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COUNTRY & TOWN INTERIORS

2022/23

THE 50 FINEST INTERIOR DESIGNERS



STEPHANIE BARBA MENDOZA

'I take great joy in infusing a home with colour,' says Mexican designer Stephanie Barba Mendoza who studied interior design in her home country before completing the KLC diploma course in London, and working for Martin Brudnizki. She launched her studio in 2020 and is already making her mark with a maximalist style – think an uplifting riot of patterns, mix of high-low tactile materials and bespoke handcrafted pieces next to vintage finds. 'From artists who specialise in hand-painted finishes and clay sculptors to papier-mâché makers and glass workers, I find craft immensely inspiring; this type of collaboration adds something wholly unique to our designs.' For Stephanie, the devil really is in the detail, whether that's lining a wardrobe in a beautiful fabric, adding a trim to curtains or searching for a special item of furniture from a local gallery. barbamendoza.com



STUDIO VERO

Inseparable friends since they were 13, it was perhaps inevitable that one day Venetia Rudebeck and Romanos Brihi – both avid art collectors – would end up working together. 'Clients see us as a little more daring than some of our peers and respond positively to our passion and enthusiasm,' says Romanos, of the studio, which the pair set up in 2014. 'While we both bring slightly different design elements to the table, our schemes are very coherent: the final result is always colourful, layered and full of surprises. The emphasis on art defines many of our designs, often juxtaposed with interesting antiques or one-off pieces of vintage furniture,' continues Venetia. Projects are brilliantly varied and include a recently completed duplex apartment in Belgravia with Portuguese tiles and teal lacquered cabinets in the kitchen, soaring hallway murals and an enormous light fixture sourced from a Viennese train station. studio-vero.com

STUDIO VERO

The interior design duo creating colourful spaces filled with art and antiques



Inseparable childhood friends, interior designers Venetia Rudebeck and Romanos Brihi followed similar career paths. Both studied at the KLC School of Design, as well as a course in art history in Italy, and each had their own design business before joining forces to launch London-based Studio Vero in 2014.

As serious collectors themselves, art is an important consideration in all their projects. The pair often collaborate with artisans and artists to create bespoke pieces, which they combine with interesting antiques and flea-market finds to create timeless interiors. 'Art elevates a space,' says Venetia, recalling a recent apartment project in Chelsea where an Antony Gormley painting, spotted at the artist's Royal Academy retrospective, prompted the start of an evolving collection of British art for the client that was sourced from over 20 galleries. 'As well as visiting many of the major exhibitions, we get really excited by the discovery of new artists who aren't yet that well known. Sometimes we work with clients to source artworks to add to an existing collection, while with others we go on the journey with them, finding new pieces that work with their possessions.'

According to Studio Vero, good design should make a home inviting and intriguing in a seemingly effortless way. This they achieve by a sensitive and intelligent use of lighting, together with an adventurous colour palette, rich textures and convivial corners, all designed to create relaxed, layered spaces that are so comfortable and welcoming that



As they focus on residential properties, Venetia and Romanos' relationship with their clients is of paramount importance

guests don't want to leave. This approach to design is perfectly illustrated in a commission for a quirky newly completed townhouse on Westbourne Grove. 'We used an abundance of bold colours and exquisite wallpapers with jungle scenes and unusual patterns to introduce a sense of theatre, while antiques sourced from all over the world added character and charm,' explains Romanos.

For the duo, fully grasping the brief and gaining an intimate understanding of the client's lifestyle is paramount. 'When you're working on someone's home for several years, that relationship between client and designer is key because it's such a personal and emotional process,' continues Venetia. Studio Vero focuses solely on private residences, which are as varied as the clients themselves. 'A current project involves reconfiguring a double-fronted villa on one of Notting Hill's tree-lined avenues,' continues Romanos. 'Our goal here is to enhance the entertaining space, which includes a wonderful garden with an outdoor kitchen and bar, and a low-level seating area. It works brilliantly for parties.' Inside, against the backdrop of a significant art collection, natural materials such as jute, linen, marble, reclaimed timber and cane have been used to create a deliberate counterpoint to the property's quiet luxury.

Romanos and Venetia work closely on every project and, while they share a similar aesthetic, they also have different tastes, ensuring clients have the advantage of two perspectives on design decisions. As a result, this collaborative approach not only reinforces their own individual creativity but remains a continuous source of inspiration, which is the secret behind the success of Studio Vero.

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