where the family come and go via the kitchen, works hard. Tatiana, a keen cook, wanted a space where she could experiment and entertain. There are two sinks, one with a Quooker tap in a nook which Anna describes as an “open breakfast bar”. Exquisite teak pantries house all the staples, from the kids’ cereals to their mother’s extensive collection of teas. “Every inch is used,” says the designer approvingly.

A run of white units is disrupted by an open shelf for recipe books. Fritz Fryer lights over the island add visual interest. Quartzite with bold veining serves as worktop, splashback and breakfast bar and stove surround. Ralf, himself a keen cook, went appliance shopping with Tatiana. They ended up with a Gaggenau gas hob, which had the option for customised controls. Ralf placed these on a quartzite panel, to pull the appliance into the flow of the kitchen. It’s this level of thought and customisation that elevates the entire space. “Luxury is definitely in the detail,” agrees Anna.

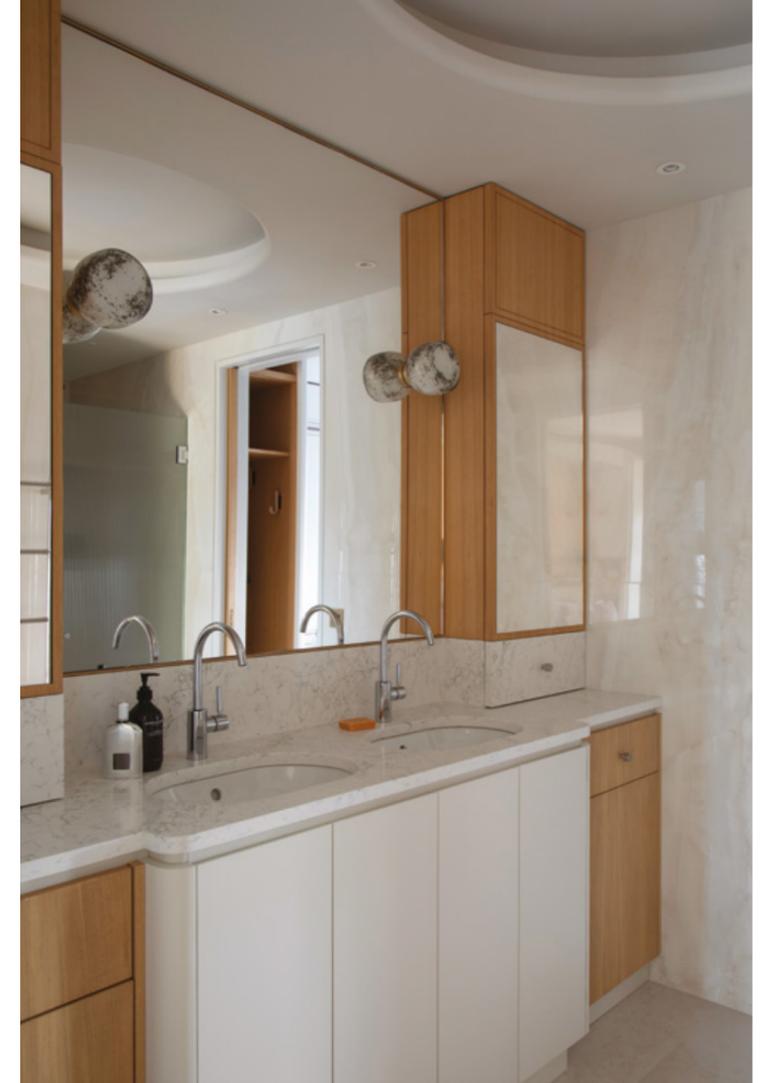
The kitchen opens, via a bifold door, to the dining room. Unlike the rest of the house, Tatiana already had two pieces for this room: an oval dining table and a painting that was a gift from her father. With those as the anchors, Anna added Bontempi chairs covered in leather (wipe-clean was part of the brief) and pendant lights from Bert Frank. Built-in wall units have some ▶





Below The principal bedroom has a desk for Tatiana. It flows on to the en-suite and dressing room. **Right** Tatiana's nook includes a stripped-back version of the storage used in the office, part of Heckmann Design's Secrete range. **Below, right** The American light is the statement piece in the very tidy dressing room. **Far right** The master en-suite with Heathfield & Co lights and Silestone surfaces

“To see a building where everything has been designed as one is a completely different experience. That’s what we’re trying to do here”



open shelves to break up the storage and show off the family's growing art collection. One vibrant work, by Colombian painter Alejandro Ospina, hangs above a forest-green corner sofa. Anna kept that corner tonal with brushed mohair cushions, made by the Heckmann in-house workshop, for an added layer of texture, and sage window dressings for softness and sound insulation.

On the floor above is a clever space: a study that opens into the living room, with a discreet coffee and drinks bar in an alcove. “It’s a surprising little space, tucked away, waiting to be discovered,” says Anna of the latter. Tatiana’s husband can get a caffeine hit without trekking downstairs, while she offers friends drinks as they chat by the window. The green quartzite used for the coffee bar (Verde Oasis from London’s MGLW) also features in the fireplace on the lower ground floor and in the guest WC. “It’s not polished,” explains Anna. “Rather, it has a leather finish that reveals all the veins and means you can feel the texture.”

The living room is full of intriguing and unexpected details, and here the art really comes into its own. There are two of photographer Ian Kirby’s moody landscapes. A low-slung coffee table in a bold Yves Klein blue, sourced from Pamono, is one of Anna’s masterstrokes. “It was one of these lucky finds,” she ▶



Left Tatiana's daughter has this top-floor bedroom, with a built-in desk constructed by Sonabuild. **Below** The guest WC with more Verde Oasis. Anna designed the mirror and painted the green detailing on the ceiling



admits. "It took me a while to source the right coffee table to tie in the other elements." Tatiana wasn't sure at first, but it grew on her. Anna was adamant that, without it, the room would be too balanced and harmonious. It needed a block of solid blue to mix it up.

The other table, a sculptural one by Tom Faulkner, is framed by another of Anna's Pamoto finds: an unmatched pair of 1960s chairs. "One has arms, the other doesn't," she says. "They're very geometric, add a pop of colour, and we didn't even have to recover them – they were just perfect."

Through in the study is another hero piece: a deep burgundy desk by Danish designer Poul Henningsen. Its green leather detailing ties in with the stone used throughout the house. And to make sure nothing spoils the desk's clean lines, Ralf was in charge of hiding all computer cables under a hatch. There is even a fabric covering so the cables merge into the rest of the room.

Above it hangs a striking portrait of a bear, by Miami-based photographer Dean West. Anna spotted it at the London Art Fair, called Tatiana straight away, and it became the focus of her husband's new study.

It's typical of the teamwork that has made this house a joint

labour of love. Anna hand-mixed the tricky water-based lacquer for the banisters, designed the mirror for the guest WC and even painted in freehand all the detailing on the ceiling.

As a former student of the Glasgow School of Art, she gives Charles Rennie Mackintosh some of the credit for Heckmann Design's 360 approach. "Beauty and aesthetics were incredibly important to him but technically his buildings were so innovative. His design goes through everything, the architecture, the furniture, the glass. To see a building where everything has been designed as one is a completely different experience," she says.

"That's what we're trying to do here. And to capture the soul of this wonderful family." ■