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INFLUENTIAL DESIGN AND DECORATION MAGAZINE



PLUS 68-PAGE **THE WORD OF INTERIORS**: 40 DESCRIPTIONS
OF ROOMS, BUILDINGS AND WAYS TO LIVE BY WRITERS
FROM HOMER TO HILARY MANTEL, ZOLA TO ZADIE SMITH



The drawing-room walls are lined with temple pink 'Verandah' linen by Veere Grenney from Tissus d'Hélène, while the armchair is upholstered in a Claremont silk that was custom-quilted in India. Presiding over everything is a 1930s Italian chandelier from Alexandre Biaggi in Paris



RISE AND SHINE

A new Art Deco-style bronzed lift cage, lacquered walls and a sprinkling of mid-century Lucite elevate this seven-storey west London town house to a whole new level. Previously a shell with no internal walls, it was vamped up by the venerable Veere Grenney, a man the owners knew they could count on to inject a certain quiet glamour. Certainly the palette and play on textures press all Ruth Guilding's buttons. Photography: Simon Upton



This page, clockwise from top left: immediately in front of a bespoke chimney piece made by Jamb are two 1970s Italian stools; one of a pair of Marc du Plantier 'Egyptian' chairs, c1935, sits in the window. To the right of the banquette sofa - a Veere Grenney design - is a 1950s floor lamp; the library is just visible beyond the piano, on top of which rests a Henry Moore bronze; the owners' collection of 20th-century art hangs from Collier Webb picture rails

The centrepiece of the 'Russian-army khaki' library on the first floor is a black-lacquer pedestal table designed by Pierre Cardin in the 1970s. It is surrounded by a set of Art Deco chairs by Alvar Andersson for Hyresgästernas Möbelfärr from the Modernity gallery in Stockholm





This page, clockwise from top: in the boy's bedroom, walls upholstered with chocolate-coloured alpaca provide the backdrop for a pair of 1940s walnut bedside tables, topped with glazed lamps from Tarquin Bilgen, and a French desk of similar vintage; glazed linen lines the girl's room, which is furnished with a bespoke bed made by Veere Grenney Associates; the interior decorator's 'Folly' linen forms window and closet curtains in the dressing room

Glimpsed through the sliding door is the boy's en suite bathroom, where richly veined Verde Tinos marble covers the walls of the shower as well as the floor. Upholstered in a tactile ivory-coloured bouclé woollen fabric, the side chair is Finnish and dates to the mid-1940s





From top: the kitchen windows are dressed with curtains and box pelmets in a Claremont fabric, 'Hindu'; a set of original Arne Jacobsen dining chairs sit on a Sinclair Till rug. Visible on the right is the glazed pantry



Scandinavian brass pendant lights from the 1950s hang over the island, with its monumental counter top of Calacatta Viola marble. The metro tiles behind the sink are by Craven Dunnill, while Thomas Hayes Studio in Los Angeles supplied the leather-and-brass 'Gachot' stools





OCEANS of exquisite upholstery and a lifetime's scholarly understanding of Modernism made this house. It is entirely the creation of interior decorator Veere Grenney, his design team and, of course, his client. 'Our job was to make a working house here, for this family with four children. They had a very nice one in Hampstead and a wonderful art collection, mainly 20th-century pieces, but they wanted to move into town.' Then the châtelaine found this seven-floor terraced property in a leafy west London square awaiting reconfiguration by a developer. The house as it stood comprised just the four external walls and new floors in poured concrete. 'Everything else you see, including doors, cornices, architraves and panelling, I've done,' Veere says. 'What made this project such a dream was being able to design these spaces architecturally, then to find the furniture to fit them afterwards. You're designing the furniture as you design the house, which is my idea of perfection.'

