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Inside David Gandy's bachelor pad

David Gandy has a guilty secret: rather than picking out suits or pumping iron, he prefers to spend his time off bargain-hunting for claw-foot baths or watching his Farrow & Ball paint dry. Laura Craik gets a guided tour of his new Fulham townhouse, four-poster bed and all

LAURA CRAIK | Thursday 16 October 2014 | 0 comments



Man of the house: David Gandy in the kitchen of his Fulham home. David Gandy for Autograph vest, £15. Watch, David's own

A man in a very tight white T-shirt is speaking in tongues: 'So we were going to get all the panelling made up, and I saw the guy's work and the quality of the plaster, and I said, "I don't know why we're putting something else on top." This is literally just dado rail, and that's how we did it, all the way up. It looks good now, but to actually get all these squares, and to get all the plug sockets in and at the right angle... it takes a while.'



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replaced him with Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen. Don't let the modelling career fool you: Gandy's first love is DIY. Perhaps this is an inevitable consequence of being 2013's Second Highest-Paid Male Model in the World, according to *Forbes*; when you've appeared in a video with J-Lo and designed your own underwear range for M&S, true solace lies in B&Q.

There must be millions of women gagging to get a glimpse of Gandy's interior, and he is happy to show it to me, in exquisite detail, even if the one for which he is most famous remains firmly in his pants. And that's fine. Call me weird, but I don't fancy him. I know! What's wrong with me? I'm sure he's devastated. Happily, my obliviousness to his Popeye arms and 'Blue Steel' gaze allows me to focus fully on the job in hand, which is admiring the home he lovingly fashioned from a clapped-out shell in Fulham.

'It was such a wreck – in a horrendous condition,' says Gandy. 'People walking out from the viewing said to me, "Don't even bother going in." That sort of got my juices flowing.' Stop flirting with me, David; I'm not interested. 'It was a bigger project than I wanted to take on but I had a good feeling about it.'



Study hard: An old map of London covers a wall in the snug/study. David wears Berluti shirt, £450, and Hugo Boss wool trousers, at selfridges.com, £139

If Gandy's taste is surprising, it's only because you might expect a well-travelled man who's worked closely with Dolce & Gabbana for so many years to be a little more... flamboyant. No. In fact, Casa Gandy is one part boutique hotel to two parts Surrey housewife, with only a soupçon of eccentricity. For example, few people have stumbled upon the idea of using an artist's easel as a television stand. 'I hate TVs on walls. You either make a room around it so it's a feature, or you try to hide it with something like this,' he says.

Everything in Gandy's three-storey Victorian home (with dug-out basement) is a symphony of off-white, brown and greige, from the Farrow & Ball-painted walls (Elephant's Breath is a favourite shade) to the oatmeal throws and curtains. Gandy loves a claw-foot bath, an antique trunk, a railway tile and a polished concrete surface (though his are resin). That these stylistic tics will go on to define the 2010s just as Moroccan lanterns and fairylights defined the 1990s does not diminish them. My house is full of them. Isn't everyone's?

As he's an ambassador for British menswear (he was appointed

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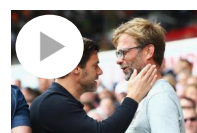
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and upholstery were all sourced from companies in either Chelsea or Essex (Gandy grew up in Billericay), while the builders were local, too. Most of the fabrics were sourced from Holland & Sherry, the Savile Row cloth merchants established in 1836. 'Lots of the materials are Savile Row – houndstooth, Prince of Wales checks...' he reels off. Thank God Gandy doesn't have any children yet – the dry-cleaning bills would be horrendous.

Does he have anything from Ikea? 'I can't say I do. Actually, those picture frames are from Ikea, I tell a lie.' What about eBay? 'One of the baths is from eBay. A lot of it is from Gumtree – some of the chairs downstairs are, though we got them reupholstered. And I've taken stuff off skips. With permission,' he adds hastily.

