

ELLE DECORATION N°370 OCTOBER 2023

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ELLEDECORATION.CO.UK

ELLE DECORATION

OCTOBER 2023

Access all areas,
from new
launches to the
brightest stars

68 PAGES
of inspiration &
trends that push
the boundaries

Make a difference

Patterns, prints
& colours to
change your home
for the better

£6.99



9 770957 894281



Charles & Co

Having won global acclaim for her work for Soho House, Brit designer Vicky Charles is now an independent style powerhouse, thanks to her trademark cosy, layered look

Who is she? Even if you don't know Vicky Charles by name, you'll know her style: as the former design director of Soho House, where she worked for more than 20 years, she shaped the aesthetic of all its global members' clubs and, in the process, defined the modern ideal of cool-meets-cosy interiors. Charles didn't follow the obvious industry route: she studied fine art and English literature at Exeter University, and began her career waiting tables at Soho House. 'When I was a kid, I wanted to work in a shoe store and didn't know interior designers existed,' she remembers. 'I only learned about this world from watching designer Ilse Crawford work during the early days of Soho House.' Charles' lifelong love of colour, plus early practical experience organising events at big film festivals, paid dividends. By 2016, when she established her own studio in New York, she had already won some prestigious private clients (such

From top Vicky Charles, cofounder of Charles & Co, and her dog June-Bug; a sleek but inviting colour palette in the kitchen of Charles's recent Brooklyn townhouse project



as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who commissioned her to revamp Frogmore Cottage, and celeb royalty the Beckhams) and launched Soho Home, the homeware arm of Soho House. Now, she and her 20-strong team at Charles & Co inject relaxed yet vibrant style into homes and hotels around the world.

What are her recent projects? 'We tend to work on full restoration projects, and have recently completed a New York townhouse,' reveals Charles. 'The clients, like us, love to search for vintage pieces and so the house is full of a mix of furniture, sourced from Europe and America, that blend old and new. Mid-century pieces sit alongside fine antiques and modern designs. I believe that it's so important to be surrounded by things you love, and to look at things that make you happy – even if they aren't from the same period or style.' Charles restored many of the townhouse's original features, including a smart inlaid wooden kitchen floor with classical Greek details; the room itself featured dark-painted cabinetry and brass details. Seeking to reflect her clients' warm personalities, she created 'vignettes with multiple experiences throughout the house', such as a reading nook and music area in the living room (the latter complete with baby grand piano). Charles & Co's signature love of fabrics and tactile textures is also in evidence: the main bedroom has velvet-lined walls, while the bathroom is clad from floor to ceiling in hand-painted tiles.

Charles & Co has also been busy in the UK, opening a London office in Lots Road, Chelsea, in March. Doubling as a showroom, the space caters to the studio's growing British and European client base, who are drawn in by Charles' endlessly versatile brand of elegance. 'When it comes to styles or eras, I can lean into >

'I believe that it's so important to be surrounded by things you love, and to look at things that make you happy'

Expert advice

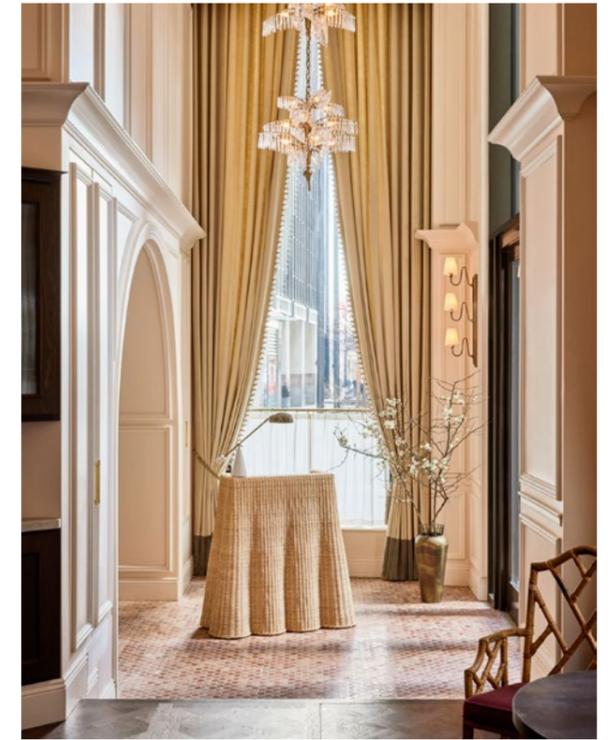
Vicky Charles on how to layer traditional patterns and fabrics in a modern way

When it comes to prints, pick your star design and then everything else in the room has to be selected to let it shine. Our choices are always influenced by the surrounding landscape. It's about harmony, rather than having things that are all the same colour or style – large-scale prints work best surrounded by smaller designs and plenty of textures.

Never choose textiles or finishes from an image on a screen. You need to see colours in person, and touch any textiles or rugs. There is no wrong choice – just fall in love with something and build from there. Clients often come into our sample library and fall for a coloured tile or a particular patterned wallpaper not knowing where it will go. Find one thing at a time and let the rest fall into place.

Look for historical prints that allow you to feel the craftsmanship of the maker – anything by Watts 1874 and Antoinette Poisson. The finer details, such as a subtle tassel or trim on curtains, or a coloured lining on a lampshade or chest of drawers, add a sense of fun and make a room more bespoke.

I love using wood on walls and ceilings to create a cocooning effect, but not necessarily in a rustic way. My office at home is lined in whitewashed, textured wood panels; it is a practical way to add a layer of warmth. Always invest in finishes, it's like creating a healthy body. Think of furniture as clothing – anything can look good if the space underneath works well.



