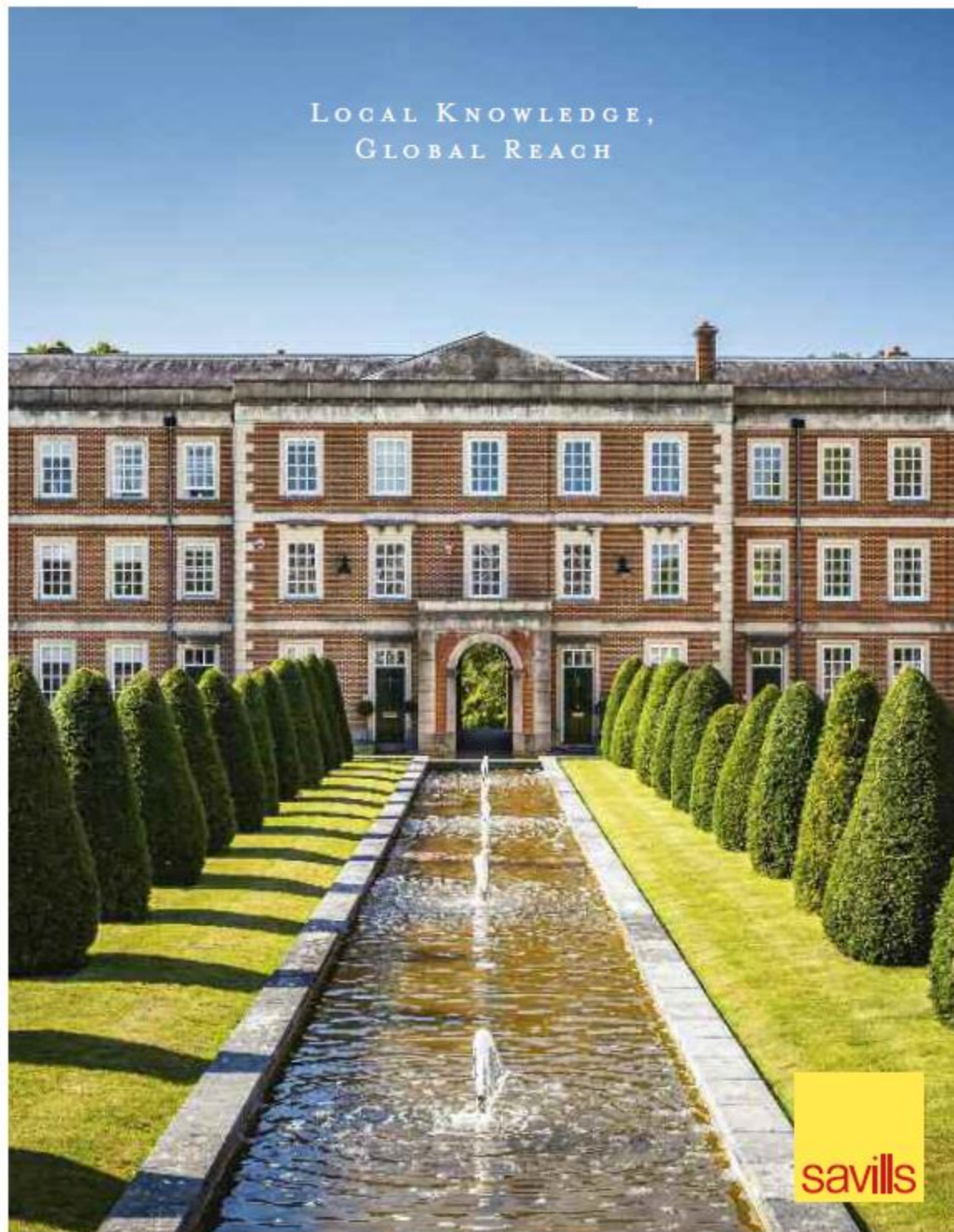


# THE COLLECTION

WINCHESTER - ISSUE 5

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE,  
GLOBAL REACH



savills





# Effortless Elegance

French-Brooks Interiors is an interior design studio based in London and Hampshire specialising in residential interiors.

French-Brooks Interiors was set up just two years ago by Victoria Wormsley as she was increasingly being asked to work for private clients who were moving home and needed an individual and expert interior design eye. Victoria spent 10 years with London property developers Chester Row, where she honed her skills designing and decorating highly urban spaces in central London.

Victoria has worked on a large variety of projects, from a listed Cotswold farmhouse, a Belgravia pied à terre, a new house on the Crown Estate in Surrey to a former monastery in the South of France. "I like the diverse range of properties and clients I work with, and having been mainly London-based, I also now enjoy taking on more country properties and bringing a more urbane and considered country style to period houses too" she says. "Whilst I enjoy creating sleek minimalist interiors, particularly in the city where one longs for a calm retreat, I've always had a great interest in architecture and antiques which my country projects allow me to explore in more depth," she adds.







Her approach to renovating and decorating her own country house, a Regency Hampshire rectory, was the same as if she was designing for a client. "A house must be comfortable and easy to live in, but I like to balance that with a certain relaxed elegance and individuality. Formulaic design is one of my pet hates," she says. She believes it's vital to take account of the nature of the space – for instance how much light it has, which way it faces and its proportions whether it's a London mews house, a period country house or a new-build mansion. "Interiors are much more interesting and genuine when they reflect their owners' interests, whether they collect priceless Chinese ceramics or old weather vanes, whether they're into everything pale grey or love pattern," she enthuses.

The rectory had a strong ebullient character with its period architecture and an idyllic rural setting which is superbly reflected in the interior design. Victoria used bold colours and patterns in some of the more important rooms, in keeping with a flamboyant Regency aesthetic, along with her own collection of Modern British art. "I also realised afterwards that the countryside had crept into the design, when someone pointed out that there was a leaf motif in many of the furnishings – from acanthus leaves on lamps, to foliage in a rug design," she says, "I hadn't consciously set out to do this, but it was a part of the inspiration."





At the other end of the design spectrum is a recently completed penthouse flat in South Kensington with an expansive private roof terrace. Although the flat was essentially a pied à terre with limited space and tired decoration, it had good volumes ready to be exploited with unusual high ceiling profiles and it has been transformed into an open, light interior.

*‘A house must be comfortable and easy to live in...’*

“Lighting rooms with asymmetrical angled ceilings and skylights is always more challenging but we sourced interesting pendants which made effective use of the height,” explains Victoria. A fireplace was reinstated in the living room and a built-in bookcase with integral lighting was installed along one wall to make a feature in the low-ceilinged part of the room. “This really

transformed the space: paradoxically, instead of closing it down, it made it into a focal point. With warm lighting, quirky objects, plants and books it really glows at night,” she adds.

The diverse nature of French-Brooks’ portfolio makes it an ideal choice for clients looking for either urban or country design advice. “I really don’t have a special favourite type of project,” she says, “It’s the client relationship that’s more important: I like to get on a client’s wavelength, understand their taste and visualise what it is they will really like. They may not have thought of it themselves but it’s a kind of design journey we make together. The best projects are a happy collaboration.” And her own dream project? “As a mad keen skier I guess an Alpine chalet would come up high on the list!”

**For more information please visit  
French-Brooks Interiors at  
[www.french-brooks.com](http://www.french-brooks.com)  
or call 020 7591 0165**



Photography credits: James McDonald, Mark Bolton, Mel Yates and Paul Massey