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*This page:* in the kitchen, a huge slab of Carrara marble is topped with a Dish Doctor rack, designed by Marc Newson for Magis. *Opposite:* Charlotte and Marc get cozy on one of the Svenskt Tenn sofas, upholstered with a print by Josef Frank

# DESIGN FOR LIFE



*Marc Newson is famous for his sleek, minimal designs. Stylist Charlotte Stockdale likes feminine influences with traditional touches. So could they find harmony in their first home together? Vanessa Barneby finds out. Photographs by Henry Bourne*

An early start, 8.30am on a grey wintry morning in London, and the door is opened by a fresh-faced Charlotte Stockdale and her beautiful, bare-bottomed two-year-old, Imogen. Scheduling time with *Vogue's* contributing fashion editor has not been simple; as a stylist for the magazine, and creative consultant for designers such as

Viktor & Rolf and Fendi, shoots can take her as far away as Alaska or on a three-week trip on the Trans-Siberian railway. Today, an hour has been found between her return from New York (where she has been working on the Victoria's Secret fashion show), a shoot here in London, and an 11am flight to Shanghai, where Stockdale will cover the Karl Lagerfeld show for *i-D* magazine with her old friend Amanda Harlech.

Charlotte's dark hair is tied back, her skin is make-up free, and her calm smile belies the long-haul flights and back-to-back shoots of her daily life. She's casually dressed in loose-fitting jeans, with bare feet, and a G-Star Raw sweatshirt by her husband, Sydney-born industrial-design guru Marc Newson. Leading the way through the entrance hall, flanked by floor-to-ceiling cupboards in a celadon-green lacquer, she moves into the vast open-plan living space. "We're going through a bit of a green phase," Marc explains later, admitting that even his car – a 1960 Aston Martin DB4 – is painted in the same shade. The blonde oak feels warm underfoot, and an array of toys scattered across the floor provides a welcome touch of reality. When I visited their home a week ago, it was hard to believe it was lived in, but with owners who regularly hop between London, New York, Paris and Tokyo, leaving the apartment in the hands of a housekeeper, this is not surprising.

Howick Place, in Victoria, was built in 1894 and was once a Royal Mail sorting office. It was bought two years ago by Alessandro Cajarati Crivelli, the Italian developer most famous for creating Milan's fashion quarter, Zona Tortona. Crivelli's purchase of the 120,000sq ft building originally came with planning for 122 flats alongside an arts complex to include galleries, exhibition rooms and offices. But he chose a more sensitive restoration, creating just nine apartments in the residential space.

With 16ft ceilings and windows pushing 10ft, the flat is an extraordinary urban dwelling. "Marc was looking for an office," Charlotte recalls, "and I remember him ringing me and going, 'It's the most amazing building, and there's space on the other side for living in!'" And so it is that he works from one side of the building (conveniently alongside Phillips de Pury, the auction house responsible for last year's £1.1 million sale of Marc's Lockheed Lounge, the curvaceous aluminium chaise longue he designed in 1986), and



Marc's retro-futuristic design aesthetic is visible everywhere – including in his Low Voronoi Shelf

lives with his wife and child on the other.

The housekeeper serves breakfast from Marc's grey marble Lathed Table (one of a limited edition of pieces that were shown at the Gagosian Gallery in 2007) at the kitchen end of the main room, which stretches 80ft from end to end. "The one thing we wanted was lateral living," says Charlotte, over a bowl of spelt muesli. "My previous house, in Pimlico, was five floors, with just a couple of small rooms per floor, so it's amazing to see Imogen running around this place." Working with his associate architect Sébastien Segers, Marc gutted the space and started from scratch, undoing the template Crivelli had

designed. Everything, from the smooth wood floors, polished plaster walls, lacquered kitchen units and solid marble bathrooms – with not a sharp corner in sight – was custom-built to his exact specification. "Marc's attention to detail is almost alarming," says Charlotte. "There were a lot of things that had to be re-done – you'd see the nervous looks pass over the builders' faces every time he walked through the door!"

