

GET THE LA look

From Sir Elton to Cher, Christina Aguilera to Ozzy, interiors guru Martyn Lawrence Bullard has transformed their homes. **FRANCESCA COOKNEY** finds out how to work his Hollywood glamour on a budget

MARTYN Lawrence Bullard has decorated apartments in London, castles in Italy and beach mansions in Malibu.

Right now he's working on a hotel in Switzerland that was once the summer home of Queen Victoria and he counts Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne among his pals.

It's safe to say he knows a fair bit about glamour.

But the interior designer says you don't need an A-listers' budget to get a unique look. In his current TV show he can be seen transforming an average home in just three days. Out go bland furnishings and safe schemes. In come bold colours and dramatic style as he endeavours to sprinkle Hollywood stardust across the country.

Back home in LA, Martyn's star-studded client lists includes Elton John, Cher, Christina Aguilera, Nicki Minaj, Kid Rock, the Osbournes and Tommy Hilfinger.

FANTASIES

"In Hollywood people want to live out their fantasies," he says. "With Cher's latest apartment, she told me she wanted to feel like the first wife of a maharaja and that I was to create her very own Indian palace in the heart of Beverly Hills."

The London-born designer moved to Los Angeles in 1991 to cater to the rich and famous. His budgets start at \$500,000 (£340,000) and rocket from there. The biggest budget he's ever been given was \$20million (£13.4million) to do up the home of an investment banker in Bel Air.

He sources furniture and accessories from all over the world. "All the fretwork cabinets in Cher's apartment were imported from Morocco," he says. "The screen in the bedroom is from a palace in Rajasthan."

With American musician Kid Rock's Malibu holiday home, he ordered batik fabrics and ethnic accessories from Indonesia and the Pacific Islands.

"I found some amazing necklaces from New Guinea for the bedroom. He sometimes wears those on stage now!"

This look is fashionable now and you can pick up similar pieces in Debenhams and Dunelm Mill. Exotic looks are easy to copy - the key is to stick to simple colours and look out for quirky accessories.

He also decorated the Osbourne's mansion in LA. "The bedroom had silver weeping willows and a fabulous mirrored four-poster bed - you would never imagine that's where the Prince of Darkness sleeps," he says. "You can definitely tell Sharon rules the roost when it comes to decorating!"

But he says his all-time favourite clients are Sir Elton and David Furnish. He gushes: "They have amazing taste. Their latest house is very white and crisp and built around their spectacular art collection."

Martyn says: "You just have to do what you love."

●HOLLYWOOD Me, Wednesdays, 9pm, Channel 4

Style... Martyn

How to make it work for you

1 Get the lighting right
Movie stars understand how important lighting is. Make sure you give yourself plenty of options with overhead lights and softer table and floor lamps. Then you can dim the bulbs and make it soft and sexy or bring them up and make it bright and beautiful.

2 Add some sparkle
Mirrors are a genius trick. A little bit of cut glass in a fireplace or on a table top automatically sparkles it up and gives a room a touch of glamour. In a small or dark space, a big mirror will bring drama, light and glamour and a new energy to the whole room.

3 Be bold with colour
If you're a little bit afraid of going all out with colour, try just doing half the wall. In my bedroom I have cream walls at the top but for the first three feet, up to hip height, I've painted it terracotta red. It adds a big burst of colour but without being overpowering.

4 Don't be afraid to go big
Often people who have small rooms are scared to put anything large in it - but actually you can put big mirrors or oversized sofas and lamps in. It can actually make the space feel bigger rather than smaller. The trick is to keep it to one or two select pieces and not over-clutter the space.

5 Paint the floor
If you've got beaten up floorboards, painting them is a good way to revive them. Paint a big stencil on them - chevron patterns are a big trend at the moment. Or just paint it all white and then do an 8in black border around it. It creates a very strong, designer look for very little money. That's a real Hollywood trick - they actually used to do things like that on movie sets to create different effects on the cheap.

