The ENGLISH HOME

2022 DECORATING GUIDE

INTERIOR DESIGN

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For expert advice on window dressings, from smart shutters to opulent curtains, turn to page 108.

A letter from home

Whether considering a complete redecoration or quick update, there are so many decorating ideas and exciting products available to transform every room of the home. Our 2022 issue of *Interior Design* is therefore structured by theme – from versatile ways with paint to enhancing rooms with art and antiques – in order to offer style inspiration, explain creative ideas and highlight the playful details that interior designers and professional decorators use. These sit alongside expert advice and insider insights from key names in the industry, so that each section offers a layered, useful and in-depth guide to decorating.

Interior Design is an enjoyable and insightful read that we hope you'll return to time and time again this year. Brimming with information, unexpected ideas and creative solutions, we hope that you'll find this an invaluable resouce for taking decorating at home to the next level.

Samantha

Samantha Scott-Jeffries, Editor

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Don't miss our NEW monthly podcast

The English Home podcast celebrates the best of classic English interiors and design. In each episode, Samantha Scott-Jeffries, editor of *The English Home* magazine, talks with leading interiors experts, designers and specialists to discover their style secrets, decorating advice and seasonal inspiration.

Catch up on episodes featuring Farrow & Ball's colour curator **Joa Studholme**, leading interior designers **Nina Campbell** and **Kit Kemp**, English furniture and lighting designer **Tom Raffield** as well as high-profile floral stylist **Willow Crossley** and our regular columnist and BBC *Great British Menu* judge **Matthew Fort** amongst many others….

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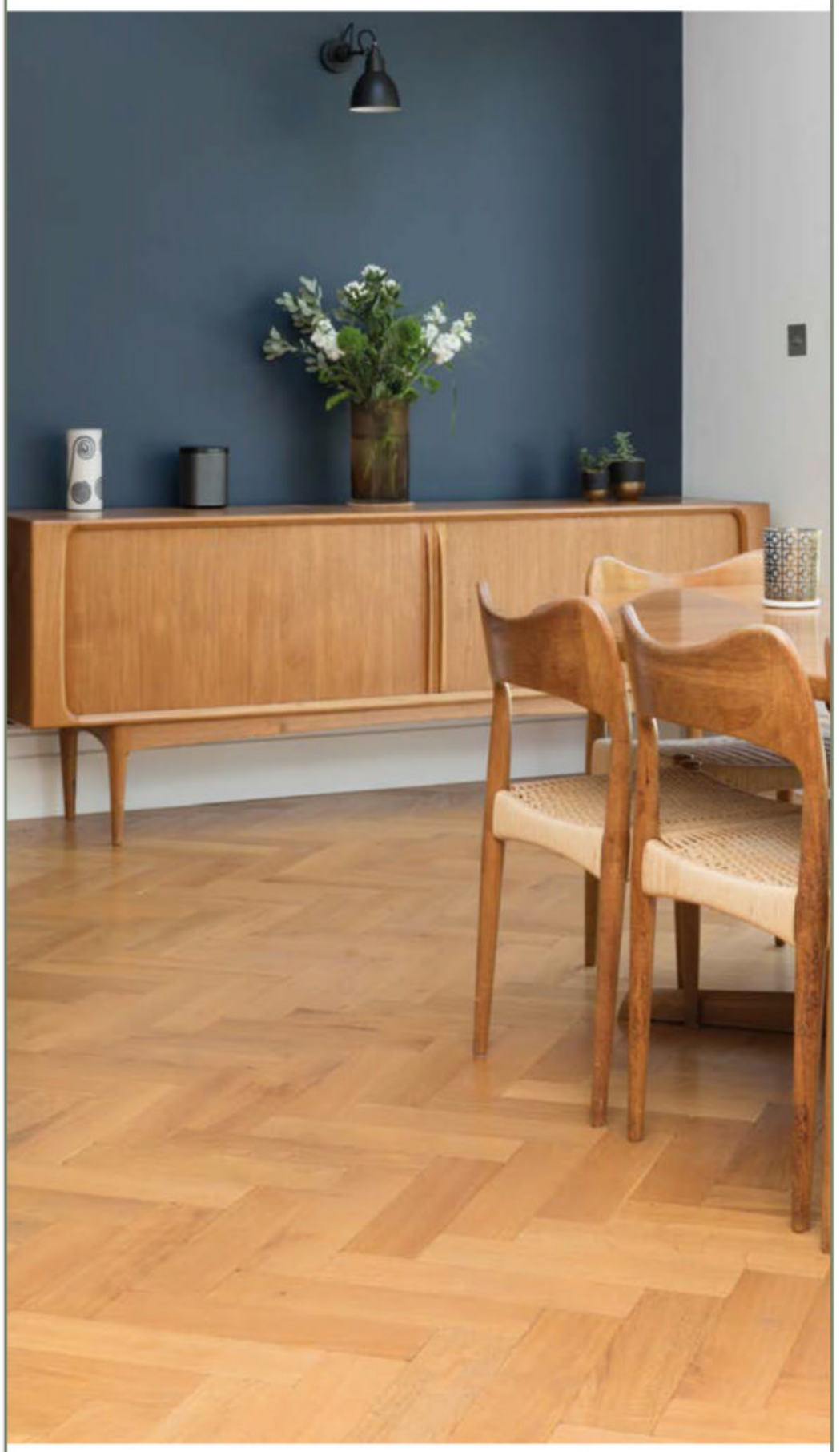

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Versatile ways with

PAINT

From effecting the complete transformation of a room to upcycling a piece of furniture, paint can quickly add decorative impact

Whether considering a complete redecoration or a quick update, the versatility of paint opens up opportunities to add creative details and be bold with colour.

A medium that can used in any decorating project, whether on woodwork, ceilings or walls, paint is relatively easy and affordable to change as desired, as well as to match to a preferred textile choice for a cohesive look. It allows for a bold contrast in block colours without the added worry of successfully combining patterns, and the range of finishes available offers a chance to subtly but effectively transform the completed look.

Here we look at ways to combine colours, add playful details on different surfaces, inside and out, to make the most of this essential, useful and transformative decorative tool.

ABOVE RIGHT Use block colours to experiment with bold colour contrasting. *Cornicing, Slaked Lime; picture rail and above, Leather; below picture rail, Pea Green; skirting and window, Obsidian Green, all from £48.50 for 2.5l Absolute Matt Emulsion, Little Greene*

OPPOSITE Deep colours look even more sumptuous in a matt finish. *Wall, Serpentine, £52 for 2.5l True Matt, Zoffany*

HIGH CONTRAST

Use contrasting colours of paint on walls, woodwork and original architectural features to make a striking style statement, perhaps adding a bold flash of colour above a picture rail (as shown above) or painting the top or bottom half of a room in different colours. A dark colour at the bottom helps to ground the room and everything in it. For a softer look, teaming a lighter colour with a darker one to highlight certain features such as a fireplace or alcove brings areas of light to a rich and cosy scheme.

Contrast can be helpful, too, in zoning spaces or creating a backdrop to something – a bright colour around a bath, or behind a bed – or to give distinction to an area within an open-plan room.

PERFECT FINISH

The beauty of paint is that it is available in a host of transformative finishes, from chalky, matt paints that create a soft, earthy quality and limewashes with a wonderful tactile character, to high gloss and lacquer for added glamour and luxury, or the gentle sheen of eggshell to help reflect light and enliven a room.

Finishes can be combined – gloss or eggshell can work on a wall, perhaps on the bottom half of a wall with a matt in the same shade above for a subtle but effective contrast. Peter Gomez, lead designer at Zoffany adds that, "Using the same colour on not just the walls but on the skirting, fireplaces or ceilings is a really strong trend, however, if you were to use different finishes of the same colour, you'll gain interest in the light reflection, which will break up the room to make it feel more layered." High gloss paint can look striking on cabinetry or other furniture and offer a hard-wearing finish too.

Sumptuous velvet-like matt finishes create a cosseting backdrop and work particularly well on deep vibrant colours where the block colour, without sheen allows the colour to absorb light and shadow to create beautiful character.

