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Clients: Mr and Mrs Hugh Sassoon
Photographs by: Fritz van der Schulenburg





Classically contemporary

Derek Frost was commissioned to redecorate this apartment, designing new furniture to complement his clients' fine antique collection. Text by Catherine Haig, with photographs by Fritz von der Schulenburg

DEREK FROST's twin skills are naturally complementary: interior design and the design of furniture. He rarely, however, has the chance to combine the two in the style and scope illustrated on these pages.

His brief for this elegant period apartment in central London evolved gradually as redecoration progressed from room to room. His clients were collectors of fine antique furniture and paintings but were also keen to patronise new, young, contemporary talent.

Derek Frost's designs for furniture, though clearly contemporary,

1 Derek Frost designed the tripartite mirror as a companion to the antique bookcase below it. The rug was made to his design by Morgan & Oates.
2 End-tables in grey-stained sycamore with cherry and massar birch inlay flank the sofa. Their 'architectural' character was inspired by the fine eighteenth-century columned bookcase on the opposite side of the room (3). A Kingcome stool is covered in Jim Thompson silk and, at the windows, plain silk dress curtains are caught back over striped silk inner curtains.



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draw their inspiration from the past and employ rich, voluptuous materials which blend well with antiques. He recalls, 'The most exciting part of this project was to be able to design pieces which were to stand beside some of the finest examples of previous periods.'

'The interior designer's job,' he believes, 'is to make space grow.' Faced with the drawing-room, a large, elegant room, but disproportionately long and narrow, he avoided the solution of creating separate seating-areas, railway-carriage-like at each end of the room. Instead, one sofa was placed against the long wall, creating a focus for one main conversation-area. The two end-tables, designed by Derek Frost, are deliberately 'architectural', the design alluding to the magnificent columned bookcase placed in the centre window-bay opposite. Simple but sophisticated Italian-strung curtains and cool pastel-toned upholstery give the room a Japanese-like simplicity.

The cue for the dining-room was an existing dark-green carpet, and the colour is repeated on the leather chair-seats and the velvet curtains. Green lacquered walls, edged with gilt battens, offset the paintings, the picture-lamps casting a warm glow on the antique furniture.

In contrast, the main bedroom was devoid of special pieces of existing furniture, allowing the designer greater freedom. Against a shimmering metallic-grey background, he added bold touches of red in the Thai silk by Jim Thompson used on the bed and the leading edge of the curtains. The bedside tables are a Frost design, with rusticated bases supporting marble tops. Opposite, the dressing-table is also by Derek Frost, its stately dimensions and rich decoration in perfect harmony with its setting □

An exhibition of furniture by Derek Frost is at Leighton House, 12 Holland Park Road, London W14, from June 10 to June 20.

1 *and* **2** *Furniture in the dining-room includes an antique apothecary's chest.* **3** *and* **5** *Walls in the main bedroom are lined with fabric by Turner Wallcoverings. The TV 'bureau' by the windows was designed by Derek Frost and made by Richard Ould with metalwork by Gordon Burnett.* **4** *The dressing-table and mirror were made to Derek Frost's design by Peter Hoare, with gilding by Sebastian Wakefield and Lucilla van den Bogaerde, marquetry by Tim Deans, and glass handles by Diane Radford.*



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