From top Layered materials add to the grandeur in this entrance of the Charles & Co-designed restaurant La Marchande; the dining room in another Brooklyn project by Charles shows her belief in filling a home with beloved art and objects



industry index



From top An airy colour scheme with a rustic touch for a Charles & Co apartment in Barcelona; this built-in snug beside the dining room in a Brooklyn project shows Charles's dedication to comfort; mother-of-pearl-like tiles add a subtle shimmer to the ensuite in another Brooklyn residential project

everything,' she explains. 'The location, architecture and client dictate the style. What's important to me is that the interior designer works with the architect from the start. Ilse Crawford, who is a big influence on me, showed me that this was the only way to work.'

What is she currently working on? A 'fun project' on the coast in Tuscany: a house built in 1968, now a holiday retreat in which to unwind, surrounded by nature. 'We've tried to stay true to the era, working with the colour palette of the time and mixing original 1960s furniture with bespoke pieces and marble finishes,' says Charles. 'We imagine guests will be at home in a turban and kaftan, sipping cocktails at the outdoor bar overlooking the sea.'

She says 'It's all about creating spaces to feel happier in – it's that simple. It's never about how a room looks, but how you live and feel in it. We are working to create a future you.' charlesandco.com **ED**



The little black book

Every successful project requires access to the contacts that make magic possible

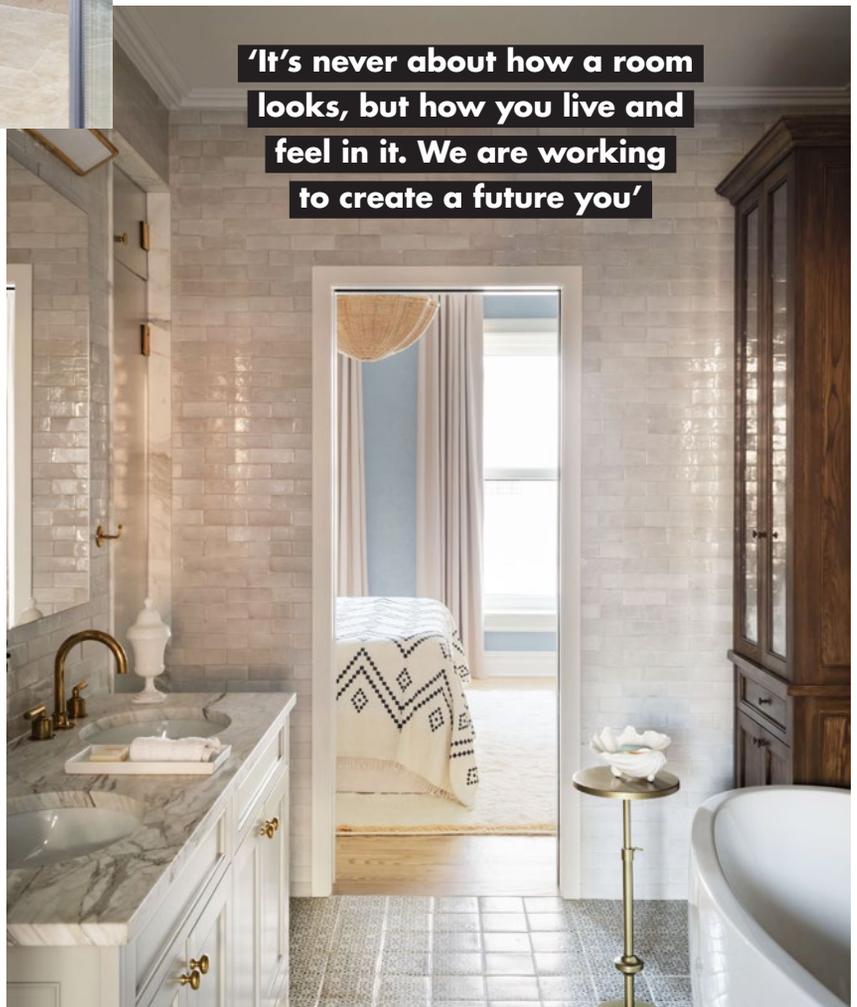
Craft accessories Abask has a wonderful collection of tableware and barware, created by artisans and sourced from around the globe. I love the mix of colours in its collection: they are pieces to make a room really sing, and I have confidence that the details are reliably perfect. abask.com

Fabrics and wallpapers I'm drawn to the Watts 1874 collection of textiles, wallcoverings and passementerie – it's steeped in history, with rich designs that add to the story of a room. I find its showroom inspiring, too, and it often informs the beginning of moodboards for clients. watts1874.co.uk

Bespoke British furniture designer Rupert Bevan has become a friend after many years working together. He creates truly customised, beautiful heirloom pieces that are an investment for your home, not only in a practical sense (as they will be well used), but also to be passed down through generations. rupertbevan.com

Hardware PE Guerin is based in New York and makes its artistic handles, taps and more in its own foundry – a brownstone building on Jane Street in Greenwich Village. It's the most inspirational place, filled with gems for every room in the home. peguerin.com

'It's never about how a room looks, but how you live and feel in it. We are working to create a future you'



WORDS: AVY BRADFORD. PICTURES: MATTHEW WILLIAMS, NICOLE FRANZEN, IRINGO DEMETER. STYLING: KATJA GREFF, MIEKE TEN HAVE, COUN KING. PORTRAIT: GYNNIS CARPENTER