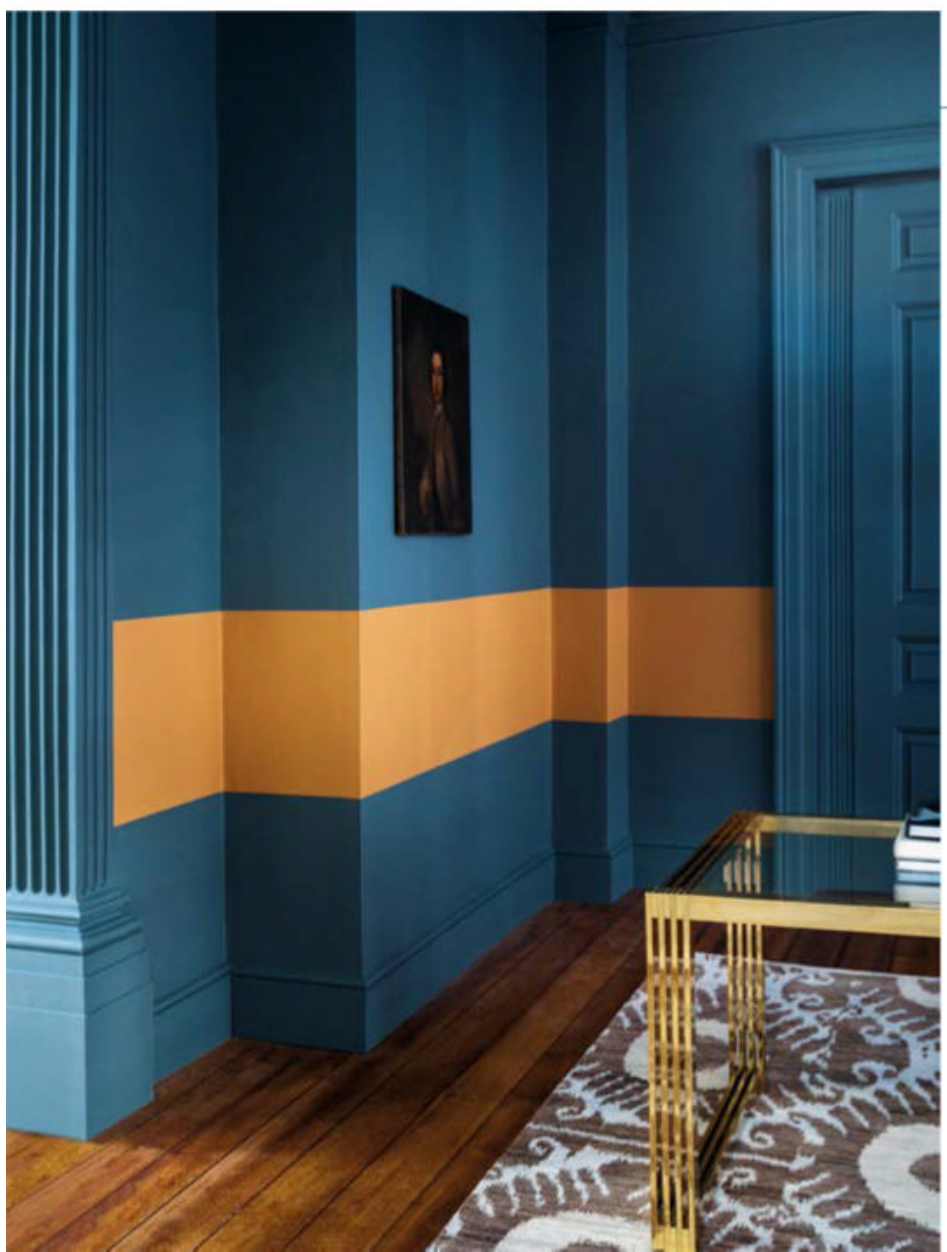
UP ABOVE

Traditionally ceilings are painted white, which can be a brilliant choice for creating a light, airy feel, but if the walls are a dark colour, doing so can draw the eye to top of the room and make the ceiling feel lower. One way of countering this is to paint the ceiling in the same shade as the walls. This blurs the definition between where one begins and one ends. Or turn things around and keep walls lighter and neutral and apply colour above.

"Use unexpected dark colours on ceilings to create a dramatic but cosy and intimate atmosphere, whilst lighter colours can be paired with complementary pale tones or off-white walls to expand the space and make the whole room feel larger," Dominic Myland, director of Mylands, advises.

Wallpapered rooms can benefit from ceilings painted in a colour matched to one in the paper design. A bonus of paint is that several companies offer a bespoke colour-mixing service to ensure a perfect result is achieved.

RIGHT Reverse traditional choices by painting the ceiling and woodwork in a colour and leaving walls white.
Ceiling and woodwork, Long Acre; walls, Walpole, both £51 for 2.5l Marble Matt Emulsion, Mylands



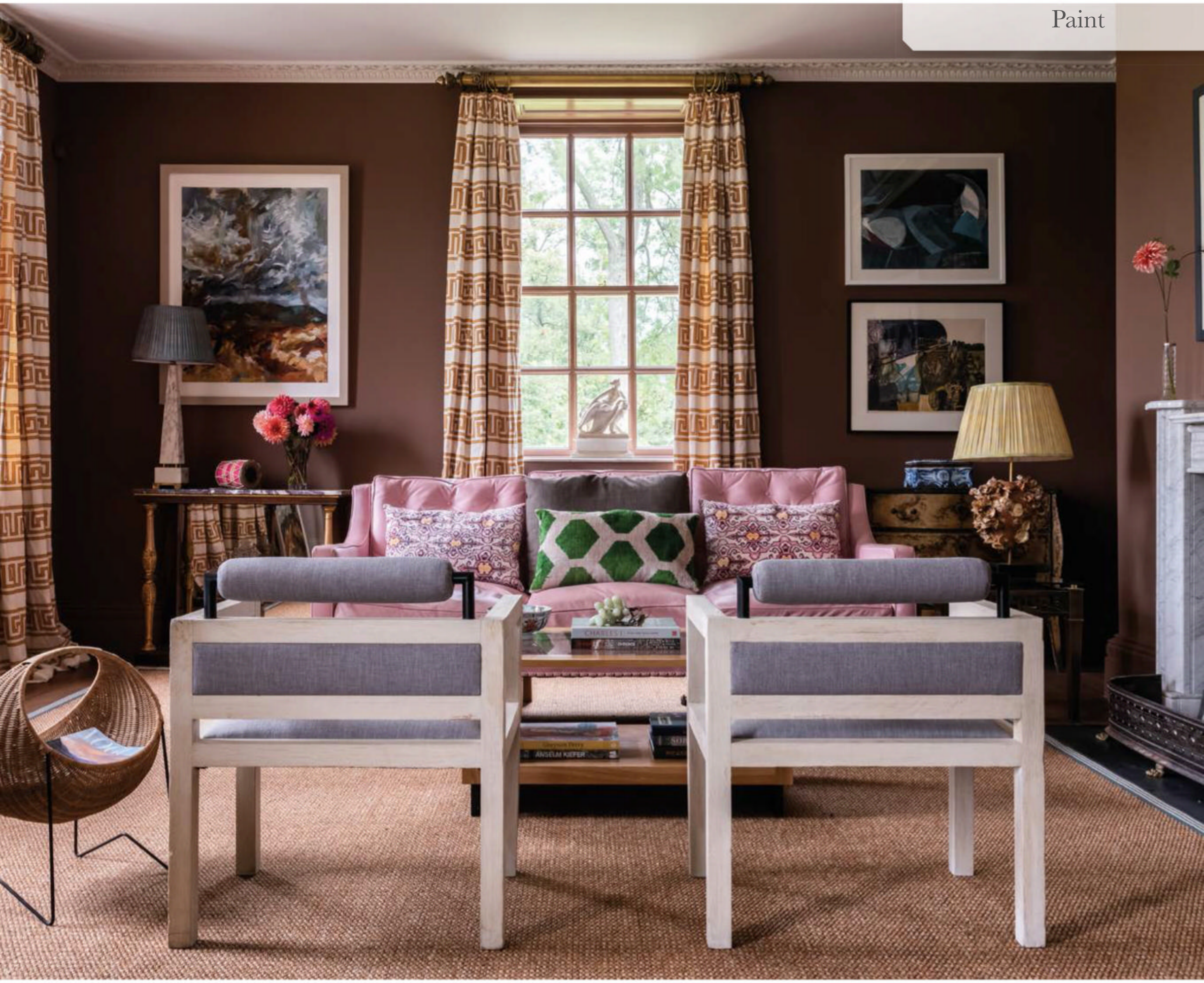
CREATIVE IDEAS

Paint can be used to add playful details in rooms. Painting behind shelves or the inside of a bookcase is an easy way to add bespoke character. A smart idea is painting the shelves and backdrop in the same colour, with one or two spaces in a contrasting, brighter colour – perhaps to highlight a cherished ornament or picture as well as tie in an accent colour used elsewhere in the scheme.

Adding a bold band of colour to a wall is also relatively simple with the help of a spirit level and good-quality masking tape. Details such as this make a room look well considered and instantly add personality.

Small details such as painting the edge of a door a different colour make for a surprising feature, particularly on dark-painted woodwork, adding a flash of a lighter, prettier colour to catch the eye.

LEFT Simple yet highly effective, painting a wide band of colour in a contrasting hue adds a bespoke detail.
Walls, door and skirting, Squid Ink; stripe, Rufus, both from £51 for 2.5l Pure Flat Emulsion, Paint & Paper Library



SYMPATHETIC CHOICES

Whilst paint can be used beautifully for contemporary updates, it is also a medium well-suited to period homes. A number of paint brands offer ranges of heritage or historically accurate colours for purists.

Edward Bulmer, interior designer and founder of Edward Bulmer Natural Paint, notes another benefit of paint for older houses. "Period properties seldom have dead-straight lines, so very linear wallpapers can be problematic and do not suit oak-beamed or irregular interiors so well," he says. "Paint is also the most cost-efficient and breathable wall covering. It suits all rooms, is serviceable and, of course, easy to update. And it is happily subservient to pictures and other furnishings in a way that wallpaper is not." This also stands for fabrics used on upholstery and for window dressings, which can be beautifully offset against a painted backdrop in just the right hue.

Bulmer advises considering original features when choosing the right colour paint for a period property. "Period properties have features that will be part of any new scheme, like floorboards or an old fireplace," he says. "Successful paint colours need to be the same in underlying tonality, and for this we use earth pigments to create a unifying harmony."

ABOVE In this period property a rich chocolate brown on the walls provides the perfect backdrop for a pink sofa by Edward Bulmer and furniture, artwork and antiques from Lorfords. *Walls, London Brown, from £49.50 for 2.5l of Emulsion, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint*

COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION

For the creative amongst us, paint can offer a world of opportunity to revive or transform furniture (though nothing antique or of significant value), particularly quality chalk paints, which can be used on almost any surface. Paint can make a tired-looking cabinet or table into something special that works with a new decorating scheme, and also avoids the need to buy new.

Painting furniture, frames and even walls in a decorative way – from stencil detailing to adding patina with waxes – can be a useful tool for providing that perfect finishing touch to a room.

Investing a little time and effort can offer a rewarding result that is bespoke and full of character, as well as negating the need to search high and low for the ideal piece in just the right colour.

RIGHT Give tired or outdated furniture a new lease of life that is perfectly tailored to a decorative scheme with easy-to-use chalk paints.
Oxford Navy and Old White, both from £21.95 for 1l of Chalk Paint, Annie Sloan

QUICK UPDATES

One of the joys of paint is that it can be used for a quick and simple yet impactful update on just a small area of a room. Adding an exciting detail or a splash of unexpected colour can be an easily achievable weekend project, and easy to change if the result is not as successful as hoped.

Painting the recess of a window or alcove a bright sunny yellow might be wonderful for the summer months but cosier if changed to a richer, darker hue for winter. Consider painting the insides of cupboards, pantries or smaller rooms in a bolder choice than might be used in living areas. "Bold but fairly small statements reflect our personalities, make us proud of our homes and bring joy into our lives," Farrow & Ball's colour curator Joa Studholme says.

Add character and make a feature of a painted staircase by covering the risers in one or a choice of different colours, or simply paint the handrail for a striking dash of colour that can be changed as often as desired.

