

BESPOKE E-MAGAZINE

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Master of pop



Living

Along the Hudson River, from Grand Central Station, New York, past drab suburbs that all look the same, to the idyllic town of Scarborough. It looks like something out of 'Gone with the Wind'. Large verandas stretch out in front of opulent villas and there is even a red brick church in the middle of town.

What on earth is Karim Rashid, the colourful pop designer doing here? It seems

a bit unlikely - way too bourgeois - until you see him standing in front of his completely renovated 1950s house. It's illuminated, on top of a hill and appears almost exhibitionistic, with two huge windows facing the street giving a clear view inside. It seems a bit naughty; the way Rashid displays his pop furniture in the prude American upper-class ghetto.

Rashid living in Scarborough is pure provocation. You see it in front of the house where a Jaguar sits in the driveway. It's not just any Jaguar - but an Eighties Jaguar XJS V12.

In the garden he's in the process of building a swimming pool and experimenting with a kidney-shaped pool. It only needs to have the concrete poured, but due to over-extended workmen they now have to wait for the plumbing. It's comforting to know even star designers have problems with personnel.

During our visit another company sends out workmen and they view the other workmen's botched job with snorting sounds and head shaking. It's a familiar sight to anyone who has built or renovated a place. Luckily, everything else is finished. "I have had the house for three years now. My wife and I really didn't change anything, we even took an original colour palette from the Fifties and had the same tones mixed for the paint," he explains.

But even without changing the structure of the 170-square-metre house, you can still see Rashid's unmistakable stamp on the place. Only the kitchen and two bathrooms are 'pop-free' furniture zones due to the built-in cupboards, but in all the rooms there are objects designed by Rashid. In the kitchen, his stamp is on everything from the dustbin to the washing-up liquid; the bathrooms are filled with Rashid-created, heavenly-scented envelopes. The Egyptian-born designer has designed and produced over 200 products including furniture, clothes and lighting. He's had his own brand for the last 13 years and likes to show it off privately, even in Scarborough.

Downstairs is the living room that adjoins the open plan kitchen, guest bedroom and guest bathroom. Upstairs under the roof is a bedroom and walk-in closet, the master bedroom, and in between, in the hallway, a workroom, which can also be reached through the bathroom. This is what a 'pop' star's house looks like.