

## Christine Yorath - Yorkshire based interior designer

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Jo Haywood



Christine Yorath

Jo Haywood meets an interior designer who specialises in making houses into homes. Photographs by Joan Russell



Christine Yorath with clients Karen and Mike Luty at their Harewood home near Leeds

Christine Yorath is a woman of substance and style. She's smart, funny, warm and has a real way with words, drawing you into her stories with colourful descriptions, verve and an unblinking eye for detail.

And it's these very same skills that make her such a successful interior designer, specialising in creating bespoke, comfortable homes that reflect the unique dynamic of each client's life.

'I always make a point of getting to know my clients; how they live, and how they want to live,' she explained. 'As a designer, I have a relationship with people, not with their house.'

'Some designers have a definitive look, but I'm not one of them. I don't want people to look at a house and think 'that's a Christine Yorath'. I want each property to be unique – as unique as the people who call it home.'

### Christine Yorath



Christmas decoration



She's currently working with Karen and Mike Luty on their house in Harewood, Leeds. She joined the project at the development stage, ensuring the building had the right layout and spec from the get-go and, when the Lutys came on-board as buyers, began working with them to turn the house into their ideal home. When the last accessory is finally sourced, bought and placed, Christine will have spent three years on the project.

'The earlier you can bring a designer in, the fewer expensive mistakes you make,' she said. 'With Karen and Mike, I came on-board very early. In the months since, I've helped them with every design decision, from carpets and curtains to coat hooks and wine racks.'

Christine is obviously not someone who shies away from hard work, putting in endless hours on a project while juggling several other schemes and enjoying a busy social life. She is, frankly, not a stereotypical former WAG.

She was married to footballer Terry Yorath, who played for Leeds United and managed the Welsh national team amongst others, for 36 years. They had four children, **TV presenter Gabby** (Logan), model and Circe du Soleil performer Louise, property developer Jordan and Daniel, who tragically died in 1992 at the age of 15 from hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, an inherited form of heart disease.

You only have to spend five minutes in Christine's company to know how important her family are to her. There are numerous photographs – some posed, some fun family snapshots – around her stunning Leeds home, an extended Art Deco property in the north-east suburb of Shadwell. And her conversation is peppered with anecdotes about her children, grandchildren and various members of her extended family.

'My mum was very house-proud,' she said, while discussing the early stages of her passion for interior design. 'We always said that dust was not allowed to land in our house.'

She might have every copy of Architectural Digest from 1973 onwards but, perhaps surprisingly, Christine's first success was actually in the beauty rather than property business. She opened Yorkshire's first stand-alone beauty salon in **Wetherby** and is still active in the sector today as European distributor of the Metrin beauty brand.

The signs were there from a young age, however, that her future lay in property. When she bought her first house – a five-bedroom detached – in Adel at the age of 20, she wasn't prepared to sit back and let others make design decisions for her.

'It was a new-build and I made a point of getting to know the site foreman,' she said. 'I'd get him to make alterations and additions to my house so it wouldn't be the same as everyone else's. I even persuaded him to paint the bathroom dark brown. I won't tell you what he called my colour choice, but he did it.'

Christine bought her first renovation project at the age of 39 and started turning round modest Leeds back-to-backs. She then turned her gaze on the city centre, developing flats in York Place before launching a game-changing scheme in Wellington Street, creating an elite collection of luxury apartments that smashed through the city's property price ceiling.

'My philosophy was – and still is – to make every property unique,' she said. 'That's the prime reason those apartments sold so well – buyers knew their home was not the same as their neighbours.'

Christine continues to utilise her keen eye for design and her passion for creating homes as individual as their owners in her work today. At 65, she's still putting in the hours and still showing no sign of slowing down.

'When I was 60 the kids asked if I was thinking of retiring, but it's not something that appeals to me,' she said. 'We live a long time in my family. My uncle died recently at the age of 106 and my auntie is 99. I could have 40 more years of heating bills to pay, so I'd better carry on.' w

Find out more about Christine Yorath's design studio at [www.christineyorath.com](http://www.christineyorath.com) or by calling 0113 265 0979. She's happy to chat (and the kettle is invariably on).