We come to the master bedroom, with its extremely large bed and slightly disconcerting teddy bear. What mood was he trying to create? 'If an accomplished interior designer came in here, they would probably criticise me for mixing Georgian with Victorian,' he says, somewhat defensively. 'I don't particularly care – I wanted what I liked. At the end of the day, it's my house, it's my home.'



Drawer filler: The walk-in wardrobe on the top floor with custom-built drawers. David wears M&S Collection vest, £12. Trousers and braces, David's own

What does he think is the biggest mistake people make with their homes? 'Lighting,' he responds quickly. 'Usually too much. They have their overhead lights on, and it's so white and cold, so clinical. Virtually every light in this house is dimmable. In here at night, all the lamps are carefully placed around so it's a really nice mood, almost like candlelight.'

At this point, it is perhaps apposite to mention The Drawer. Obviously, Gandy has a walk-in wardrobe – more of a small room, really – and there, chalked on one of the many drawers that have been custom-built to keep his prodigious collection of clothing in order, is the name 'Mollie'. Someone has written 'Mollie' on one of your drawers, I remark.

'That may be there for a while, so, uh...' Wow. A lady with her own drawer in the house, I say. Someone book the church. 'There you go,' he says. 'Even though she steals all my clothes.' I figure Mollie is probably famous, because celebrities never go out with normals. Later, I Google and find out that she is Mollie King, the blonde one from The Saturdays. Dedicated drawer or not, it can't be easy maintaining your love life when you travel as much as Gandy who

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or a black taxi... it just makes me feel homesick.'

Gandy recently shot a video with Jennifer Lopez. Did she hit on him? 'No. She didn't.' Wasn't she between boyfriends? 'I don't know. I didn't ask about her private life.' Does he ever wish he could switch off his face and look more like Ricky Gervais? 'I think Ricky Gervais would get more attention than me, so I'm not sure about that. I know everyone round here, and they all know me. I love that. That's why I don't ever really want to live in Notting Hill or on the King's Road. If you don't have a pair of Ray-Bans on [in those places] then you're not accepted.'

We are now downstairs in the study-cum-snug, where I spy my first photograph of Gandy. To be fair, it's hard to miss, taking up as it does the best part of one wall. 'I think it's about the only one I have. It was a gift from the photographer at the time. My mum keeps everything; maybe 60, 70-odd covers. I know lots of people would put them on walls and stuff, but I think that's a bit...'

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Comfy setting: Gandy furnished the house with items from Gumtree, eBay and Sunbury Antiques Market; fabrics came from Holland & Sherry on Savile Row

Gazing at the black and white image of his chiselled body, it seems a good time to talk about how he attains it. Any quick fixes for the time-pressed man? 'There is no quick fix,' he says firmly. 'It's about changing your lifestyle. I don't even really believe in diets.' You ate carbs, I say, somewhat accusatorially, having witnessed him earlier

of a person who really loves his food. He tells me about the GQ Men of the Year Awards last month, and how he ate his own dinner, followed by the supermodel Natalia Vodianova's. "The only other person who ate as much as me was Sam Smith. And Kanye West's bodyguard – he was scoffing it all down."

Is he ever like, 'I can't be bothered to go to the gym today'?

'Oh, all the time. Especially when I come home late, when I've been working for 12 hours and have to go down the gym at 9.30pm, and be there until 10.30pm, and then eat dinner and try to get ready for bed.'

This sounds pretty grim. What does he do to relax? Is there even any opportunity? 'I watch a lot of documentaries. Then *Mad Men*, *The Sopranos*... *House of Cards* is amazing. Dangerous on Netflix, though. Netflix kills me because it has that button that says, "Your next episode will play in 14 seconds." And I'll literally be in bed at 2am going, "Yes, I can do another one, I suppose."'

David Gandy: he's just like the rest of us. Only with better pecs. And a dado rail.

The David Gandy for Autograph men's underwear and sleepwear collection is available now at marksandspencer.com. Photographs by Tomo Brejc, styled by Anish Patel

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