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HIS ENGLISH HOME IN
OXFORDSHIRE.
NEXT TO IT, CELESTE
DELL'ANNA.

The Universe in One Room

BY CESARE CUNACCIA

Celeste dell'Anna draws the inspiration for his untiring creative energy from the whole globe. An untiring inventor, he never follows stereotypes or takes refuge in rules: he delights in enjoying himself, amazing clients and, above all, himself.

It is always difficult if not impossible to talk about your own friends and this is the case here. In both his life and his extraordinary career, moreover, Celeste Dell'Anna is undefinable, independent and ever changing, overflowing with creativity, energy and enthusiasm in continual dynamic, creative and emotional evolution to the extent that it is difficult, perhaps impossible to put a label to his work or describe him within the confines of normal or general parameters. The only constant, the only password which can help us to read and interpret his complex existential and professional world with its myriad of chiaroscuro nuances, splendid eccentricities and equally wonderful surprises is the word creativity. His is a straight talking, eclectic and candid personality which can at times be as disconcerting, generous, engaging and intuitive as a popular novel. Celeste is often over-the-top, but that's the way he is - larger than life.

A pupil of Renzo Mongiardino, Celeste Dell'Anna is one of the most important interior designers on the international scene and divides his time between his Milan and London studios where he makes use of the services of thirty or so fixed

employees.

He is continually on the move around the world with an open, powerful approach to design, an active client portfolio and some of the most sophisticated and prestigious creations in the world.

To name but a few, King Juan Carlos of Spain, for whom he designed the interior of the Spanish Crown's official yacht Fortuna, Georg von Opel, the business magnate, the great jeweller Chatila who entrusted him with its London and Riyadh headquarters and its Geneva offices, Prince Aga Khan and the Dorchester Collection Hotels.

He has various projects under way at the moment from Italy to St. Moritz, the Virgin Islands, London, Munich and Moscow including an entire architectural project for an immense Orientalist residence with park in Kazakhstan. "It is a place which I find particularly fascinating", he confides. "I went there recently and I sense an incredible energy there. We'll see how it goes...". He's also putting the finishing touches to a furniture collection which will come out as a limited edition.

"In my career path, just as in my personal choices, in the polyform codes of my taste, I



HOLIDAY HOME IN ST. MORITZ.

don't have a pre-conceived artistic map", he tells me with a voice tinged with the brash and tongue-in-cheek humour of the eternal youth. I don't pretend to know, or impose, rules on the right way "to create a home", to breathe life and form into a space. Above all in today's society in which new characters appear quite suddenly on stage bringing myriad colours and cultural sensitivities with them. I come from a school in which the concept of using 'the past to invent the future' was close to being an obsession and limited my curiosity. So I don't like to throw dust over what I've created to age it and give it foundations. My work is a mission for me but I have to enjoy it too. I like to design spaces as a set designer creates his scenery". Is life a film? "Perhaps it is. We're all actors, however aware of this we are, surrounded by bit players, some important some not, but essentially our everyday existence follows a script. How could I simply replicate a system which bores me in order to create houses which already seem old? And for whom? In order to oblige, for example, a fan of Mark Rothko or Jeff Koon's neo-pop to live with a baroque painting by Guercino?

Contemporary, traditional, antique. I think that these are simplistic definitions which mean nothing when we're taking about houses, places and living spaces". Even Celeste Dell'Anna's clothes style is full of British style leitmotifs rising to heights of fanciful creativity with fine, dandyish touches reminiscent of a country gentleman. Tweed fabrics, cover coats, grisaille and casual corduroys in warm, deep and spicy colours, London tailored suits, fine cashmere, suede for sahari, soft and informal jackets, tartan gilets as appropriate for every different and unique facet of his personality. So Celeste is capable of buying a load of jackets from Gujarat or embroidered kaftans in some Eastern market or obscure London or Shanghai ethnic boutique and handing them over to an aristocratic Savile Row tailor to reshape and adapt them. He's quite capable of changing his clothes several times if the urge takes him. "My crazes? Rings above all, sometimes even very big ones that I put on according to my mood. And big multicoloured scarves, antique paisley shawls, coloured bracelets. I sometimes even wear



two watches in two different colours and styles because, when I travel, I always like to be able to refer to my starting point. Just like my thoughts: flying but keeping a clear sense of where I began. I don't sleep at home much and planes have become a sort of wraparound cocoon for me, a living room in the air where I can finally relax, rest and recoup, cutting myself off from commitments and thoughts. I telephone all the time, everywhere, too much unfortunately! Lately I love hats but I lose them all the time, every week. The wind takes them and I sometimes just let them fly away without trying to get them back and watch them fluttering away in the breeze just as I let myself be carried

away by my passions.

I'm fascinated by communication technologies but I don't like Facebook. I don't have time for it and, quite honestly, I can't see that it's necessary. I love my iPad dressed in crocodile. It is currently in purple crocodile, a few months ago it was in China red but I'm studying a new colour for the autumn, for October. Green? Maybe. But I know that I'll only be able to make the definitive choice at the last minute from my supplier (the same supplier who makes Dell Anna his very elegant folders, bags, luggage and briefcases with a sophisticated retro look).

www.celestedellanna.com

ENGLISH HOME IN OXFORDSHIRE.

ON THE NEXT PAGE AT THE TOP: HIS SLICK CONTEMPORARY OFFICE IN ZURICH. BELOW: HIS PRIVATE SWIMMING POOL IN LONDON.