LEFT In her own home, Farrow & Ball's Joa Studholme has added a burst of colour in a window recess – an easy project that can be changed frequently for a quick transformation.
Walls, School House White; window recess, Babouche, both £53 for 2.5l Modern Emulsion, Farrow & Ball

ABOVE Give tired or outdated furniture a new lease of life, perfectly tailored to a decorative scheme with easy-to-use chalk paints.
Oxford Navy and Old White, both from £21.95 for 1l of Chalk Paint, Annie Sloan

OUTDOOR COLOUR

Outside, paint is a useful medium for transforming the garden as well as making a welcoming sight at the front of the house. Giving a front door a makeover has a truly huge impact – it will always bring cheer when returning at the end of the day as well as delight visitors or passers-by.

Marianne Chillingford, creative director at Dulux, advises: "When choosing a colour for a front door, consider the materials of your house and how a colour will harmonise with them if you are looking for understated elegance. But if you fancy something more striking, choose a cheerful summer petal colour like Lavender Quartz and frame it with white to put a smile on the faces of everyone who walks past."

Use masonry paints on exterior walls in the garden to create a colourful backdrop to a seating area, add impact to a walled border or bring personality to a display of plants.

ABOVE Add cheer and personality with a front door in a favourite colour.
Door in Lavender Quartz, £27.95 for 1l Weathershield Quick Dry Exterior Satin, Dulux

SEAMLESS COLOUR

Using the same colour across walls, ceilings and woodwork can be highly effective in making a space seem larger as there are no hard contrasts or divisions. Rather than making a room featureless, as might be expected in covering features, woodwork and walls, it offers a contemporary, soothing and chic look.

Helen Shaw, director of Benjamin Moore UK, advises using this technique in loft rooms. "Don't let sloping ceilings put you off opting for colour," she says. "Instead, make the most of the abundance of natural light to create a space that is airy and open yet also cosy.

Consider a warm, inviting mid-tone across the walls, woodwork and ceiling to maintain a light feel. This is achieved by not breaking up the colour with white trims and ceilings. Instead, you'll have an airy room that doesn't feel cramped."

ABOVE Unified colour on walls, ceiling and woodwork creates a calming and larger looking space.
Yarmouth Blue, from £25.50 for 0.94l Advanced Matt, Benjamin Moore

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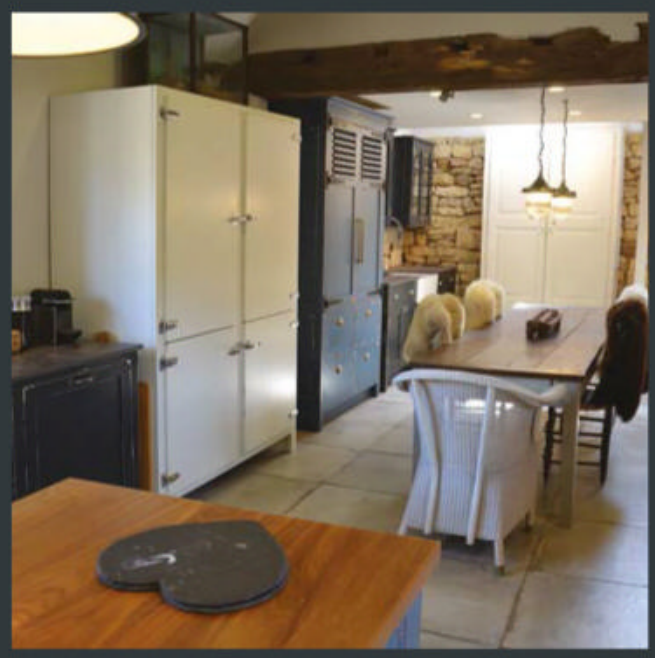

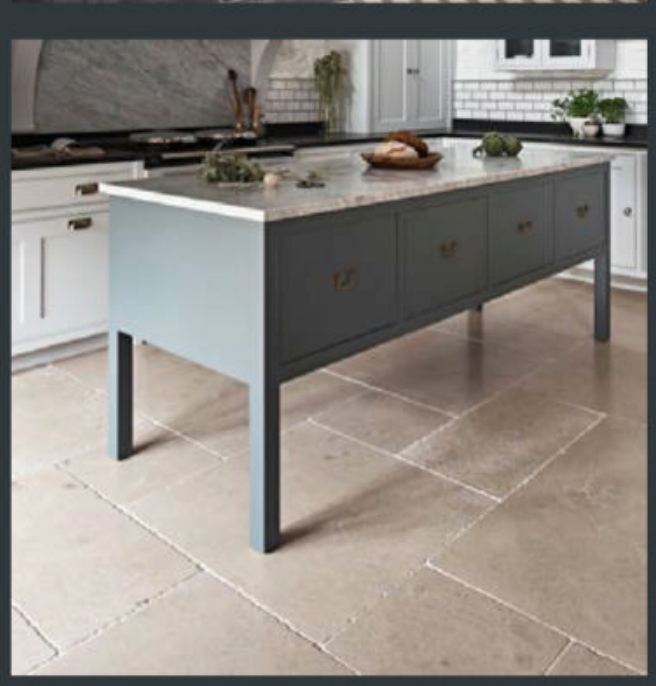
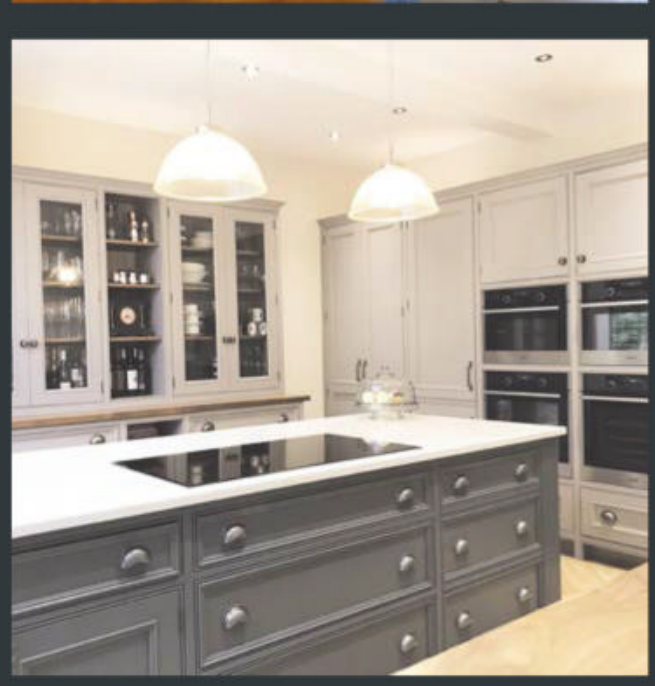
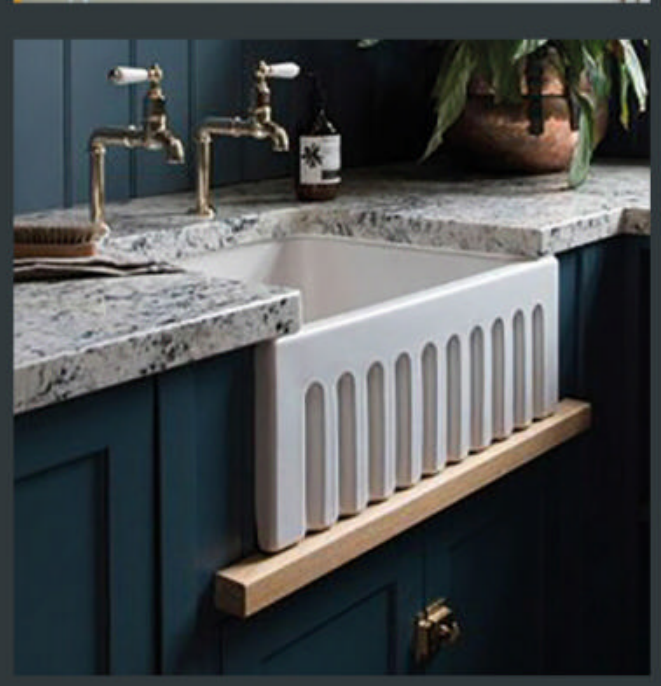
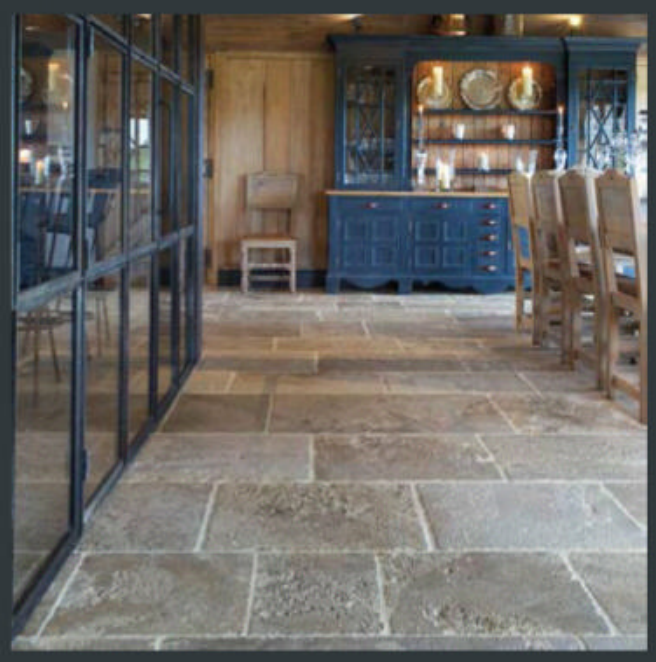

