



SENSE OF PLACE

Jennie Trethewey, who recently opened her interior architecture and design studio in St Agnes, talks about her most exciting projects

Designing interiors is like telling the story of a person or a place. You can bring a public space to life using design as a narrative tool – or create a home that portrays a client’s personality.

Jennie Trethewey, of London and Cornwall-based Lomax and Chi is a master of both. She has designed concept hotels, spas and luxury residences at home and abroad and thrives on the buzz of very different challenges.

Last year she put down roots in Cornwall, returning here with her husband Adam and children Sam and Zak. She has recently opened her interior architecture and design studio in St Agnes while her business partner Chi Chi Baber looks after their London office.

The design duo met while working for

Fox Linton Associates in London where they worked together on prestigious hospitality projects before deciding to branch out on their own in 2016.

The Waldorf Hotel, at Aldwych in London, the Caledonian in Edinburgh and the Dorchester group’s Coworth Park hotel at Ascot count among the exclusive hotel projects Jennie has worked on in the UK, and she also completed the concept design for Raffles Hotel in Warsaw.

Since setting up Lomax and Chi the pair have focused on residential projects, completing full refurbishment and extension projects on Victorian properties in London, country cottages in the Cotswolds, and coastal properties in Cornwall.

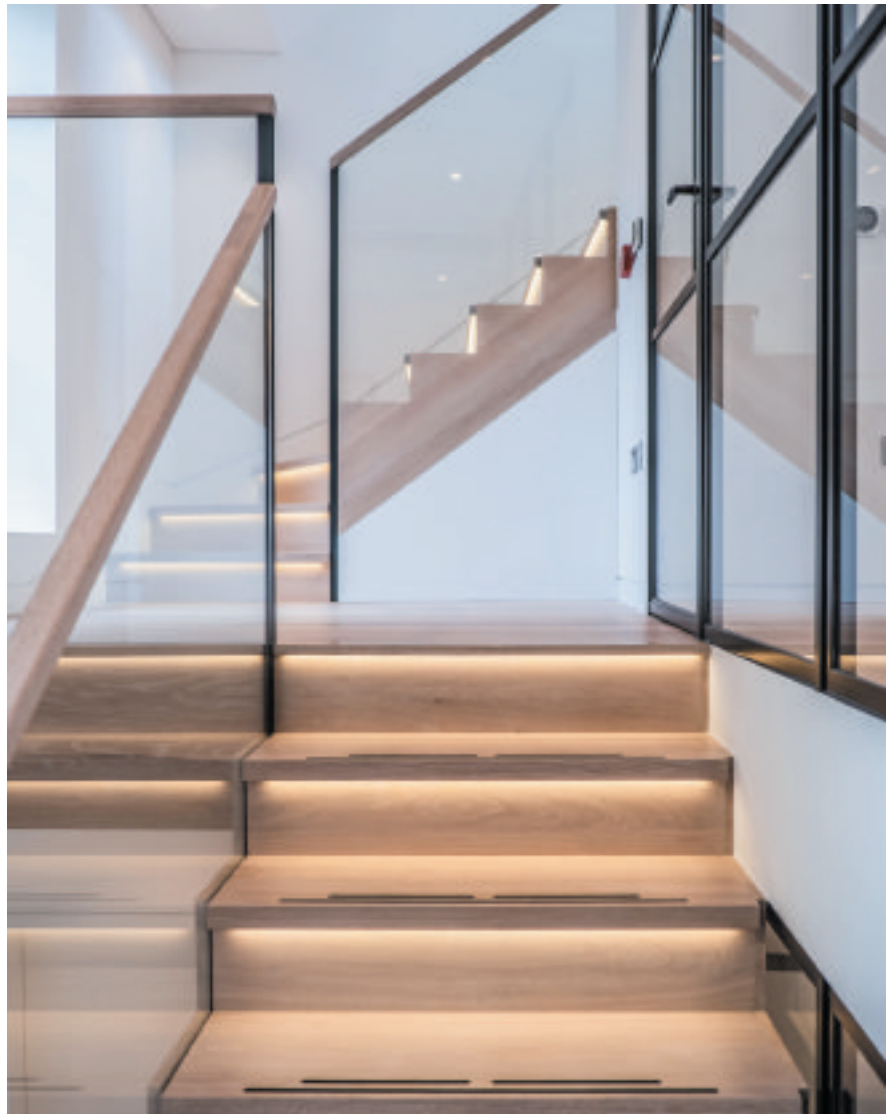
“I very much like both sides of the business. With hotels, the design can often

acknowledge the location and surroundings and tell a story of place. For example, Coworth Park drew inspiration from the English seasons and from the estates’ equestrian links.”

