

# I ♥ the 1980s

The 1980s are back, with primary colours, marble tables and shiny black surfaces making a comeback in spaces from luxury apartments to chic bars. **Rebecca Burgess** goes back to the future to look at what's on offer in today's 1980s, take two.

For many, the 1980s will always be remembered as the decade of the Big Bang in the City of London, when deregulated financial markets unleashed a national spending spree in the UK. The brick-sized mobile phones, sharp suits and angled shoulder pads may seem a world away, but now it appears as if we want to do it all over again. Following years of clean living, straight lines and muted hues, designers are lifting the lids on their paint pots to cater to the increasing demand for all things 80s.

## Inspired by music

Designers Lisa Burke and Matt Hazelden's combined passion for luxury furniture, contemporary art and injection of punk ticks every box of the revival. The pair met through a mutual love of music, having spent the 80s marketing for record labels, and have merged interior design, upholstery and graffiti to great effect.

In 2005 they began collaborating with contemporary artists and designers to create a limited-edition furniture range. Burke told *The Wealth Collection* how she and Hazelden came together through a shared musical background. 'We were both really into graffiti and from there we came up with the idea of creating art on 3D pieces, which is where the furniture comes in,' she explains. 'We have always championed the fact that graffiti is art, and it's finally getting recognised now. Pieces from the late 1970s and 1980s are now collectible, and a lot of pieces on the market nowadays are influenced by that sort of colour and the Memphis movement in Italy.'

## Decorative play

The Memphis group was made up of Italian designers and architects who got together in 1981 and challenged the idea that products had to follow conventional shapes, colours, textures and patterns. It was a reaction against the minimalist design of the 1970s, drawing on Art Deco and Pop Art.

It is this movement which music industry people and private collectors alike are now revisiting, according to Burke. The couple travel to France to buy classic furniture such as Louis

XV armoires and beds, and ship them back to the UK to recycle. They then commission artists to decorate the pieces, which retail for around £7,000 and now sell in Liberty, London.

Their current pieces include the Ellen van de Graaf French Armoire – *Avin It* – a walnut piece painted in fluorescent yellow and orange by the London-based pop artist. Another popular piece is *SheOne* – a French 1890 walnut Louis XV armoire whose floral carvings are lacquered in shiny, mirrored-white gloss paint and abstract typography. 'For me, the real 1980s was definitely about black and chrome – shiny black was a big thing,' says Burke. 'Four years ago I was asked to do a black kitchen and now you can buy them in Ikea.'

## A thirst for style

For 28-year-old Kieron Bakewell, design director at Leeds-based Naughtone, his most memorable passion of the 80s was his favourite Mickey Mouse jumper. But while he may have been too young to remember much the first time around, he is clear about the period's re-emergence.

'I think it's about people asking why we are living in grey buildings,' he explains. 'I don't know why I liked my Mickey Mouse jumper so much, but I know it was a period where you were able to do and wear whatever you wanted and have new ideas. I think there is a real harking back to that styling, the Memphis movement and postmodernism, after going through five or ten years of very clean lines. The realisation at the moment is that stripping everything back to loft living and black and white spaces is not much fun anymore.'



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The piece which Bakewell feels most strongly reflects an 80s influence is his Plus Cross Storage Unit (priced around £500) which has five equally sized spaces at a 45° angle in the shape of a cross – in a choice of coloured finishes. ‘This is the product which I think is visually the most 80s,’ he says. ‘It’s made of quite plain cubes and has a quality of function, but then it’s done in quite bright, primary colours.’

Another of Bakewell’s designs is the portion sofa (priced between £1,150 and £1,995), whose dubious claim to fame is being part of the house furniture in the 2007 series of reality TV programme *Big Brother*. ‘The buttoning on the seat harps back to the modern design but also makes it more luxurious and emphasises the quality as well as providing a good function,’ he says. ‘While the design might not completely reflect the 80s, it’s the ideas they were using during the 80s which are influencing products.’

### Demand for originals

While designers are turning to the 80s for inspiration for new products, originals from the decade are also becoming collectible. Simon Andrews, senior specialist in the 20th century decorative art and design department at Christie’s, says a full-blown renaissance of the 80s is definitely on its way. ‘These things normally start with fashion and follow with artefacts and we have definitely found an enhanced market for 80s products.’

Christie’s has always been able to sell objects from the Memphis movement and there has also been a solid interest in originals by designers such as Ron

Arad and Tom Dixon, whose contemporary status as top designers makes their pieces more collectible. Andrews explains: ‘There is real interest in their early work, and it’s international, not confined to the British, which is reassuring because these pieces do have a particularly British aspect.’

Andrews notes that most collectors are people in their mid-30s to mid-50s, who connect to the time and associate the objects with capturing a moment in history. ‘As with most collectibles, it’s the experience of familiarity that’s endearing – looking back and remembering,’ he says. ‘At the end of the day, good design is good design whether 80s or 90s, and now, 20 years on, it’s easier for us to review the decade, benefit from hindsight and identify its great creations.’

With Christie’s in New York setting the record for the price paid for 80s design sold at auction last month – \$900,000 for a Mark Newson aluminium pod cabinet – now is the perfect time to dig out any old pieces you may have in storage. And dust off a good Bollinger while you’re at it. ■



‘Do it’, Ellen van de Graaf Louis XV carved bed, Burke & Hazelden Collection.

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# Exciting trends in Spanish property

Two regions of Spain are prime for investment, with new air links and luxury developments, writes property consultant Richard A Rooke.

Alicante and Murcia are today drawing more visitors than any of the other Mediterranean coastal regions. Alicante already has its international airport with flights arriving from all over Europe, and an increasing number from all parts of the UK. The small Murcia Airport at San Javier has always had limited traffic as it shares the runways with the military academy air-force base, but a new airport for the Murcia Region will shortly be opening at Corvera, just 30 minutes from the coast. This will be a welcome relief, as the demand for flights into Murcia is increasing in line with the demand for housing in the area, and in particular, the new developments located within easy reach of the new airport.



Apart from the multitude of new top-class residential golfing projects that are already available here, there are a few developments with that extra appeal that sets them apart from all the rest. Take, for example, a new luxury complex inland, where the main theme is horse-riding, built around a fully equipped riding stable and spa, in a beautiful rural setting. First phase prices are

extremely attractive, and the development is virtually guaranteed to be a success.

Another excellent inland project is concentrating on leisure, and the possibilities of practising a whole host of different sports and pastimes. Here, the offer is varied, unusual, and very exciting, located on the slopes of the beautiful Sierra Espuña nature reserve, with the accent on outdoor recreational activities, such as paragliding, trekking, climbing, mountain-biking, horse-riding, archery,

tennis, paddle, bowls, etc. Set in picturesque surroundings, this modern luxury complex, complete with a unique domed spa centre for relaxation, provides a new innovative concept in residential tourism. ■

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