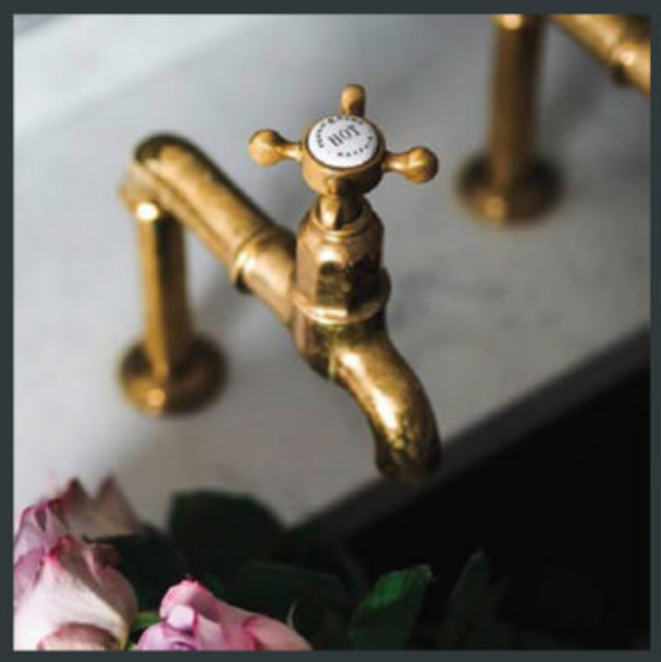

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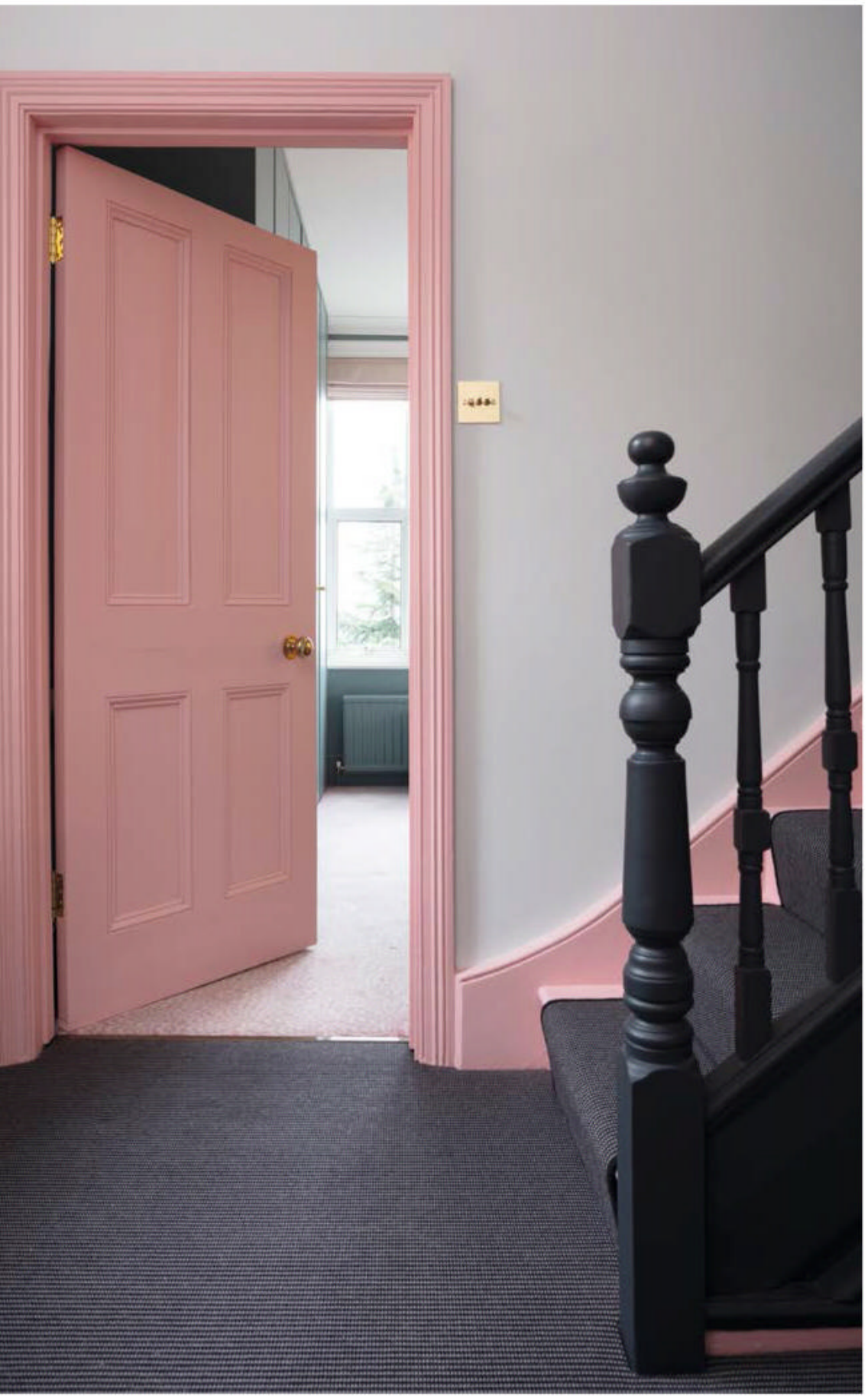


WONDERFUL WOODWORK

Skirting boards, doors, windows, stairs and bannisters provide an opportunity to add expression and impact. Colourful woodwork can add character to a white room and be a softer way to introduce a bold colour without taking it all over the walls and is easy to update as desired. Painting woodwork throughout a house in one colour will help to create a feeling of flow and cohesion.

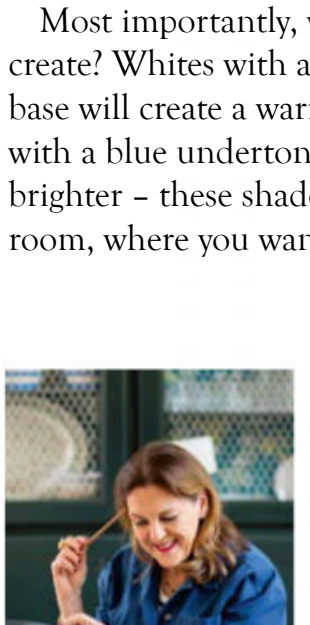
Find a colour that works well with other choices, for instance a pink can look good with whites, greys and black as well as various shades of green and blue. Dark blues together with greens are a versatile choice too. Though a unified approach creates a sense of flow, a door in a different colour adds character and creates a statement feature in minutes.

ABOVE Colourful woodwork looks considered and interesting and creates flow and unity throughout a house. *Bannister, Blackout; door, door frame, skirting and stairs, Pink House Pink, both from £31 for 1l of Wood & Metal Eggshell Paint, Mylands*

FEATURE KATY MCLEAN **PHOTOGRAPHS** P15 (ZOFFANY) © ANDY GORE; P18 (FARROW & BALL) © JAMES MERRELL; P21 © JOHN BESSLER; P23 (MYLANDS) © SUSIE LOWE/THE PINK HOUSE

EXPERT COMMENT

How to select the right colour for a room, whether white or something bolder



HOW TO CHOOSE A WHITE

ANDY GREENALL,
head of design at Paint & Paper Library

"Before choosing a white, it's important to select the style you wish to create before you begin. Understanding how the nuances in different whites and soft neutrals behave in different light settings is also key. Remember that ambient light changes throughout the day, causing colours to appear to change too.

If you want to use the same white throughout your home, in rooms with different aspects, consider using whites with a grey or green undertone such as our Minim or Raw Chalk, which are very neutral, meaning they are neither warm nor cold, so work perfectly in north- or south-facing rooms.

If you are looking to use a range of whites and neutrals within a home, consider the light and orientation of each room, as well as the proportions of the space, and whether there are existing colours and surfaces to consider.

Most importantly, what kind of atmosphere do you wish to create? Whites with a soft pink (red oxide) or yellow (ochre) base will create a warm and soothing space, whilst whites with a blue undertone will make a room feel cooler and brighter – these shades are well suited to a south-facing room, where you want a crisp and impactful finish."

CHOOSING COLOURS

JOA STUDHOLME,
colour curator at Farrow & Ball

"When it comes to choosing colour for your home, you should first consider how and when you are going to use each space. Larger rooms used during the day are usually suited to lighter colours, whilst those used at night, therefore artificially lit, command stronger colours which create more intimate comforting spaces.

A strongly coloured hall creates a little drama when you enter your house and means that all the rooms off it feel bigger and lighter. For an extra chic twist, you can paint the spindles of your staircase in a really dark tone, which will create a striking spine running through your house without being overwhelming."

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Captivating ways with WALLPAPER

Make an impression by covering an entire room or simply highlighting an interesting feature with bold, sophisticated and textural wallcoverings

Wallpaper is a versatile medium that has a transformative effect on a room. Though it requires more investment and commitment than a quick lick of paint, the impact of wallpaper pays dividends, especially when this decorative medium is used with panache and a little creativity. From matching, or contrasting, with fabrics, highlighting architectural features and adding flair to shelves or furniture through to mural-like scenes or applying pattern to the ceiling, wallpaper can transform a room, adding colour, pattern and character. Here we share some unusual, imaginative and interesting ways to work with papers that make the investment and effort worth every penny and moment.

ABOVE A bold, striped paper has been used in the top half of this interesting scheme, with plain white below allowing for an eclectic and colourful blend of prints.
Sporty Stripes, £155 a roll, Ottoline at The Fabric Collective

ABOVE RIGHT The dado rail breaks up smartly striped walls, with a coloured variation used above and a single colour below.
Ombré Stripe in Lichen & Doric, £87 a roll; Ombré Plain in Doric, £75.50 a roll, both Little Greene

Stripe it right

Striped wallpaer is an effective choice for chic walls and can be used in myriad ways. From wide and bold to narrow and classic, diagonal chevrons or floral patterns arranged into stripes, this versatile wall covering provides pattern without overwhelming and allows the use of busier patterns in fabrics and accessories.

Traditionally, stripes are vertical on a paper but can lend themselves to being hung horizontally, too. A big bold horizontal stripe can make a room wider, and this technique could be employed creatively – perhaps on one wall whilst the rest are vertical. Consider using narrower stripes below the dado and a wider stripe above, or mixing stripes with a plain or floral above or below. Alternating two slightly different shades of a diagonal stripe to create a chevron makes an interesting contemporary effect – best in a soft neutral. Continuing stripes through to the ceiling can also look striking.

Make a statement

A feature wall, done well, can be a good way to add a burst of pattern. Generally it works best when the wall itself has an interesting architectural feature such as an alcove or a sloping ceiling.

When used to create a backdrop to a bed or sofa, the single papered wall can inspire colours of other elements in a room such as the paint used for the walls, an armchair in a co-ordinating fabric or accessories in similar tones. Papering a window recess or smaller nooks and alcoves as well can integrate a statement wall into a scheme.

Wallpaper can also be used to designate part of a room to a different purpose, for instance to create an office nook or a cosy corner within an open-plan space.

