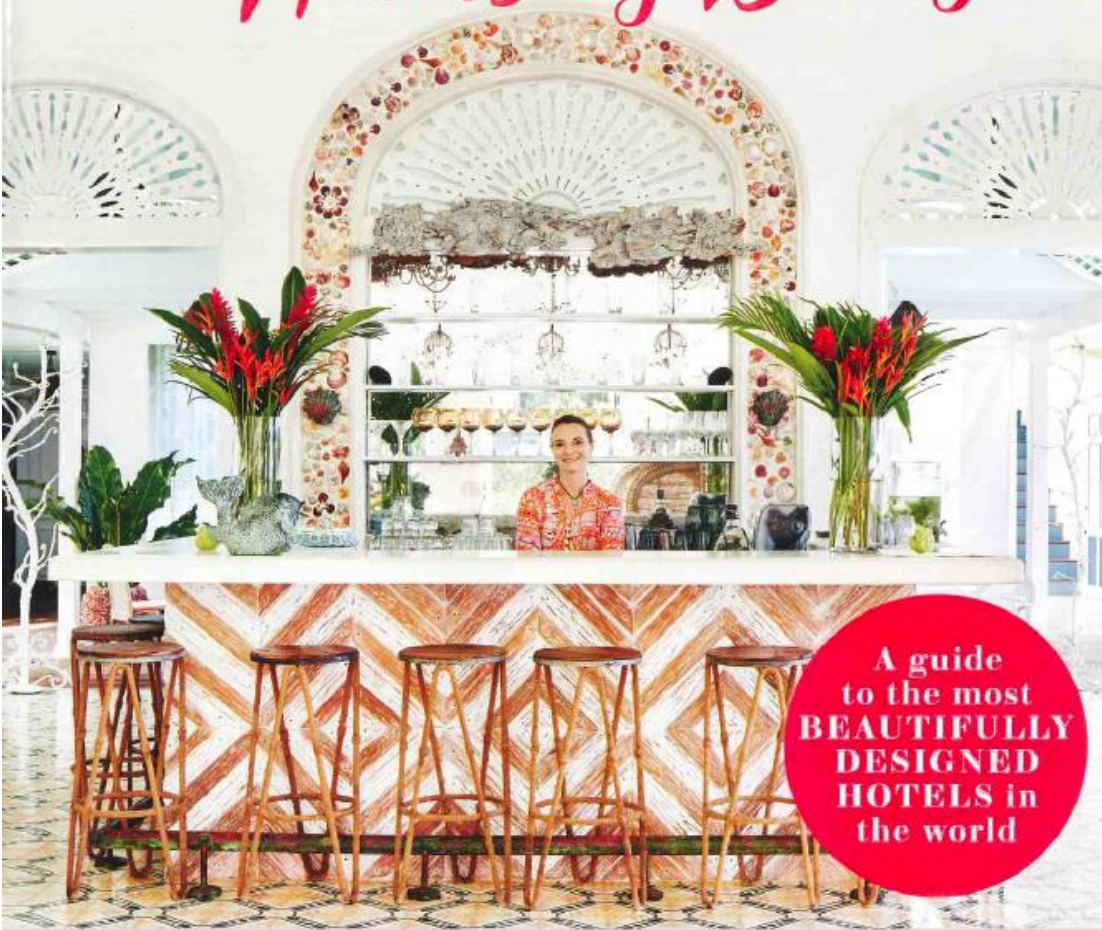


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HOUSE & GARDEN®

Hotels by Design



A guide
to the most
**BEAUTIFULLY
DESIGNED
HOTELS** in
the world

Lifestyle

Hotels
by design **35**



Photographs PAUL MASSEY

TRADING PLACES

MARTIN BRUDNIZKI IS A MAN IN DEMAND. HIS TALENT FOR CREATING INTERESTING, WELCOMING INTERIORS HAS LED TO NUMEROUS PRESTIGIOUS DESIGN PROJECTS IN THE UK AND OVERSEAS, WITH SOME OF THE BIGGEST NAMES IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY. **PAMELA GOODMAN** TALKS TO HIM ABOUT THE SECRETS OF HIS SUCCESS

