

Design Dreams

Fran Hickman
Design & Interiors



Moda Operandi © Fran Hickman Design & Interiors

West London native and interior design maven Fran Hickman is no stranger to the Notting Hill design scene. Daughter of property developer John Hickman, Fran built her own career in the creative sector, working for Soho House Group and Waldo Works before setting out on her own in 2014. With an impressive client list and portfolio, Fran Hickman Design & Interiors quickly became the leading design studio in town, and we're not surprised why. Some of her projects include the stunning Goop store on Westbourne Grove, the highly raved Chess Club in Mayfair, and elegant Moda Operandi store in Belgravia. The studio's main motto goes by the saying that interior design is inherently social; merging storytelling and symbolism to create mesmerising commercial and residential spaces. We had the chance to sit down with Fran who spilled everything about her projects, biggest inspirations and how growing up in London influenced it all.



Fran Hickman © Fran Hickman Design & Interiors

You're a west London native, Fran.**Can you tell us a little bit about your upbringing in the area?**

I grew up as one of six siblings in an old-fashioned townhouse in Kensington, close to Holland Park. A house packed with noise, people and things. I understood from a young age the importance of well-made personal space. My mother, and to a degree my grandmother, grew up on Campden Hill Road so as a family, we feel pretty rooted to the area.

How did you kickstart your interior design career?

Whilst studying photography in New York, I worked for a dealer called Martin Waller who travelled the world and brought back treasures. I loved the stories about the pieces he would bring back and the world they would summon and I think it was then that I decided to go into design – creating bespoke interiors with thought behind them felt like something I could happily do for the foreseeable future. Following that I worked for Soho House, Sibyl Colefax and John Fowler, the architectural practice Waldo Works, a YBA artist who had been commissioned to design a 40k square foot residential interior and a developer converting car parks in Soho into loft apartments. After that I started my own company in 2014.

What is your favourite part about running your own studio and brand?

I love the variety – the people, the places and objects – each one opens up a new world and the freedom to explore new ideas within that. I also love the way that my studio works, where the grounded belief is that at the heart of all good design lies great story-telling. In collaboration, our clients are encouraged to play a central role in authoring their own design. Tailoring the way a client lives or works to the specifics of their history, locale and architecture, the studio then creates singular designs from the language of existing environments. The rewards of this are huge – unforgettable design directly reflective of your personal style or brand ethos – making life and work more productive, more playful, calmer, happier, even healthier.

What aesthetics and architectural features define your work?

We aim to keep shape, texture and colour interesting, innovative and simple.

Any local interior designers you think we need to look out for in the upcoming months?

I really admire Retrouvius. All of their work is sustainable, stylish and comes with a good story.

Do you have a favourite project you've worked on to date?

I can't choose a favourite but I will always be particularly fond of my first retail project for Moda Opernadi, Belgravia and my first hospitality project Chess Club, Mayfair. Both clients were dreamy in that they gave me clear briefs and boundaries in regards to deadlines and budgets and then gave me free reign to play.

Any secret local gem you would like to share with us?

Negozio Classica for the wine, Hereford Road for the food, Golborne Road for the street life and the canal for the peace.

franhickman.com

