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# All is Calm

London, UK

Design firm Elicyon injects some soul into a warm-toned South Bank apartment by looking to the area's industrial heritage for inspiration



Charu Gandhi, founder of design studio Elicyon, describes the colour palette used in this three-bedroom apartment on London's South Bank as "new neutrals". Soft shades of caramel, blush and chocolate have been mixed with accents of terracotta and ruby red: there's an earthiness to it all that is very grounding, which feels necessary when you are perched 31 storeys high, basking in a skyline view of the Thames, the London Eye, the Houses of Parliament, St Paul's Cathedral and the City.

"We wanted to celebrate the abundance of natural light within the apartment but without 'bleaching' the space," says Gandhi, who says that her chosen colour scheme "complements the natural light and creates a space that is rich, warm and heartening."

This is the first show apartment at One Casson Square, the Squire and Partners-designed tower that forms part of a cluster of new buildings at Southbank Place – the site of 1951's Festival of Britain. Gandhi looked further back than the post-war years for her design inspiration, however, to the area's industrial heritage: "We were influenced by the location of the apartment and the site's history, and wanted to subtly reference the South Bank's past as a centre of weaving, cloth manufacturing and also pottery, which inspired us to use warm, sandy neutrals and bleached cloth tones interspersed with darker autumnal accent colours."





“We wanted to reference the area’s past as a centre of weaving, cloth manufacturing and pottery”

Pattern is not a particularly big feature here, save for areas such as the boldly scaled Jennifer Manners hand-knotted rug in the living area, but that does not mean that there is nothing to delight the eye. This scheme is all about creating calm through gentle repetition of subtle texture.

“We focused on using rich, woven and natural textures throughout the apartment; lots of linen, cotton and bouclé wool,” says Gandhi. “We also added some soft furnishings upholstered in velvet and also eye-catching leather to add interest and a feeling of sumptuousness.” Fabric wallpaper and fabric-wrapped panelled walls also bring that cocooning sense of calm, with added acoustic dampening properties in the case of the fabric walls, used in the master bedroom.







The art chosen enhances the story: a handmade geometric woven cord piece by textile artist Jo Elbourne hanging in the study is an homage to the area's weaving past, while gourd-like vases, stone sculpture and agate objects are all linked by being decorative hard surfaces with their roots in the natural world.

Angularly snaking around the study walls is a 1960s modular shelving system, but the kidney-shaped desk is all curves to provide some contrast. This ties in with the seating in the living area – two curving cream sofas face one another, but they have also been positioned to look out over the skyline. Several pieces in the apartment were designed in-house by Elicyon, including the blonde timber dining table, which features golden spheres that sit between its solid legs.





The main challenge on this project, says Gandhi, was the same as any designer faces with a show apartment: appealing to as many people as possible while still creating a scheme that is exciting and pushes the envelope. The potential benefit, of course, is that someone will buy the apartment in its entirety, a not-uncommon outcome when Gandhi is involved and one of the reasons why Elicyon has become one of the go-to firms for soulful speculative design that has the ability to quicken the pulse and gladden the heart.

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*Images* Courtesy of Elicyon

*Words* Emily Brooks

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