

DECORATION

## Hutley & Humm's top tips for creating a strong relationship between client and interior designer

Lucy Boulton speaks with Melissa Hutley and Charlie Humm about their interior design studio Hutley & Humm as well as how they nurture client relationships

By Lucy Boulton  
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**H**utley & Humm, which was established in 2013 by Melissa Hutley and Charlie Humm, takes pride in its immersive approach to design. Melissa and Charlie believe a home should reflect its inhabitants and act as a window into things that they love and places that they've visited. They aren't afraid to encourage their clients to be brave and support them, giving them the confidence to have colours and designs that ultimately elevate their day-to-day life.

The List's Lucy Boulton sits down with Melissa to discuss the studio's portfolio and learn how they nurture relationships with their clients.



Helen Cathcart

**Tell us a little about the origins of your company.**

“We started our company together after working for other design studios and realising we wanted to create an intimate studio where the relationship and dialogue with our clients remained paramount. We both had moments where we tried to grow the company, but we realised having a direct relationship with the client was most important. We love listening to clients and then trying to surprise them with a design they didn’t realise they wanted. By doing so, we constantly push ourselves and our clients to think outside the obvious and be brave.”

**What is the underlying inspiration behind your designs?**

“The inspiration always starts with our clients – who they are, their heritage, and how they live. Our aesthetic pulls them to our work, but we concentrate on designing specifically for them.”



Helen Cathcart

**Have you worked on any exciting projects or collaborations recently?**

“We have just finished our fifth project for a client, which was an incredible feeling and a significant milestone for our business. To build a relationship with a client who is so happy that they come back again is the best reward.



Helen Cathcart

Creating five projects together has been so special, and each has been unique; the house, the style, and the approach has challenged us each time. Two past clients have been in touch in the last month with new projects, which feels like the biggest compliment we could ever ask for. It’s so much fun keeping these relationships going.

We are also looking to start a collection of [bespoke TV units](#) made to order after receiving requests through Instagram. It’s amazing how Instagram has allowed so many businesses to expand into new areas. We are also looking at our wallpaper border collection, which we will focus on in 2023!”



**It sounds like you've been able to build really strong relationships with your clients. How do you think you've achieved this?**

“This has been down to keeping the studio small so that Charlie and I are both involved throughout the projects, and our clients can contact us directly throughout the processes with concerns or queries.”

**Do you have any advice for people that are keen to foster good relationships with their interior designers?**

“Communication and honesty are key. We always want to make sure clients are aware of any possible delays or situations. We have always found clients are grateful for us managing expectations and hopefully beating deadlines rather than extending them.”



Helen Cathcart



**Tell us a bit more about your bespoke cabinets.**

“The idea for the made-to-order TV cabinet was purely derived from the response from our followers. The furniture maker we are working with has a workshop in Suffolk and creates the most beautiful high-quality pieces. We are very excited to offer something bespoke and specialised.”

**How do you envisage your company ten years from now?**

“We hope our families will be that bit older to allow us more time to explore our design ideas in other areas. Charlie and I are frustrated craftsmen at heart. We would love to expand our designs into landscaping, [fabric and wallpaper design](#) and sourcing more [antiques](#) and accessories as we discover them on our travels.”

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