

READING THE ROOM

BRITISH DESIGNER TARA BERNERD BRINGS HER THOROUGH, THOUGHTFUL
AND SOPHISTICATED INTERIOR APPROACH TO PROJECTS THAT ARE HELPING
TO REIMAGINE THE SOUTH FLORIDA LANDSCAPE

BY DANIELLE CHARBONNEAU





SPANNING THE GLOBE:
Bernerd's luxury interior
background includes hotels/
projects in New York, London,
Hong Kong and Miami.

Tara Bernerd oozes creativity as she speaks over Zoom from one of her home offices in Milan, Italy. The globally renowned and contagiously effervescent interior architectural designer is wearing a burgundy blazer threaded in cream lattice-plaid. The lapel is adorned with a turquoise brooch ensconced in a flame-shaped golden rim. She's wearing thick-framed, creamy-gold glasses and chunky rings on four fingers of the left hand she passionately waves while describing, in detail, exactly what she means by her term "Design DNA."

The phrase, which has been part of her brand's ver-

She's also no stranger to South Florida with projects that include Four Seasons Hotel and Residences Fort Lauderdale and her latest, the Perigon, an uber-chic, oceanside condo complex she's designing in collaboration with OMA Architects and landscape artists Gustafson Porter & Bowman that's set to open on Miami Beach in 2025.

Bernerd thinks of buildings as she does people, with skeletal structure, muscular forms, skin, clothes, accessories, history and culture. First: the interior shape, with its curves, lines and spatial geometry, which, she says, must harmonize with the building's external architecture.

"If you were dressing a person, whatever their per-



ROOM WITH A VIEW: Bernerd will bring the outside indoors at the Perigon, the luxury residential project debuting on Miami Beach in 2025. (Rendering courtesy of The Boundary)

nacular for decades, has been widely printed in media but rarely expounded. Finding a building's "Design DNA," Bernerd explains, is the first, most critical step to approaching any new design project.

In Bernerd's case, her A-list projects not only capture and express such innate qualities, but they take the British designer around the world.

Her résumé includes the behemoth Grand LA, which she worked on alongside architectural genius Frank Gehry in Los Angeles; the Hari Hong Kong, a five-star luxury hotel in China; the Villa Sabina in Ibiza, Spain; and the Maroma, a Belmond Hotel nestled in the Riviera Maya of Mexico.

sonality, you'd first want them in the gym and in the best shape they can be in," she says. "Internal architecture is paramount to what we do."

Then there's the walls, floors, furniture and color palette. Next comes the lighting fixtures and how they interact with the rhythms of natural, surrounding glow. Climate, environment and function also influence design. How will individuals interact in the space? What is the flow of motion and essential energy? These are the thoughts that swirl in Bernerd's artistic mind. Discovering a project's Design DNA, Bernerd describes, is essentially getting to know a new person—and birthing them into existence.



RAISE A GLASS: Bernerd also is designing chic amenity spaces at the Perigon—including this wine room. (Rendering courtesy of The Boundary)

“That’s how genuine this kind of approach is,” she says.

While there are stylistic threads that remain somewhat consistent in Bernerd’s designs, such as global influences (from Bernerd’s childhood growing up in London and her subsequent international travels), a vein of industrialism, sense of comfort, varied textures, pops of color and geometric patterns, no two buildings have the same personality.

Bernerd’s team at Tara Bernerd & Partners—which celebrates 21 years of collective creativity in April—has become masterful at bringing unique designs to life.

With a background in film school, Bernerd says she sees parallels between her design team and the work of a buzzing movie crew.

“People don’t usually see the connection [with film],” she says. “But there is actually a lot of crossover. It is the greatest coming together of creative talent. The storyboarding. The imagining of something that doesn’t yet exist.”

For the Perigon, Bernerd says her team wanted to keep the design clean and pure.

“Even though ordinarily we believe in layering and layering, here [at the Perigon], we thought maybe less is more,” Bernerd says.

The resulting design will incorporate natural tones, expansive windows, a flow between indoor and outdoor spaces, and earth-inspired textures like stone and wood. The design’s trend toward minimalism allows it

to feel spacious and fresh, complementing the sunshine, expansive Atlantic views and gardens surrounding the sleek, cascading curves of the building’s tower.

While visiting Florida for the first time in 2014 to begin designs on Four Seasons Fort Lauderdale, which opened in 2022, Bernerd says her preconceived notions of South Florida as MTV’s spring break capital were smashed when she discovered Las Olas Boulevard to be more reminiscent of the breezy Mediterranean, with its canals, higher-end resorts and yachting enthusiasts. Bernerd’s design for the hotel thus tried to evoke the Riviera lifestyle and capture “an era when Chris-Craft yachts and Capri pants flourished.”

Her design plans for a new project on Fisher Island have yet to be unveiled, but she has revealed that she was recruited by Related Group for the project, Six Fisher Island Drive, the last available development site on the historic island. The project will be an exclusive, 50-condominium complex designed by Kobi Karp Architects.

Bernerd’s involvement in all these South Florida projects may be a good indicator of the area’s growing place as a global destination. Bernerd says she is happy to help advance South Florida’s portfolio of impressive architecture and design assets.

“We keep striving, and we never sit back because the world is changing,” she says. “[South Florida] is changing.”

Lifestyle

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