

hello  
again!

## THORP NEWS, ISSUE II

Welcome to the second edition of the Thorp Newspaper. Over the following pages we reveal our most recent projects and give a unique insight into what makes our talented coterie of architects, interior designers and landscapers tick.

We hope you enjoy it!

Philippa and the Thorp team



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II

## WORK/LIFE BALANCE

### CELEBRATING LIFE IN AND AROUND OUR SW1 HQ

While the fun and buzz of our Motcomb Street-based studio served us well, we have since moved on – albeit just a stone’s throw away – to Sloane Street, where our contemporary new office space sits in a prime position atop Louis Vuitton’s latest flagship store.



Shops on Sloane Street



'The Only Pub on Sloane Street'

*In close proximity to Knightsbridge and Hyde Park, with numerous lunch-break options and sumptuous Pierre Hermé macarons within easy reach, where better to work? We especially like watching all the characters who stroll up and down this luxury shopping street. Meanwhile, for some of us, the pull of Prada,*

*Gucci and Jo Malone can prove too hard to resist! And with 'The Only Pub on Sloane Street' (as it is known amongst the locals) just a few doors down, we've found a quaint little watering hole in which to enjoy an occasional after-work get together.*



### IDEAL LOCATION...

The best thing about being here is the shopping – very dangerous – and taking my sister's dog Pigeon for walks in Hyde park.

– *Laetitia Thorp, interior designer*



### PARENTAL PRIORITIES

Balancing work and life is never easy, especially with a two-month-old baby and an 18-month-old toddler! When you love your job with a passion that inspires and motivates, then you somehow find a way where everything works out. I manage by setting a few rules. I prioritise my time and focus on all the important and urgent tasks so that when I am with my family they have my full attention.

– *Olga Gkigkopoulou, architect*



### LOW FLYING POSE

Recently, some of us decided to skip an office drinks outing and go to yoga instead. It turned out to be an Aerial Yoga class. The instructor had us all flying about in these huge slings! I thought wow, that really is something quite unusual... I've never gone flying on somebody's feet before!

– *Philippa Thorp, director*



### THE DREAM JOB

Working with listed buildings is a particular passion of mine. I am also obsessed with clean lines and volumes. My dream would be for a client to call us and say they have bought a special plot on a remote Greek island!!!

– *Afroditi Kirmi, head of architecture*

## III

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

The Thorp team have been busy bees of late. A garden design project in north Hampshire recently led to the client asking us to do the interior design of their house. Usually, it's swatch books first, pitchforks second.

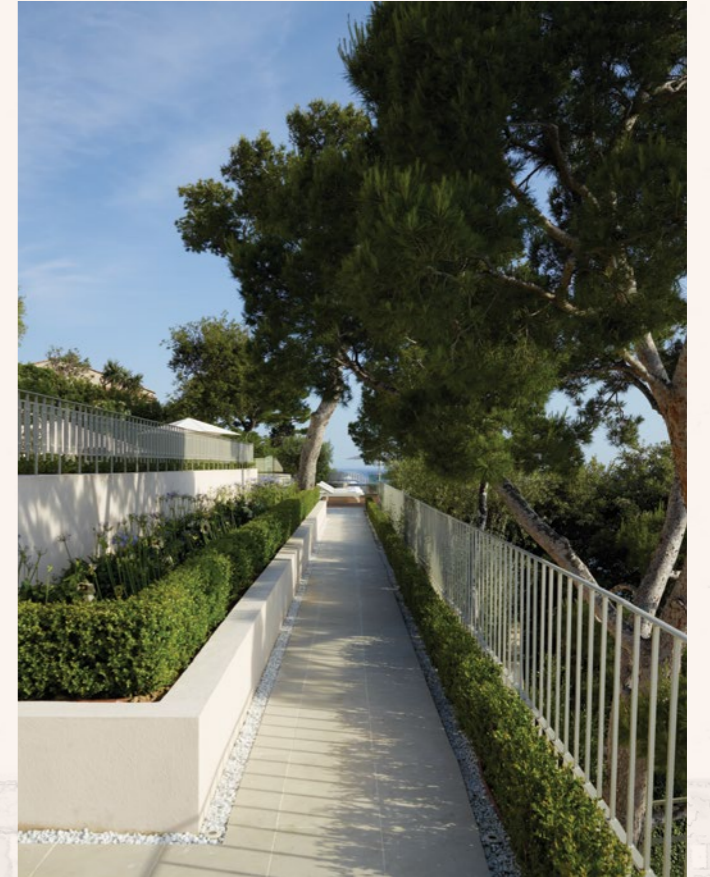
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4



