

In conversation with

Linda Boronkay

WORDS: JULES TAYLOR

Former Design Director of Soho House and now running her own agency, Linda Boronkay creates interiors for people with soul and passion, and places for people to gather and to celebrate life

Is it possible to be both international and local in the way you work? “Of course! It’s how I approach all projects,” says Linda Boronkay. Currently, the Linda Boronkay Design Studio team is running nine projects across four continents and seven countries. It’s a collaborative network operating from the London office, with satellite and local teams who are the company’s ‘eyes and ears’. “Wherever we’re working in the world, we immerse ourselves in the culture, the history, the geography,” explains Linda, “That’s what makes it all so interesting – every project is unique and not only particular to its location, but also to the people who own the property.”

Linda’s inspiration comes from art, films, fashion, vintage furniture and craft creations, but it’s mostly from how people feel. “It has to be about how people interact with a space: I always want them to feel special, to have a great experience in the space they’re living in – I want them to feel as if they’ve been embraced by someone who’s a great character and for them to want to return. We achieve this by ensuring

there’s a strong sense of place, curiosity and even details that educate about a particular place, culture or history.”

Linda chooses her clients carefully. “We have to have similarities and to feel like we speak the same language for a collaboration to work; it’s almost like dating someone! Yesterday, I met a client for two hours just talking about art, design and movies. People come from different angles, but we have to connect because we’re going to spend a lot of time together.” explains Linda.

Luckily for Linda, her passion for travel is fulfilled. “I love designing around the world because everything is so different. I’m originally from Budapest in Hungary and my family still lives there. Although I still have an apartment in the Castle District of Budapest, I now live in Belsize Park in London with my husband and baby son.”

Linda has recently spent a considerable amount of time in Australia designing a new luxury boutique hotel, Osborn House. Located in the small town of Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales – just two hours from both Sydney and

Canberra, Osborn House dates back to the 1890s. “Surrounded by sweeping views and rolling hills, our brief was to create a Soho House style hotel, but an Australian version with subtler colours, using local materials and working with craftspeople. It’s got the feel of European country living style and is more like a home where people can stay. In the main house, there are just 15 suites (with another seven self-contained cabins that feature fireplaces and outdoor bathtubs) and plenty of segmented spaces, rather than open plan areas, so we emphasised that by making each of the rooms unique with different themes and colour schemes.”

At the front of the hotel, Linda has introduced brighter colours to energise guests, with olive green and light blue in the reception area and warm yellows and oranges in upholstery. In the library, it’s more feminine with shades of aubergine and raspberry and vintage chairs covered in soft pink leather.

The games room has a more masculine feel with indigo blue high-gloss panels and rich mahogany wood. These colours are not typically used in Australia – interiors tend >>

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Linda travels a lot with work: “I love designing around the world because everything is so different... craft is so alive in places – and the history and culture is reflected in them.”



A luxury 5-star boutique hotel in the mountains of New South Wales, Osborn House pays homage to the past with a contemporary twist

to be more subdued and pastel. “The bedrooms are all shades of green – from forest greens to teals, offset with soft pinks and blues – with the aim of bringing nature in and making guests feel relaxed. The nature is extraordinary here. It’s a truly magical place, a wonderful environment. While the flora feels European – the gardens are romantic and a bit formal – the climate means the plants are large, a bit overgrown and lush. It’s a beautiful setting.”

Creating the interior was a highly creative process. None of the lighting or furniture pieces are off-the-shelf. Linda sourced vintage pieces from Europe and shipped

them over to Australia. “It feels like it’s someone’s home with a collection they’ve built up over the years. Our design influence is on everything – staff uniforms, bedlinen, glassware, crockery – every detail has to be right.” explains Linda.

Linda employed local carpenters, ceramicists and artists, including Jai Vasicek from Byron Bay. “As soon as Jai saw the gardens and property he fell under their spell and we just let him loose to decorate the corridors and garden suites. He’s created beautiful bespoke murals in the garden.”

So, was this Linda’s favourite project? “I love whatever I’m working on, especially if

the location is interesting and has history, then it makes the process exciting. When we were working in Beirut, history and culture is reflective in sculptures, glass works, metalwork and carpentry. The tools were right there on our doorstep, and it was amazing to be able to discover and use them. Currently, we’re designing a private club in Madrid and a members’ club in Vienna. I’m learning about the Wiener Werkstätte (Viennese Workshops) movement – established over 100 years ago, but it’s so brave, modern, relevant and cool.” **AS**
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