



CULTURE | INSIDERS

## How to achieve your dream home, according to award-winning interior designer Kelly Hoppen

Work of art

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Kelly Hoppen MBE shares valuable tips and tricks on how to get your dream home and the creative process behind her amazing luxury designs

In the world of [interior design](#), Kelly Hoppen is a juggernaut in her own right. After renovating a family friend's kitchen when she was just a teen, Hoppen has come a long way in her star-studded career. Four decades on, she remains in a league with the greats and regularly shares the 'top 10' list with peers such as Steve Leung, Philippe Starck and Jade Jagger. Her visionary and innovative work makes her a luminary force in the industry, even earning an MBE by the Queen in 2009.

Name any space, Hoppen has already employed her signature touch all over it as the "Queen of Taupe"—whether it's designing [luxury hotels](#), cruises, residences, planes, or bars.



One of her famous design philosophies, "East meets West", was beautifully brought to life when Hoppen debuted her design expertise for the YO08 luxury residences at 8 Conlay in Kuala Lumpur, blending modernity, minimalism and textures into an opulent abode.

Ahead, Kelly Hoppen shares valuable tips on how anyone can achieve their desired dream house and the importance of the home in the current pandemic.

**What is your current self-quarantine routine?**

"I try to start each day with a workout, and will go through all emails. I then sit down to work and design some of my current projects which is exciting. To keep in touch with people, from my family to my team, I find it's very important to FaceTime as it's good to have this face to face contact. I try to keep motivated each day and to keep a structure which I find really helps."

**With the current pandemic and many people stuck at home, how has the idea of home and space changed?**

"We have all been thrown into a situation beyond any of our wildest dreams and we are having to act fast and calmly. As we enter this new way of living for the time being, it is important to remember that **the home is our sanctuary**, always has been and always will be, but now the entire family has to live together 24/7. So, we need to look at our spaces and make some changes that work for everyone. If two people are working from home, you need to make a specific 'office area'. However big or small, these spaces need to be kept as organised as possible."



Design by Kelly Hoppen for a luxury show apartment in Taipei, Taiwan

**Your designs have an "East Meets West" philosophy—what do you think are the key differences between the two and how do you consolidate them?**

"We wanted to create an environment where someone could walk into YO08 and say, 'Wow, I feel like I can live in this space'. So I designed the spaces in the YO08 residences, in an East meets West fashion, and all they have to do is put their clothes in the drawer, food in the kitchen, and they put their own personal objects in."

"You're actually becoming part of a community, and I think that is what's so brilliant about it. Of the two themes (Urban and Spring), Urban is really a fusion of East meets West; it's got clear lines, it has a hint of glamour, a slightly eclectic taste and plenty of style. Spring pairs an earth-tone palette with weathered surfaces and unbleached fabrics."



Spring-themed living and dining room designed by Kelly Hoppen for YO08 Residences



Urban-themed living and dining room for YO08 Residences

**What is your creative process going into designing a space or building?  
What is the first step?**

"The design process begins with meeting my clients, each person within the home will then fill in a questionnaire which lets me know key things about how they live. We then work through tear sheets of style and ideas and then I start designing. For the final part of the process, we present the design boards to the client.

"When I design a space, I take time to visualise the lifestyle around it: sleeping, waking up, watching television, etc. What I do after this lifestyle mapping is try to add more details to what I visualise. I know I have been successful because all these little elements make people go, "Wow!" I don't just imagine a wooden floor—I'll also think about how it feels when I touch it. The texture and sensorial details add up. For a home buyer who has never experienced these before, these things are big moments.

"My design philosophy has always been to create timeless and understated elegance, whilst also fusing the Eastern principles of simplicity with the Western taste for sumptuous textures and luxurious finishes. Simplicity is key."



Design by Kelly Hoppen for YOO at Pune, India

**In an age where people are obsessed with "aesthetics" what with the rise of Instagram and Tumblr in recent years, how has this hindered or encouraged interior designing ideas?**

"I think they are great platforms of course, however I think they risk hindering people's true imagination and stopping them from using art, music, nature and fashion."

**What are some things people should look for when attempting to design their own home?**

"Planning your house is very important! Don't just buy things without thinking about if you really need them or where you are going to put them. You have to ask yourself a few questions from the beginning such as: **What lifestyle do I have? What do I and don't want? What colours am I looking for?**

"Then, break it down into several categories that you can work around, focusing on how you live every day. You have to look at your space and start with the basics in order for you to work your way up, and eventually charm it up with accessories."



Design by Kelly Hoppen for YOO in Pune, India

**What's the biggest no-no when it comes to interior design for a home that clients should know about?**

"Don't overdo trends or try and be too clever, and remember that there still can be too much of a good thing! Overkill is *never* a good look."

**What are three must-have items to use as accents for anyone looking to decorate their home?**

"Natural tones, sumptuous fabrics and vintage pieces. You can keep things chic without spending too much by changing carpets to wooden floors which makes a huge difference to the ambience of a room. Additional lighting, new accessories and cushions can also make all the difference. Three things to keep in mind when de-signing a space are: **texture, colour and proportion**. They keep harmony in a space."



Design by Kelly Hoppen for Regal, London

**Going back to people stuck at home for long periods of time due to the pandemic, what are tips for anyone looking to maximise space in a medium-sized home in Malaysia?**

"It's a great time to re-shuffle rooms, move sofas and chairs, and try different ways to place the furniture to get a fresh look—this can also be super fun. Swap cushions from bedrooms to the living room just to try new things—but, try not to argue in the process! When I suggested this to my other half, he looked at me with horror and went off for a walk!"

**You've worked with many high-profile clients including celebrities, has there ever been a clash of ideas and how do you go about solving them?**

"For me, working with clients is the same whether they are celebrities, entrepreneurs or people that you meet in the supermarket, their homes are the most important thing to them and it needs to be perfect."

**You debuted your design prowess in Malaysia for 8 Conlay. Tell us more about what went into designing the luxury branded residences.**

"It was a great project for our Malaysia debut, as YOO and KSK Land wanted us to bring something international but creating something that was accessible. My inspiration for Spring was earth, so we used very warm woods, metals and bronze colours, lots of detailing with slices of marble. The bathtubs used are from my own designs that I did with Apaiser, which is called Origami."



"The Urban concept is very different in its colours and textures, so I wanted to create two very different looks. Urban is quite sharp, there is a lot of chrome, black lacquer; for the bathroom it has the black marble, the doors are very different, so you've got a completely different look."



**Lastly, what is next for Kelly Hoppen in 2020?**

"I have got some very exciting collaborations with Focus SB and de Gournay which we are launching soon—stay tuned!"