

London Evening Standard

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Homes & Property | Interiors

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Who's a pretty boy?: parrot money box, £48 for Mia Fleur (miafleur.com)



Feathered frenzy: tropical cushion, above left, from £12 at very.co.uk; above right, cotton cushion cover by H&M Home, £7.99; right, copper-coloured pineapple ice bucket from Oliver Bonas, £40



Let's party: above, blue pineapple tea light holder, £6; pineapple citronella candle, £8; flamingo scatter cushion, £12; tableware from £2.50; honeycomb flamingos, £2 (sainsburys.co.uk)

Design trends

By **Barbara Chandler**

Flying down to Rio



THE Rio Olympics are months away and outside it's still chilly, but London design is already enjoying a Brazil-inspired tropical creative storm. Setting the scene is The Conran Shop in South Kensington, where Urban Outfitters' Hugh Waldo became chief executive at the end of last year.

Espirito do Brasil, an ambitious installation at the store, reflects the diverse architecture and vibrant design of South America's biggest country, the largest population of Portuguese speakers in the world. An "apartment concept" fills the windows with an open-plan layout that shoppers can walk through to explore rooms on either side, set against a backdrop of room-high banana trees, palms and ferns.

Inspiration came from the Casa de Vidro, or Glass House, a modernist landmark in Morumbi, São Paulo, which merges seamlessly with the tropical vegetation outside. The house was built in 1951 by architect and editor Lina Bo Bardi (1914-1992), who left her native Italy after the war to settle in Brazil, where her many designs include the São Paulo Museum of Art.

Design buffs may associate the Campana Brothers – Humberto, the elder, and Fernando – whose offbeat work, self-described as "volatile and

spontaneous", includes chairs made of soft toys and tangled rope, and has been seen in London regularly since the flamboyant pair founded their São Paulo studio in 1984.

But there is a quieter, stronger and more accessible side to Brazilian design, influenced by the country's profound modernist heritage, and its traditions of fine craftsmanship.

The Conran Shop is promoting Brazilian designer Jader Almeida, who at 34 already has about 150 pieces in production with Brazil-based furniture manufacturer, Sollos. With a background that includes technical drawing and architecture, Almeida loves working in solid wood – combined, for example, with brass and glass – creating furniture with carefully detailed joints and labour-intensive hand finishes. Influences include the elegant curves of buildings in the capital, Brasilia, by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer.

In London you can find vintage Brazilian mid-century furniture masters at the Espasso design gallery, set up in 2012 in London Fields, E8, by São Paulo native Carlos Junqueira.

Espasso's current star, however, is very much of the moment – Zanini de Zanini, 38, the son of mid-century Brazilian furniture designer José Zanini Caldas. His chunky, hand-crafted limited editions are already highly collectible, and pieces from a current one-man show in Paris will shortly come to our capital.

"London is only just discovering Brazilian mid-century modernism," says Junqueira. What you find in his gallery/shop is in marked contrast to the plethora of blond Scandi-modern pieces so prevalent elsewhere. Brazilian furniture is rich and organic, with plenty of dark woods and deep-coloured leather, usually handcrafted, and even a little brutal.

Authenticated "re-editions" are now available of mid-century classic pieces by, for example, Sérgio Rodrigues, who died in 2014 aged 86 and has been called "the father of Brazilian furniture". And from next month, Espasso will be representing the Campana Brothers in London.

At Harrods, Annalise Fard, director of home and design, has observed the influence of Brazil: "From furnishings to food, fashion and accessories, from Aquazzura, Proenza Schouler and Salvatore Ferragamo with their pambbox brights and jazzy prints." She has styled a tropical room as part of a "London edit" to open early next month, with new Matthew

Tops for the table: above left, Matthew Williamson dessert plate, £4 at Debenhams; above, parrot plate, £3, from George Home at Asda



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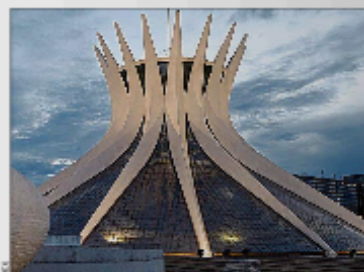
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A profound modernist heritage: Brazil has a rich collection of great modern buildings, including the São Paulo Museum of Art (far left) by Lina Bo Bardi, and the stunningly curved Cathedral of Brasilia, left, by Oscar Niemeyer



Offbeat seat: left, the Prickly Chair by Mexican designer Valentina Gonzalez Wohlers is a humorous take on the classic Louis XV oval chair combined with a Nopal cactus; above left, Maifa wallpaper from the 2016 collection at Manuel Canovas (manuelcanovas.com)

Brazilian beauties: Espirito do Brasil installation at the Conran Shop with Beehive pendant lamp in brass by Marc de Groot, £395, and Geometric corded cushion covers, £99



Williamson furniture – just arrived in store from Dunesta – and geometric palm-print paper from Cole’s.

From a simple group of cacti – get them in little pots from Ikea at £4.50 for three – to giant palms, greenery is an easy route to the tropical look. The London-wide Oliver Bonas brand of fashion/home stores has already foretold “a summer of the cactus”.

The huge plants in The Conran Shop are from specialists Arnott & Mason in New Covent Garden Market. Get up early to catch them in SW8, as they start around 4am and are finished by 10.30am. Visit arnottandmason.london/plants.

More conveniently, buy from The Conran Shop – from £270 for a giant Monstera. Or go down the faux route and find cacti, grasses, giant banana leaves and more at Abigail Ahern in Upper Street, NI (abigailahern.com), or in Heath’s, WI.

Meanwhile, exclusive brands and the high street alike are in a tropical frenzy, sporting palms, pineapples, flamingos, parrots and exotic flowers at every turn, in cerise, lemon, lime, cobalt and turquoise.

Like Rudyard Kipling in the Just So stories, we may never roll to Rio or sail the Amazon, but certainly for London design in the months ahead, tropical will be topical.



Sculptural: Balança Chaise by Zanini de Zanini for Espasso, price on request (espasso.com)



Jungle rock: Crosley Palm Print Keepsake Record Player, right, £160 from Urban Outfitters

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