



One of *Home Journal's* top ten designers for the past two years, Nicole Cromwell is firmly established in the SAR and has completed a stream of projects for high profile clients. She is renowned for her hands-on approach and extraordinary versatility.

How would you sum up your style?

I'd say that attention to detail always comes out in my projects. I've done interiors that are very minimal right through to typically traditional. I like using colour, particularly red and burgundy as they work well with a neutral base.

Which projects have you had most fun with?

I always like working with single guys because they give me a free rein. Recently I completed a project with another overseas designer which was very inspiring because the furniture and fabrics were all sourced and custom-made around the world, and we managed to manipulate a vast empty space into something modern and functional but very stylish.

What elements do you look for in a home?

Natural light is very important as is ceiling height, and any interesting features that divert from the typical Hong Kong box-shaped rooms.

What do you see as the most recent trend in home design?

Anything Indian — the silks, beading, embroidery. Whether you look at fashion, home accessories or fabrics, the quality is getting better, their designs are becoming cleaner and you get amazing value for money.

What do you regard as some of the most common mistakes in interior design?

Trying to make everything in an apartment look too coordinated. I don't want people to walk into my clients' homes and feel that everything is so contrived that you can't sit in a chair.

What do you think will be the next hot thing in interiors?

Experimenting with different materials for furniture. For example, using leather, suede and crocodile skin upholstery on tables, instead of the typical dark wood veneer. Crystal is also becoming very big — as in crystal chandeliers and crystal beading on cushions and throws.

What's the biggest eyesore you've ever seen in anyone's home?

A living room set of furniture which was made from garden gnome-style tree trunks!

Whose work do you most admire in the field of design?

Ed Tuttle (of Amanpuri fame). I also like Kelly Hoppen's style. She doesn't conform to the mainstream and manages to turn ordinary items of furniture into interesting features. She plays with neutrals and patterns in both modern and classic styles and pulls it all together to create a very serene aesthetic.

Please give us one tip on how to achieve style for less?

Those in rented accommodation should cut costs on curtains and structural changes. I believe that you pay for what you get so it is better to spend on furniture, accessories and things that you can take with you when you leave. Custom made furniture is also very reasonable in Hong Kong and far cheaper than imported Italian furniture. The craftsmanship here is excellent and many good fabrics are reasonably priced.

過去兩年被譽為「美好家居」十大頂尖設計師之一的Nicole Cromwell，在本港設計界建立了崇高聲譽，為各界知名人士完成了一系列設計項目。她凡事親力親為，並以其靈活多變的設計特色著稱。

你會怎樣概括你的風格？

注意細節裝飾必然出現在我的項目中。我的設計可以從非常簡約直至典型的傳統風格。我喜歡運用顏色，特別喜歡紅色和酒紅色，因為它們容易和中色底色相配。

哪些項目你認為最有趣？

我喜歡和單身人士合作，因為他們給我極大的自由度。最近我與一位海外設計師合作完成了一個極富創意的項目，所有的傢俱和布藝均自世界各地選購和訂造。我們還預留一些空間，增加華實兼備的現代傢具。

你認為裝飾家居的要素是甚麼？

天然光線和天花高度都非常重要，還有能改變典型香港盒子形房間面貌的任何有趣特色也重要。

你認為在室內設計中最新潮流是甚麼？

凡是和印度有關的——絲綢、珠飾、刺繡。無論是服裝，家居配襯或布藝，質素愈來愈好，設計也日益提高，令你感到物超所值。

你認為在室內設計中最常見的錯誤是甚麼？

我認為是讓室內的一切都相互配襯諧調。我不希望人們走進我客戶的寓所時，感到每件東西都經過仔細安排，令你不敢坐在椅子上。

你認為室內設計將會出現甚麼熱門潮流？

以各種不同的傢具材料進行試驗，例如皮革、麂皮和鱷魚皮做桌面裝飾，取代典型深色膠合板。水晶也開始大戰風雲——水晶枝形吊燈和坐墊、披布飾以水晶珠飾。

你在別人家裏有否看到過十分礙眼的東西？

一套起居室傢具，是用樹幹製造。每件傢具上還有樹枝伸出來！

在設計界中，你最欣賞誰的作品？

Ed Tuttle。我也欣賞Kelly Hoppen的風格。她不跟隨潮流，能把一件普通的傢具變成趣緻的設計。我喜歡她用的布料和色系。她善於在現代或傳統風格的家居中運用中性色系和不同圖案，從而營造非常寧謐柔和的氣氛。

請為我們提供如何營造風格的有關貼士。

住在租用單位的人士宜削減用在窗簾設計和改動建築結構上的花費。我認為你既然花錢，便應該有所得，因此，不妨把錢用在買傢具、配飾以及當你離開時可以帶走的東西上。訂造傢具在香港價格合理，比入口的意大利傢具便宜得多。本地造傢具的手藝高明，此外，優質布藝價格合理。 [HJ]