6 Don't forget the ceiling
Ceilings are such a big expense of space and they often get forgotten so that's one of the things I love to do. I either wallpaper the ceiling or I add a trellis design. A graduated paint colour can also add real interest.



Ozzy Osbourne
THE bedroom has a fabulous mirrored four-poster bed - you would never imagine that's where the Prince of Darkness sleeps! You can tell Sharon rules when it comes to decorating.



Pictures: TIM STREET PORTER



Kid Rock
IN his bachelor pad we did a very Zen vibe with lots of masculine dark wood and beautiful linen sofas with an eclectic array of batik fabrics and ethnic accessories.



Cher
ALL the gorgeous fretwork cabinets in Cher's apartment were imported from Morocco and the screen in the bedroom is from a genuine Indian palace in Rajasthan.

Tricks of the trade



Temple Tulips by Amy Butler for Graham & Brown, £26 a roll (grahambrown.com, 0800 328 8452)

And now for something completely different

I HAVE a sample of wallpaper from our last house and would love to have it in the hall of our new home but we can't remember where it's from. How can I trace it?
Pam Connell, Redditch, Worcs

ZENA SAYS: You could try a website called wallpapermatch.com to help you track it down but let me tell you about my search for paper for my kitchen.

I thought I knew exactly what I wanted: something in cheery yellow, plus other bright colours in a floral pattern. I went to a good local supplier which keeps hundreds of samples and was suddenly spoiled for choice.

Eventually, I bought a wallpaper in a blue geometric pattern.

The moral? There are so many beautiful designs to choose from, why stick to wallpaper you've already used in your old home? Life's too short.

Try something new... you may be pleasantly surprised.

Hot tip for a new gas fire

WE have a coal-effect gas fire but I'd prefer logs. Can we replace the coals with logs?
Joyce Webster, Hove, East Sussex

ZENA SAYS: The "coal" in your fire is actually ceramic and easy to freshen up with new "coal" or replace with ceramic logs or even pebbles.

To get a realistic-looking fire, choose different sized logs, coal or pebbles and arrange the larger ones at the bottom, working your way up to the smaller ones until you're happy.

Don't stack them too tightly - you'll need some gaps for the gas flames to work their way through.

Try Grate Fireplace Accessories (gratefireplaceaccessories.co.uk, 0161 408 1431) where prices start at £10.41 for two straight ceramic "logs".

You answer..

LAST week Sarah Pearson asked for advice on painting a blackboard wall over tiles.

ZENA: If the tiles have a shiny ceramic finish, give it a light sand in order for the paint to adhere. Mask off the area and do at least two coats - the more the better.

HANNAH PISA, BY EMAIL: No problem. Blackboard paint works on virtually any non-flexible surface. I've used it on wardrobe doors and wood with good results.

Can you help? I like the idea of watching TV in bed but don't want some huge screen to spoil the decor. Any ideas?
Caroline Wilkie, Edinburgh

Go to mirror.co.uk/homes for more questions and answers from readers

Loan advice when things go Wonga

THOUSANDS of people are turning to payday loans to get them out of a financial pickle every month.

But how many people know what they are really getting into? And how many people jump on the payday loan wagon, thinking that it's a simple solution... only to find they are on a runaway train.

Following my meeting with Wonga this week (see the full story on Page 26) here are some more helpful hints if you have a payday loan.

If you use Facebook or other forms of social media be careful - Wonga has confirmed it sometimes uses Facebook to profile borrowers (with their permission). And if they are doing this it is likely other lenders are doing the same.

So why do they do this? Many users of social media sites post their every move online, so for example if you lose your job and post about it on Facebook, the likes of Wonga can see that!

However, you can stop the prying eyes by simply electing to make your Facebook account private.

Go into your privacy settings and

Q CAN a bailiff force his way into my home?
A NO, a bailiff can only enter your home if you invite them or they have a court order.

