





Model, Mother and Material Girl

Beautiful English 1960's fashion model, mother of Oscar nominee Minnie Driver and fabulous fabric designer, glorious Gaynor Churchward in her own words...

Creative Beginnings

"My design inspiration started when I was very young. I went to an unusual progressive co-ed boarding school where we were all encouraged to concentrate on subjects we enjoyed and if we could convince the teachers, we could give up those we did not. I developed a fascination for languages and the creative arts which led me to an excitingly varied life. I became a model, living and working all over the world. Watching the inventiveness of Parisian couturiers and their skills with textiles influenced me greatly. I learnt a lot too, observing the exclusive trappings that surrounded the rich playboys who always buzz around models – they often knew a lot about style. Design is always in the detail and spotting details has always been a major hobby.

"I did eventually settle down but always longed to do something associated with the arts, so after my three children had grown up I started a small business from my home, selling one-off cushions made out of vintage embroidery and antique Persian carpet scraps. They quickly found a following with designers and when people started knocking on my front door asking: 'Is this the place where the cushions are made?' I decided to expand."





Blossoming Business

"Now, 25 years later, English Home has grown into an international company with a loyal and growing client base all over the world. We have our own specialist factory in India, where superbly talented embroiderers make up our exclusive designs. These are the designs which I love creating.

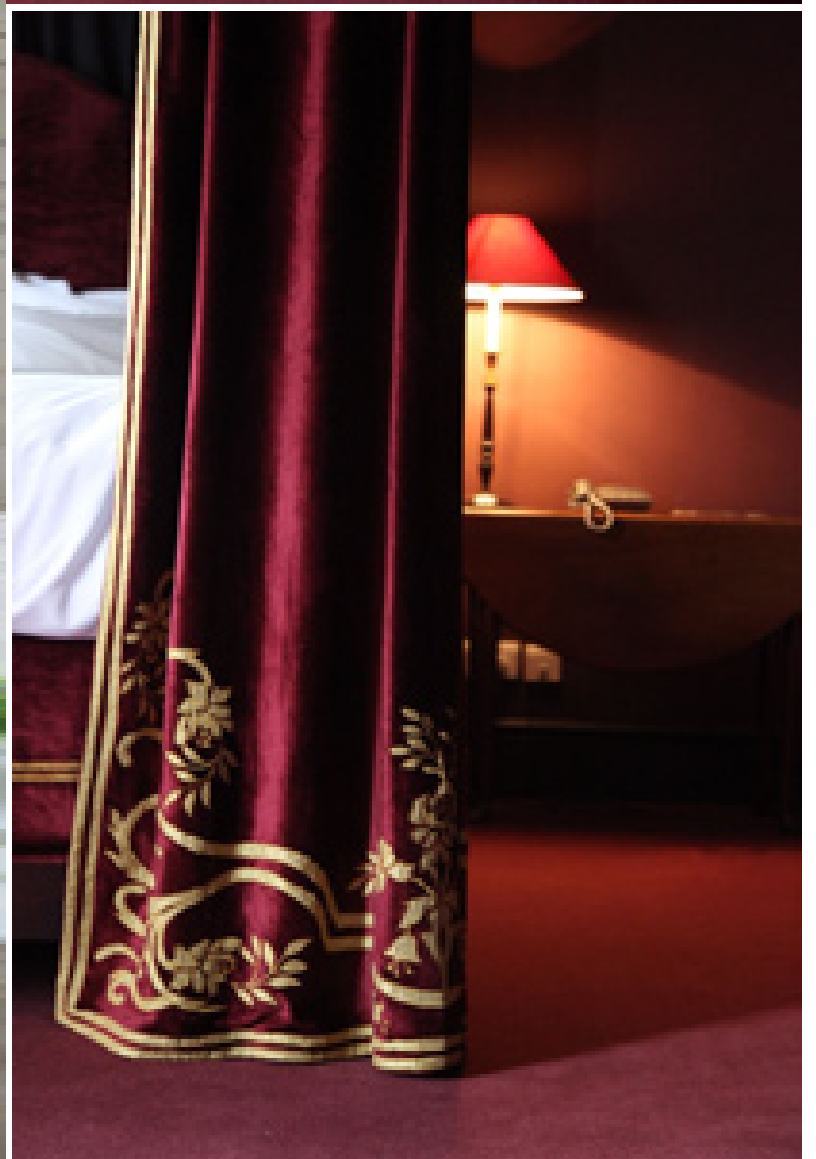
"My own preference in interior design is to mix past and present, like having a single intricate antique piece of furniture or elaborate baroque feature, alongside empty walls, plus big windows and plants. I admire different designers for different qualities – but the trick is to give your customers what they want, so when one of them gives me a specific design brief about the look they want to create – even though I may not particularly like it and have to compromise – I always aim to be faithful to beauty and scale."

