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SOLD!

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After a fashion

The husband of the late Isabella Blow shows **Cheryl Markosky** around the style maven's eclectic Belgravia pad and explains why he's moving on

She was attention-grabbing in life, famous for her bright-red lips, high heels and extravagant hats — think pheasants, lobsters and antlers — and the Belgravia home of the late Isabella Blow is no less eye-catching. The muse of the milliner Philip Treacy, and former fashion director of Sunday Times Style and Tatler, committed suicide in May last year at 48, having suffered from cancer and depression. Her flat is now on the market, with 12 years left on the lease, for £535,000.

"The flat is a museum to Isabella," says Detmar Blow, who was married to the stylist for 18 years. Following a split, he and Isabella reunited and renovated the one-bedroom flat on Eaton Square they bought in 2005 for about £400,000.

Although Isabella — or Issie, as she was known — provided many of the ideas and helped to source furniture, they hired the architect Seng Watson and Isabella's interior-designer pal

Camilla Guinness (they cleaned houses together as teenagers) to transform what Detmar describes as "a dull, beige businessman's flat, with a hideous pine fireplace and flatscreen telly" into baroque-style cool.

The flat is "pure Issie" as soon as you step into the orange hallway. Perspex stands hold some of her hat collection — though you won't find her favourite, a Treacy pheasant concoction, as she was buried in it. Ornate 18th-century doors bought from the salvage firm Lasso lead to a glittery silver reception room. ("She always liked glittery make-up," says Detmar.)

Isabella didn't forget her family connections. She was the eldest daughter of Sir Evelyn Delves Broughton, 12th baronet, and her grandfather was "Jock" Delves Broughton, of White Mischief fame. She used an antique console table from her ancestral home, Doddington Hall, in Cheshire, as a desk — a glass cover protects the 1660 Siena leather top. A huge 1920s glass

chandelier that once adorned her grandmother's boudoir now dangles from the 20ft ceiling.

