

A Week In The Life Of Joanna Barr

Joanna Barr started her design career after studying at KLC and gaining an Honours. Her design career started at Sarah Hudson Design from where she went to The London Furnishing Company before joining the family business at Ham Interiors at the start of 2011. She now works on a variety of high profile clients' residential and commercial properties in London and the Home Counties

Monday

I always make sure I get into the office early to make sure I have time to settle back in after the weekend, before tackling the week ahead. I make myself a very strong black coffee and start the day off by checking through my emails and then running



through my jobs and what the week has in store. My assistant (and right hand) Ilana is my ears and eyes and makes sure we are as organized as we can be.

We run through all of our jobs and make a list in order of importance what we need to get onto first thing. We then sit down and have a meeting with the rest of the team so we all know where we are that week and if we need to pull in any help on installations. It is also a great time to discuss new suppliers and contractors that we might have found and can recommend as we like to keep up with new trends and introduce new suppliers where we can.

I don't usually like to have any meetings on a Monday as I use it to make sure I speak with all my clients and my admin is all up to date but today I have a meeting with a client at Mowlem on the Kings Road. We are completely gutting her large five bedroom house in Gerrards Cross for which we have totally redesigned the interior. It's a project which I feel I need to be involved with at every stage. Usually on a project like this ▼





Sumptuous comfort in this sitting room!



First floor landing of private residence project

▲ the initial design stage can go on for as long as six months before the renovations actually begin.

Today, as usual, I grab my salad wrap and eat it in the car on the way back to the office. I am not one for finishing early. I like to use the hour or two when everyone has gone to get some quiet time to write out proposals or quotes so I can go home with a clear head.

Tuesday

I have a meeting in London first thing today. My client BMOR is a very up and coming developer and I consult on the design of all their developments. We are nearing the end of one of the properties off Chancery Lane and finalizing the designs of another. The builders start work this week, so it's imperative that we have regular design meetings with the architects and contractors to iron out any issues that might occur along the way.

When I have any meetings in London I will always try and take the opportunity to meet with a friend or my mum for lunch or coffee. Today my mum comes to meet me at Manocomios on the Kings Road for lunch, before I have to head up to Islington for a new client meeting.

Before meeting any new client we try and quantify them on the phone to get a good idea of what design services they require and what budget they have so I have something of an idea to take with me to the initial meeting. I always like the first meet to be very relaxed and informal as I feel that designer and client must essentially "gel" and get on if we are to work together closely on their project. It should be a good experience for both parties.



▲ Today's meeting is with a barrister in Islington who wants to completely refurbish his apartment. I take an architect we have worked with before to take a look at the job to kill two birds with one stone. The meeting went really well and he instructed us to draw up proposals for the works to begin there and then.

I jump in the car and dash back just in time to be put through my paces by my personal trainer Richard. Keeping fit keeps me

motivated and relieves a lot of stress that comes with the job.

Wednesday

This morning we are installing a reception room and master bedroom that I designed just over four weeks ago at a beautiful family home in Buckinghamshire. We arrive to meet our delivery team and the upholsterers at 10am sharp. It is a smooth install and the client is absolutely delighted with the finished product. Although I am ▼



A fitting display for Bremont watches!



Master bedroom for a private client



The Bremont store in Mayfair's South Audley Street

▲ pleased with the end result, I have a very critical eye and always feel that there was something I could do better!

Installs can be pretty tiring so I grab my afternoon coffee and head back to the office and check through my emails before heading home to pour myself a large glass of wine. With it being a family business, I am not one to leave work at work and therefore even if I am not working on one of my projects, I like to look for new ideas and inspiration in design magazines and on Pinterest. It actually helps me unwind!

Thursday

As I do every morning, I get up at 7am and walk my two dogs Indie and Boodika. My husband Tom and I are lucky that we live next to a nature reserve and therefore it's a great time to get out and think before rushing home, making my morning smoothie and heading to the office. I am away on holiday next week so I am trying to get as organized as I can before I go and there is a lot to get through as I currently have twelve active clients on my books. ▼



The store encompasses the heritage of the Bremont brand



Fabulous collectors' items from Bremont

▲ My client from yesterday's install recommended us to a friend nearby so I head over to their new house to discuss floor options and paint colours. I am fortunate that I have a great working relationship with all my clients and really enjoy each meeting.

Once leaving the clients, I stop off to get my nails done for my holiday before stopping by Waitrose to grab a bag load of ingredients

for a winning salad which I usually make up in the office and have at my desk. Tonight I get home for 7pm, as we have friends for dinner.

Friday

I have a large design presentation early this morning so we load up the car the night before with the design boards we have been working on over the last couple of weeks, fabric books and supplier brochures

to take with us. This morning the meeting is with a couple who have just refurbished their house beautifully and just need some help with furnishings and window dressings. They are happy with the presentation so we take notes and head back to the office to draw up a quote to send back for them to confirm. We tie up all the loose ends that need tying up, then I head home for a well deserved glass of red wine!