

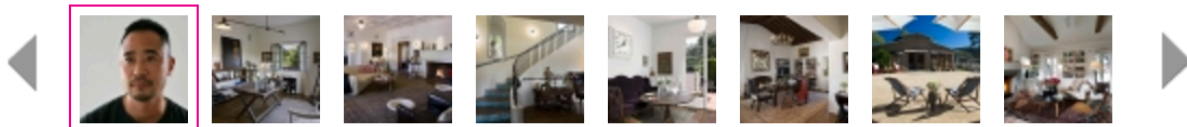


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Designer Crush Q&A: Cliff Fong

Cliff Fong is a former fashion buyer and stylist who was born in NY but spent his childhood living around the globe. After a few years working for luxury brands, he segued into interiors, started his own design studio **Matt Blacke Inc**, and has been on a quiet war path ever since. Fong's designs manage to be sophisticated and understated at the same time. Looking at the celeb homes he's worked on (which include Ellen Degeneres and Portia DeRossi, Ryan Murphy, Balthazar Getty and James Franco), you're initially greeted with a beautifully balanced and welcoming space. But the closer you look, the more you see how special each vintage treasure, architectural detail, and piece of fine art truly is, and how masterfully so many items blend together. We love that Cliff shies away from brash, bold color and wild design, but instead makes his statement in a softer way, creating spaces that feel lived in but still interesting and sophisticated.

By **Rachel Amy Shahvar** on 08/27/13 at 1:30 pm



In addition to outfitting residential projects, Cliff has also worked on some spectacular commercial spaces, including **Michael Voltaggio's Ink** restaurant and Twelfth Street by Cynthia Vincent. He's

also co-owner of **Galerie Half**, an emporium of 20th century design, European antiques and art. With so much going on, we're thrilled he took to time to answer our Designer Crush Q&A!

1. Where do you currently live in CA and what's special about how you've designed your personal space?

I live in a beautiful, Normandy style building in Los Angeles's Wilshire Center neighborhood. Built in 1927, it's quite old, at least by LA standards, and that alone makes it special to me. Even if I weren't working as a designer and able to surround myself with great pieces that I love, I could easily imagine still being happy here.

2. What's your dream design project? Who would it be for (dead or alive)?

To work on preserving and furnishing Pierre Chareau's Maison de Verre in Paris.

3. In real life, what's your favorite design project you've completed to date?

It's actually difficult to choose a favorite since I see each project individually, possessing its own distinct qualities. That said, I most enjoy working in spaces that have history, or possess some kind of unique identity before I even begin.

4. You've been gifted a fabulously furnished dream home but can only bring one item from your current space. What would it be?

A Jean Prouvé Standard Chair that was given to me as a gift by a friend and client.

5. What's your creative process when designing a space?

For me, it's similar to getting dressed each morning: I think about the mood (in this case, of the space), work around my favorite items and build from there.

6. Where do you score prized interior design items? Any shopping tips?

I suspect I may be a scavenger at heart, so I look everywhere. I think it's important to always keep an open mind. The sense of discovery I feel, when I find something amazing somewhere I least expected it, that's a great joy.

7. Ever had an epic DIY disaster? What project would you never take on again yourself?

Thankfully, no.

8. What new design trend are you excited to integrate into your next project?

I find that I don't latch onto trends easily. Even when I do, the seduction is usually brief because trends are usually thin on substance, therefore making them difficult to live with long term.

9. Lightning round!

Beach or mountains?

Beach.

Twitter or Facebook?

Both are fun. Add Instagram and you have a perfect mixture of utility and entertainment.

Architectural Digest or Wallpaper?

Both are great resources depending on what I need.

Should you spend money on a fabulous bathroom or kitchen?

That depends on your personal habits...

Would you rather shop new or vintage?

Vintage. No question there.

Great view or perfect pool?

Can't we have both?

SF or LA?

Again, I think I need both.

10. What's one tip you wish someone had told you when first starting out in the design world?

I've been really very lucky in that, from the start, friends and colleagues have been incredibly helpful and supportive. I suppose the tip I would pass along from this is not to be afraid to look to them for guidance.

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