

From Mayfair to Dubai

Nakheel Interiors' Emma Gower on balancing innovation with budgets, delivering elegant designs, and the difference between clients in Dubai and London

There is a retro feel to current commercial interior design trends, according to Gower.

Sitting on a sofa in Dubai's Grovesnor House, Nakheel Interiors' Emma Gower is the epitome of the latest trends in commercial design – she's elegant, sophisticated and stylish. What's more she's all in black, reflecting the move towards dark woods and cool interiors currently dominating the commercial interior design scene. She took time out of her hectic schedule to discuss the latest trends, and to reveal that despite its ostentatious outlook, commercial interior design in Dubai is not all about gold leaf and crushed velvet.

CID: How did you start out in commercial interior design?

Emma Gower: I like problem solving, and commercial interior design is art, it's sophisticated, but it is also about solving problems. It is about trying to do something different – getting a new look

with different materials. I took an interior design degree in London and then spent around 10 years working with exclusive companies based in and around Mayfair – designing and solving problems.

CID: What inspires you when you are designing?

EG: In my experience, inspiration always comes from out of the blue, or usually from the client. Conversations and spending time with clients is very rewarding when the finished product meets their brief. But it's not just about inspiration. Maintaining the balance between creativity and function has always been of critical importance in my mind.

CID: Which companies did you work for in the UK, and what type of projects did you work on?

EG: Costain was the largest firm I worked

for, but I've also had the opportunity to work with small private designers and developers such as Portman Heritage and Jenny Maclean. In terms of projects, it was exclusive and high-end retail, kitchens and bathrooms.

CID: Which of your UK projects were you most proud of?

EG: I did a complete refurbishment of a prestigious penthouse in Mayfair for a developer, who had a generous budget. It was so good to work with someone with a good budget but someone who also knew they would get a return from their investment. In fact, the project culminated in a private sale prior to the launch party, and the sale far exceeded its valuation.

CID: How does this compare to the work you do now with Nakheel?

