



DESIGN

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JUDITH VAN MOURIK

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The Fashionable Approach of Interior Architect Judith van Mourik

When transforming a formal castle in the countryside into an exclusive hotel, Judith van Mourik pulled out all the stops. With her experimental nature and aesthetic eye rooted in fashion, she created the iconic Parc Broekhuizen. Since that incredible project, she has become an indispensable figure in the world of interior design, having worked on a succession of impressive hospitality projects in historic buildings. “I’m fulfilling my dream,” she says.

“Using just one material has always been the standard in kitchens, but I have no hesitation combining brass, chrome and mirrored stainless steel. By aligning the design or the details, I can bring it all together into a stunning whole. Plus, it immediately creates a surprising effect.” Judith’s interiors are not picture-perfect; instead, they often embrace a subtle tension. She combines elegance and femininity with the grittiness characteristic of Rotterdam – a rawness that her clients occasionally need time to appreciate. “I often draw on my fashion background and explain that they wouldn’t go for the safe option of pairing red shoes with a red handbag. An interior should be a bit daring, so people look at it with a sense of wonder and there’s always something to discover.”

Judith’s big breakthrough came with the opening of Parc Broekhuizen. She rebuilt the property from scratch, highlighting its historic features while integrating contemporary materials. “I look for the right vibe, where admiration meets the wow factor. Of course, these were historic buildings – including the main house, the coach house and the bistro – so careful consideration was essential. My goal is to create designs that are iconic and can last for at least 30 years. Rushed hospitality concepts aren’t for me; I prefer detailed designs executed with care and attention.”



The brass bar and mid-20th-century bar stools create a striking contrast with the monumental surroundings of Parc Broekhuizen.

The opportunity to pitch for that mega-project came at just the right moment, as Judith was rounding off her studies at the Willem de Kooning Academy, enabling her to officially use the title of interior architect. “By setting and working towards a clear goal for myself, I can stay incredibly focused. My strength lies in perseverance. The clients were still figuring things out, and I was able to draw on the experience I’d gained during a previous hotel project on the Dutch coast. Within the building’s existing structure, I had to design 30 hotel rooms with bathrooms and two restaurants with accompanying kitchens. The upper level was entirely empty; there weren’t even any floors. Once I’d gained their trust, the clients gave me carte blanche, which is a luxury most designers can only dream of.”

This trust allowed Judith to create something truly special. Anyone who is familiar with the property will remember the large oak staircase that graces the entrance, exuding a sense of grandeur. “I brought this monumental atmosphere into the present by pairing the classic oak with nude-coloured walls. Instantly, the staircase lost its stuffy appearance – it was fantastic!” A gradient staircase runner, starting in warm red-pink tones and transitioning to deep green at the top, is a striking statement that has since become Judith’s signature element. Fashion often serves as a foundation for her ideas, and the staircase runner was inspired by a dress. “I’m impressed by how Coco Chanel, one of my biggest style icons, turned the graceful Camellia into a visual symbol for the Chanel brand. She was ahead of her time, and I try to incorporate her way of making statements into my own design vision.”

A gradient in carpets or a staircase runner has become Judith’s signature.

on this page — Fashion often serves as a source of inspiration for Judith’s interior designs.







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Another moment of inspiration struck Judith while washing her hands under the gold taps of the Hôtel Ritz in Paris. “They are kitsch, but perfect for a current project within the pre-war Van Uden building in Rotterdam’s historic Scheepvaartkwartier neighbourhood. This old six-storey trading building, a landmark in the city, is being renovated and transformed, and a sky bar is being added. The original early-20th-century interior includes nautical and sea elements. A gold swan will fit right in, and I’m pairing it with shells and washbasins made of beautiful marble.”

Today, clients with impressive hospitality projects know where to find Judith. In addition to the aforementioned examples, she transformed the entire interior of an old orphanage in Gouda into the Relais & Châteaux WSHS hotel in 2021. She is also working on a listed building – a castle in Belgium’s Voerstreek – and has prepared an impressive concept book for it. “The first step is discovering where we want to go with the concept. What are the starting points, and what is the level of ambition? That becomes the framework for further development. For me, it’s important that I can channel my authenticity and individuality. Looking back on my work over the years, it’s evident that I love playing with material contrasts and that I have a background in styling.”

Judith finds it very rewarding to design hotels. “Even long after a project is finished, I still receive messages from hotel guests who have been inspired by it. That’s the beauty of hotels. But at the same time, I’m discovering how much I enjoy designing private homes as well. By combining a vintage painting with an exclusive handmade lamp imported from New York, for example, I can create contrast and achieve the wow factor that I love so much.”

Judith currently harbours no grand ambitions. “The projects I’m working on, and my family – my loving husband and three healthy children – make me incredibly happy. I’d love to design my own furniture one day, but I’m sure that will happen when the time is right.”

left — While using a single material in kitchens is the norm, Judith confidently combines brass, chrome and mirrored stainless steel.



JUDITH VAN MOURIK IN SHORT

Her designs are layered, featuring a rich mix of materials and a sense of boldness. Judith van Mourik (Rotterdam, 1977) developed her eye for aesthetics at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute (AMFI) and completed internship with Lidewij Edelkoort in Paris. After running her own styling agency for ten years, Judith expanded her knowledge by studying for four years at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. Just before officially becoming an interior architect in 2012, the mega-project at Parc Broekhuizen in Leersum presented itself. Using daring combinations of colours and materials, she transformed the historic Parc Broekhuizen into a luxury boutique hotel with a bistro and a Michelin-starred restaurant, which received the Leading Design Award 2018. Residential and hospitality projects followed, including the Relais & Châteaux WSHS hotel in Gouda, the Belgian country estate Altenbrook and the transformation of the monumental Van Uden building in Rotterdam.