**Thorp garden projects, from city to coast**

1. An avenue of London Plane trees in leafy Hampshire
2. Dale Chihuly sculptures weave through the undergrowth in a South London garden
- 3,4. Clean lines in the South of France create vistas out to sea

*Thorp's 360 degree design business continues to grow.* Architecture, interior design and landscape gardens are an integrated part of our philosophy. We passionately believe that gardens are an integral part of every house we design. They are rooms to live in and savour. When designing gardens we focus on how

the space will be seen and enjoyed from the house as well as the physical journey through every outside room. Colour, shape, form and vistas are our every concern and we try to incorporate sculpture, lighting, views, water and sound into all that we do.

# DESTINATION: AMERICAS



“One of the huge excitements about our jobs is that everywhere we go in the world we are looking at other people’s cultures, their art collections, architecture and history...” says Philippa. The art and culture scene in both Bogotá and Antigua Guatemala is so rich and established. The latter is a UNESCO World Heritage site where the architecture is influenced by the Spanish baroque. We were lucky that in both of those cities each of our suppliers wanted to teach us about their fascinating cultures and took us to see some of the best

galleries, museums, sculpture parks...We had the most wonderful time.” Olga was just as bowled over by both Bogotá and Antigua Guatemala. “You can’t help but be inspired when working in Central America because the cities you see there are so vibrant, so colourful,” she says “that inspiration stems from everything. The fabrics, the buildings, the streetscapes, to every tiny detail on the doors and internal courtyards.”





Philippa and Olga, Miami

“Shhh... don’t tell anyone, that was supposed to be our little secret!” laughs Olga when quizzed about the amount of domestic flights she and Philippa ‘accidentally’ missed while visiting their suppliers across Central America. The first time it happened en route from Miami to Bogotá they blamed it on getting up too early and losing track of time as they waited in a badly lit airport cafe. As for the second time, Philippa adds: “We got up at 4am for an 8am flight in Guatemala but because the traffic at that time in the morning is chaos – total gridlock by 5am – we missed the first of three flights that day!” As these intrepid travellers know too well, sometimes you have to give in to the travel gods and just go with the flow. “I bought funky pieces of organic jewellery and a sculptural jade head from one of the many artists’ studios we visited in Bogotá,” says Philippa. “Olga is so generous and kind – her present buying even extended to me, when I’d be in the same shop, often standing right beside her!” she adds.





Meanwhile, in the Bahamas...



