

# KENSINGTON & CHELSEA MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2017 • £5

## Pony Tale

Playing the field at  
British Polo Day

## Power Ranger

Head into the  
wild on safari in  
Namibia and Kent

WALL TO  
WALL  
THE BEST  
STATEMENT  
INTERIORS

# Classical INTERLUDE

The Proms season at the Royal Albert Hall  
and accessories to hit the right notes



feature

# f a i r e s t o f t h e m a l l



Left & right:  
Bang & Olufsen  
BeoSound Shape

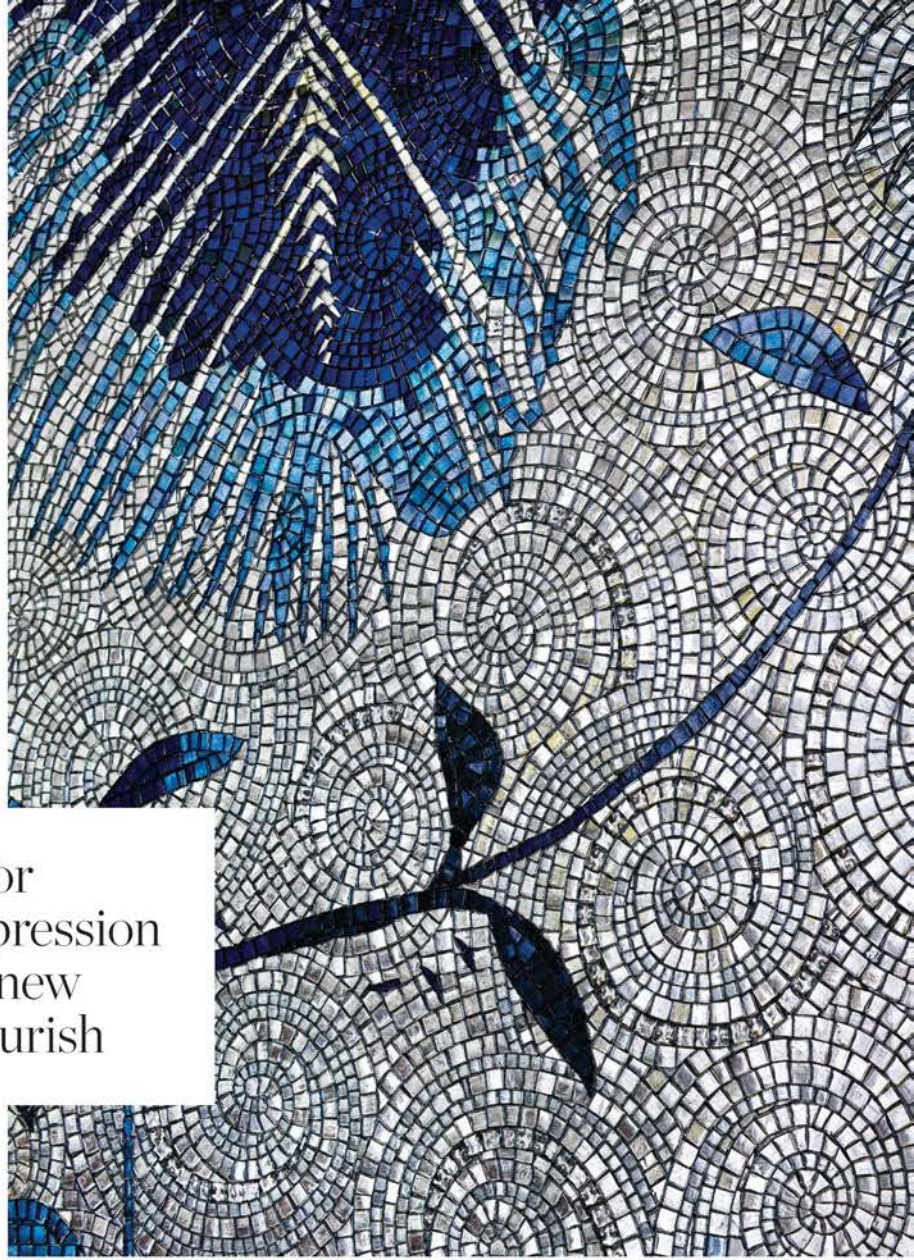


*The ultimate blank canvas in interior design,  
the humble wall has found a new lease of life at*

*Salone del Mobile and beyond – from wireless speaker  
systems to leather panelling and intricate mosaics*

*words by Camilla Apcar*

This image and right: Sici's Palme Panel, £5,800 per sq m



» Flos, La Plus Belle is an oval mirror surrounded by chrome, gold or copper – plus an LED trim.

Although minimalist, this trio of utilitarian designs capitalise on the idea of making a home appear more welcoming by ridding it of bare expanses of wall (especially bright white ones). They create a focal point without involving elaborate upholstery or distracting chandeliers: an antidote to overwrought interior schemes.