LEFT A bold floral wallpaper is used to create a backdrop for the bed. Colours are echoed in accessories and paintwork to co-ordinate the look. *Bloomsbury Neo Mint, £60 a roll, Graham & Brown*

ABOVE This recessed area of wall has a lovely arched detail which is beautifully highlighted by the use of a wallpaper with a large-scale pattern. *Brophy Trellis, £89 a roll, Morris & Co*

On the panel

Panelled walls lend themselves brilliantly to creative use of wallpaper. Using a beautiful pattern within a panel creates a frame for what could be considered an artwork, as well as breaking up a more dominant motif. Small-scale patterns that could create an overley busy effect if used all over can benefit from this treatment, as well as larger scale designs.

Mural-style papers or those with more isolated pictorial scenes can look striking set within a panel to emphasise different parts of the design. When working with a strong, large repeat and a panel, consider how to line up the repeat so it does not jar the eye – either lining it up at the two edges of adjoining panels (as though there were no gap), or allowing for the natural space that falls between and omitting this. Patterns with animals or birds in particular warrant extra care whilst smaller geometrics are more forgiving.

ABOVE LEFT Each embroidered silk wallcovering within each panel in this luxurious bedroom is handmade to order. *Sylvaner, Moghul, from £550 a square metre, Fromental*

ABOVE RIGHT This busy small-scale pattern looks chic encased within dark-painted panelling. *Quatrefoil, Kohl, £108 a roll, and paints, all by Paint & Paper Library*

BELOW LEFT Wallpaper inside and outside of panels, breaks up a pattern and adds a fun effect. *Woodvale Orchard, £110 a roll, Cole & Son*

BELOW RIGHT Panelling with gilded edges gives an elevated status to a special wallpaper. *Lynx, Nude, £55 a roll, Clarke & Clarke*

RIGHT Kit Kemp's imaginative mural-style wallpapers for Andrew Martin are transportative. *Mythical Land Mural, from £378 , Kit Kemp for Andrew Martin*

BELOW Use wallpaper to create the look of a library or shelves of *objets d'art*. *Greek Pottery, £175 for three rolls, Mind the Gap*

BELOW RIGHT Explore the depths of this enchanting woodland design. *Sylvania, £145 a roll, Osborne & Little*

The grand illusion

Several companies offer papers that create the illusion of a mural or painted design. From bespoke scenes covering entire rooms to papers with a design to cover only the top or bottom half to those that emulate the look of a library or shelves of *objets d'art*, there is a plethora of inventive papers to transform and transport.

The likes of de Gournay, Zuber and Fromental offer wonderful hand-painted designs, tailored to fit a room perfectly, with scenic panoramas and delicate chinoiserie. These bespoke options ensure perfect placement of the design – allowing the benefits of a hand-painted mural without having the work painted in-situ.

Other brands, such as Andrew Martin, offer designs by the roll that create woodlands, mountains and gardens – often with an A and B roll for a less repetitive design – and a pattern that changes as it climbs the walls. Special-effect papers can be used to create a library – particularly effective when used in shelving or simply for adding a magical, whimsical touch or strong dose of character.

Pattern for all

Adding pattern to the walls with a flamboyant patterned wallpaper might cause some to opt for plainer fabrics on curtains and upholstery. However, more is more in some cases and using a matching pattern on fabrics and walls can look highly effective.

Florals and botanicals, with a repeat that is not too strong or rhythmical, help the eye coast over walls and furnishings if both are in the same pattern. Approach this matched look with confidence and gusto, allowing only a small amount of a plain block colour or alternative pattern to break up the effect. For full impact, use the same pattern across walls, window treatments and upholstery.

Where a small ditsy print and large-scale pattern might overwhelm, a mid-scale design will be less overpowering. In some cases it can also work to use the same pattern but in a different colourway – perhaps a softer, more neutral choice on walls and a bolder, deeper tone on fabrics.

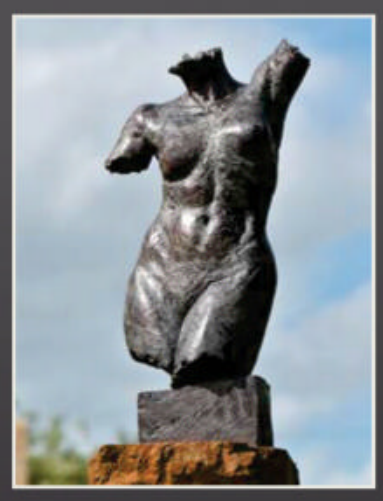
TOP Use the same design in different hues for contrast and interest and a truly cohesive scheme. Here the mid-scale, organic nature of the design makes it appealing to the eye not jarring. *Snow Tree walllpaper, Cream, £68 a roll; Snow Tree fabric, Blue, £98 a metre, Colefax and Fowler*

RIGHT Embrace pattern with confidence on walls, curtains, and even accessories such as lampshades for a united scheme. A hint of leopard print adds fun and flair to this assured look. *Artemis, Petrol, wallpaper from £125 a roll; velvet fabric, £120 a metre, all House of Hackney*

Hamish Mackie

HAMISH MACKIE SCULPTURE

LIFE IN BRONZE



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Up above

Papering ceilings makes what can be an afterthought into a main focus as well as adding an element of fun. Continue a pattern on the walls onto the ceiling for an enveloping and impactful design choice. Stripes and geometric designs work particularly well, but more whimsical patterns such as cloud-like designs can also work. However, avoid anything that might be confusing to look up at from various angles, although a swirling, trailing organic design could be successful.

When using pattern, particularly stripes, continuously up the wall and onto the ceiling without a break, consider if this will only work on two opposite walls. With stripes the others obviously will have stripes meeting vertical to horizontal, which will work, but consider which walls look best with a more seamless join. Of course, a cornice will diffuse this choice or consider a contrasting pattern for a ceiling, or plain walls with pattern overhead.

TOP LEFT This monochromatic cloudy scene is continued onto the ceiling for a dramatic dining room.
Nuvole, £50 a square metre, Fornasetti Senza Tempo collection Cole & Son

LEFT A bold red geometric is used on walls and ceilings, cleverly broken up by painted white walls so as not to dominate the room.
Ranelagh, £105 a roll, and all papers and paints, Farrow & Ball

FAR LEFT When using a striped motif on walls and ceilings, consider how the stipes will meet. The beams here offer natural direction for the stripes to follow.
Travelling Light wallpaper, £82.50 a metre, by Kit Kemp for Christopher Farr Cloth; bathroom furniture, CP Hart

EXPERT COMMENT

Experts offer advice on scale of pattern and investing in skilled paperhangers

INSTALLING WALLPAPER

MICK WELLS, *director, Wells Interiors*

"I've been hanging papers in some of the most luxurious residential homes in London and the home counties for well over a decade now. It requires great patience, precision and attention to detail, as a specialist paperhanger will put a lot of time and thought into the pattern layout before starting a job. I think it's also very much an intuitive skill and will be based on the dimensions of the room, as you want the pattern to look balanced to the eye and sit at the right height. My team always aims to centre the pattern –both horizontally and vertically – before centring a piece of wallpaper over major features such as fireplaces, or in the case of a feature wall, in the centre.

Wallpaper is expensive and some bespoke lines can easily run into hundreds of pounds per roll, so getting it right first time is paramount – which is why a specialist hanger experienced in both wide and standard width paper can save a huge amount of expense and time, and prevent waste too. Anyone embarking on hanging drops of luxury or bespoke wallpaper without professional help should proceed with extreme caution. It can be done, but my top tip would most definitely be to test the wallpaper and see how it reacts to paste, and then plan the layout of the room meticulously beforehand. At all costs, do not rush or think that wallpaper can hide, or cover up bad walls! Thorough and skilled wall preparation is as important as the hanging, for the finished effect to be as seamless and polished as possible."

CHOOSING SCALE AND PATTERN

REBECCA CRAIG, *lead designer, Morris & Co*

"There are no rules about scale of pattern, whether in a large or small room. Don't restrict yourself, go for what you like and have fun with pattern and scale. In particularly high-ceilinged rooms, I recommend choosing a colour from the wallpaper to paint your skirting and woodwork to tie it all together, rather than leaving them white – going darker can help ground the wallpapers, making them feel less daunting. A softer shade makes it feel more tonal and gives a real feeling of every aspect of the room being considered, leaving you with a very professional finish.

Don't be afraid to play with mixing scales. All our collections include a mixture of scales that are designed to go together – the colours and tones tie them together and the mixture of scales adds interest and depth, so it can help you to be braver with combining patterns on walls and fabrics."

A papered cupboard back adds depth and interest. *Tourbillon wallpaper, £105 a roll, Farrow & Ball*

Off the wall

Wallpapers can also be used as a decorative tool away from walls. Line bookcases or shelves to add some vibrant pattern – or even inside cupboard doors for unexpected pizzazz. Similar to panelling, wardrobe doors can be given some interest with a fun paper to enliven a wall of cabinetry. Wooden or painted staircases can be given extra charm with a pretty paper on the risers. Drawer fronts on upcycled painted furniture can also benefit from some pattern – perhaps to unite with a feature wall in the room.

RIGHT, ABOVE Wallpapering stair risers is an easy and creative way to add colour, pattern and interest to a hallway. *Luxor Blossom wallpaper, £68 a metre, Walter G at The Fabric Collective*

RIGHT, BELOW Adding wallpaper to wardrobe panels provides a quick update. *Nakuru, £120 a roll, Juliet Travers; interior design by Hamilton Wills*

Get creative

Wallpaper does not have to be applied floor to ceiling – consider using wallpaper just on the top or bottom half, or in a band between dado and picture rail. It can even be used without a rail to break up paper and paint (or a plain paper), just ensure a clean and very straight line between the two. Or perhaps use two different colourways of the same pattern above and below the dado rail. Some papers have designs that help creativity by incorporating a border runs along the edge to create a frame or faux panelling. Others have a design that fades or disappears at a certain height into a plain paper for a pretty, easy decorative idea.

