

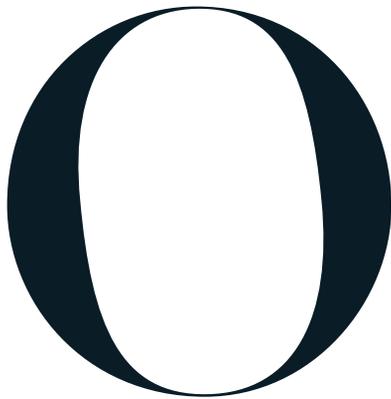


MAKING A STATEMENT

TOP DESIGNERS AT HOME



ABOVE BEGONIAS OVERFLOW ON THE COURTYARD LOGGIA. ANTIQUE MOROCCAN LANTERNS AND RUGS; ANTIQUE WICKER CHAIRS CUSHIONED IN LOCAL STRIPED LINEN. **OPPOSITE** IN A GUEST BEDROOM, AN ANTIQUE ENGLISH CHAIR IS UPHOLSTERED IN A LE MANACH COTTON. 19TH-CENTURY ENGLISH WRITING TABLE; WILLIAM IV MAHOGANY SIDE CHAIR IN A NAMAY SAMAY FABRIC; LOCALLY EMBROIDERED CURTAINS; ANTIQUE MOROCCAN RUG.



On a sultry summer evening two years ago, with the paint in his rooms barely dry, London decorator Veere Grenney bravely threw open the doors of his Tangier villa for a charity performance of Terence Rattigan’s play *After the Dance*, directed by Rob Ashford. The script called for a Mayfair drawing room, 1938, and Grenney’s supremely soigné living room, swathed in a rose-patterned

chintz and crowded with ballroom chairs for the occasion, fit the bill to cut-crystal perfection.

At one end of the space, two large Jansen mirrors, circled with coral-like branches, reflect a convivial roomscape of commodious armchairs and plump sofas beneath a stepped Soanian ceiling. At the other, a sunroom clad in treillage opens to breathtaking views across the Strait of Gibraltar, the roiling Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and Cape Trafalgar on the southern tip of Spain, less than 30 miles away.

Writers, artists, and assorted creative types have been drawn to this wind-blown spot ever since the

ringleted Catherine of Braganza brought Tangier as part of her dowry when she married England’s Charles II. Samuel Pepys wrote in his diary under a fig tree in the casbah square. Beat poet Jack Kerouac marveled at “this dream of white robed Africa on the blue afternoon Sea” when he arrived by ferry, adding, “Wow, who dreamed it?” For Truman Capote it was “a timeless place” where “the days slide by less noticed than foam in a waterfall.”

Fueled by those literary echoes, a shaggy-haired, starry-eyed Grenney left his native Auckland in the early 1970s and arrived in Morocco at the age of 23. “I had this magic idea of all the people that lived here,” the AD100 star recalls. Reality did not disappoint. Here he soon met Mickey Raymond, a Colefax and Fowler Assoc. alum who, like many British aesthetes, had created a charming Tangerine home of his own. Raymond soon invited Grenney to dine at Villa Léon l’Africain, where the former Sotheby’s expert Richard Timewell lived in elegant retirement—only for Grenney, dressed in dungarees, to find a gathering of suave older bachelors.

“It was the manifestation of everything one had ever dreamed of growing up in suburban New Zealand,