A family beach house



Secluded private holiday house



Creating a cool interior in a breathtaking location

V

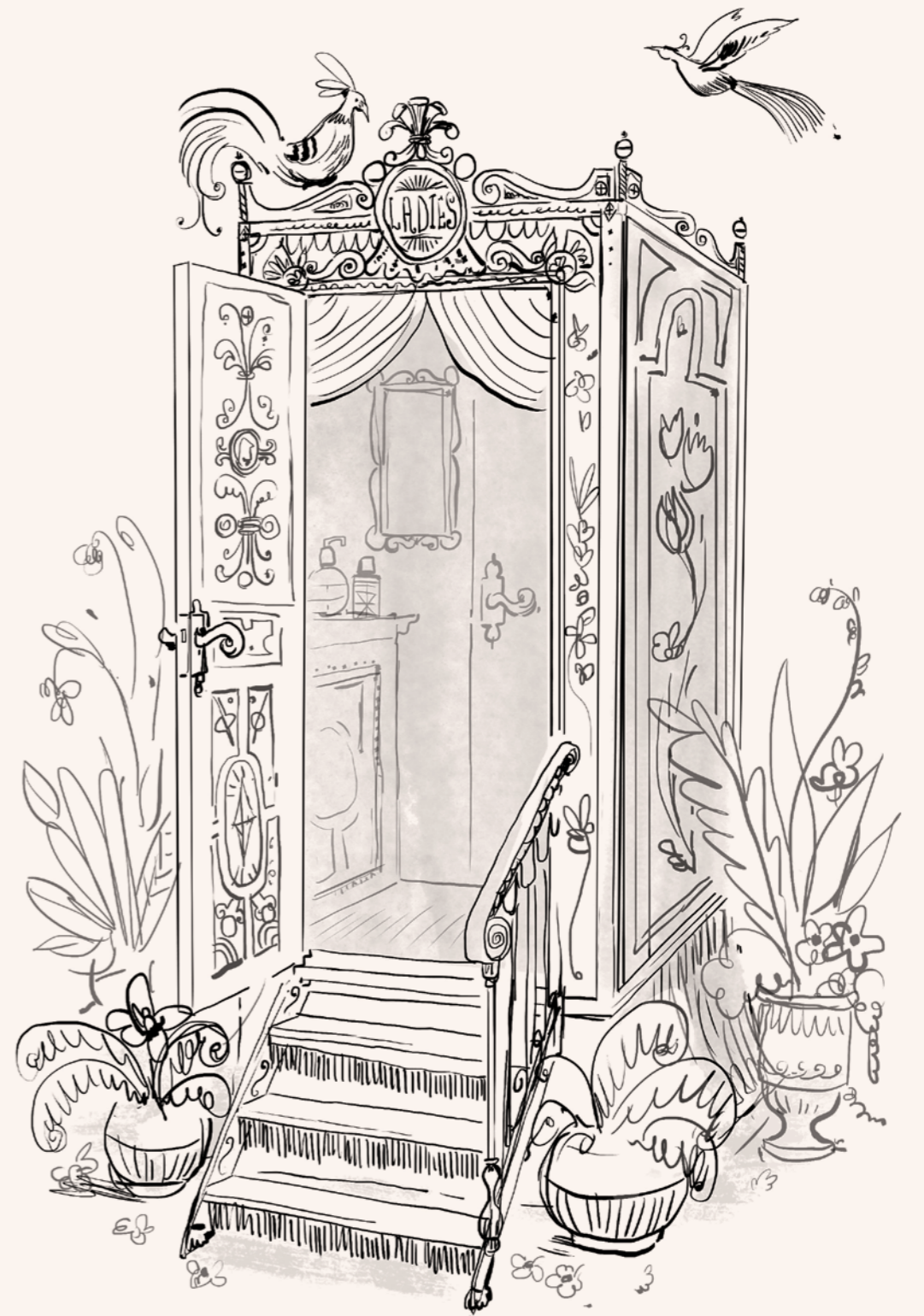
# A THRONE OF ONE'S OWN

*When John Harington invented the first flush lavatory 400 years ago, he had a woman in mind: Elizabeth I. Now, if only the same consideration were given to the women working on predominantly male building sites today! According to a recent survey, one in five UK sites falls short of offering separate loos and washing facilities for female employees!*

Our female architects and designers make frequent trips to building sites. And while facilities are provided, no offence gents, but judging by the state of some of them, let's just say that the ladies at Thorp would rather cross their legs. As Philippa Thorp laments, all too often our pre-site inspections would go something like this: "Ok girls, we will shortly be passing a coffee shop so if anyone needs to go, speak up - it's your last chance for eight hours!"

And here's another fascinating loo fact for you. In 1884, Philippa's great-grandfather, George Giles, also played his part in the battle for better sanitary conditions. As an eminent civil engineer, he produced extensive plans for the design of an elaborate underground sewage system in Lincoln.

With this as the backdrop, imagine our delight when a recent contractor surprised us on-site with a girls only Portakabin complete with running hot water and a lavish lavatory. Well, if Givenchy did loos...!





