

Dexters

London Property Professionals

Autumn 2026

Manuela Hamilford

Shares her passion for creating
luxury interiors from her
studio in Notting Hill

Immerse yourself
in the capital's
best bookshops

Our pick
of London's
finest properties

Elevate your
kitchen with the
latest design trends





for products that are high quality and will age well. Where appropriate, we use reclaimed and locally sourced materials. If a client still loves their home in 10 or 15 years and doesn't feel the need to change anything and begin again, we have made the right decisions from the outset."

Technology plays a vital role at every stage, as she explains. "We use it for technical drawings, visualisation, project coordination and communicating ideas to clients, consultants and contractors. What it can't replace is the human side of the process and building relationships along the way."

Expert insight

Each commission starts with a meeting and Manuela has an unusual approach. "People often expect us to begin with kitchens, furniture or paint colours, but those conversations come later. First, I want to know how they spend their weekends, whether they entertain, where they naturally gather and what currently frustrates them about their home. It's a little like being a

psychologist. You notice non-verbal details too: how someone presents themselves, what they're wearing, the fragrance they choose, where they suggest meeting and what naturally catches their eye.

"We also ask clients to complete a detailed questionnaire. It's quite common for someone to say they want a traditional home and then show us predominantly modern references. People often have conflicting ideas and our role is to work out what styles they like, what their needs are and how we can incorporate both when bringing the project to life."

“
We use natural materials
such as timber, stone,
marble and linen
”

Makeover masterclass

According to Manuela, good design can really enhance everyday living. She recalls a particular townhouse in Ladbroke Grove. "The house didn't need to be rebuilt, but it did need to be rethought. We introduced more light into the lower-ground floor and filled in an awkward, underused mezzanine to create a snug. It has since become the part



of the home where everyone spends the most time, which is a great example of how intelligent spatial planning can make a significant difference without changing everything."

As for her own home life, how does she strike a balance between time with her husband and two sons and a busy work schedule? "I'm not sure I've completely mastered it!" she laughs. "Design is a genuine passion, so it isn't something I switch off at the end of the day. I'm always thinking about projects, spotting new ideas or noticing details wherever I go. I'm fortunate that I love what I do!"

Local loyalty

That said, living and working in the same area does make life easier for Manuela and she adores everything about her corner of west London. "What I love is how connected everything feels. On any given day I might pop into the Design Centre at Chelsea Harbour, meet a client for coffee, visit a supplier and spend time with the team in the studio. West London has a wonderful creative community. Between the independent shops, galleries and restaurants, there's always something new to discover."

Manuela is also keen to bring her expertise to the less fortunate. "We support Healing Homes West, a women-led community project that transforms unsafe housing into more supportive homes for children and single-parent families living in poverty in west London. As a female-run and entirely female studio, supporting women and children is particularly important to us."

Hamilford Design has earned recognition from leading design bodies, with multiple award wins and nominations, and its work has been widely featured across the interiors and lifestyle press, however it is client satisfaction that Manuela values most. "We may begin by designing a client's London home and then be asked to work on their family house outside the capital, a holiday property or a house abroad." For this design expert, repeat business and word of mouth recommendation are the greatest compliments of all.

hamilforddesign.com
@hamilford_design

Manuela's London

- **What is your favourite London memory?**
Collecting the keys to our Notting Hill studio. I had been running the business from home, but it was growing quickly and we needed space for the expanding team. I remember standing in the empty studio and realising that the business had reached a completely new stage. It was very exciting.
- **Where do you like to eat in the capital?**
Juno Omakase is a favourite. We designed the restaurant, so I am slightly biased. Julie's in Notting Hill is an institution. I also love Maison Estelle, and the new Restoration Hardware restaurant at Burlington Gardens celebrates rich architecture, luxury interiors, and incredible food, all under one roof.
- **Where do you go to unwind?**
Home, I love entertaining and having friends and family around. We also spend time at our lakeside home. Life there has a different rhythm to London, and it gives us more time together as a family.
- **What or who have you got on speed dial?**
My husband, Mark. He's my sounding board and always gives excellent advice. He has probably heard more conversations about layouts, fabrics and lighting than he ever expected to when we met.
- **Who is on your radar?**
Coat Paints. Its paints are sustainable, the collections are lovely and make the process of choosing colour much easier, even for people who aren't designers.



Timeless interiors

For 15 years, interior designer Manuela Hamilford has crafted sophisticated, contemporary spaces across the globe



Interior expert Manuela Hamilford began her career in New York. In 2005, having met her husband Mark, she settled in Holland Park and went on to open her own studio at nearby Pembridge Villas in Notting Hill. Hamilford Design offer a full-service approach, from interior architecture and project management to procurement and installation. With her all-female team, she has built a considerable reputation and is now in demand for high-end residential work and select restaurant projects such as Sale e Pepe Mare at The Langham, one of the capital's 5-star hotels.

Early inspiration

Manuela's interest in design began during her upbringing in Vicenza, Italy. "I was surrounded by beautiful architecture, skilled craftsmanship and a culture that places value on quality," she says, adding, "Then I worked with Italian design houses in New York. It was fast-paced, the projects were ambitious and it was an exciting place to learn. When I moved to London, it felt like the natural place to start my own studio and I founded Hamilford Design in 2010."

Family first

"Design should reflect the client, not the designer. Each of my clients lives differently, and understanding the differences is where I begin. I never want a project to feel like a show home. Whether it's a busy family breakfast or a quiet evening at home, the spaces should feel comfortable and suit the people using them. I try not to be led by trends. If you understand the client, the building and its surroundings, you'll arrive at something far more personal than if you start with what's fashionable."

Sustainability is increasingly important to both the studio and clients. "We use natural materials such as timber, stone, marble and linen, and look