On this site, the first project Jennie managed and saw through from concept to completion was the eco-luxury spa, where sustainable design was at its core.

“It was a new semi-circular building of timber construction nestled in the landscape, half above and half below ground. Its fragrant roof garden is adorned with calm-inducing thyme, lavender and chamomile and the relaxation lounge and treatments rooms looked out over a central herb garden.

“Throughout the spa all furnishings were sourced locally and were influenced by the textures of the spa’s raw materials. Sculpture



and artwork draw inspiration from the picturesque parkland and English gardens.

“We were building a story. For example, a graphic metal bulrush sculpture defines the arc of the corridor leading to the treatment rooms, reflecting the bulrushes growing in the grounds of the estate. Along the side of the pool is a fine collection of amethysts, a natural crystal known for providing an antidote to overwork and stress.”

Where concept design is paramount in public spaces, high end residential projects offer a different challenge, creating designs which are timeless and classic, but portray the owner’s taste and individuality.

“That is what I love about residential projects, getting to know the client and reflecting their personality in the interior design. We don’t have a house style - we tailor each and every project to suit our client’s needs,” she says.

A current client who owns a five-bedroom home a stone’s throw from the beach near Padstow “loves the style of a Californian lake house” and Jennie is transforming her property to create a mid-century beach house with a contemporary twist.

“It has been a really fun project to work

on. The architecture has warm earthy terracotta hues, and each bedroom will have its own individual palette. As it is primarily a holiday home, we have been able to be bold with colours, which I love, and we will have a mix of sixties retro and vintage pieces. Where possible we will source the furniture locally and we will have certain pieces made by local designers and makers, including bespoke fitted joinery, kitchen and bathroom designs.”

Having qualified in interior architecture, Jennie brings her skills to bear on a project from the outset – visualising and planning the layout to ensure the interior space is used in a way which best matches the client’s lifestyle.

Both in London and Cornwall, the scale and budgets for projects vary – from small extensions when a client wants to increase the footprint of their property and take advantage of a panoramic sea view – to big budget changing spaces projects with a refurbishment budget running over £500,000. But whatever the size of a project, understanding and maximising available space is key.

One recent project Jennie worked on had a very large central atrium which needed an understanding of space and creativity to convert it into a living area for her clients.

“It was on the site of an original pool house which had been the swimming pool complex of a hotel development.

“It had a huge atrium reception area with bedrooms leading directly off it around the perimeter. The challenge was to break down the reception, so it felt like different areas had their own identity and function.”

The finished project has kitchen area, dining space, cosy living space with an open fire and it even includes a cocktail lounge for evening entertaining.

‘There is a real market in Cornwall for high end hospitality and luxury residential projects’



Jennie’s move to Cornwall is not limiting the projects she works on both here and further afield.

“There are advantages to having London and Cornwall offices. At the start I was focused on local Cornwall projects, but now I am also working remotely on projects in London. Lockdown proved that we can do a lot of work from a distance.

The lifestyle in Cornwall beats London hands down. Even before their children were born Jennie and Adam had made a decision they would move back to Cornwall to raise their family because of the more relaxed way of life.

And they love the sense of community they have found in St Agnes.

Sam, six, and Zak, three, keep her busy. “My life is quite crazy,” she laughs.

“Between school runs and clubs and surfing trips to the beach after school – and running the business.

Now that their children are a little older

Jennie and Chi Chi are set on developing Lomax and Chi. Jennie has been busy bidding for work on hotel refurbishments and luxury apartment developments in Cornwall in need of turnkey interior styling.

She has been commissioned to design the Samphire restaurant and luxury Ocean View suites at the Headland Hotel in Newquay.

“There is a real market in Cornwall for high end hospitality and luxury residential projects,” she says.

More than enough to keep Lomax and Chi busy for the foreseeable future, and in doing so they committed to supporting the local economy and supporting local designers and makers.

**Jennie Trethewey, Lomax and Chi,
48 Vicarage Road, St Agnes, Cornwall.
01872 211688
0798 0900 845
info@lomaxandchi.com
lomaxandchi.com**