LEFT This design by artist Melissa White has a border that can be trimmed to allow for a repeat across the wall, or used to create a panelled appearance. Here it has been creatively applied to frame the paper, following the curved line of the skirting to wonderful effect.
Bacchus, Grigio, £70.81 a metre, Lewis & Wood

LEFT Consider mixing patterns above or below dado or picture rails, or, as here, using the same paper in two colourways for an interesting look.
Albemarle in Astral (upper wall) and Vapour (lower wall), £88 a roll, Little Greene

RIGHT Here paper is hung abover the natural dado rail height, yet there is no rail, simply a clean line before a matt paint finish.
Wrest Trial, Pink Plaster, £87 a roll, Little Greene

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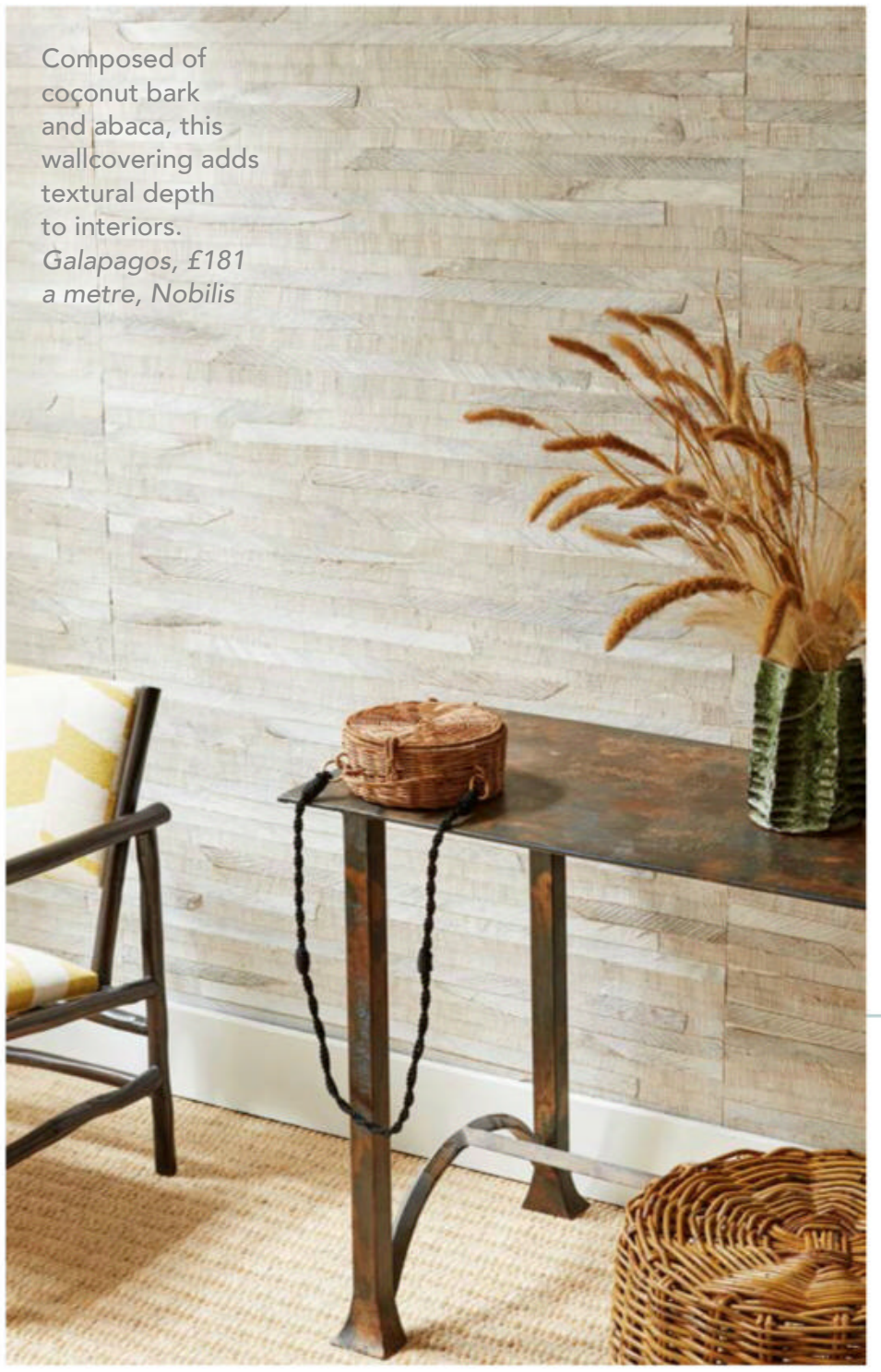
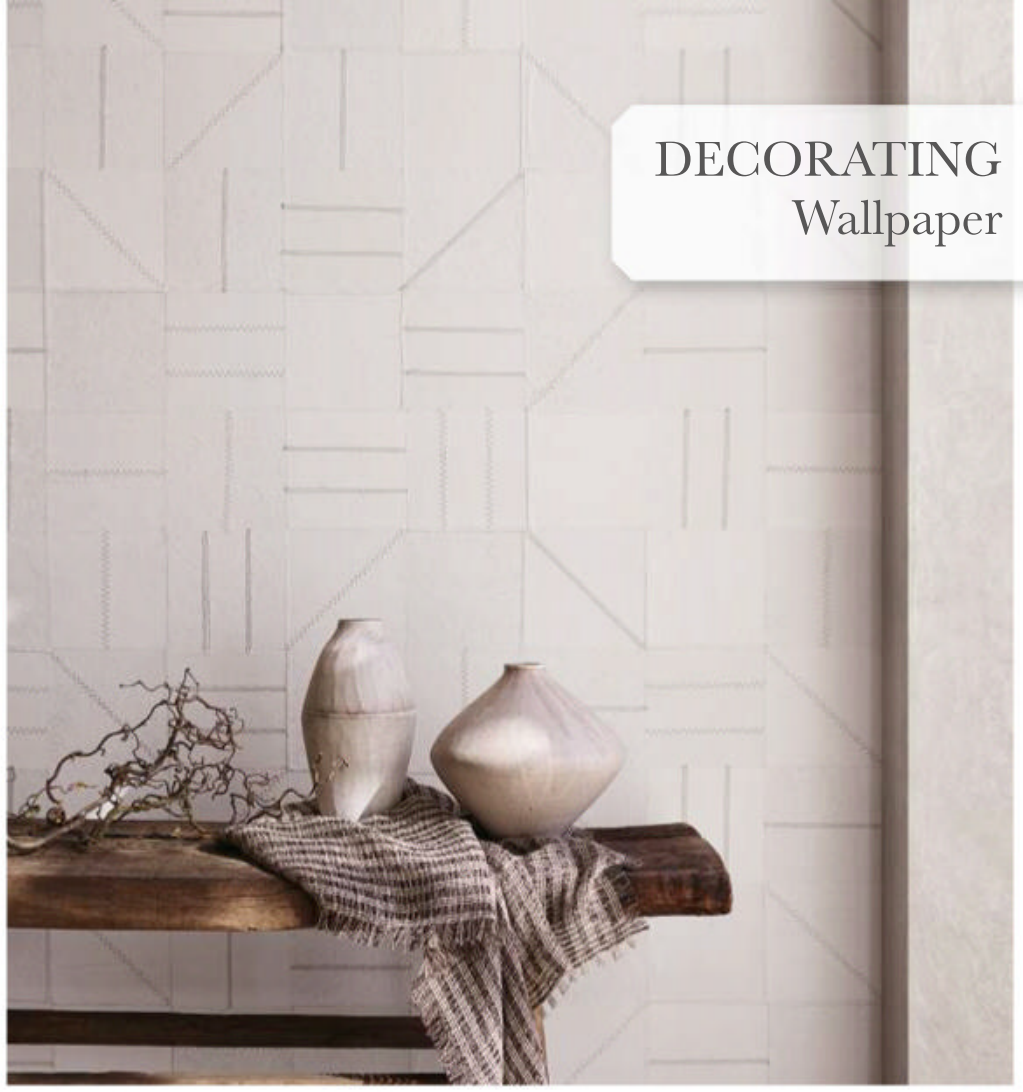


Composed of coconut bark and abaca, this wallcovering adds textural depth to interiors. *Galapagos, £181 a metre, Nobilis*



Textural effects

Wallpaper can offer a textural dimension to walls. Here some smart, sophisticated choices add luxurious detailing to considered interiors. There is a huge range of designs available, from grass cloth to fine embroidered and beaded elements, to clever recreations of hard surface finishes such as plaster, wood and metal.

ABOVE Japanese papers, crumpled, hand-coloured and mounted on a paper backing bring texture and depth to walls. *Network, £950 a roll, Collage collection, Mark Alexander*

Bathed in glory

Wallpaper is not a natural choice for a bathroom, or kitchen, but it can work. Whilst there are specialist moisture-resistant wallpapers for humid rooms, normal wallpapers can also be used as long as the room is well-ventilated and glass panels are placed over particularly at-risk areas such as above a basin. Using wallpaper is a quick way to create visual impact, and whilst tile-effect papers are an effective idea, moving away from this traditional medium also allows for experimentation with bolder patterns, scenic mural designs, or even simple stripes for a classic coastal flavour in a bathroom.

