

At home with



Robin Anderson at work in his London home

robin anderson

Novelist and interior designer Robin Anderson was born in Scotland but educated in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and South Africa. He has been an inveterate traveller ever since.

As a designer, he has worked for actors Coral Browne and Vincent Price, Christopher Plummer and socialite Ivana Trump – the latter makes a guest appearance in his most recent novel, *La Di Da Di Bloody Da!* – and his designs include the ball hosted by Margaret, Duchess of Argyll at the Dorchester Hotel in London for the eightieth birthday of billionaire Paul Getty and a spectacular bash thrown in the desert outside Marrakech in Morocco.

His novels include *Red Snapper* ('an absolute feast of unsavoury delights', according to one reviewer), *Sebastian and Seline* ('not for the squeamish or easily shockable') and *Versus* ('for those who need help with their masturbatory fantasies').

This year he has published *The Gallery*, a macabre thriller set in London's art world and which is best described as a cornucopia of bizarre sexual experiences, and *La Di Da Di Bloody Da!*, a comic Ruritanian romance set in the fictional principality of Bejestan and with a cast led by two scheming and statuesque transvestites and a ruler who likes his sexual partners to possess the physical attributes of both men (a penis) and women (breasts, the bigger the better).

Anderson lives in an elegant studio flat, the soft-toned walls are covered by the framed cover artwork for his novels, a sly homage to Margaret, Duchess of Argyll (notoriously cock-eyed) made up from a photographic portrait surrounded by illustrations by Tom of Finland and a collection of dinner plates enlivened by homoerotic drawings by Jean Cocteau.

However, perhaps the most startling feature of Anderson's home is a red lacquered coffin which serves as a coffee table.

Let's hear about the coffin...

I was being a good boy scout, being prepared! One day I was talking and made a slip of the tongue and said 'coffin table' instead of 'coffee table' and I thought 'Well, why not?' So I rang the local undertaker and asked about the cost. "You can have this wonderful coffin for £2,000," he told me. "No," I replied. "I want the cheapest coffin you've got. I don't want brass handles, I want plastic." And he said, "But if you're being cremated..." And I said, "I'm not. I just want a coffin. I think I paid something like £60 for it. I had it done in



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red lacquer but had a bit of a problem because it was a bit long, so I had the feet cut off! So, I may need to have them amputated after my death so I can squeeze into it!"

Where do you live?

In Redcliffe Square. People say it's in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, but to me it's really Earl's Court – though what I pay by way of service charges and council tax, it certainly is Kensington and Chelsea! I've been here for six years and I love it.

And before that?

I had a lovely house in the country. A Georgian saltbox type of house set within seventeen acres. I had doves, which I dyed. There were pink doves and blue doves and green doves and they all had white heads. Someone said to me that they looked like members of the WI. People used to ask me how I'd kept the heads white and I told them I'd covered them with condoms, which was true. I had a Japanese dining room and I had a very, very camp swimming pool. I had a lovely penthouse overlooking Hyde Park and a flat in Paris and a little chalet in the Alpes Maritimes – but then you reduce everything and now I'm very comfortable in this studio flat.

Is there anywhere else where you'd like to live?

I love New York. I may end up one day living there permanently. But, of course, when I'm in New York I miss a lot of things about London, about England because even though some people say England's finished, it's still quite fabulous.

Keep up to date with Robin at www.robin-anderson.com