



DESIGNED TO IMPRESS

One woman's passion for design led her to pass on her expertise to others

Given her boundless enthusiasm for her work, it is no surprise to hear that 80 per cent of Marion Falchi-Pereira's business comes via referral from delighted clients. 'It's about interpreting what a client wants,' she says, explaining that if she is unconvinced by a client's vision, she submits two plans: one that follows the specification exactly and one which incorporates all the client's requirements but which will work better, with finer details. 'Sometimes people don't have any ideas, and it's then up to me to inspire them,' she adds.

tastes and personality

PSYCHOLOGY AND DIPLOMACY
 'I always see clients in their own home, which gives me an insight into their taste and personality. You have to be part psychologist and part diplomat, as well as a good designer,' admits Falchi-Pereira, who claims that her greatest pleasure is in taking the client's vision beyond their expectations.

Having spent more than a decade in the design industry, working on commissions all over the globe, Falchi-Pereira decided to start her own company in Berkshire. With a portfolio that spans residential, corporate and commercial buildings, Falchi-Pereira and her assistant Clair Barrett embrace everything from structural redesign to bespoke soft furnishings, project managing with a skilful proficiency that has enhanced the company's reputation.

'With personal homes, I work very closely with the client,' Falchi-Pereira explains. 'It's an ongoing design process which is very flexible. In corporate projects, I present a plan and a design to the client and then once these are agreed and budgets have been set I then work with a project manager to ensure that everything is implemented,' she explains, adding that practicality is a major consideration in her designs. 'You simply must be able to use things,' she says adamantly.

local suppliers

'Take a walk-in wardrobe in a dressing room: why would you hide the contents with cupboard doors? You need to be able to see the clothes, so if there must be doors then they should be made from top quality glass.'

UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE
Falchi-Pereira is especially proud of a recent commission that the company undertook for Cemex, a worldwide producer of cement, ready-mix concrete and aggregates, whose brief specified understated elegance for their new UK head office.

Falchi-Pereira's quest for ready-made furniture that fitted with the integrity of the building brought nothing that met with her approval.

'So we designed 45 amazing pieces of bespoke office furniture in maple and walnut that looked wonderful,' she explains. 'You just do what you know you have to do in order to make the design work. I take the thought process and turn it into corporate and office space. The process for Cemex took a year, but I was thrilled with the result, as was the client, for whom I am now handling further projects', she says.

KEEPING THINGS PERSONAL
Whether working on someone's home or on a major corporate development, Falchi-Pereira's approach, she says, is rooted in the same philosophy. 'I have to build a relationship and a trust with my clients. We're a small company and people like that. All my clients are treated entirely individually and I gauge people quickly, which enables me to understand their wishes better. I have many returning clients. For example, one lady recently moved to Madrid and asked me to design her new home there. She wouldn't consider anyone else.'

Admitting to having an address book 'full of the most amazing contacts', Falchi-Pereira points out that in order to maintain her high standards, she has to be discerning in her choice of suppliers. Discovering new talent in the shape of small businesses, however, is something she delights in.

'I use local suppliers when I can, which is good for the local economy. I signed up a local kitchen manufacturer recently. He had fantastic production values and I made some design suggestions, so the partnership works brilliantly,' she comments, with obvious satisfaction. Nurturing relationships with tradespeople is something Falchi-Pereira sees as essential:

'When we work on site I always make a point of meeting and greeting the painters, carpenters and electricians.

Courtesy and good manners cost nothing and it makes people want to work with you.'

INSPIRATION FROM NATURE
Falchi-Pereira's passion for interior design is, she claims, twofold. A self-confessed 'people person', the prospect of what she can achieve for someone is, she admits, hugely inspirational. As for more physical inspirations, she claims to be receptive to a wide array of concepts. 'Oh yes,' she laughs, 'I can get excited by anything. A gallery, a brochure – I'm sensitive to colour, fabric and texture; it's just innate in me and three-dimensional design is natural to me. You can train for years but you have to have a strong sense of space. The Gramercy Park Hotel in New York might be an inspiration for me, but it wouldn't work for day-to-day living, so I'd scale it down and adapt it to fit a residential space.

With colour it's the same; the other day my assistant Clair and I were driving from an appointment and we passed some beautiful brown cows in a field.

The contrast of the brown against the blue of the sky and the green grass started a theme, as the house we came from had a lot of brown furniture. It may not come together, but the important thing is it began a theme.'

Currently involved in several ventures, including an exciting project designing a New York apartment, it is clear that Falchi Interiors has a lot to look forward to. The company has pitched to be a supplier for the 2012 Olympics and Falchi-Pereira admits that this is a project that she'd love to be involved in.

'I'd also love to do more work in Dubai. I love the people and their innovative ways of thinking,' she says. 'I'm just making some contacts there, so who knows? Clair has a burning ambition for us to do a yacht, but I'd absolutely love to do a boutique hotel with themed rooms.'

A Falchi-designed interior and a Rolls-Royce on the driveway – what more could a dream home need?

CAPTION TEXT: Xxxxxxx

