

In Conversation with Camellia Interiors

Commercial Show Home, St Ives - interior design, furnish, home staging, project management



We talk to Elaine Skinner, design director and founder of luxury interior design practice, Camellia Interiors about what makes them different, what it takes to stand out in the Cornwall luxury holiday let market and how to achieve maximum return on investment on your holiday property.

Why would a client select you to help with their second home?

Firstly, the return on investment they know I can achieve for their revenue and secondly the relationship they can build with me. Mostly when clients come to us, one half of the couple is looking after the expenditure and the other the design, these two elements can often conflict and I understand how to merge them so everyone is happy. My focus is always on the client's investment costs and what can be done to a property to maximise revenue; but I'm not frightened to say to a client where they absolutely cannot cut corners.

Secondly the relationship, I personally do all the design and work direct with my clients until design is signed off, there isn't a team of graduates working with you offering you just one look, usually a 'Scandi sheepskin throw and bamboo furniture roll out'; each project in the designers repertoire looking the same. I would always advise a client to look at a designers case studies, you want to see a variety of work and styles as opposed to an Instagram looking feed of the same thing over and over. You are not getting a personalised design for you with this style of interior design, you are getting a branded design that is

rolled out for each and every client. You can't expect to stand out from the crowd and command the best return if you look the same as everyone else.

What sort of work do you do?

For private clients we often start with just giving a holiday home the finishing touches they need to get the home ready for rental, or we might do a complete package of flooring, curtains, blinds and furniture; all depending on budgets and requirements. We'll often be asked to then accessorise the house ready for it to be let with a holiday letting company whilst the owner retains a number of weeks a year. Lastly we work with clients to create their own dream second home that is purely for their personal use.

We also work very closely with architects, property developers and holiday let companies staging show homes and styling properties to add value, salability and desirability; sometimes a whole house, sometimes just a few key rooms. I totally understand what it takes to stand out in this crowded market and pride myself on achieving maximum return on investment for all our clients, whatever their goals. On average our methodology increases holiday home revenue by at least 25%, which is pretty impressive considering how saturated Cornwall is with options.

We also help estate agents advise potential buyers on suitable investment properties, how to maximise a property's potential and add value, plus working with

Below: Bluewater, Holiday home with Cornish Horizons, St Ives - renovation, interior design, installation



clients who are struggling to sell, we've had a lot of success in this area and it's fantastic being able to help people in this way.

What advice would you give someone trying to enter the luxury holiday let market, or someone who wanted to up their game?

If you want to enter into the luxury holiday let industry and command the best price for your property, then you need to speak to a designer that understands this field. Luxury holiday letting is competitive; you want to make sure your interiors not only look great but that the space works well for the job intended. Interiors should be hard-wearing and not date when the latest trends change. Sometimes investing slightly more in the beginning can make a huge difference to your return on investment long term and a good designer will be able to explain this to you and advise accordingly.

We don't tend to follow trends, our designs are timeless and classic, to make sure they last; not just the heavy footfall and everyday wear and tear but outlive any trends that may come and go. We totally understand just what it takes to set the tone for today's discerning customers and deliver ultimate return on investment for our clients, it's why they keep coming back.

What do your clients appreciate most?

I have 30 years experience in the industry and my commitment to keeping the practice small means all clients get to work with me personally. This close interaction with clients enables me to deliver a highly individual and tailored service and one that sees many returning time and time again for the personal and professional service they know they will receive. Clients really appreciate having one point of contact all the way through and knowing I'm overseeing everything on their behalf, they know their project is in safe, professional and experienced hands.

I take the time to fully understand our clients, the property and their objectives, and creatively design to meet their individual needs. Our clients always have peace of mind and full transparency of our process and know that it will be completed on time and on budget. I thoroughly research each project to completely recognise the plans, architecture and wishes of each client we work with and because we are BILD registered Interior Designers, it means we can often suggest work that a client would not have thought of, or perhaps thought only an architect could do, including complete reconfigurations of a property to maximise use of space and earning potential.

If you'd like to speak to Elaine about your project or to discuss ideas for potential work contact her at: www.camelliainteriors.co.uk