RIGHT This large-scale design resembles large tiles but has a beautiful pattern that may only be achieved by using wallpaper. *Wilhelmina, Indigo, £99 a roll, Morris & Co*

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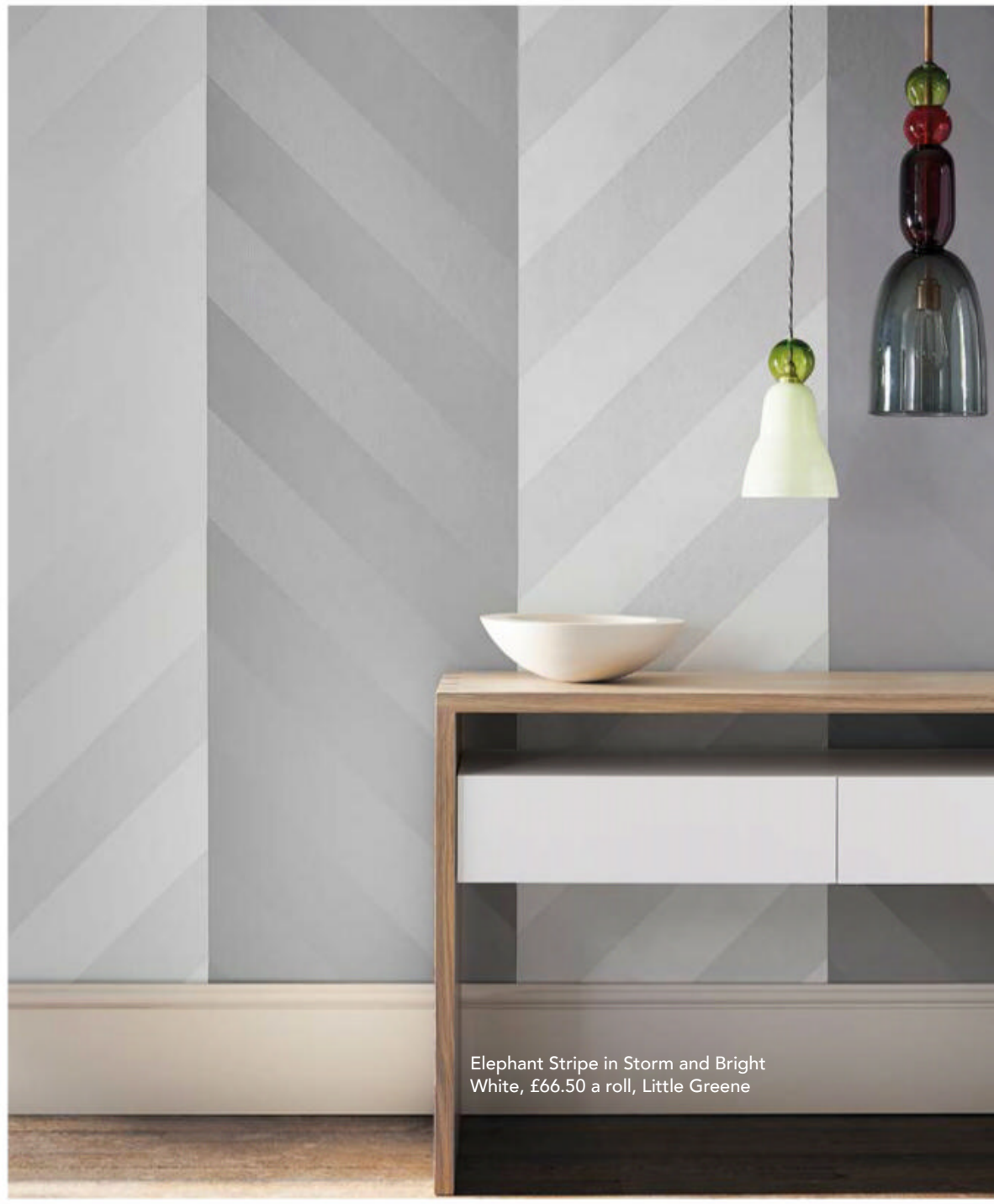

Elephant Stripe in Storm and Bright White, £66.50 a roll, Little Greene

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Enhance an interior with lighting designs
that deliver on style, ambience and practicality

From picture lights and pendants to statement chandeliers, lighting has immense power to influence the look and feel of a room in an instant. Good lighting design cleverly marries functionality with aesthetic, and with a myriad of styles to choose from, it has never been easier to shine a light on even the darkest of interior spaces.

Downlighters strategically positioned are ideal as task lighting in areas designated for working, reading or cooking, and several lighting types mixed together will create a lovely ambient mood, so be generous with table lamps and floor lights to add areas of soft illumination at different levels. For decadence and visual impact a large, opulent design will work wonders.

ABOVE Hand-blown glass horseshoe shapes cascade from a nickel frame creating an arresting contemporary twist on the traditional glass chandelier. *Sorbonne chandelier, £5,385.60, Vaughan*

OPPOSITE Select a single lighting style in complementary colourways for a subtle change of pace. *Ealing pendant, £239; Cotswold wall light, £166, both David Hunt Lighting*

EXPERT COMMENT

Lighting designers share their advice on choosing fittings and the placement of lights for a beautiful ambience

DESIGN A LIGHTING SCHEME

SALLY STOREY, *creative director, John Cullen Lighting*

"Different layers of light provide texture, depth and interest to any space, so build up a palette of effects, just as an interior designer would, by mixing ambient, accent and task lighting. In a kitchen, dining or living room, where the need for transition from a bright environment during the day to a much softer, atmospheric space at night, it is essential to create a flexible scheme so the room feels welcoming at all times. Avoid a grid of downlights on a ceiling and instead focus on light down the front of cupboards to reflect it back into the space and for task lighting over an island in a kitchen. Remember to create pools of focus by highlighting a coffee table or decorative object with a narrow beam of light in a living room, and consider lighting your shelving. There are many ways to create interest with front light, back light and individual mini downlights, all adding to the overall ambience."

USE LIGHT TO ADD HERITAGE APPEAL

PETER BOWLES, *founder and managing director, Original BTC*

"Lighting can really add a touch of authentic heritage charm to a classic English home, whether urban or rural. Focus on function, quality materials and craftsmanship, choosing lights that are produced using highly skilled and centuries-old techniques for a look that is timeless. Choose fittings that complement the building, but also reflect individual taste, be it a classic bone china shade, rugged industrial bulkheads or hand-blown glass pendants. Interesting fittings will give any room character. Bring warmth with metals such as brass, copper or bronze, mixed with natural textures and handcrafted elements, or consider using cool and warm-toned metals together for an eclectic look. Add a dash of utilitarian charm by making a feature of the cable itself – our signature cotton-braided cable comes in a variety of colours – and go for bulbs with a warm tone rather than stark white, and always LEDs, which have improved so much in recent years. Light fittings with exposed filament bulbs add extra decorative flavour."

CULINARY BRILLIANCE

Whilst kitchens are essentially spaces for food preparation and cooking, they can be hugely sociable areas of the home too, so the right combination of lighting types and positioning are key. Wall or shelf-mounted adjustable task lights are neat in design and can be angled to where light is required. Pendant lights are perfect for illuminating larger areas. Alistair Hepher, managing director of Charles Edwards, suggests using pendants or hanging lights above an island or a kitchen table to define the area and add a decorative element. “If you can’t find the right lights to complement the shape of the island or table, use a series of lights instead,” he adds. Source designs in materials in keeping with traditional English kitchens such as brass and copper, or aluminium and enamel for a soft industrial aesthetic, using a single style throughout for cohesion.

LAYER UP

Introducing layers of light to an interior can dramatically change the mood of the room, and provide maximum flexibility. Use lighting types of different heights and designs to add pools of light that are conducive to both relaxing and task work. A central ceiling pendant light may be crucial for overall illumination, and, if on a dimmer, can be easily adjusted to provide mood enhancing gentle light too. Decorative table lamps with fabric shades will add soft diffused light at a low level, and tall floor lamps will shine down on a small concentrated area, so place near armchairs as a suitable reading lamp. For additional warmth and cosiness add candles dotted along a mantelpiece or in wall sconces.

ABOVE Lighting designs can be used to beautifully complement the panels in kitchen cabinetry.
Buchanan light in Nickel and Patinated Bronze, from £6,204, Charles Edwards
RIGHT Classic elegance can be achieved with different types of lighting in similar styles and materials.
Pimlico floor lamp with swivel arm, £540; Oxford double wall light, £195, both David Hunt Lighting. Hidcote shades on wall light, from £42 each, The Light Shade Studio

Different types of lighting allow for a rich and elaborate mixing of colours and textures in a room scheme, adding to the grandeur. *Melvillous chandelier, £440; Stucco table lamp, £120 and 40cm straight empire shade in Teal Heraldic Ikat, £93; Ned floor lamp, £270 and 30cm drum shade in Emerald Dupion silk, £60, all Pooky Lighting*

ON THE WALL

Wall lights come in a myriad of designs and styles, and can be used as general lighting alongside ceiling lights to add a balance of illumination to a room. Generally small in size, they can also be used to add decorative interest and create a focal point to an area of a room, particularly when positioned at eye level. Wall lights can also be great space savers, with elegant period-style designs in glass and fabric providing suitable alternatives to bedside table lamps or to add glamour and light around a mirror. Candle-style wall sconces that use a flame-shaped bulb are ideal for creating soft light in a dining room or hallway. Source designs in gold and brass or with a mirrored back plate for extra sparkle when the light is on.

DELICATE DECADENCE

Glass, particularly crystal, chandeliers are synonymous with elaborate interior decoration due to their exceptional ability to reflect and refract the light, bouncing it around the room and creating a sparkling effect. Traditional styles naturally suit large period homes as a centrepiece in an entrance hall or living space. For a contemporary twist on the classic chandelier, source sculptural pieces either in glass or in other materials such as porcelain, which is equally revered for its luminosity and light-enhancing qualities, as British designer Joanna Bibby of Ochre explains: "Fine porcelain drops have a delicate transparency that emits a warm glow of light when illuminated, with the added bonus of introducing subtle glazes of soft colour during the day. Both glass and porcelain are centuries old and blend beautifully into any interior, be it a very modern or period home."

ABOVE Pair simple wall lights with patterned shades for discreet decorative charm.
Lilburn wall lights, £486 each; linen shades, £94 each, Porta Romana

