

YOU



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'MOTHERS NEED TO BE AT THEIR DESKS'
Controversial view or fact of post-recession life?

DANNII'S CLOSET CONFIDENTIAL
Ms Minogue opens up her wardrobe

YOUR EXCLUSIVE INVITATION TO HIGHGROVE

Cher Lloyd

EXCLUSIVE
The *X Factor* rebel on saying no to Simon Cowell

London-based international interior architect Alison Henry's work spans two decades and includes projects ranging from luxury hotels in Hong Kong and Singapore to homes in the UK, New Zealand and Australia, with a smattering of super-yacht interiors, furniture collections and product design in the mix. Alison lives with her husband and four children in a house in London's Chelsea, which she recently reconfigured and extended to create an open series of white spaces.

"When people come through the front door, I want them to feel welcome and be a part of our lives"

THE FAMILY Alison, her husband, financier Tariq Dag Khan, their two-year-old daughter Anna Cristina, and Alison's daughters Olivia, 12, and twins Sophie and Rebecca, 15.

HOW DO YOU SUM UP YOUR STYLE? Free, easy, glamorous and family oriented. I am a New Zealander and always go for open and informal, chic and light.

WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PROCESS? Before I design anything, I consider the end result. I get a feel for the space, for the client and how they would like to live. But it is based on passion as much as practicality. I also ask, "Which things are important to you? How do you want to feel in the space? What is the function of the space?" I work out ▶



ABOVE The entrance to Alison's early 20th-century Chelsea house is flanked by a pair of bay trees in lead planters.

RIGHT Alison in the kitchen wearing her trademark Chanel



ALL WHITE



The vast excavation to create 195 square metres of space in Alison's basement gave her the opportunity to create a family room and cinema with remarkable ceiling height and natural light, as well as an office, gym and guest suite. The white and neutral palette is enriched with faux-fur throws, a silk carpet and linen and leather upholstery.

wow!

Interior architect Alison Henry's home makes the ultimate use of light and space to create a sleek, chic environment that's practical enough to accommodate four children

Photographs BRENT DARBY
Words SARAH STEWART-SMITH



ABOVE The informal living area adjoins the kitchen, and concertina doors open on to the terrace to create a light-filled indoor-outdoor space.

BELOW The open-plan kitchen has a large roof light and bespoke chandeliers, made to Alison's design by Chris Cox (tel: 020 8880 3923, coxworkshops.com). She also designed the four-metre-long white oiled-oak table (made by Victorian Woodworks using antique oak boards, tel: 020 8534 1000, victorianwoodworks.co.uk). It's a great ice-breaker as it's right in the middle of the kitchen, so everyone is involved in making the evening or party happen whether they like it or not! The dining chairs are from La Maison (tel: 020 7729 9646, atlamaison.com).

BELOW RIGHT The carved mirror in the entrance hall came from La Maison (see above). The bronze Burmese temple urn is one of a pair that sit on either side of the front door. All the floors are white-oiled, wide-plank oak supplied by Dinean (tel: 0045 7455 2140, dinean.com). The stair is finished with a natural silk runner.

◀ how the house will work at its best on all these levels so that I can see it in my imagination before making it real.

HOW DID YOU ACHIEVE THE LOOK IN YOUR HOME?

My chief aim was to make the whole house feel bright – it was a massive excavation with a new 186-square-metre basement. I also added large roof lanterns in the kitchen, family room and above the main staircase, which allow natural light into the basement. During the day I hardly ever have to switch on the lights. I also changed all the doors so that they allow light to flow and to create a feeling of space. The floors are white oiled oak, the walls finished in a chalky white, and most of the furnishings are white or neutral in tone as well. Nothing is too heavy or too serious, but everything is very beautiful and special in its own right.

HOW HAS YOUR LIFE INSPIRED YOUR WORK?

I live a busy life with four children and, very often, their friends. I want people to be able to just drop in and have a coffee or a chat. I am not particularly formal, and when it came to designing my own home, everything had to work with the fact that I have three teenagers and an infant. The core of the house is the open, flexible family space centred on the kitchen, with doors on two sides that open on to the courtyard. I can be with Anna Cristina and Tariq in the kitchen and the girls and their friends can be in the cinema-playroom in the basement. I always want my designs to feel friendly and inviting.

HOW HAS WORK INSPIRED LIFE?