Design Influences

"Inspiration comes from unexpected small things – like the colour of the feathers under the wing of a passing pigeon, or the transient colours of a sunset, or a scrap of tribal weaving found at an antique fair. Our latest Richmond range was inspired by a broken 19th century cast iron balcony I happened to pass in New York, and one of our new cushion designs came from the pattern on an 19th century iron manhole cover in Paris. I always modify and change these inspirations, as there is no fun in just duplicating stuff."

On the Big Screen

"We attract a lot of theatrical set designers because of our dramatic look, and many big film and TV productions have showcased our fabrics. Moulin Rouge, which won an Oscar for best set design, featured our cushions and bedspreads,









as did Pirates of the Caribbean, Notting Hill, Robin Hood, Girl with a Pearl Earring and countless others. English Home cushions and embroidered curtain panels crop up all the time on television. Last month they were seen in the BBC period drama series 'Emma', and the historic drama about Henry VIII, The Tudors, earlier in the year."

Worldwide Appeal

"Our regal designs in heavy velvet are quite difficult to assimilate into a domestic setting but are transformed when made up in pale linen or silk. It does take an experienced eye to get the best look – which is why so many professional designers use us. This transformation from one fabric to another gives me great pleasure as it illustrates how, with a little thought, our products are quite adaptable. English interiors have always attracted world-wide designer interest. We spend a lot of time indoors in England, due to the unsettled weather here, so we make them as interesting and comfortable as possible. English aesthetics have always been a magnet for up-market designers in many different countries, particularly where a comfortable and elegant look is required.

"Our cotton voile and net embroidered panels are ideal for tropical climates, creating cool and interesting accents in the more contemporary settings of eastern homes. Current trends are unpredictable and in England - anything goes.

There is a fascination here for eclectic and diverse style, often with a reverence for worn old leather sofas and mixing old architectural relics in with modern conversions. Contemporary colours are often subtle and carefully blended – aubergine with dark olive and pewter, dark khaki with taupe and ivory, old rose with smoky greys, all naturally muted - these are the favourites with the chic designers, while traditionalists go for the classic faded old roses look. England is famed for anarchic designs - mad electric colours mixed with industrial elements that are popular with newer designers who never follow any trends but in doing so create new ones."

A Step Ahead

"Copiers constantly dog English Home, which only ever spurs me to design something new – the best part of my job. My daughter Minnie Driver is an actress, whose Spanish colonial house in Hollywood is full of our curtains and cushions. I stayed recently while she was filming in New York. It was whilst there that I created the new formal Henry range based on a classic trellis pattern, and also the Richmond range (the New York balcony!) which is a baroque mass of swirls and flowers. For 2010, we have added a lot of herringbone patterns and stripes to the new collections for the first time.

"I must get my energy from my father, who went on working until he was over 80, but it is loving my job that keeps me on the ball. In January 2010, we launched our brand new website, which is an online showcase and gallery for all our established products and four brand new collections together with inspiration for innovative ways to use our fabrics and accessories. The website is a great tool for those who cannot get to the London shop to see our range and to order online."

www.englishhome.com