

real life TRACY LOWY

A behind-the-scenes take on Tracy Lowy – the personality behind London's 'secret' hotel, No5 Maddox St. Her philosophy is to combine good design and space with all the comforts of home. By Jo Denbury Photographer Chris Tubbs



AT NO 5 ABOVE LEFT: bedrooms are set up with private dining and work facilities, complete with modern linens and portable phones. **ABOVE RIGHT:** No 5 doesn't have a lift; the only way up is via the elegant central staircase. **BELOW LEFT:** the reception room, with its curved walls and stunning fish tanks, is the only public space in the hotel – all your needs are catered for in the bedrooms. **BELOW RIGHT:** each suite is an inner-city sanctuary, with soothing organic colours and natural materials. Guests can relax on the super-comfortable beds while burning a choice of oils in the aroma stone.

What is your philosophy for design? Creating comfortable, understated, sensual interiors, designed around the modern lifestyle.

What is your favourite design object? Currently my sexy, stainless steel Siemens fridge.

What would you like to see less of? Hotels with lobbies that feel like airport terminals.

What do you avoid and why? Paying exclusive prices for non-exclusive items, like a £75 candle which only burns for four hours.

Who in design are you watching? Tom Bertlett at Meath Baker Design, currently working on Hotel Seratoga in Cuba. His design combines a unique blend of old school style and modern urban.

How do you define good taste? Bradley's delicatessen in Ludbury Road; delicious, fresh, home-made food.

How would you describe your home? A light, comfortable living space. A luxury junk shop which has been the testing ground for both Fountains and No 5 Maddox St.

Do you have a favourite nook or cranny? No, I don't like them. Well, maybe under the weeping willow in the communal garden.

What is it you like best about your home? The view of, and direct access to the gardens.





What is your biggest decorating mistake? Age 12—a pink shag pile carpet.

What would you say is your best interiors decorating trick? Maximising space by using a neutral colour palette that's brought to life with touches of greenery.

Where do you find most of your things and source ideas for your home and hotels? I'm constantly on the look out – both in London and when travelling. South East Asia is particularly inspiring—the Super Hotel in Bangkok for example, where they manage to balance luxury and comfort without being over the top.

What is the best thing you have found? Recently, *The Little Book Of Wrong Feng Shui* – it really made me laugh.

Do you have a favourite place where you like to sit? My Mongolian sheepskin floor pad in my living room.

What inspires you? Unconditional love.

What is your newest obsession? Lemon soap by Sugarbath, yoga and the new Andy Williams record, *Music For Swingers*.

What look are you getting into? Vertical cuts of bamboo with tropical leaves from McQueen's, a float in St John's Street.

What is your most treasured possession? My passport.

What can't you live without? Humour.

What type of decoration will you never do? Design by committee. Experience has taught me never to say never – who knows, a pink shag pile carpet may be coming to a bedroom near you.

What do you think will be the next big thing in interiors? I've recently seen a sleek, battery-operated table lamp called the 'Lala Pham', designed by Robert Grace and produced by Loax.

Reservations for No 5 (0171 792 4070)



AT LOWY'S HOME

ABOVE LEFT: Tracy's latest obsession. Leave a bar of lemon soap unwrapped and the doors open and its aroma will scent your home. **ABOVE:** the neutral tones and contrasting textures in Lowy's flat have been translated into the design of No 5. **FAR LEFT:** the simple white fittings and stone floor of the bathroom give the room a calm, monastic air.

BELOW: brushetta with broad beans and parmesan shavings, from Bradley's Deli/Catessen in Ludbury Road. **BELOW LEFT:** Lowy's outsized Siemens fridge-freezer.



LEFT: each suite has a private kitchen and "big bar" facility with both healthy and naughty food options, from Ben & Jerry's Chocolate Fudge Brownie ice cream to yogi tea. Upon arrival each guest receives a complimentary grocery pack.

