

COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

LIVING A BALANCED LIFE

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SPRING
Awakening





Charu Gandhi of Elicyon was inspired by the 'lost' River Westbourne - formerly known as the Kilburn river - when it came to designing the interiors of two apartments at 41-43 Beaufort Gardens



CITY SLICKER

How Charu Gandhi used a lost river as inspiration for the design of two new Knightsbridge apartments

When lockdown hit a year ago, one of the most notable phenomena was the mass exodus of Londoners to the countryside. Searches for property in the capital fell, demand for gardens and home offices rose, and city-dwellers raced to swap glossy London boxes for pretty crumbling rectories with ample banana bread baking facilities.

But elasticity is in London's DNA, and it was never going to be down on its luck for long. One of the designers making a case for staying in the capital (among the joys of art galleries, museums and all the rich cultural fabric London has to offer) is Charu Gandhi, founder of Kensington-based design studio Elicyon. Despite an increasingly empty city centre, in the late summer of 2020 Elicyon was called upon to create striking and elegant spaces in two apartments in the 41-43 Beaufort Gardens development in the heart of Knightsbridge. A stone's throw from Harrods and the V&A, the location is exemplary of the best and most beautiful London has on offer, and Elicyon sought to acknowledge and celebrate the architecture as well as the design updates by Parisian architect Pierre Yovanovitch.

'Elicyon's designs were inspired by the etymology of Knightsbridge and the "lost" River Westbourne,' explains Charu Gandhi, referencing a buried tributary of the Thames which once connected the neighbouring areas of Chelsea and Hyde Park: 'Ink blue details in the colour palette,

materiality and finishes subtly emulate the ebb and flow of water.' Influence was also drawn from the cities of Madrid, Rome and Paris. 'The aesthetic is akin to lofty 19th century European residences,' elaborates Gandhi, 'where high ceilings, white stucco frontages and a sensibility of scale between rooms typifies designs.'

To complement modern materials and pieces, Elicyon sourced a number of antiques from The Old Cinema in Chiswick and Alfie's Antiques Market in Lisson Grove. Gandhi further subtly enhanced and softened the raw beauty of coffered ceilings, intricate panelling and abstract art with convex and concave mirrors, pieces upholstered in bouclé mohair and leather detail.

While the allure of the countryside has drawn many to greener pastures, 41-43 Beaufort Gardens is a great fit for the London highfliers (with a spa, gym, treatment room and sauna to boot). As Samuel Johnson famously put it: 'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life,' and the hard work of London-based designers like Elicyon is sure to draw revellers as life floods back into the city. 'I always say that buildings are living, breathing organisms,' concludes Gandhi, 'designing based on static architectural drawings and plans will only take you so far.'

Prices at 41-43 Beaufort Gardens range from £2.45-£25 million. beauchamp.com; harrodsestates.com ■