One glance across the room and Marc's retro-futuristic aesthetic is everywhere.

A huge slab of elliptical Carrara marble makes up the kitchen island, his Dish Doctor rack for Magis the only object protruding from the even surface. A galleried room ("Marc's control tower," quips Charlotte), with curvilinear glassless windows, overlooks both the kitchen and living room. And against the wall, Marc's cellular Low Voronoi Shelf, named after a mathematical diagram and carved from a single piece of marble, sits opposite his balloon-like Diode floor lamp. Even the crisp white monogrammed linen place mats (a wedding present from Anthony and Carole Bamford) are laid with tableware Marc designed for Qantas Airways.

"I'm very happy and comfortable living in Marc's style," says Charlotte. "I don't think he could stand living in mine. We're spending so much more time now in London, rather than Paris [where Marc also has an apartment], and I wanted him to be in his comfort zone. As long as I have curtains, dimmable lighting and a library, I knew that I could happily live in it."

Charlotte got her library. The second floor of the apartment is accessed via a central stairway and lies alongside the full-height main room. Nestled in the heart of the property, at the top of the stairs, is an oak-panelled room, modelled on a sixteenth-century library. It is lined with old family photographs and books – Helmut Newton, Julius Shulman, *Interieurs '70*, a beautiful bound collection of Dumas – and furnished with two sofas clad in Colefax & Fowler tweed.

Prior to their marriage, Charlotte and Marc owned separate homes, the aesthetics of which couldn't have been more different. Charlotte's was a classic Victorian townhouse in >



Lacquer cabinets stretch from floor to ceiling. "We're going through a bit of a green phase," says Marc



As a fashion editor and consultant, Charlotte's wardrobe is extensive

Glassless windows on the top floor overlook the kitchen and living areas



Imogen's bedroom features a Diode lamp, designed by Marc, with limited editions exhibited at Galerie Krao, Paris



The striped-marble bathroom, Marc's favourite room, is a marvel of curves and smooth edges



The master bedroom features a wooden chair by Marc for Cappellini. He plans to decorate the room with fractal-inspired wallpaper



*Opposite:* Charlotte's traditional library is lined with oak panels. The sofas are upholstered in Catelex & Fowler tweed. *This page:* "Charlotte has probably had a library in every house she's ever lived in," says Mare. "I love it in that environment because it's so unexpected."

HENRY BOURNE



Marc's glossy Mies van der Rohe chairs (limited editions of which were exhibited at New York's Gagosian Gallery in 2007) stand out against the blonde-oak floors. On the wall hangs a ballpoint-ink piece by Italian artist Alighiero Boetti

HENRY BOURNE

London; Marc's was an open-plan Fifties red-brick villa on one of the highest hills in Paris. "His was a super-spruce, super-modern bachelor pad," recalls Alice Rawsthorn, design critic of the *International Herald Tribune*. "Hers was very pretty, very feminine, and filled with family mementos. Typically, they've magicked up a new home that suits them both." Loosely based on a room in her parents' Hampshire home, Charlotte's library provides a stark contrast to the rest of the space, but, in Rawsthorn's words, it's "so charming, cosy and surprising that it fits in beautifully". "Charlotte has probably had a library in every house she's ever lived in," says Marc. "I never have. The reason I love it in this environment is because it's so unexpected. It's very theatrical, and kind of wacky and quirky."

Marc is cool and charming. Articulate, deliberate and softly spoken, he takes pains to describe the inspiration behind certain architectural features, like the giant stone wall in the living room. "We wanted to preserve the sense of volume, but at the same time create an atmosphere and a warmth that's quite difficult to achieve in such a large space." Sharing a hatred for lofts, the one thing Charlotte and Marc wanted to avoid was for the apartment to look like a stark, New York-style gallery space – so Marc looked to chalets for inspiration. "The thing about chalets is that they're naturally cosy, no matter how big they are," he says. One Swiss chalet, in particular, owned by Roman Polanski and featured in the 1959 Hitchcock film *North by Northwest*, helped them settle on an idea. Breaking up the huge expanse of polished plaster, a stone wall offers the required warmth and texture, but also an element of surprise.