Pictured above: Martin on Brooklyn Bridge in New York



LONDON

This page anticlockwise from top: A meeting in the Academicians' Room. In his flat with associate Nick Jeames. Meeting Fiona McDonald (left) in her shop with design director Pascale Belot. The MBDS-designed interior of Sexy Fish. Opposite: At Scarfes Bar with his partner Jonathan Brook and Michael Bonsor, the manager of Rosewood London



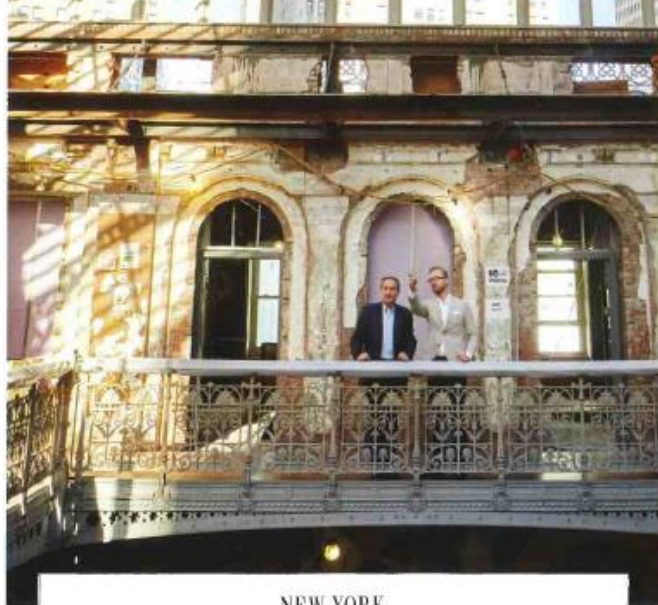
Need to know Martin's design for Scarfes Bar, pictured right, in Rosewood London hotel, retains the original features of the Belle Epoque building and mixes vintage furnishings with custom designs

The Academicians' Room at the Royal Academy in Piccadilly feels like an appropriate starting point for my day with design maestro Martin Brudnizki. True, the space is not open to the public – that honour is reserved only for Royal Academicians and private members – but it neatly encapsulates so much of Martin's ethos in creating masterful interiors. The room is one of his most recent achievements, though such is the prolific output of Martin Brudnizki Design Studio (MBDS) that there are always new projects to celebrate.

On the subject of transforming the room into the inviting space it is today, Martin says his vision had been to make what felt like an airport lounge into a 'wonderful drawing room', where people would feel as comfortable and as welcome as in a private house. This, in fact, is his mantra for all the work he undertakes, believing that interiors should never be austere or intimidating. In characteristic style, he carefully blends colour and texture, vintage and contemporary, with subtle lighting and a clever use of space, always mindful of the history and architectural integrity of a room.

The dramatic proportions of the Academicians' Room, crowned by an expansive skylight, reference another of Martin's recent projects – the creation of the new Beckman hotel in New York, which opens imminently. Constructed in 1883 by the Irish developer Eugene Kelly, the building that now houses The Beckman is a signature Lower Manhattan landmark defined on the exterior by its brick façade and twin turrets and on the interior by a soaring atrium, which rises nine storeys to a fabulous Renaissance revival glass ceiling. Each level displays elaborate cast-iron arches and filigree balustrades ornamented with decorative flowers, sunbursts and dragons, and it is off these levels that Martin has fashioned a number of the hotel's 287 rooms. Yet, as much as this has been a restoration project, it has also been a newbuild, for behind the original edifice and seamlessly >





NEW YORK

Clockwise from above: Martin with Eric Bass of GB Lodging, which owns The Beekman, in the hotel's atrium. In Union Square with Jonathan. Working in the New York studio of MBDS with Karen Cruz (left) and Naeemah Amir. On the roof of The Beekman with Stefan Golobogic of PR agency Nadine Johnson, which represents the hotel, and GB Lodging's Senka Suljic.

