



## Kitchens & Bathrooms

By Alix Lawson  
Founder, Alix Lawson

Alix Lawson was just 23 when she started her first company and throughout her career has been published in countless design magazines including the FT How to Spend it, The Sunday Times, Vogue and GQ. Alix has been making a dent in the world of interiors for many years, working for prominent families and developers in London and wider Europe as well as all over the Middle East and sitting on the judging panel for both the World Interior News Awards and the A&D Trophy Awards in Asia. Ever the entrepreneur Alix launched her latest interiors lifestyle brand Alix Lawson in August 2019. A firm believer that simplicity is the new luxury, Lawson's new agency brings together lifestyle and interiors. More than just a design firm, Alix wants to change the way clients view interiors and incorporate them into their lives.

**W**ith kitchens and bathrooms there are a lot of functionality concerns to incorporate into the design which can be a challenge for us as designers, but also provides an opportunity to get creative with the mundane. The kitchen has always been somewhat the social hub of the home but this has really been cemented lately and is an essential element of the design opportunities with kitchen design. Rather than the traditional functionality focus, the entertaining element has overtaken cooking as a driving force behind design. We are seeing more and more calls for kitchens that don't look like kitchens, but are more of a statement piece in the home.



*Above: Acacia Road ensuite designed by Alix Lawson*



*Above: Elgin ensuite designed by Alix Lawson*

For instance ‘downdraft’ extractors, which pop up vertically from a concealed space, give clients the opportunity to have their cooking stove in a kitchen island, thereby opening up the room into an open plan entertaining space rather than just a functional zone. We have really seen a change in the last few years with clients wanting more and more of a bespoke kitchen and design opportunities like this can be a great way to overcome certain limitations of the space.

As for bathrooms, amid the rise of wellness retreats we are focusing more and more of our bathroom design processes on bringing ‘the retreat into the home. Incorporating elements of the spa from lighting, materials and open spaces is key to this. A rejection of opulence is centre to high-end design at the moment,

swapping the shiny finishes for mattes, focusing on the authenticity of materials to create refined spaces instead of loud ‘luxurious’ ones.

At the forefront of our studios ‘innovations’ at the moment is a marrying of old and new. The key to this is using traditional materials in new ways. For instance, companies like Salvatori are pushing boundaries with products they bring to market by fusing new technology into their work with stone. In our upcoming central London project we are using a traditional Carrara marble with a new treatment that creates a bamboo like effect, giving a totally new finish.

In another recent collaboration with Lanserring for our project in Notting Hill we got to play with all of our favourite design elements. Authenticity of materials, attention to finishes

and the timeless appeal of Japanese and Mid-Century Scandinavian design led the process, creating warmth, character, and a serene space for family living.

Looking at the more popular requests we’re receiving, boutique hotel bathrooms are definitely a huge inspiration for a lot of private residential clients. We are also receiving a lot of requests for one-off vanity units. Thematically I would say that everything is becoming more bespoke and there is a definite return to natural materials; in kitchens and bathrooms it is very much stones and marbles over ceramics and porcelains, the authenticity of materials is key. Some of my favourite design elements within a bathroom are shower niches and bringing in veneers to vanity units, I really love using light and materials to make the space feel

## ALIX LAWSON

as open as possible and bring a sense of calm to the room. For global inspiration, I look to Australia for a laidback kind of elegance. Contemporary, clean lines, attention to detail with shadow gaps and an affinity with nature are central to Aussie architecture and interior design. I also love getting inspiration from boutique design hotels, I find they're often ahead of the game in showcasing new design trends. Our studio is a blend of Scandinavian, Japanese and Australian aesthetics focusing on a thoughtful simplicity. When we set the studio up last year we said our ethos was to bring a holistic approach to interiors with what we refer to as 'conscious minimalism.' We have always had a heavy focus on

japanese and scandinavian design aesthetics with an Australian twist as per my heritage. In the past six months we have seen this blow up into a huge design trend which we believe will have more longevity than any other. This stripped back refinement is in many ways a reaction to the state of the world, a rejection of the disposable consumer society and a call to simplify our lives, if anything was evident of this tidal wave trend it was the explosion of Marie Kondo and her approach to life and the home. Clients are definitely more exposed to design through social media now than say four years ago, this may be behind the demand for more CGIs earlier on in the design process, as everything is so immediately

visual now clients expect more CGIs as a means of comparison with what they're seeing online. For me personally, going from a large design company to a smaller boutique studio, I have been able to revive my creativity and this has translated into my client relations. There have also been growing calls for a slower pace of life, be it temporary or permanent, people are in pursuit of stillness. Our homes have always been our retreats but for a long time luxury design was synonymous with a loud opulence. This conscious minimalist movement requires thoughtful attention to detail and as a result reduces the volume but increases the sound quality.  
**alixlawson.com**  
**IG: @alixlawsondesign**



*Above: "Rather than the traditional functionality focus, the entertaining element has overtaken cooking as a driving force behind design." Alix Lawson.*