



LEFT Beki makes use of the well-stocked library in the Rabih Hage-designed Design Club. ABOVE Beki often brings clients into the Design Club for meetings



Smart Thinking

For interior designer Beki Leivars, the stylish surroundings of the Design Club is a perfect environment for both work and relaxation

'I'm here all the time,' laughs Beki Leivars as she flops into one of the chic Rabih Hage-designed seating areas in the Design Club. 'I was aware of it when I was studying and enquired about membership after graduating. My business couldn't survive without it.'

The Design Club opened in 2006 as a private space for designers, architects and journalists to work, relax and entertain. It is situated on the third floor of the south dome and run by Charlie Ford, who is always on hand to arrange meetings, catering and anything else members might need.

'I use the Club as my office,' says Beki. 'A huge benefit is having a meeting room where I can take clients away from the hustle and bustle of the showrooms downstairs.' Beki often spends all day at the Design Centre visiting the different showrooms while using the club as her base. 'I send emails, work on schemes and have meetings. It's an inspirational space.' She also points out that she's had to incorporate backlit bookshelves into a couple of schemes once a client has seen the library. 'To have the use of such an incredible space in a prime location makes working in London very easy; it's also a fabulous example of the merits of investing in quality fabrics and good lighting.'

Beki is one of London's most talented up-and-coming interior designers. After deciding on a mid-career change, she completed a diploma at KLC School of Design and started her own company in autumn 2007. Current projects include a Marylebone apartment for a young lingerie designer, which Beki describes as 'a proper girls' pad, almost burlesque in style, with lots of silk and reflective surfaces.' Then there is a classic family home in Chelsea and an architect's kitchen, with a mix of wood, slate and stone: 'I love that kind of uncompromising, masculine style'.

With such a healthy portfolio, Beki is finding herself here more than ever. 'I always take clients round the showrooms at the start of a project and we come upstairs to the Club afterwards to digest information and chat,' she explains. 'It's brilliant having Charlie here too, she is familiar with every supplier so you can discuss details with her and she understands your business needs; plus it's always done with a smile. I don't feel I could give the same service without the Design Club, it's at the heart of where I need to be.' □

Design Club (tel: 020-7351 5842; enquiries@designclublondon.com). Beki Leivars (tel: 07929 934511; www.rebeccaivearsdesigns.com)

PERSONAL SHOPPING



Charlie Ford runs the Personal Shopping service at Design Centre Chelsea Harbour. Having worked at Colefax and Fowler for four years, she has plenty of experience in fabric, colour and interior styles. She also has an in-depth knowledge of all 75? showrooms.

Charlie offers consultations on an appointment basis. 'I can help with anything from sourcing a particular fabric or piece of furniture to a whole room scheme. Or I can put people in touch with the right interior designer for their needs. Some clients know what they want and need help sourcing it and others are overwhelmed by the interior design world and I give a helping hand.'

The Personal Shopping Service is popular and clients often return. 'It's fun,' says Charlie, 'on a first visit I ask people to bring magazine features, bits of fabric and anything else they like to discover their style and we take it from there. I also help with purchases and placing orders.'

To book a Personal Shopping consultation call 020-7225 9129 or email personalsourcing@dcch.co.uk. The first hour's consultation is free and thereafter costs £75 per hour.