

Finding Hidden Glories with Anouska Hempel's new 'Hempel House & Hotels' collection of interiors products

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Since the opening of Blakes London, guests of the iconic hotel have dreamt of having a bit of Anouska Hempel's enigmatic look and design at home.

A quiet request to Blakes' concierge: "can we take the bedside lamps home" would lead to a little extra on the bill, and a little extra luggage to tow – the dream of bringing a touch of this pioneering boutique hotel designer home, was a bit of a best kept secret. Even four-poster beds were seen being dismantled and packed for an international shipper, waiting outside Blakes.

Anouska writes back then in the Sunday Express newspaper for London: "Blakes acquired a look best described a Parisian oriental chic. From then on, the hotel was filled with lots of things from Portobello as well as treasures from the Far East and India. Blakes is pitched halfway between formal and casual. Issey Miyake used to come and stay and removed all the furniture from his room and sleep on the floor, which was fine by me. This is the mood of my hotel, a blend of couture and comfort." London, 1992

Cities with Rhythm: Paris - Singapore - London

Today, these 'hidden glories' can still be yours at any one of Anouska's three key hotels participating in the new Hempel House & Hotels collection. In London, there's the Franklin in Knightsbridge; in Singapore, the newly reopened Duxton Reserve on Duxton Hill; and in Paris, the all-new Monsieur George just off the Champs Elysées. These three iconic boutique hotels now constitute this unofficial and desirable 'shopping experience' just as it did when Hempel started out designing her own eclectic products and furniture at Blakes.

Furniture, furnishings, fittings, fans, beds, lamps and mirrors are just some of the treasures available in this new collection, and very little is off limits. From London to Paris and onto Singapore, the home can become a replica of personal travel through design.

Anouska's Yard Stick lamps, transcending her key colour ways, stand out as a design classic throughout. Natural beech, high-gloss black, white or brass, they come in two sizes, with their bespoke coolie lampshades. Light diffusers are set underneath the coolie to soften any harshness of the light.

Monsieur George's fabled green theme can be ordered as jade green velvet perch stools or soft velvet dining chairs with hand-painted ceramic handbag holders. The chairs and seats compliment the intricate inlaid marble tables, and the prettiest bar stools line up along the bar, dotted with bespoke green tin bar lamps, while large pumpkin pendant lamps look on – these are all part of the HHH collection. All these pieces breathe Anouska's sense of couture into this Parisian hotel and can now be enjoyed at home too; sent to wherever home might be.

Anouska's HHH product range continues in the rooms and suites upstairs, featuring engraved lanterns, white sconces, bespoke wall lights, large marble-framed mirrors, and then again round convex mirrors with

gold inlay which reflect the entire room. The Yard Stick lamps here are in brass, black, grey and natural beech, coordinated with the hotel rooms' palette in both short and tall versions. They sit on mirrored bedside tables, in cushioned alcoves and beside velvet armchairs and luxuriously large velvet beds. Anything is possible.

For the Duxton Reserve in Singapore, Anouska brings contemporary style and couture pieces into the ten shop-houses which once upon a time saw the constant bustle of rickshaws by day and by night, typical of downtown Singapore. Today the smell of dumplings, lemongrass, Green River curry, steamed noodles and hickory wood used for roasting, bring the senses alive in the award-winning Yellow Pot Café - a modern Chinese gem run by chef Sebastian Goh. In-keeping with the rest of the hotel, Anouska has used oriental black, gold and yellow throughout the restaurant, the saloon bar and the alcoves in the lobby. From the heat and brightness outside, this dark interior unfolds into a cool and contemporary space punctuated with gold silk sofas, rise and fall lamps with glowing pleated lampshades, 'double happiness' screens with Junko trays, and beyond an array of yellow pots of a hundred different sizes sitting in lacquered black wood dressers lining the walls of the Yellow Pot Café. Huge fans as big as the rising sun on the road to Mandalay screen the interiors from the passers-by. These pieces are just some of the products, which layer her design and take you through from the lobby, to the suites and bedrooms above. Objects, fabrics and colours mark the journey that takes you on inside the hotel and beyond – and all the way back home.

In London, it is this architecture, as an art, which is Anouska Hempel at her best, and her concepts continue into the Victorian building now the Franklin Hotel, just steps away from the V&A museum. This is another signature boutique hotel where the designer has created a harmony of tranquillity with layers of colour. The 4 town-houses which are now one elegant destination, are part of the Starhotel Collezione collection. Anouska's next hotel for the group is the historical Helvetia Bristol opened May 2021, in Florence.

The product range of Hempel House & Hotels at the Franklin Hotel encompasses grey velvet dining chairs and bar stools, black & white marble tables, settees, tin lamps, scones, wall lights, and more. The garden suite with its own balcony, is the most loved here, with a bespoke wireframe four-poster bed with its very own central globe light. This suite reflects the tranquillity of the gardens outside and the furniture is adapted to the space with romance. Hempel's Yard Stick lamps, as in Blakes, the Duxton and Monsieur George, glow on the bedside tables, this time designed in grey to suit the main colours throughout the hotel. The high-backed tin chairs add dimension to the room, and the 18th century replica Venetian marble mirror reflects the trees outside: "without these two pieces, the room was empty, it had no character" says Anouska. This is the sense of soul she brings into every space, combining styles and features from different countries, continents and periods. As Marcus Binney rightly comments in her latest book: "Her interiors are never copies or reincarnations, but new creations in which her ideas and themes are developed often obsessively. It all works thanks to a constant lightness of touch mixed with an engaging sense of fun."

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