Michael Vaughan  
at Thorp

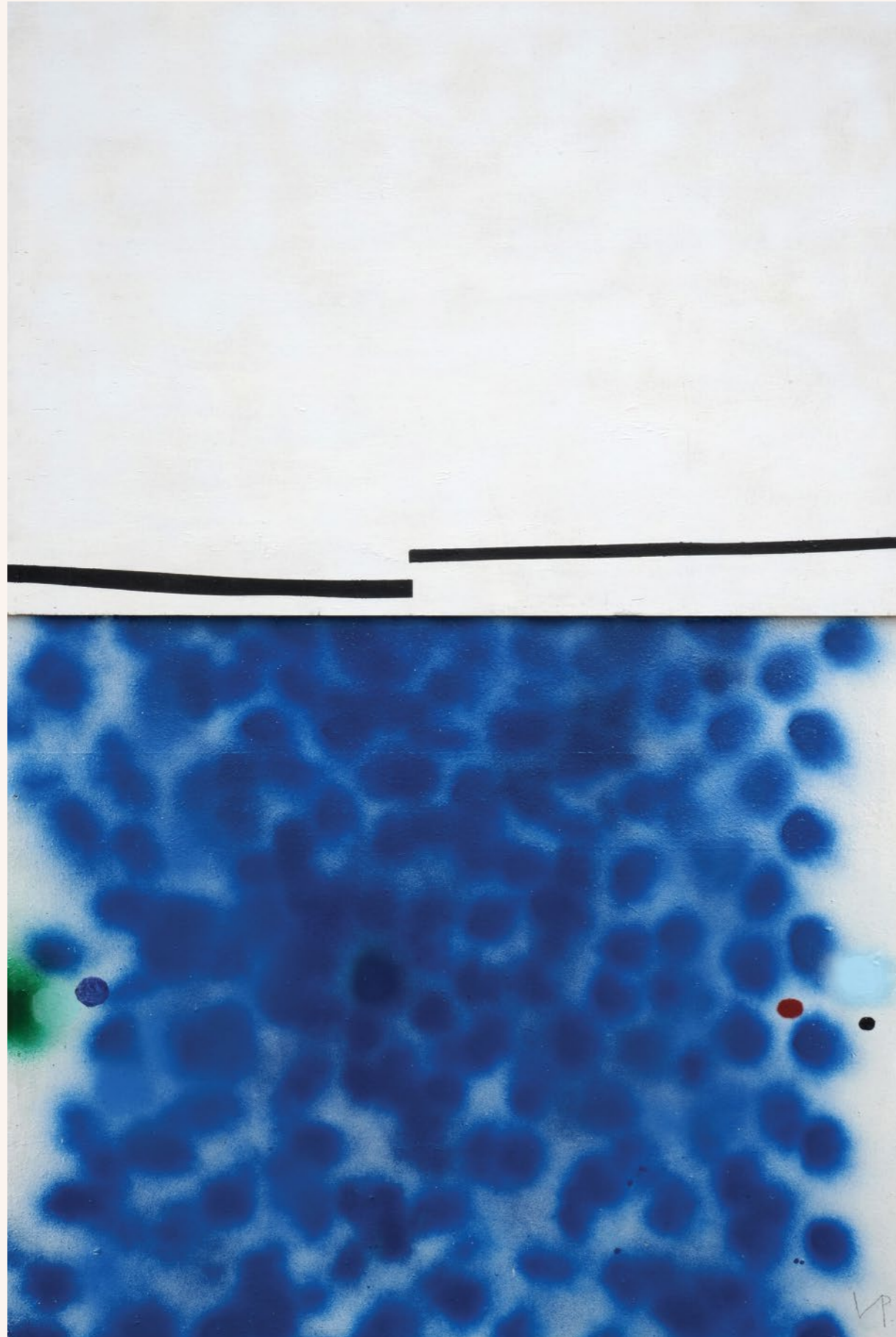
## VI

THE GALLERY  
AT THORP

Our in-house gallery provides clients with the latest artworks selected by our designers in a light and tranquil setting.

*With art being such a huge part of our every project, Thorp now have an in-house Gallery which provides clients with rotating exhibitions and pieces available to buy. We often design a room starting with the art, which can influence the choice of style and colour. The artwork ties the whole space together.*

Our long, mirrored gallery in Sloane Street showcases artwork by the likes of Sandra Blow, The Connor Brothers, Adrian Heath, Sir Terry Frost RA and many esteemed artists handpicked by us.



