



SHIP SHAPE Above: The top floor of a modern mews house in Bayswater, designed by Maddux Creative. Adjacent to the rooftop terrace is the sitting room with a rounded wooden ceiling, vintage finds, ceramics and bronze side tables in an “unconventional mix of Alpine architecture and Palm Springs modernism”

PICTURE PERFECT

Photographer Andreas von Einsiedel has spent his career capturing the inside of London's smartest homes: from slick penthouses to Georgian townhouses. Now some of his images are showcased in a book of the capital's finest interiors. By **Kate Salter**

Photographs by Andreas von Einsiedel





PALE AND INTERESTING Above: The dining room of a house in a Kensington crescent designed by Louise Jones Interiors. The walls have been painted with a special finish to replicate linen; the painting is from the Stephanie Hoppen Gallery and the marquetry cabinet is Dutch. Below: The cloakroom of a Notting Hill home

If there was a word that could sum up the essence of London's interior design style, it would probably be eclectic. Where else could you find an "unconventional mix of Alpine architecture and Palm Springs modernism", in a mews house in Bayswater, pictured overleaf. Or how about a Notting Hill mansion with a stately grey entrance hall, private spas, gyms and burnt orange Moroccan-inspired bathroom?

The city may be known for its palatial Nash terraces, stucco mansions and charmingly wonky Victorian streets, houses that traditionally have showcased the British love of antiques, rich fabrics, and a sophisticated careworn look. But as London has become more international, more design conscious, and considerably richer, a new style has emerged

which is reflected in a book, *Living In Style: London*. Now, alongside the traditional terraces painted in Farrow & Ball hues are the super-sleek, highly finished penthouse apartments and period mansions whose interiors have been reconfigured entirely to accommodate wine cellars and swimming pools.

Andreas von Einsiedel, whose photographs feature in the book, is one of the world's best-known interiors photographers and has been taking pictures for over 25 years. Based in London, his work is regularly published in this magazine, as well as in *Architectural Digest*, *World of Interiors*, *Elle Decoration*, *Vogue Living* and *House & Garden*.

"The London style you see in this book is very upmarket and a little older" he says. "There is a





FADE TO GREY Above: The panelled walls and wooden floors of this townhouse in Clapham, designed by interior stylist, author and homeware designer Cassandra Ellis, are a warm and simple backdrop for the selection of antique and vintage furniture. The 1860s Victorian terrace has been refurbished to form more open spaces

younger, more 'street' style too of course in London, but getting older is not very helpful as I don't have a connection to those kind of people any more," he says, chuckling.

Von Einsiedel came to London from Germany in 1974 to study at the Polytechnic of Central London, now the University of Westminster. It was a very different London then, only a year after the three-day week, with its strikes and black-outs and, von Einsiedel says, "the rubbish wasn't cleared from the streets and it felt like England was 50 years behind Germany." For one thing, student accommodation involved cold and damp houses with no heating. In one property he saw "they still used a plank of wood over a tin bath as a kitchen table and when you wanted a bath you just removed the plank."

After trying film production back in Germany, then a brief spell as a sheep farmer in Scotland ("it's a long story"), he began working as a photographer, and moved into interiors after photographing friends-of-friends' smart houses.

Today he says London is "more international, more crowded, a lot more expensive and perhaps a little less friendly." But the grandest properties are still to be found in Knightsbridge, Kensington and Notting Hill. "In

Chelsea the houses are smaller, so you find that super-grand style less, while in Hampstead they can be more arty and bohemian," he says.

Von Einsiedel works in digital photography, which means he is rarely beaten by the gloomy British weather. "I don't use lights any more because with digital photography, even on a dark winter's day in London you can get around it by exposing for a long time." And while the logistics

of trying to park in central London were a constant headache, "Uber has been a godsend".

As well as his work for magazines and the National Trust, for whom he has been photographing Britain's historic houses for 27 years, von Einsiedel works with some of London's most in-demand interior designers to showcase their work. Maddux Creative were behind the Bayswater mews house, which as well as a huge roof terrace (designed by Adolfo Harrison), also features a wine tasting room lined with vintage wooden wine crates. Louise Jones Interiors designed the elegant home in Knightsbridge with its green silk-lined walls, floor to ceiling antique mirrors and an intricate Dutch marquetry cabinet. Studio Indigo, who also design interiors for private jets and

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LIGHT AND SHADE Above: Bella Marshall's home in Chiswick, one of von Einsiedel's favourite of those featured in the book, where French metal-framed windows were installed between the living room and the kitchen to create space and light. Left: The entrance hall of a double-fronted, stuccoed house in Notting Hill, which was reconfigured by Studio Indigo Ltd

yachts, were responsible for remodelling the house in Notting Hill with its Gothic influenced, seven-metre-high entrance hall.

One of von Einsiedel's favourite properties in the book is a townhouse in Chiswick, which is extremely stylish but wasn't, he says, "done on an outrageous budget". It was designed by Bella Marshall, who has combined textured wood and vintage pieces with mid-century modern and rich blues and turquoise.

Von Einsiedel says it's important

for the personality of the owner to shine through in his pictures and while he might curate a photograph, moving the odd vase or chair, "you don't want it to be anonymous or it looks like a show home". As a rule, he says, if someone has asked to have their house photographed, they don't object to you looking around, "but I think you have to be very careful with the bedrooms and bathrooms – don't go there unless you're asked".

As far as current interior trends

go, von Einsiedel says he thinks "people want rich fabrics, things that are handmade and one-off pieces. Colour is coming back, and texture – and minimalism is completely dead."

For the past 35 years, von Einsiedel's studio has been on Leather Lane in Farringdon, an area he chose originally because it was cheap. Now though, in a scenario repeating itself across the city, the owner of the building wants to sell to a developer and he is not sure where he will go next.

Despite being in his sixth decade, von Einsiedel is not going to let the mere question of studio location stop him. He says he'll still happily jump on a transatlantic flight to photograph someone's house. "I'll go anywhere for a good story," he says. "I still love what I do." **L**

"Living In Style: London" (teNeues) with photography by Andreas von Einsiedel, text by Karin Gråbaek Helledie is out now, £45

einsiedel.com