Need to know The granite, red Philadelphia brick and tan Dorchester stone building that houses The Beekman was declared an official New York City landmark in 1998

linked to it is the brand new skyscraping Beekman Tower, which houses a further nine storeys of hotel rooms with private residences above.

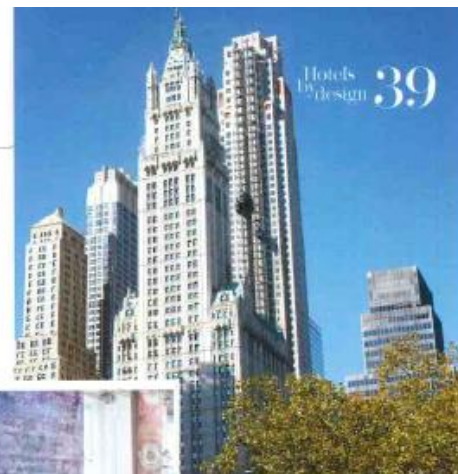
Since the opening of MBDS New York in 2012, Martin has increasingly found himself in the US, the location of about 10 of the 30 or so projects he has on the go at one time. But his home is in London, where he has a flat overlooking the grounds of The Hurlingham Club in Fulham and design headquarters in Chelsea's Lots Road. It was in the very same building he occupies now that MBDS started out in 2000. 'I had no ambition to set up my own design practice,' he tells me, 'it just worked out that way.' Self-effacing though he undoubtedly is, there can be no denying his innate sense of artistic creativity, shaped in part by an upbringing in Sweden in beautiful homes fashioned by his mother, and by his education at the American University in London, where he studied interior design.

At first, Martin's work was split fairly evenly between residential and commercial projects, but over the years he has veered more towards the latter, particularly within the hospitality sector. Restaurants, bars and hotels have become his métier and the list of establishments he has been involved with reads like a roll call of industry superstars: Rocco Forte, Soho House, Thompson, Rosewood and Four Seasons, to name but a few.

So what is the secret to his success? First and foremost is his aforementioned modesty, coupled with a strict determination to never let ego get in the way of his designs. He passionately believes that the client is king, that a sense of context is essential and that themes and gimmicks are best avoided. Then comes the design process itself. 'As simple and as practical as possible to begin with', he says, overlaid with excellent lighting and colour, and finished with an eclectic mix of furniture, books, decorative accessories and great art to create a characterful, lived-in look. On the whole, his taste is defined by the twentieth century and he loves nothing more than to refurbish or reupholster vintage finds or to commission bespoke pieces based on favourite designs.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that, in recent months, Martin has launched a new online retail arm of MBDS, co-founded with friend and business associate Nick Jeanes, previously design director of MBDS, through which a range of furniture, lighting and decorative accessories are available for general purchase. And Objects, as it is called, is split into two parts: the first concentrates on an in-house product range comprising items such as the lamps used at London's Sexy Fish restaurant, wall lights from The Ivy and bar stools from 34 Mayfair. The second specialises in product collaborations with leading brands – a bathroom collection in conjunction with Drummonds, for example, or a lighting range with American specialist The Urban Electric Co. As time moves on, the plan is to expand the site to include fabrics, wallpapers, tableware and a wider selection of bespoke furniture, so it won't be long before we can all have a little bit of Martin Brudnizki at home. Happy days □

Martin Brudnizki Design Studio: 020-7376 7555; mbds.com
And Objects: 020-7427 6059; andobjects.com



NEW YORK

From top: A view of the neo-Gothic Woolworth Building on Broadway. Martin at ABC Carpet & Home choosing carpets for a London project. Spending time with Jonathan in the city: brunch at Coffee Shop on Union Square and walking along Nassau Street (bottom)