The spaces here are cool, tall, linear and classically ordered like those of a glamorous Cunard liner. Walls around the entrance hall are finished in glossy lacquer but, on the floors above, the drawing room, library and bedrooms are subtly and softly upholstered in Veere Grenney's signature 'Verandah' linen. 'So the house is about wet versus dry finishes, high versus low,' he explains. The combination of lofty pale ceilings, bronze and metal-work handrails and furniture mounts, brass picture rails, gesso, glass and thick white carpets represents his take on Art Deco, conjuring the cool opulence of some grand hotel between the wars. Dark parquet in the entrance hall looks antique but is brand new. The final grande-luxe touch is supplied by the bronzed lift cage rising up through the centre of the house. 'Where the staircase

would originally have been, we put in this lift and built a new staircase around it,' says Veere. 'I like to think this is particularly brilliant because I curved the corners of the stairwell to hide a cupboard panel, behind which all the pipework and services are concealed.'

Veere Grenney thinks of everything. The ground-floor lobby has marbled finishes and a glazed screen in black lacquer, the first room beyond it is a large family sitting and television room, with mid-century Italian chandeliers and a many-cushioned banquette sofa upholstered in silk velvet. The whole of the back of the house had been pushed out into an extension that has become a catering-sized kitchen, with a boot room and door leading to a private garden and the communal garden beyond it. But you might search for it in vain, for the kitchen's 'baize door' is a louvred one that folds back into the wall – so you don't even know it is a door – upholstered in marron-glacé leather and studded with brass tacks. Inside there's an alcove holding a dining table that can extend to seat 18, the cupboards are in Coca Cola-coloured lacquer and the worktops consist of huge slabs of Italian marble the colour of bloody slabs of meat. This is an engine house for cooking and eating, a most fantastic kitchen, Veere thinks. The homely touches are a pantry set inside a glazed box and blissful floor-length curtains in a charcoal-coloured floral print by Claremont.

On the floor above there are three 'day' rooms, separately defined but open plan and each giving on to the next. The drawing room is a soft pink with linen-upholstered walls and seats covered in aqueous pinks and yellows. There is huge attention to detail here. Armchairs are handmade with quilted upholstery that Veere declares 'very Fifties', but he only likes quilting when it's in squares and pulled very tight. 'I don't like it when it looks like a duvet. These two chairs are vintage [Marc] Du Plantier. I re-covered them but used the original bronze studs; I covet them, I love them so much!' He thinks this room is 'pretty good' but he might not repeat the mirrored overmantel panels again. He trialled them decades ago in his Chelsea Embankment flat and since then 'everyone has copied them. I'm a bit sick of being copied! But it does make a very good frame for a picture.'

This house has a great degree of sophistication. There's a spectacular example of one of his favourite Sciolari chrome chandeliers and subtle Fortuny-damask curtains edged with narrow cotton fringe. The room turns a corner past a grand piano, across the head of the stairwell and into a library upholstered in what Veere describes as Russian-army khaki, to terminate in a cuboid home office lit by a glazed lantern. It took a while, but this floor flows together now, he thinks.

Above there are three storeys of bedrooms. First of all comes the master suite, occupying a floor of its own. There are his-and-hers dressing rooms lined with oak cupboards and drawers, hers furnished with an exquisite three-panel pink Deco looking-glass. The fabric-covered walls are complemented by white carpets in a tiled effect with deep plain borders, woven by Cogolin in Paris. The cupboards have square glass door handles made by Gordon Watson; the bathroom is in lavender-brown marble and mirror glass, with chunky ripple-edged green-glass shelves.

'To me this is like Gazebo, my house in Tangier (WoI March 2019) – it's a project where I could achieve everything I wanted with no restrictions, but all the architectural features are appropriate, I think,' says Veere. At this moment his client's daughter appears to say hello and 'I'm never moving out! I've told Mum and Dad. I love my room so much. Thank you, Veere!' ■

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Top: the private garden was designed by Butter Wakefield. Opposite: in the entrance hall, hand-lacquered lilac walls set off a 1930s cabinet by Jacques Adnet from Alexandre Biaggi and a pair of German gilded and ebonised chairs from Carlton Hobbs in London. The ceiling pendant is Swedish

