

ISSUE 8 - MAY 2010

matchbox

*Your essential entertainment
& lifestyle guide*

Chelsea

Drama Queen

Dervla Kirwan
on 20 years at
the top

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

The many faces
of Richard Coyle

STILLS LIFE

On-set photographs by
Murray Close



Ever looked at an interior and thought you could do that? With short design courses popping up all over west London, there's never been a better time to test your skill. *Victoria Gill* signs up for class



A CLASS ACT

THE excesses of the Noughties may be firmly behind us, but that doesn't mean that interest in our homes and their improvement has waned – simply that refining, rather than replacing, our spaces is de rigeur these days. And what could be more satisfying than tapping into our inner creative and learning to do it ourselves? A host of courses is now available for just that, offering an invaluable alternative to trawling endless magazines, employing the services of an interior designer or – even more costly – getting it totally wrong.

Which is how I come to find myself sharing the Starck (pun intended – it was designed by the French master) white boardroom of the Sanderson Hotel with a cosmopolitan Cotswolds couple, trio of lawyers and an international accountancy duo.



Run by interior designer Jo Hamilton, the day kicks off with a crash course learning the basics and principles of interior design alongside practical tips and tricks, starting with the rainbow hues of the colour wheel. We learn that three adjoining colours are deployed to form harmonious interiors, a single shade layered with contrasting textures provides a calming, monochromatic theme, and clashing and contrasting tones add drama to a room.

Overall, we gain a sound, fast-track idea of how to enlarge small or create intimacy in large spaces, along with the basics of effects, visual tricks and the various approaches to lighting (which, Hamilton cites, is “80 per cent of a room's success”). So far, so intensive, but it's a lot of information and at this stage I've no idea how we are to apply it to our homes.

‘I triumph with brown and lime green leather Chesterfield sofas, complemented by a giant pop art backdrop and an end wall made of glass’

Before breaking for lunch, Hamilton takes us on a tour of the Sanderson Hotel, asking us to examine our surrounds – to consider how Philippe Starck has grouped together furniture themes in the cavernous lobby and created the jewel-like intimacy of the Purple Bar, and the way in which the design of the Long Bar pulls attention towards its dramatic centrepiece.

We had been asked to bring along the dimensions to a room we'd like to transform and, with this in mind, the afternoon is set aside to getting pleasurably stuck in: tearing strips from our favourite interiors glossies and fabric swatches until the table is a hive of colour; snipping and gluing

with industry and furrowed brows. Once we have refined the schemas and considered their application in our space, it is time to create the ‘mood board’ of textures and aesthetics, alongside the plan.

After using the scale ruler that designers and architects employ to draw the perspective lines of a room, cutting out a series of Lilliputian squares and rectangles representing the furniture (all the while factoring in ergonomics, the science of space) we are ready to finalise our schemes, with one-to-one advice and feedback from Hamilton. Glancing around the room, designs range from minimalist kitchens to classic Regency-styled bedrooms.

Me? I triumph with Cole & Son's Fornasetti Library wallpaper in the study, brown and lime green leather Chesterfield sofas and armchairs extending into the living area, complemented by a giant pop wall art backdrop, drop-down lights and Studio Glitheroe tiling in the kitchen, and an end wall made of glass. Hamilton adds a giant rug and coffee table and we have a practical and eye-catching mood board and plan. But, more than that, I take away a practical knowledge that can be applied whenever, and to wherever, I wish – which must be the ultimate in home education. **■**

Jo Hamilton Interior Design one- and two-day courses take place at the Sanderson Hotel three times a month, from £275 (johamilton.co.uk)