I never forget the power of home and returning there, and what it feels like to be yourself in your own space. Work has also taught me to mix things up a little.

ANY TIPS FOR LIVING IN A WHITE HOUSE?

Even though my house is white, it is practical: white leather is as easy to clean as any other colour – baby wipes are a great way to clean off marks, even pen marks – and white linen slip covers can be put in the washing machine.

DESIGN TIP?

Be flexible – rooms need to change to suit your ▶





Alison's drawing room has a calm atmosphere – almost everything is pale in colour, from the oiled-oak floors and silk carpet to the furniture, walls and many of the objects. Venetian mirrors and lights add a modern grandeur and glamour.

BELOW In an all-white scheme, texture is vital. Here a combination of baroque paper books, with mother of pearl, silver and linen add a subtle richness.



MIRROR, £120, John Lewis, tel: 0845 604 9049, johnlewis.com

SCENTED CANDLE, £19, John Lewis, tel: 0845 604 9049, johnlewis.com

SHOP THE LOOK



CHINESE BOWL, £29, Cka, tel: 0844 815 7380, okadirect.com



THROW, £110, and CUSHION, £40, both the White Company, tel: 0844 736 4222, thewhitecompany.com



BED, £1,895 (king size), the French Bedroom Company, tel: 0845 644 6022, frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk



'Mirrors create light in the house. They also bring the outside in: the olive trees in the courtyard are reflected back into our home'

HOW TO COMMISSION

- Do your research thoroughly beforehand to be sure that you know exactly what you want.
- Commission someone who you trust and with whom you have an affinity – good communication is crucial.
- Don't expect to be able to undertake such a project on the cheap: you are creating a one-off and paying for top-level work that is site-specific.

◀ circumstances. I want to know that my home can work for me and my friends as much as it does for my children and theirs, because it has been designed for everyone living in it.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY COLLECTING?

I used to live in Hong Kong and I love Asian art. One of my favourite pieces is a painting called *Paper Bride* by Zeng Chuanxing. I am passionate about photography and have a large picture of a cloud by the English photographer Richard Learoyd.

WHO ARE YOUR MENTORS?

My parents Jocelyn and Eric have been a huge support through good and bad, and my father was particularly supportive when I took big steps in life. He appreciates what I have achieved. My designer friends Melissa Odabash and Julien Macdonald are inspirational.

DO YOU HAVE A MOTTO?

Really believe in yourself and trust your own judgment – for everything, not just design.

alisonhenry.com, tel: 020 7351 7800



ABOVE In Alison's bedroom the bespoke French furniture is by La Maison (as before). The linen curtains throughout the house are made by Cameron Broom (tel: 020 8675 7910, cameronbroom.com). FAR LEFT A 12-metre-long chandelier designed by Alison (made by Chris Cox, as before) hangs from the top to the bottom of the house through the stairwell. Alison loves the simplicity of Zeng Chuanxing's *Paper Bride* painting. LEFT Alison wanted her en suite bathroom to be as open as possible, so there is no shower screen. The room has been tanked so excess water is not a problem. The fixtures are from Drummonds, tel: 020 7376 4499, drummonds-uk.com

KANEBO SENSAI BODY FIRMING CREAM, £90 for 200g, from Harrods, tel: 0845 605 1234, harrods.com



SERGE LUTENS L'EAU FRAGRANCE, £86 for 100ml, from Selfridges, tel: 0800 123400, selfridges.com



'Little punches of colour – the crystal in a chandelier or the colour in a painting – combined with texture and scent, all create the essence of a home'

SHOES, £2,450, Christian Louboutin, tel: 020 7491 0033, christianlouboutin.com



I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT...

My family and friends.

Shoes I love and collect shoes, especially Louboutins – all very high! – but I also love my Havaianas flip-flops.

Portraits of my children The paintings of my children in the sitting room are by Claeuwen James. I also collect photographs of my children taken by Andrea Hamilton. Perfume I love Serge Lutens. I prefer his non-sweet, non-floral, cleaner scents.

I read a marvellous book this summer called *September* by Rosamund Pilcher and I also really enjoyed *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett. For beauty I believe in the basics. Clean your skin every evening, apply moisturiser regularly and always use sunscreen during the day – as a Kiwi, I am very aware of the damage that the sun can cause.