"It's so easy to think that this is Marc," Charlotte says, gesticulating towards the lacquer and marble so typical of her husband's look. "But he's also got this funny, quirky taste. There are some unexpected things that are Marc, like Tanuki, who's hiding behind the stairs there," she smiles, pointing towards a carved wood bear with enormous testicles. "He's a symbol of good luck in Japan."

Alongside the stone wall sit two huge Svenskt Tenn sofas, upholstered in a leafy print by Josef Frank. Overhead, an antler chandelier adds to the Modernist feel. "First you are transported to Palm Springs, then the baronial library creates a totally different

atmosphere," says *Vogue's* fashion features director, Harriet Quick, a close friend. "The bathroom feels like a Middle Eastern hammam. But all these areas of contrasting resonance somehow gel together."

Charlotte and Marc's bathroom is a striped marble pod, entered and exited via a pair of space-age doorways. It's a marvel of smooth-edged ellipses, with no corners to be seen. "The marble comes from this particular factory in Italy where I've worked a lot," says Marc. "They can carve seemingly impossible shapes out of marble." A deep roll-top bath takes



Unusual features such as this Cow Bench by Julia Lohmann add humour to an otherwise minimal space

centre stage beneath a skylight, alongside a sauna and a luxuriously large pair of basins. Pools of light bounce off the stone surfaces for an amazingly zen atmosphere – it's no wonder that this is Marc's favourite room.

As one would expect, the apartment has been fitted with the latest technology. A boiling-water tap and Fisher & Paykel Dishdrawers alone make the kitchen utterly enviable, and the slick new oven Marc designed for Smeg "feels like the Leica of ovens", according to Charlotte. Even the loo, a Japanese design, comes with a control panel featuring an image of a hairdryer – apparently for blow-drying one's bottom.

All that remains to be decorated is the main bedroom, the only area of the house where their opposing tastes have yet to be resolved. "Charlotte loves wallpaper, but I have mixed feelings about it," says Marc. "You've got the de Gournays and the Zubers, and then just about every other wallpaper is horrible. There's really nothing in between." Unable to agree on anything produced in the market, and having often thought about designing his own wallpaper, a Newson creation seems the perfect compromise. "I've designed a wallpaper inspired by fractal theory

[geometric shapes that can be subdivided into infinitely smaller versions of themselves], the same source of inspiration I had for the necklace I did for Boucheron." Anyone who's seen this piece of jewellery – an intricate swirl made up of 1,400 diamonds and sapphires – will have no doubt that the wallpaper will be magical. "Now I need to find someone who will print the design on a Venetian blind as well," Charlotte says, "so the pattern will flow, seamlessly enveloping the room." It seems it's not only Marc with such meticulous attention to detail.

As Imogen scoots past at break-neck speed, it's easy to see how well the space works as a family home, but one can't help but envisage the wild parties that could be thrown here. A famously fun hostess, Charlotte insists they've had just one party since September, when they moved in. It was given for Nadja Swarovski and *The New York Times's* Stefano Tonchi during Frieze, and the 60 guests didn't even touch the sides. Alice Bamford paints a wonderful fashion moment in her recollection of "Suzy Menkes and Vivienne Westwood locked in conversation on the stairs, while behind them Gareth Pugh was whipping Katie Grand with one of Charlotte's hunting whips!"

When the *Vogue* team returns a few weeks later, the kitchen surfaces are littered with debris, but it's not your usual morning-after-the-night-before mess. Martini glasses on silver trays, empty crystal cocktail jugs, half-eaten Ladurée macarons and bleary-eyed Newsons are evidence of a late night, but not without the seemingly effortless touch of glamour one would expect from two style icons. As Alice Bamford says, "The great thing about that place is it's the perfect blend of both their characters. It's the marriage of two wonderful minds, reflected in every room." ■