Q I HAVE been asked if I have parental responsibility for my daughter. What is this?
A IT'S a legal term. Those with parental rights have all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that go with being a parent.

Q HOW can I stop unwanted sales calls on my mobile?
A REGISTER your details with the Telephone Preference Service at tpsonline.org.uk

mark who can see your future posts as "Friends" rather than "Public".

If you find yourself in a position where you cannot repay your payday loan on the agreed date, take the following steps immediately:

● Cancel the credit/debit card that you gave the payday lender details of as

soon as possible so they cannot keep taking payments.

● Write to the lender and tell them you cannot pay on time.

● Tell the lender how much you can pay per month and therefore how long you will need to pay off the loan.

● Ask for confirmation that all interest charges will now stop.

Wonga confirmed they will accept all of the above measures.

If you have agreed an extension to your repayment date and the payday lender has gone ahead and taken the full payment from your card regardless of this (under their Continuous Payment Authority), demand your money back immediately.

If they don't play ball tell the card provider that the payment was not authorised as the continuous payment authority had been revoked due to the time-to-pay agreement.

If you are a Wonga customer they have pledged to me that they will reimburse customers immediately if they find themselves in this situation.

WATCH THE VIDEO: Claim for delayed or cancelled flights.
To use: Download a QR code app, then scan over this code

Get in touch at askdean@sundaymirror.co.uk

For more tips from Dean go to youandyourrights.co.uk

Follow Dean @deandunham

Six crucial things you need to know about phone contracts

1 If you buy a phone or take out a pay-as-you-go or pay-monthly contract online, by mail order or over the phone, you have seven working days to change your mind without quibble if you do not ask for the service to start at the time you buy. This does not apply to fixed-term contracts.

2 When you take out a contract check your termination rights as nearly all mobile phone contracts do not allow you to terminate early. That means you will be stuck with the monthly payments for the full term of the contract.

3 If you have a two-year contract and your handset stops working after the 12-month warranty period there are two arguments to use:

● If the phone does not last the duration of the contract it is not "fit for purpose" as it should be under the Sale of Goods Act 1979.

● Under European Law (EU Directive 1999/44/EC) the phone has a two-year guarantee so you're still within the guarantee period.

4 If your phone signal is really bad and you told the retailer/provider when

you took out the contract and it turns out that your coverage is rubbish, it could mean the phone is not "fit for purpose" - which will be a breach of the Sale of Goods Act. You can therefore hand the phone back and rip up the contract.

5 If you need to complain, go straight to the provider (e.g. Vodafone or O2) if you purchased direct from them or to the retailer (e.g. Carphone Warehouse or Phones4U). If you get nowhere, every service provider must belong to one of two telecoms dispute resolution schemes: Cias or the Communication Ombudsman Services. These are independent schemes that will investigate your problem about a mobile phone service provider if you haven't been able to resolve your issue with them directly.

6 If you want to take out mobile phone insurance check if you are insured elsewhere, like via your home insurance or bank account (some banks provide insurance as a perk) and read the terms and conditions of the policy - most policies have numerous exceptions such as they won't cover you if your phone is stolen from your car.



My favourite UK shops

Dunelm Mill... is a hidden gem. I found accessories in there that if I was in the Conran store I wouldn't have thought twice about paying a couple of hundred pounds for but they cost £10-£15.

Debenhams... have amazing designer ranges and they're really good for bedding. We got fabulous bed linen in there that looked really expensive but cost a fraction of what I'm used to paying for stuff.

Bhs... is great for lighting.

Homesense... is amazing. I got pillows here for £19.99 that came from a very smart London store and had a £400 price tag on them.

Charity shops... are great for fun ethnic furnishings for just a few pounds. While filming the show I found an amazing Chinese cabinet for £50. I sent it off to a car sprayers and they sprayed it gloss black and it came back looking like a priceless antique.

Orange suitcase £39.99 Homesense

Reflections double duvet set £65 Debenhams

Viva pendant lamp £18 Bhs