



NIKI ROBINSON

HER
HOME,
HER
WORK,
HER
PARTIES,
HER
airbnb

Barcelona

Text by ANDREW TROTTER Photography by MARI LUZ VIDAL



AT: Who are you Miss Robinson?

NR: Ooh... well originally I come from the small island of Jersey in the Channel Islands, which is beautiful but very small so my love of travel probably came from a need to escape. I worked in a bank when I left school to get money to travel, then took off to Central America and ended up living in the US for a few years, in San Francisco and Miami doing all kinds of jobs, from painter and decorator to waitressing and music event organizer. Miami was a bit like Disneyland for grown ups so in my mid twenties I decided to get off the ride and moved to London to study design. I did a degree in footwear design and then worked as a designer, which was how I ended up moving to Barcelona. I was offered the 'dream job' working for a new company based in New York with a design studio here in Barcelona and all I had to do was move my whole life in a month, so I did, and my boyfriend Joe too.

AT: Joe, what brought you to Barcelona? and how did you meet Lisa and how did you start Antiques & Boutiques?

NR: Lisa and I met through our dear friend Gianluca who was a colleague of mine who also moved here for the shoe project from Milan (and still lives here too). She had been living in Milan, working in fashion too and wanted a change. Lisa and I got along really well from the start and had a shared love of clothes, design, vintage etc. Antiques & Boutiques was born from that reality. We knew the city really well from getting out and about looking for inspiration and would have industry friends visiting and would show them around our favourite spots. We realised that in Barcelona the good stuff was kind of hidden away, so insider knowledge was invaluable. That was the real inspiration behind the tours...

AT: Was it a quick success? I hear you are now expanding into London and Italy

NR: It was quickly successful in terms of reputation and we had great press, etc. but was always a kind of extra thing on the side in terms of business... so we didn't really do much in terms of marketing, etc., mainly word of mouth and through press. It was only last year that we started to focus on it as a business, and working on it as our main project. That's when we decided to expand to other cities and it made sense to start in cities that we already knew well, hence Florence, London and soon Milan.

AT: Your life seems to be very full, you are travelling a lot, especially with Joe's work, how do you hold down a business?

NR: I have always been a person with loads of projects on the go, I can't seem to help it so I guess I must like it like that. The great thing about Antiques & Boutiques is that it is a platform, which covers all of my favourite things, travel, design, events,... the possibilities are endless because it is a lifestyle brand really.

AT: Your home is amazing, how long have you been there? Are the pieces things you have collected over the years, and did it grow, or did you set about making your home like that?

NR: Thank you. We've lived here for 2 and a half years. It used to be a

piano school servicing the old theatre district of Parallel, which is terribly romantic! Joe and I both collect things, together and individually: vinyl records, painting by numbers, general curiosities or things which have an interesting idea. That's really the backbone of the decor.

AT: You are doing lots of events, in your home and other spaces. Tell us a bit about these, about the people you are collaborating with.

NR: Joe and I have a big collection of vinyl records. When we met 12 years ago we both had collections of records from charity shops, unloved and unwanted records given a new lease of life. We started to DJ under the name 'Sweet Charity' and have been doing that ever since.

We organize events with Hendrick's Gin, who are wonderful and suit our curious sensibilities, our Project with them now involves hairdressing and music where you can have your hair styled like one of our found record cover, very glamorous! We also run a stage at Glastonbury Music Festival every year, which is a cruise ship sailing to tropical ports with bands, amazing performers and DJ's. We really go all out with that one and it's a lot of fun!

The other love we have in life is food so we also organize food and music events in at home with our amazing chef friends. We are planning some nice ones for this winter one of which is our 'Horse and Heron' pop up pub.

AT: You are renting out rooms. People must love coming to stay in a home like that in Barcelona.

NR: Yes, people love it, and generally the people who choose to stay here are likeminded. We have met some incredible people, from Russian poets to movie directors, musicians, cowboys, etc. A real mix!

AT: Tell us about the life you have with your guests, the things you share and what is special about staying with you.

NR: Well the apartment is pretty big so people can really have their privacy and we are really easy going, so it's a lovely atmosphere to be in. We're very open with our belongings and love it if people want to play music, etc. We also give them great tips on where to go and what to do around town.

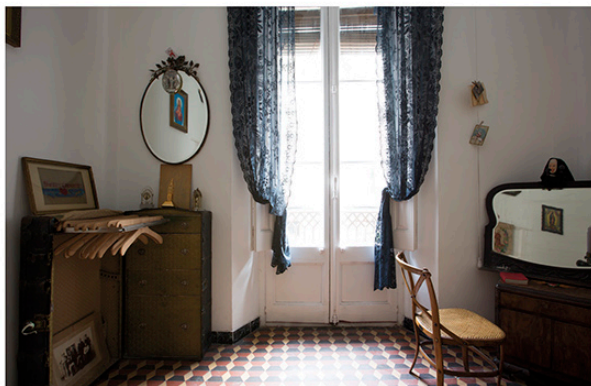
AT: How do you juggle all these things? Do you get time to rest and relax? And is your home a place you hide in?

NR: It is a lot of juggling indeed. We always seem to be working on something, but Joe and I have the lucky situation of working for ourselves and together on many projects. We don't rest and relax as much as we should, but I do try to get to yoga, then, yes, hide away at home from time to time.

AT: What is on the horizon for Niki Robinson?

NR: Lots more fun, creative adventures and some travel to exotic lands!





If you would like to stay with Niki and Joe, please contact them through Airbnb

www.airbnb.com/rooms/162219

www.antiquesandboutiques.com

A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN I WAS SITTING, MINDING MY P'S AND Q'S IN MY LITTLE SHOP, I WAS REGULARLY VISITED BY TWO LOVELY ENGLISH LASSES, BRINGING GOOD FOLK FROM OTHER COUNTRIES TO SEE MINE AND OTHER BEAUTIFUL LITTLE SHOPS AROUND BARCELONA. NOW NIKI AND LISA ARE INTO THEIR 3RD YEAR OF ANTIQUES & BOUTIQUES AND SPREADING INTO LONDON, MILAN AND FLORENCE. NIKI WITH HER PARTNER HOST FABULOUS PARTIES IN MANY CITIES ON BEHALF OF HENDRICKS GIN, BUT THIS IS NOT WHY WE TALKED TO HER. NIKI AND HER BOYFRIEND JOE HAVE A WONDERFUL HOUSE IN RAVAL, THAT THROUGH AIRBNB, REGULARLY RENTS OUT ROOMS, BUT THIS IS NO ORDINARY STAY, WHERE THE GUESTS ARE GIVEN THE KEY AND LEFT TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES. IF NIKI AND JOE ARE AROUND AT THE TIME, THE GUESTS ARE WELCOMED TO DINNER, SHOWN THE SITES OF BARCELONA, AND IF VERY LUCKY, BECOME PART OF THEIR IN HOUSE PARTIES AND MINI CONCERTS.





Niki and Joe often hold events in their house. These photos are of the play "Smoking a cigarette" by Teatro d'Appartamento and dinner by the Rooftop Smokehouse.