

## DECORATOR PROFILE Charlotte Lane Fox

When Charlotte Lane Fox's two children were born, presents from her clients 'came flying in'. There are no surprises here. She's a charismatic designer, brimming with enthusiasm. For her, boundaries between work and play blur, and clients are either friends in the first instance or they become so.

Charlotte, daughter of the inimitable Prue Lane Fox, has been a partner in her mother's interior-design business for five years, and a central cog in its wheels for a decade. Previously, a summer job cutting samples with pinking shears and handwriting labels at Charles Hammond progressed to two valuable years at Colefax and Fowler. Then, after a year's travelling, she spent a summer working for her mother and never left.

Experience, in her eyes, is all. 'My mother put me on a building site, and told me to get on with it,' she says gratefully. 'I have learnt so much from her; that every little item must be perfect, that detail is very important. I'd spend a week on a cushion to get it right.' She has recently been accepted as a member of the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), having been proposed by George Renwick.

Her style is straight-down-the-line 'contemporary traditional'. No frills or chintzes, but warm colours and natural fabrics.

She considers it her role to provide a backdrop for people to create a home. 'Then they can add their bits and pieces,' she says realistically. 'I firmly believe that you can't make a house in six months.' Ask her about jobs, and locations roll off her tongue. Country houses in Wiltshire, town houses all over London, plus a newly built house in Kuwait. All Charlotte's work comes by word of mouth, and at any time there are up to thirty jobs on the books. 'We never stop, it's go, go, go...'

It was verve like this that got Charlotte and her mother on to the TV programme *Challenge Anneka*, decorating two bungalows for people with spinal injuries on behalf of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Trust in two-and-a-half days flat. It was a breeze for Charlotte, because efficiency is her thing. 'People think interior design is glamorous,' she says. 'But seventy-five per cent of its success lies in making sure things run smoothly.' **Judith Wilson**  
Charlotte can be contacted at Prue Lane Fox on 0171-244 0292



Charlotte Lane Fox: a good decorating pedigree

## Bête noire



Car alarms do not appear to act as a criminal deterrent since no one takes the blindest notice of them. They are frequently neurotically oversensitive and once activated can

easily damage the hearing of those unfortunate enough to work in close proximity. A continuously, and aimlessly, whining car is more likely to provoke a criminal response than a silent, well-behaved one.



## POSSESSIVE CASE

In a *Desert Island Discs* vein, Insider asked Shadow Secretary of State for Health **Ann Widdecombe** (above) what six inessential treasures she would take with her if she were cast away. She replied: **My grandmother's work basket, as a reminder of the peace and care that characterized my childhood** ● The photo album of my fiftieth birthday, since that records in one volume most of my family and close friends ● **My rosary blessed by the Pope, as a reminder of my personal audience with him in 1996** ● My dictaphone – a very quick and easy method of recording any pressing thoughts ● **A recording of 'How Great Thou Art', which I regard as the most beautiful hymn in the English language** ● Virgil's *Aeneid*, which, years after I first encountered it at school, remains a favourite source of entertainment. ▷