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THE WORLD OF INTERIORS



books



SANDRA NUNNERLEY: INTERIORS (by Christine Pittel; Powerhouse, rrp £49.99) Every Big Decorator eventually produces a Big Book. New York-based New Zealand decorator Sandra Nunnerley has hatched a handsome one, well written on her behalf by Christine Pittel and laid out across pages the size of window panes. Her top-end credentials are artfully demonstrated by the jacket, which shows a staircase hall where a painting by Matisse hangs above a Frits Henningsen sofa next to a bronze by Willem de Kooning.

Documenting ten spectacular domestic projects, all of them American, the property pageant begins with Nunnerley's own apartment, which comprises 'Two adjacent units in a turn-of-the-century Carrère & Hastings town house on a beautiful block close to Central Park.' Here she has polished up the period bones, knocked down walls, added french windows and put in oak floorboards with intentional gaps 'to look like something you would see in an old warehouse'. Furnishings are arranged with characteristically elegant precision, counterpointing sharp modernity and contemporary artworks with a select band of antique and vintage pieces, and the handcrafted charm of a boomerang, an Ethiopian chair and a model of a Maori canoe.

Glamorous though it is, Sandra's home is modest compared to those of her clients: the huge contemporary house featured on the cover, where everything from the paintings to the cocktail table has a famous name attached; the four apartments knocked into one with wraparound windows overlooking New York Harbour; and most lavish of all, the top two floors of Manhattan's Sherry-Netherland Hotel, which has 360-degree views of everything. The various combinations of stupendous square-footage with jaw-dropping locations end with a stonking new country house on Chesapeake Bay that blends traditional style with cutting-edge conveniences. By which time you may be feeling like a small, grubby child, nose pressed against the window of the world's most exclusive sweetie shop.

That said, there is plenty of interest and inspiration to justify a good gawp; Sandra Nunnerley is particularly adept at contrast and juxtaposition, and the photographs do full tactile justice to her sumptuous use of materials, whether the handrail in cast bronze that features on the cover, the snakeskin upholstery of a stool, or the polished nickel of an architrave. The text tells an interesting story of themes and inspirations, and some of these are illustrated, for example the tattered curtains of a Tibetan monastery echoed by a rug, a Jean Royère design for a dining room opposite its modern interpretation, and the Corbusier spiral staircase that prompted a Nunnerley version in white marble, stainless steel and silver leaf ■ ROS BYAM SHAW *is the author of 'Farrow & Ball: Decorating with Colour' (Ryland Peters & Small)*

To order *Sandra Nunnerley* for £44.91 (plus £4.50 UK p&p), ring the *World of Interiors* Bookshop on 0871 911 1747