

Kit Kemp's style secrets

Interior designer and co-owner of the Firmdale Hotel Group, Kit Kemp invites us into her eclectic London townhouse

AS TOLD TO VANESSA KEYS
PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD GADSBY

"I always buy art for love, never investment. My husband and I are polar opposites when it comes to buying art; he is a slow, considered buyer and I've been known to drive past a gallery, see something that I like, jump out at the traffic lights and buy it there and then. I've never regretted anything that I've bought. This painting [right] is by Anna Raymond, a British textile artist. She primarily works in mixed media and I love the layers and depth of this particular work."



"I love the contrasting colours

and shapes of my watering can collection, especially the white plaster Paola Navone jugs juxtaposed against the old copper cans. They make a lovely tablescape and wonderful vases, and I really like how they bring a little bit of the outside indoors. When displaying collections, the key thing is to make the most of the different shapes and different heights. You don't want all the objects facing the same way or looking too uniform."

"You should never use a material that you wouldn't want to sit on without any clothes on. Furniture should always feel glorious against your skin."





"Ayala Bar is an artist and designer whose jewellery I've been wearing for many years. She makes every piece by hand using tiny fragments of fabrics and beads. The brightly coloured beads remind me of my school days, when we used to swap beads amongst our friends. I'm a big believer in wearing your finery every day – nothing should be saved for a special occasion. I've always longed to look like a gypsy and even though I haven't got dark skin or hair, I love that I can slip one of Ayala's pieces over my head and instantly be transported to another time and place."



"This dog ornament would normally be found sitting on a Victorian fireplace. I love how it's been given a modern spin simply by adding a lampshade."

"Boiled wool is one of my all-time

favourite upholstery materials – it's a heavy, woven felt. On this sofa [right] I've used the fabric inside out and overlapped the edges with contrasting patches that bring out the bright colours on the cushions. I never understand why people are so afraid to mix colour and fabrics. I think if you put all the fabrics you love together they'll work in some way, shape or form. There's only one real 'rule': if your room is pattern-heavy, keep the outside of the room plainer by using muted or neutral shades. Other than that, go for your life!"



"Every time I go into a bookstore, I look for my favourite book, *Gone to Earth* by Mary Webb. I've been collecting copies since I was a little girl; I must have a dozen or so now." 

