



Strawberry Hill

october inspiration... keep calm and carry on

Obviously, Winston didn't have the women of the Decorator's Club in mind when he spoke those words, but on our recent trip to London this September, it became our mantra.

This September, a small group of members of The Decorators Club, (a women's interior design organization celebrating 101 years), crossed the Atlantic to attend the Decorex Design Show in Chelsea and to visit a handful of specially chosen historic houses.

When you have 16 seasoned, high energy interior designers, and add a well-respected authority on antique furniture, three highly connected British designers and a week of beautiful London weather, keeping calm, was the hard part.

Carrying on was easy. This was a field trip, "not for novices". The itinerary was as rigorous as boot camp, but the passion for what we do (and of course, daily tea at 4 PM) fueled any mid-afternoon slump. Designers, as you may know, are a hearty bunch - our stamina being condition by years of walking the design markets, and arranging furniture and accessories (did we say move that sofa again?) Like a brigade on a mission, we faced each day's schedule head on without as much as a complaint of jet lag or visual overload from any member of our group.

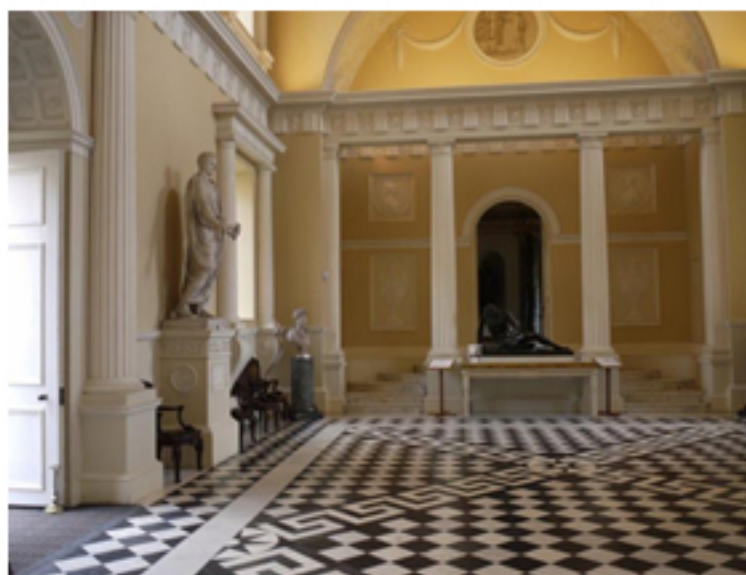


Blenheim Palace, home of the 12th Duke of Marlborough

Special thanks to fellow member Lady Henrietta Spencer-Churchill for hosting our luncheon and private tour of Blenheim, the Spencer-Churchill family home in Oxfordshire, and for arranging a special inside tour of Ditchley Park, the former home of Nancy Lancaster of Colefax and Fowler fame. Ham House, Strawberry Hill, Cheswick and the jewel in the British crown, Syon House were all on the agenda.



Strawberry Hill, Horace Walpole's Gothic Castle



The Great Hall at Syon, London home of the Duke of Northumberland



Doorway, Strawberry Hill

If that wasn't excitement enough, add a special private tour of Highclere Castle (Downton Abbey) with the Countess of Carnarvon. The evening of our tour of Highclere Castle, the first episode of this season's Downton Abbey was aired in Britain. What better way to end the day than having a "sneak peek" at where we stood that very afternoon.

Season 5 starts January in the US, and like our fellow Brits, our lips are sealed! As the Dowager Countess of Grantham might say, "No Englishman would ever think of spilling the beans!"

Cheerio!

Debra



The 8th Earl of Carnarvon arrives home at Highclere Castle

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