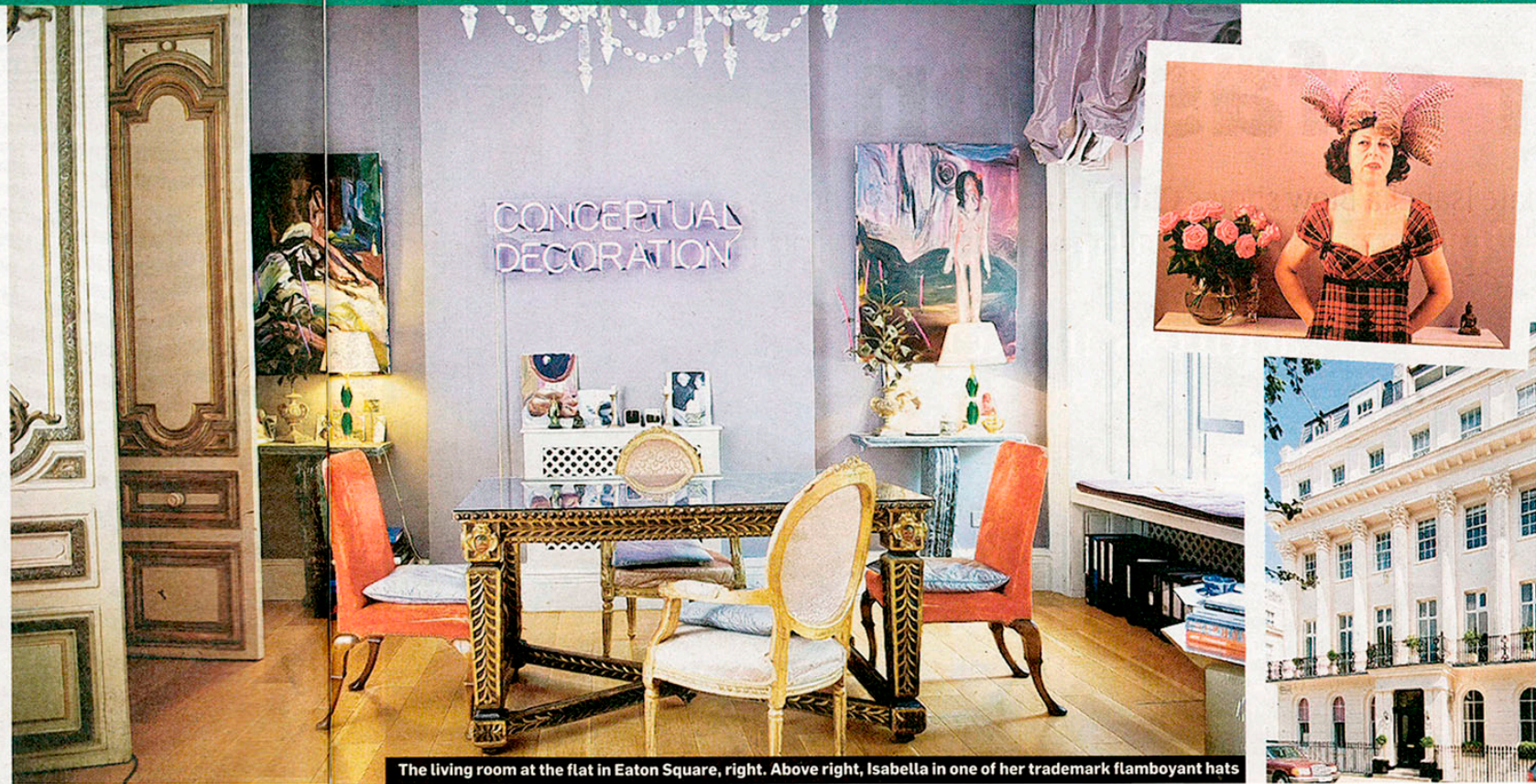
Previously, the couple had lived for a decade in a townhouse near Waterloo. "Issie hated Theed Street, with its glass and steel," Detmar says. "She called it the NCP car park." It was an easy commute by Eurostar, however, to Alexander McQueen's flat in Paris, which Isabella rented, until 2003, from the designer she had discovered — she bought his entire Central Saint Martins graduation-show collection for £5,000. The couple also spent a good deal of time at 1,000-acre Hilles, the Gloucestershire estate designed by Detmar's namesake architect grandfather.

Although Isabella loved eclecticism, sometimes Detmar just wanted somewhere cosy to sit. The only design clash between the couple came when Isabella chose a formal 18th-century striped Swedish sofa rather than a squishy modern pink one. "I liked the pink sofa," Detmar recalls, "but Issie was

Francesco Guidicini, Camera Press/Debra Hurford Brown



Detmar Blow with his pug, Alfie



The living room at the flat in Eaton Square, right. Above right, Isabella in one of her trademark flamboyant hats



ruthless about not compromising style over comfort."

The kitchen was extended from a poky hole into a long, galley-style space with cupboards for Isabella's Thomas Goode china. Detmar's art collection features too, including a painting of a rubbish bag by Stefan Brüggemann, wittily placed above the bins. Other pieces from Detmar's Blow de la Barra gallery are dotted around the flat, among them a neon work declaring "Conceptual decoration" and a video installation, by Mat Collishaw, of a blazing fire set in the fireplace, taken from a real fire at Hilles. All of the art is for sale, but not the furniture.

"Issie was content here," Detmar says. "She liked cooking her favourite Simon Hopkinson recipes, and grouse, pheasant and partridge for me."

Detmar appears reluctant to leave the artistic den in Belgravia, but his life has moved on. Along with his black pug, Alfie, he and his artist girlfriend, Mara Castilho, who is due to give birth to their first child this month, are renting a large flat in north London. "Cash never accumulated quite as we would have liked," Detmar says, "but we certainly lived our lives, which is more than most people can say."

✚ The flat is for sale for £535,000; Ayrton Wylie, 020 7730 4628, www.ayrtonwylie.com

BLOWOUT

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