



For visitors to the hotel, the allure of Todhunter Earle's designs in the drawing room and conservatory dining room lies in a complex simplicity, from the subtle matt textures of wools and silks, to the Thirties-inspired curvaceous silhouettes. 'Raymond didn't want florals inside, because there's a beautiful garden outside,' Emily explains. Instead, the 'queen of neutrals' designer worked up a palette of garden colours around the architecture's honey toned stone. 'We also used Cubist blocks of colour to build on Raymond's desire for a Thirties theme,' she adds. From the white linen slipcovers, to the neutral silk cushions, the sophisticated palette is as light and fresh as the food.

Yet it's in the fifteen bedrooms (and every one different) that Emily's creative vision excelled. 'Raymond wanted pure theatre,' she says. But he also wanted balance. 'In our garden and kitchen, there are little pockets from other continents, quietly integrated into a French tradition,' he explains. He wanted the



Emily Todhunter

same blend in the interior. 'For example, he asked for a 'hot' room and a 'cool' one,' Emily explains. In response, she designed Opium, with red striped silk bedcovers and dark stained lattice work, and Snow Queen, featuring giant silk-screened snowflakes on midnight walls and white linen curtains. 'Just walking in here makes you feel sexy,' says Emily, smiling. 'Raymond believes guests must be transported from everyday cares.'

It's clearly Todhunter Earle's ability to fulfil a brief that pleases not just Raymond, but so many of their international clients. 'Emily listens deeply to what I say,' he comments. 'I wanted intelligent, not clever, design.' He also values Emily's innate talent for creating looks that are not 'fashionable', yet fresh and modern.

Emily agrees, saying that she's currently

working on a contemporary chalet in Gstaad, and a new-build country house estate. 'I bring modern design to the old vernacular,' she says. She's quick to point that, for clients, the allure of Todhunter Earle lies in their dynamic team. 'We're fun, but professional,' she says. As female designers, they also bring superb practicality to great designs.

So what's next in the pipeline? Emily lists a new carpet range, and brand new lamp designs, all twisted plaster and pale turned wood, to add to the already popular lighting range at the Emily Todhunter Collection. New fabric designs are also imminent for their existing collections at Designers Guild. And for Le Manoir? 'There are new bedroom designs,' she says, outlining Raymond's recent brief for Lemon Grass, a room inspired by paddy-fields. Multi-levelled ideas, one suspects, are also sure to follow. 'It's a joy to work with Emily, because every idea gets bigger and more beautiful,' concludes Raymond. 'That's the sign of a really great designer.' **M**





Inspired Design

AT LE MANOIR

'Emily and Raymond make a committed team, as dynamic as each other. 'Emily willingly put her ego into a suitcase, yet designs with her heart,' he says. Emily, in turn, credits Raymond with impeccable design wisdom. 'Simplicity is never that simple!' she says knowingly.'



If the age of the designer hotel is firmly upon us, then Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons is a destination that's always been ahead of its time. In the Nineties, when Raymond Blanc 'redefined and modernised' his world famous food, he chose to overhaul the chintz-laden interior too. He brought in the young designer, Emily Todhunter, of Todhunter Earle, and handed her a momentous brief. 'The frills were to go,' says Emily. 'He wanted the best of traditional decoration – the comfort, the style – brought into the arena of modern design.' She came up trumps. Five years on, Le Manoir guests comment as much on the chic surroundings, as on the delicious morsels passing their lips.

Sitting in her buzzy Chelsea offices, the nerve centre for her and design partner Kate Earle's team of twelve, Emily remains proud of her stylish Manoir revamp. It's six years since the initial concepts, but the designs look equally new today. Raymond Blanc, she insists, is an inspiration. 'He gives a full brief,' she says, 'but he doesn't tell you what to do.' The resulting free reign suited the way Emily works. 'I tend to hurl things together,' she smiles, tongue in cheek, knowing full well that her high-drama, polished designs result from concentrated, inspired effort. Emily and Raymond make a committed team, as dynamic as each other. 'Emily willingly put her ego into a suitcase, yet designs with her heart,' he says. Emily, in turn, credits Raymond with impeccable design wisdom. 'Simplicity is never that simple!' she says knowingly.