

# Bricks & Mortar



## Take a reality check

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There is one real knockout star of *The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story* series on BBC Two: Villa Casa Casuarina, Gianni Versace's Miami mansion, on the steps of which he was shot in 1997, and its over-the-top interiors.

In the opening sequence of episode one, Gianni is in his enormous double-king-size bed (sheets in the Versace mansion had to be custom-made to fit) staring up at the clouds on his muraled ceiling, Florida sunshine streaming in through stained-glass windows. He takes his breakfast in a hot-pink dressing gown beside fountains and his swimming pool, which is inlaid with 24-carat gold tiles imported from Italy, and grabs his house keys from a gold Versace-print plate. One room resembles a shell grotto, the walls lined with tiny pebbles. There are leopard-print sofas, tasselled cushions, gilt mirrors, white orchids in vases.

These scenes were filmed in his house, which was built in 1930 to resemble Alcazar de Colon in the Dominican Republic, the house built for Christopher Columbus's son. It was bought by Versace in 1993 and was where he hosted parties with Madonna, Diana, Princess of Wales, and Elton John. Now it is a hotel, where a night in Versace's suite costs \$1,799, and is the third most photographed home in the world, after the White House and Graceland.

Versace had "the most outrageous taste anybody has ever seen, but the underlying message is absolute freedom", wrote Cathy Horyn, the *Vanity Fair* journalist, in 1997 after she spent time in the mansion.

If the show is inspiring you to throw off the shackles of restrained good taste and giving you bling envy, you can buy a UK-based Versace-designed home of your own. Aykon London One, one of the towers in the Nine Elms regeneration area next to Battersea, southwest London, is due for completion in 2020 and its interiors have been created by brand Versace.

The lobby, amenities and interiors for each apartment are designed and fitted out by Versace Home, as is the gym (with Versace-themed punch bags and towels), indoor swimming pool and spa, roof garden and cinema. Think Greek and Roman mythology and Medusa head logos, gold-plated chandeliers and



Drummonds showroom featuring pink bath tub and Cole & Son palm-leaf wallpaper by Maurizio Pellizzoni

## Gold and bold: the Versace look is back

Take a leaf out of Gianni and Donatella's book because luxury decor is all about maximalism, says **Laura Whateley**

marble floors, bathrooms and kitchens. The only sticking point is that a two-bedroom apartment costs £2.8 million.

It would be more affordable to kit your own home out with Versace accessories — though only just. An Arabesque amber water goblet by Versace costs £166, and a gold and pastel-coloured elaborately painted porcelain sauceboat £352, from Zangheim.com. Fun, irreverent maximalism

is big at the moment, say designers, with bright colours, textures, metallics and a hint of art deco Miami retroism replacing sensible greige interiors.

Who would not want to have a bath in Drummonds's new shocking-pink standalone tub, with gold taps, styled in a showroom inspired by Bel Air mansions, designed by Maurizio Pellizzoni, against a feature wall of green palm-leaf print wallpaper by Cole & Son and a shiny black and white tiled floor?

Even Ikea has issued advice on how to get Versace's "eclectic, opulent" style in your home. Try its Omedelbar leopard-print rug (£45); Henrika, bright turquoise, silky striped cushion (£5); Dotorp brass-effect chandelier (£59); or Tillagd gold-coloured cutlery set (£40).

Gold is everywhere. Jonathan Adler, the furniture designer whose latest collection includes a Nouvelle console mirrored with gold and blue zigzag patterns, and another decorated with geometric pastel-coloured shapes and gold legs, says he wasn't always a gold person, "but then I dipped my toe in and



Jonathan Adler Nouvelle console, £3,850 and Maxime lounge chair in Rialto Charcoal £1,750

furniture, such as a Tom Dixon Pylon chair, and an original Fracanzano painting of two male wrestlers that they bought from the Gianni Versace estate.

"Our interiors take shape through unexpected alchemies, the result of which is a balanced eclecticism that mixes styles, materials and colours," Locatelli says. "Our inspiration finds references from high culture as well as popular culture. Each piece that we propose to our clients is carefully selected after complex research for its uniqueness, beauty and functionality to the project. At the end of the process, order and calm arise from chaos to create an original interior."

Inside Palace View, a luxury housing development next to Lambeth Palace in central London, the designers of one of the show flats — Stephanie Koball and Hannah Lodge of Hatch Interiors — went for a "bold luxe" look, combining distressed brass, satin chrome and gold tones for a "statement-metallic palette". They also used monochrome print fabrics, accent cushions and 3D chevron wallpaper. In the bedrooms there is rose-gold wallpaper, an upholstered four-poster bed, and an electric green and gold feature chair, which help to make the bedrooms an "inviting, lavish escape". Two-bedroom apartments cost from £1.195 million.

Donatella Versace's staple luxe leather trousers are being channelled in interiors too — on walls and floors. Popular with Middle Eastern designers, camel leather, which is stronger than cow leather, is used on camel-coloured kitchen and dining room chairs for the interiors of Paddington Gardens (flats from £825,000).

Wealthy clients of Sophie Paterson, an interior designer who has worked at The W1 London in Marylebone, are increasingly requesting dressing rooms with a display area for their Hermès Birkin bags and Jimmy Choo shoes, with lighting to highlight key wardrobe pieces. It's about going all out for yourself, rather than worrying about a neutral scheme that will appeal to others.

"Separate dressing rooms and bathrooms are almost an essential requirement for our clients now," Paterson says. "We have installed fridges, mini kitchens and sitting areas within dressing rooms previously. People are now thinking about how they want to use their space and customising their homes to their specific needs, rather than worrying about how many bedrooms the house has and what impact the changes they make will have on the resale value."



Linwood's luxury Metropolis fabric collection, from £59.30 a metre. Inset above: Edgar Ramirez as Gianni Versace in BBC Two series *The Assassination of Gianni Versace*

now I am a complete addict: all gold everything. The primacy of gold in our culture isn't random, it's visceral. Gold makes life more bold, glamorous and memorable. Gold is more than a colour, it's a feeling."

Carlo Ninchi and Vittorio Locatelli of the interior designer Oneroom specialise in extravagant designs. In their gallery, four-storey warehouse in Shoreditch, east London, they have papered the walls of some rooms gold, mixing in art installations, designer



Jonathan Adler Baxter sofa, £3,595, Constantine accent table, £595, and Vienna large chandelier, £3,195