Victor Passmore



Adrian Heath



Michael Vaughan

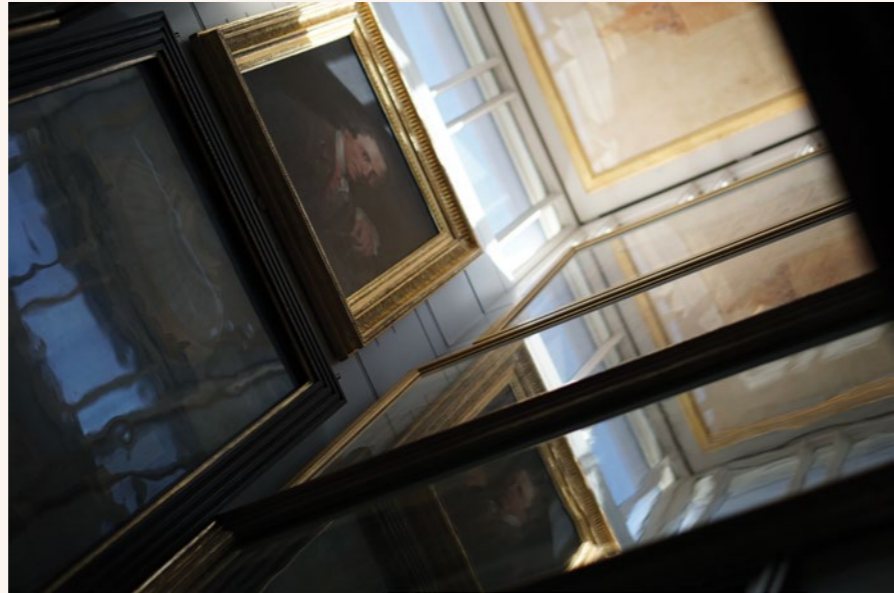
A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black top, is shown from the side, touching a large, polished marble wall. In the background, a woman in a red top and a man in a grey shirt are walking away. The scene is set in a museum hallway with warm lighting and ornate architectural details.

VII

STUDIO DAY OUT:

## SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM

London's world-class art galleries and museums provide us all with endless sources of inspiration. And since we like nothing better than an urban field trip to drag us from our drawing boards, we recently decided to make tracks for the Sir John Soane's Museum. There we discovered timeless beauty and simplicity of form in every nook and cranny of this historic house, museum and library, left untouched since the great man's death in 1837.



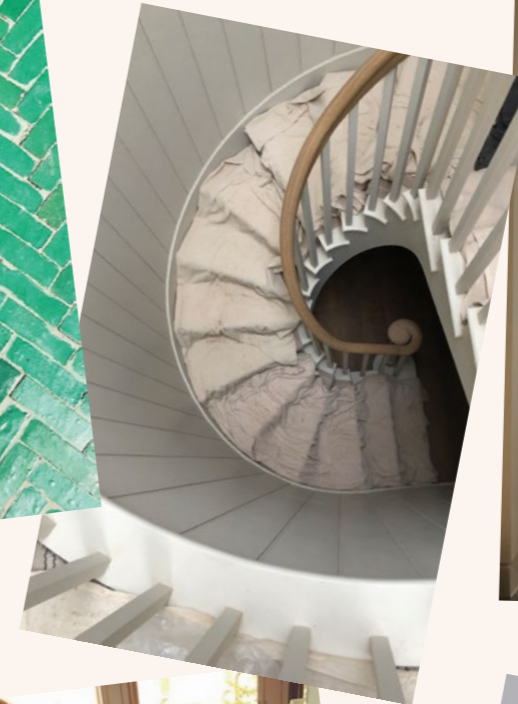
“You can’t understand what minimalism is unless you have travelled through a more detailed world,” says Philippa Thorp, who passionately believes in a ‘less is more’ design philosophy. “The proportion of everything in the museum is so beautiful. I do think you get inspired by seeing the greats and Soane was undoubtedly one of them.” As for Thorp’s interior architect, Camilla, it was Soane’s use of space, the way bookshelves open out to reveal hidden rooms, as well as the

ornate wallpaper, which adorns walls throughout the museum, which left a lasting impression. She says: “The curators found some old fragments of the original wallpaper and reinstated it in the house, just as it would have been. The colours are so bright – so vivid. I loved visiting this tardis of a building and imagining how this legendary British architect lived. It made me want to go back in time to learn more.”



# THORP SNAPSHOTS

From planting in the Bahamas to Philippa and Belle pretending to be a table and chairs, daily life at Thorp is much more fun than a hard hat and high-vis jacket!