Meanwhile, bed expert Flou launched a wall unit that transforms from a two-seat sofa into a double bed. "I've designed multifunctional furniture for more than 20 years. The aim is not only to let the pieces transform themselves, but also transform the space that they are in," says designer Giulio Manzoni, "because space is the real treasure."

This obvious capacity for bare walls – or lack thereof – to alter the amount of space in a given room was echoed by a new sliding version of Sherazade, a door designed by Piero Lissoni for Glas Italia. Its six millimetres of tempered, almost gauzy glass is sealed within a dark aluminium frame.

"The trend is now to leave more spaces open and interconnected," says export area manager Flavio Parlato. "Sliding doors filter and transform the space, influencing the light and noise, like theatre wings on the stage of our living environment."

## Appetite for artistic expression has found new ways to flourish



La Plus Belle by Philippe Starck for Flos

In the realms of interior design, walls offer the largest blank canvas. While the vogue for wallpaper throughout the home has long since diminished (trompe l'œil aside), appetite for artistic expression has found new ways to flourish.

In May, carpet specialist Sahrai opened its doors on Brook Street, bringing nearly 200 years of expertise from Tehran, Istanbul and Milan to Mayfair. Strolling past, you will spy mannequins artfully draped in Swarovski-studded carpets, and stepping inside the new showroom reveals a number of designs that can be hung vertically in their own right.

"As has been the case for hundreds of years with tapestries, today rugs can be hung on walls as a secret weapon in the mission to create full and astonishing rooms," says owner Ramine Sahrai. "They are not unlike artistic masterpieces, and can make a wonderful centrepiece that adds personality and colour to a room."

The family-run company deals in both rare, centuries-old carpets as well as new wool and silk patterns designed in-house (from £4,800). There are a few more striking ways to welcome guests than with a three-by-two-metre leopard in silk and wool relief (£12,000).

Another creative alternative to framed artworks is decorative tiling, in all manner of materials.



Studioart vector bi-colour



"I think a feature wall still has its importance," says Nadia Dalle Mese, founder of Studioart, the Italian leather interiors firm. This year Studioart has celebrated its tenth anniversary by reinterpreting its bestseller, Leatherwall: a tiled covering that uses geometric combinations of squares, triangles, trapeziums, rhombuses and rectangles to create plush contemporary patterns (from €530 per sq m).

"Its versatility allows you to apply it in bedrooms, living rooms, hallways – we even have some collections that are waterproof," says Dalle Mese. "You can use a feature wall with special patterns, shapes or colour combinations to add to an ordinary room, or if a full wall would be too much, you could use Leatherwall as an artwork."

The pieces are designed and sewn to fit by a team of ten, and the leather is supplied by Studioart's own tannery in Vicenza, the Italian leather-making capital. The anniversary collection includes three new styles to suit minimalist, modern and romantic tastes alike, with padded three-dimensionality and stitching for additional texture.

Elsewhere on the tiling front, there is little rest for the Campana brothers. They have followed their candy-cane lighting for Lasvit and hairy house in São Paulo – one of the duo's first architectural projects, covered in palm fibre inspired by traditional Brazilian



Sahrai  
Leopard  
carpet

housing – with something a little more approachable for glass mosaic firm Bisazza.

"Our range of Cementiles encompasses ancient techniques with a modern twist," says Donna Podger, Bisazza's London showroom manager. The tiles are made from a mixture of fine cement, marble dust and natural pigments, then left outside to dry for a week after being removed from their mould.

"A monochrome splash in a bathroom, a floral-inspired design for the kitchen, a geometric design to bring a hallway to life... the scope of use is vast," Podger continues. "The designers we work with like to push boundaries on making the best impression with walls."

Indeed, Paola Navone, Jaime Hayon and Tom Dixon have all lent a little of their own signature style to the Cementiles range in the past.

This year, the Campana brothers' take was inspired by the spirals found in a slice of agate rock. In shades of a single colour – green, yellow, red or blue – repeated rings come together en masse to form a full-blown 1970s retro vision (from £154 per sq m).

On a more intricate scale, Sici's on Dover Street takes tiling to new heights with Italian-made mosaics. These minute squares are one of the oldest forms of interior decoration,

particularly popular with the ancient Romans, Greeks and Byzantines.

Sici's refashions Giuseppe Arcimboldo and Gustav Klimt's work in materials as varied as marble or 24-carat gold, semi-precious stones and mother of pearl; conjures cityscapes and lifesize images of Marilyn Monroe; and, best of all, creates mesmerising abstract designs that sweep through entire rooms.

When it comes to walls, the next few thousand years look set to be as full of creativity as the last. ♦



Studioart  
Losange

