

ANOUSKA HEMPEL

CITIZEN FEMME

A Luxury Guide for the Female Traveller



Curated By... Anouska Hempel

By: Gilly Hopper

Hotelier, and former actress, Anouska Hempel, also known as Lady Weinberg, exudes style and panache.

Whilst her acting career crescendo-ed in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969), with Hempel playing a Bond girl, less than a decade later, in 1978, Hempel rang in her second act: opening Blakes hotel in London. Making her mark on the hotel industry, Blakes represented a new kind of lifestyle hotel and proved an instant hit – with everyone from the Gettys to Alice Cooper bedding down at the SW7 bolthole.

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Known for her eclectic style, Hempel would go on to design the Hempel Hotel in London, the Duxton Reserve Singapore, and the Monsieur George in Paris, amongst other design projects. Here, we get the scoop on Hempel's latest move – the Hempel House & Hotels collection (and try to resist our urge to buy every last piece of it).

Where does your design interest stem from?

From a very, very young age, I had a very visual aesthetic. I walked along the sea as a child seeing a landscape all of my own, and I followed my imagination without any hesitation.

How did you first get into interior design?

It all started in Portobello, where I had the best time running an antique silver stand and sourcing specialist pieces for my regular clients, who were often from Italy. This led to wanting to create a home, a place where people could live amongst all this magic, and so in stepped Blakes Hotel in South Kensington, followed by many private houses and mews houses, which wanted to recreate the hotel's sense of magic. One project followed another; and once I decide [on] a concept, I am committed.



How would you describe your aesthetic?

It is hard to put into a few words as it can be classic or it can be contemporary – as you see in the minimalist style of The Hempel which, as with Elakes, set off another huge new style of hotel design around in the world. Both hotels have gone on to become seminal in the lexicon of hospitality design. When it is classic, it always has a twist. I am regularly asked to bring my design into hotels, residences, and palaces, and it is always to add my own sense of romance.

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I pay a lot of attention to lighting, to movement, and to creating theatrical settings. It has to be lush and highly decorative.

What is your design philosophy?

It is in colour, in the volumes I create, the detailing of my designs, and in the all-encompassing juxtaposition of things which ultimately create an interesting space. I pay a lot of attention to lighting, to movement, and to creating theatrical settings. It has to be lush and highly decorative. Think of *The Last Emperor* and the wedding scenes... bodies against muslin sheets.



Tell us about your new 'Hempel House & Hotels' collection...

This collection is one that, again, was born out of Blakes Hotel, when guests would pay for their room stay and literally add two of our signature Yardstick lamps to the bill, which they wished to have delivered to their home in New York, for instance.

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So, we sat around the table (remotely, during lockdown!) and created a collection which would echo people's travels to Paris, London, and Singapore, to give them the chance to have a bit of the 'Anouska Hempel hotel suite' look at home, and it has been great!

Of the hotels participating – The Franklin (London), The Duxton Reserve (Singapore), and Hotel Monsieur George (Paris) – what is your favourite design element of each?

As HHH products go, the most popular pieces in each of the hotels is the signature Yardstick lamp, in any two sizes and in different colours. It is unfair to have a favourite, but I greatly enjoyed working on The Duxton Reserve in Singapore because it is steeped in, and inspired by, Asian history, as it is built in a row of chophouses. I had great fun working to source yellow pots, Asian artefacts, highlights of golds and yellow,

which all together play with layered Oriental screens, indenture wallpaper, and great big mustard yellow fans as large as the setting sun.

Where do you get your inspiration?

It is from travel, but now I am diving into my library whilst we wait for travel to come back. The latest Assouline books take me everywhere!



Can you tell us more about how you work; what's your process?

I write a story of how I see the design of a new concept come together.

How does travel influence your designs and tastes?

Travel influences my designs greatly. I like to always refer to cultural references when I design a hotel.

What makes a great hotel?

Soul – and importantly, a sense of discovery and pre-emptive service.

What's your favourite hotel?

The Summer Palace in Beijing. It is set in elegant pavilions that were once imperial waiting rooms. Today it has become a boutique hotel and it is part of the Aman group, offering a taste of pampered Qing Dynasty living. Then for me, it has to be the *most* incredible palace: The Katsura Imperial Villa on the western bank of the Katsura River in Katsura, Japan.

Designers and makers you really admire include...

Tadao Ando; Thomas Heatherwick; Jean-Michel Gathy; and Giorgio Armani.

What are some tips you have on how our readers can bring a touch of Anouska Hempel magic into their homes?

Well, take a look at the new **Hempel House and Hotels range**... you can start with a screen!

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