♥ mattporteous, lettythorp and 14 others  
thorp\_design @norinamarshall ready for her close  
up! #officephotoshoot 📸 🐦 🐶

## ‘Lionheart’ Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge!

Thorp is extremely proud to have sponsored the Oar Inspiring team in this epic feat of endurance; a rowing race across the Atlantic Ocean using muscle power alone. Setting off from the Canary Islands, over four million rowing strokes and 35 days, eight hours, five minutes later, theirs was the first British boat to arrive in Antigua to take 2nd place overall! Oar Inspiring will also be submitted into the Guinness World Records as the fastest family team of four to row across the Atlantic Ocean from east to west. At the time of writing, the team has raised £87,770 towards the Starlight charity. They hope to raise £250k so please donate if you wish!

[www.starlight.org.uk](http://www.starlight.org.uk)



## First Impressions: The Malleable Table

Thorp teamed up with British furniture maker Sebastian Cox and ceramicist Matthew Raw to commission a unique piece for one of our clients. Philippa was among the guests at an incredible dinner at Selfridges curated with aplomb by The New Craftsmen. Wine glasses, elbow dents, plates and cutlery all left their mark on the untreated clay top surface. At the end of the evening, the slab was cut into pieces and transported back to Matthew's East London studio. There, each tile was glazed in a rich shade of emerald green, creating a permanent reminder of this unforgettable night. It was then over to Sebastian to create the timber structure for the table using English hardwoods.



## Thorp and VR

Virtual reality is a game-changing way for us to communicate our design with clients and they are loving the experience.



## It's a Thorp life...

An ever-growing team produces a lot of news. Welcome back to Sarah Hampson who - after a gap of 14 years! - returns to work at Thorp, as Philippa's PA. Wedding and baby news - Belle and Camilla both got married and Olga brought her newborn to the office to pose with Afroditi. Sarah's youngest is also pictured top-right, playing with Belle's baby.



Justin and Belle



Bertie and Harry



Thank heavens for little girls



George and Camilla



## IX

## THE STUDIO PUP: “PIGEON”!

## ‘THESE THINGS I KNOW...’

Pigeon, Thorp’s lovable office pooch, is a familiar fixture in our Sloane Street studio. The black lab belongs to Camilla Blandford (née Thorp) and her husband George and celebrated his first birthday on their wedding day. That his name is Pigeon couldn’t be more apt. As Camilla says: “We called him Pigeon because George’s other dogs are all named after birds such as Teal and Quail. I wanted to call him Puffin but George liked Pigeon and he won! As he’s a London dog, I think he suits the name now, although people in the park think I’m a crazy bird lady whenever I call him!” We decided to give our favourite goofball the last word (woof?), so, over to you Pidge.

**Mayfair or Knightsbridge?** Knightsbridge is my hood. I go to the park every day and go swimming in the Serpentine, which I love almost as much as chasing a tennis ball that my owner Camilla throws dutifully for me. I am also friends with a lot of the doormen along Sloane Street. They are really kind and keep treats in their pockets for me for when we walk past each day.

**Pub or private member's club?** I did go to Annabel's in Mayfair once. It has nice pink loos and silver dog bowls. Frankly, I'm not sure why all dog bowls aren't silver...

**Frank Gehry or Mies Van der Rohe?** Neither! I prefer Frank Lloyd Wright as his buildings were more at one with nature, and I LOVE nature!

**Soft cushion or faux fur throw?** A soft cushion that I can walk round-and-round in circles on until I find the perfect comfy spot to sleep.

**Doga or flyball?** 100% flyball. Tennis balls are LIFE!

**The Financial Times or Horse & Hound?** Definitely Horse & Hound.

My owner George plays polo and I love going to watch him and hang out with the ponies.

**Beach or pool?** Both! I will gleefully belly flop into any form of water whether I'm allowed to or not. My owner's mother, Philippa, gets really cross with me for jumping in her swimming pool at home but I don't care. I just do it anyway because it's so much fun. Camilla and I do lengths together but I'm a bit faster at swimming than she is.

**Yacht or private jet?** Private helicopter. My owner George is a pilot and he takes me up. I like looking out of the window at the view across the fields. England is pretty beautiful from the sky.

**Abstract expressionism or Pop Art?** I'm quite goofy, so probably pop art.

**Chicken or biscuits?** I'm not fussy really. I basically eat everything I can get my chops on, except limes. I tried one of those once and spat it straight out.

**T H O R P**

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