

Top of the fops

Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen might just throw off his quick-fix TV image by designing a commercial project full of exuberance, decadence, colour... and, a nice line in pornographic wallpaper

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Very few places outside Soho carry an alert that pornographic material inside might offend, but that's exactly what you get outside the Divan - one of the opulent and fabulously over-the-top rooms in Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen Design Associate's debut commercial project, the Inc Bar, in Greenwich. The warning is prompted by the raunchy wallpaper, hand-drawn by Laurence and produced by the Archive Printing Company.

'I love 18th-century pornography - everyone seems to be having fun in beautifully drawn landscapes,' says Laurence. 'It seemed a straightforward jump from hardcore porn to classic toile du Jouy patterns, and it goes a long way to proving that wallpaper can be sexy.'

The Inc Bar is hewn from Britain's first purpose-built music hall, dating from the 1830s, and bursts with a refreshing, tongue-in-cheek approach, placing the sleek and modern next to the decadent and glamorous - harking back to 1980's baroque. Many of the key decorative features have been commissioned from some of Britain's most celebrated artists and makers, such as Anthony Stern and Neisha Crossland. Contemporary pieces are juxtaposed with a series of extremely fine antique clocks, mirrors and paintings from a local private collection.

The original staircase in the entrance has been updated with a steel-and-glass balustrade by Armfield Glass, which also created full-height glass screens for the entrance. Burnished Armourcoat walls reflect the mellow wear of the original stone floor, as well as framing the niches for the flat screen monitors that run web-cam links to each of the bar areas.

The double-height splendour of the Pit Bar upstairs - what was the main auditorium in its music-hall heyday - has been treated to a restrained airy scheme, sprinkled with eye-catching decorative elements. The main bar, in stunningly backlit 'tutti frutti' mineral terrazzo, is by stone specialists, Artifex London. The Tutti Frutti bar is complemented by a pair of Anthony Stern's handblown, coloured-glass chandeliers. The installation of leather window treatments helps soften the acoustics of what could otherwise be a rather cold space.

The Pit Bar is further warmed by the specially imported zebrano floorboards from Solid Wood Flooring Company. Zebrano also frames the first-floor balcony and the columns that support it. Art for the Pit is innovatively supplied by 15 digital screens, framed in laser-cut steel, that run a perpetually changing gallery of eclectic images from the Getty Collection.

The Second bar space, Larry's, is dominated by Dowling Tartan fabric on the walls and at the windows, designed for the project by Laurence and specially printed by the Archive Printing Company. The floorcovering is a bespoke carpet woven by Brintons, and the bar is in backlit Carrara Arabescato by Artifex London.

The lavatories have also been given the LLB treatment. 'We wanted to spoil female customers with Neisha Crossland wallpapers, pearl-finish mosaics and antiques,' says Laurence's studio head, Pia Munden. The gents' loo has a Saville Row-inspired livery of slate and steel mosaic.

'Inc Bar is the antithesis to all those crushingly boring, cliché-ridden, minimalist restaurant and bar interiors,' says Laurence. 'Comfortable yet sexy, inspirational without being intimidating - it's my kind of bar.'