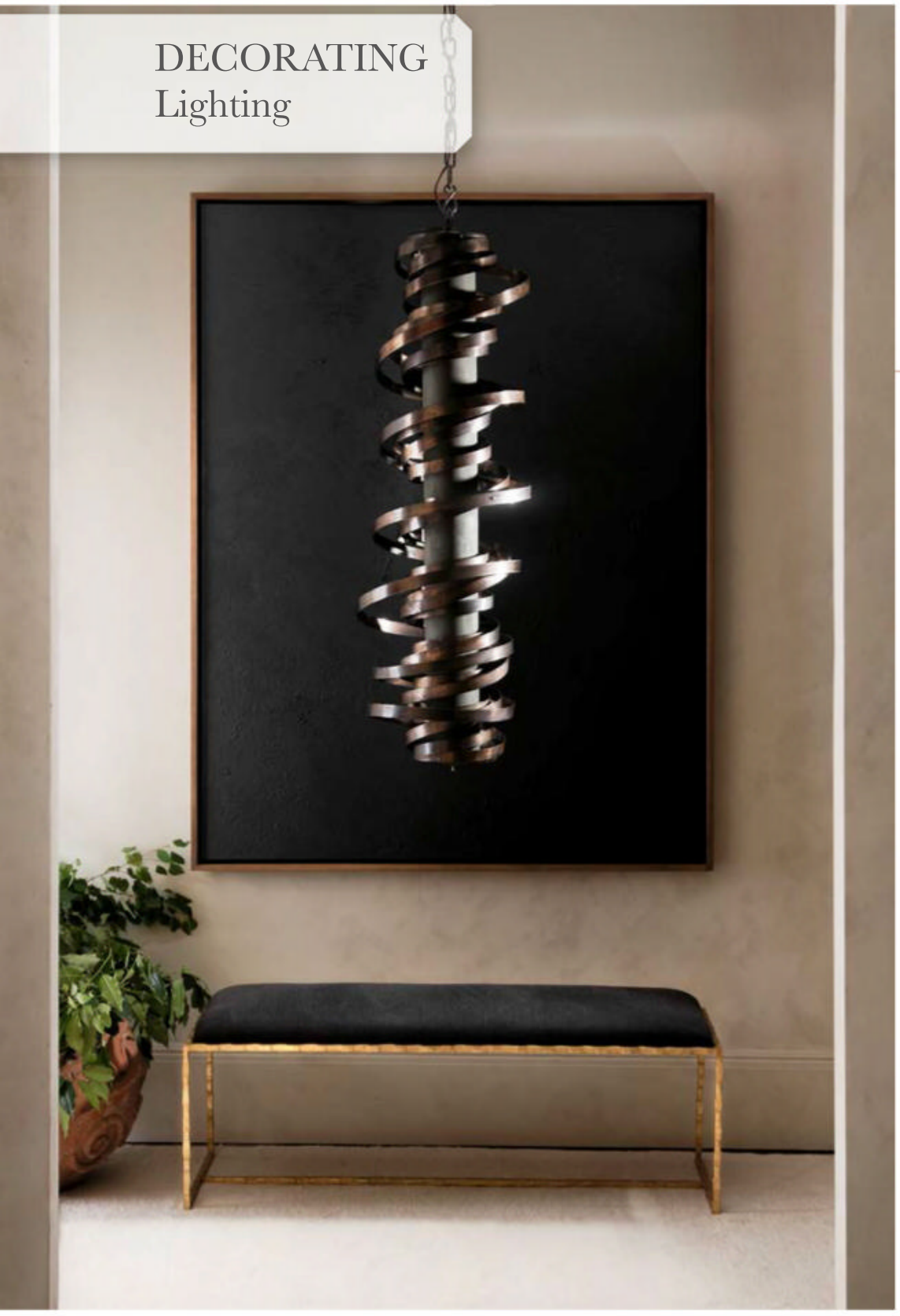
ABOVE RIGHT Wall sconces in reflective metals are ideal for emulating the light of a flickering flame without the need for candles.
Rivington wall light, £432.00, Vaughan

RIGHT Understated yet elaborate in design, the hand-glazed porcelain is beautifully translucent, allowing the light to shine through.
Aquarelles Round 60cm, £3,432, Ochre

PICTURE THAT

Use specifically designed picture lights as downlighters to illuminate works of art and add a gallery-style feel to a room. Elegant designs in heritage brass are ideal for shining light on an antique-framed oil painting, whilst contemporary stainless steel is the perfect complement for modern pieces. Bear in mind, however, that the light itself is as important as the style of fitting. Andrew Molyneux, founding director at TM Lighting says: "Selecting the correct type of light for illuminating pictures and artwork is fundamental to perceive the texture, detail and vibrancy of colour. Use LEDs as they don't emit damaging ultraviolet or infrared light, ensuring the preservation of artworks." Display lighting can also be used to great effect to highlight pieces of sculpture, curated collections of ceramics and other *objets d'art*.

A display light can transform a single painting into a focal point in a room. *Cooper short picture light in polished brass, £525, Davey Lighting*



WORK OF ART

Elevate the look and feel of a room with a statement lighting design. From bold, large-scale sculptural ceiling suspensions to abstract artistic installations, choosing a bespoke design to suit a particular space will be well worth the investment made. Think creatively about materials and form: contemporary designs made from twisted, burnished metals could be used as an aesthetic juxtaposition for the natural stone detailing often found in the entrance halls of grand country houses. Alternatively, a translucent curtain-style creation made of tiny glass droplets suspended on fine wire could be used to add drama and highlight the intricate cornicing and plaster moulding in a dining room.

LEFT Theatrical in appearance, this sculptural light is made from dynamic swirls of patinated brass. *Iago ceiling light in Old Brass, £11,520, Porta Romana*

BEDSIDE MANNER

A soft glow for reading and relaxing is an essential requisite for any lighting designed to illuminate the bedside area. Traditionally, small table lamps on bedside tables allow for layers of pattern and colour to be introduced with decorative bases and coordinating shades. For a pared-down alternative, small wall lights will add interest and remove the need for bedside furniture. Opt for designs in coloured glass that give sufficient light for a lovely night-time ambience. Hanging pendant lights strategically at pillow height will draw the eye down creating a feeling of intimacy. As Hanna Walter, creative manager at Heathfield & Co, explains: "A tall, slim pendant is a great way of adding height and dimension to a bedside scheme, whilst also freeing up valuable space on side tables." Contemporary designs juxtapose beautifully with period cornicing: repeat on both sides of the bed for elegant formality.

RIGHT Glass designs are elegant and understated, perfect for a luxuriously appointed bedroom. *Dahlia wall light, £450, Bella Figura*

A Place In The Garden

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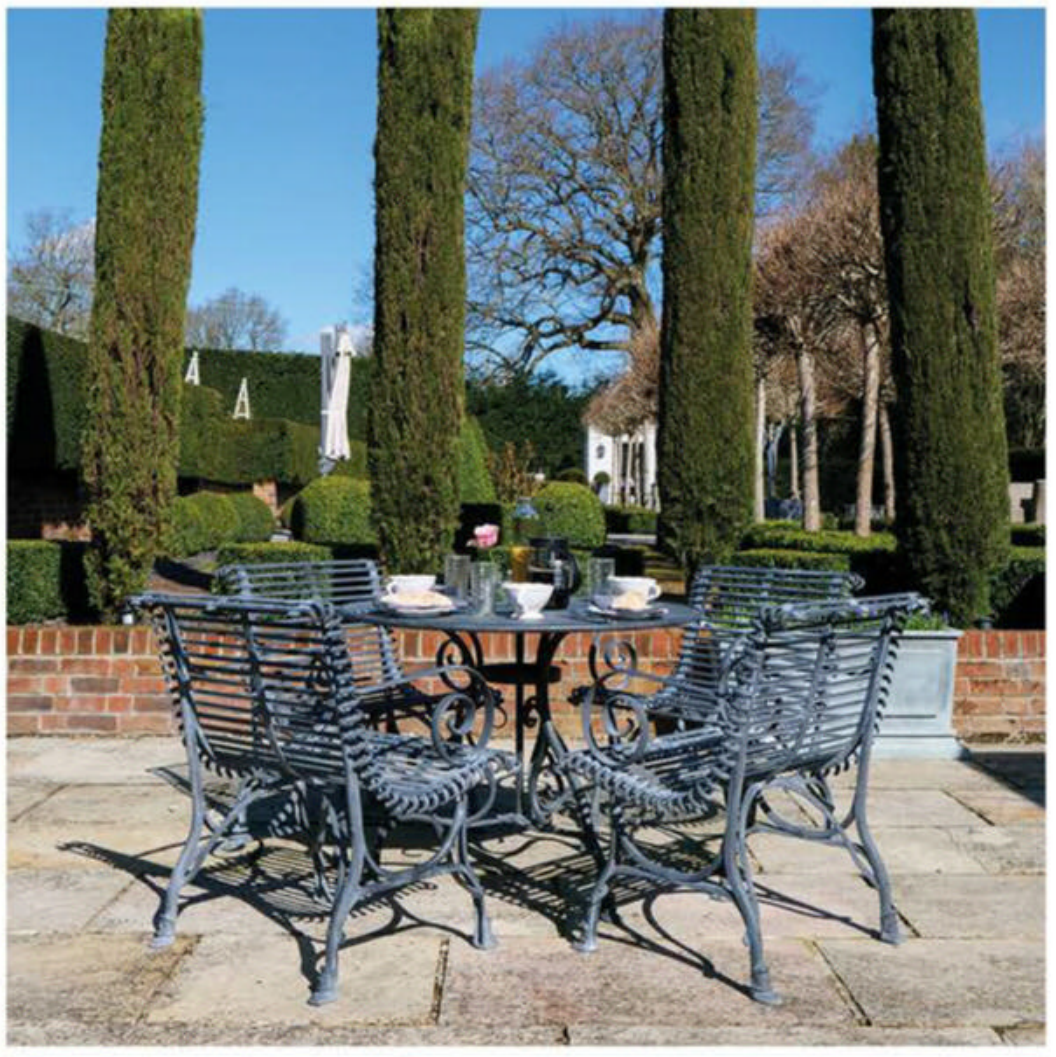

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BATHED IN LIGHT

Lighting for bathrooms needs to perform on many levels. As places of sanctuary, lighting needs to be soft and ambient in mood but with sufficient illumination for grooming, and robust enough to withstand high levels of moisture. Period-style glass lanterns and chandeliers specifically designed for bathroom use will add traditional grandeur to a sizeable space. Similarly, classic designs in wall lights either side of a basin and mirror will provide decorative flair and effective task lighting too. Nautical lighting designed for ships and harbours is built to withstand the elements, so is well suited, adding a characterful dash of utility chic. For an indulgent spa-like effect, introduce accents of light with LED uplighters and strips set into the floor or wall to create magical pools of soft light.

ABOVE In this Mayfair townhouse bathroom a flattering 2700K warm white linear LED is used. *Lighting design from £120 for a room, Home Lighting Ideas by K&S*

RIGHT A large-scale light makes a spectacular and elegant focal point in an elaborate designed bathroom. *Hanging Kew Lantern in Nickel from £1,980, Charles Edwards*

PERIOD DRAMA

Lighting can be used as a valuable decorating tool when designing an interior, adding shape, texture and colour into the mix. In period homes, lights that are of the same era as the building itself, either original or reproductions, can add depth and authenticity to the finished look. Vintage and antique lights can readily be sourced online, at antique fairs or through specialist suppliers, and are ideal for adding a one-off, original feel to a room. For multiple designs of the same style, for instance wall lights, pendants and downlighters that match, source suppliers who specialise in this.

LEFT Modern reinterpretations of antique designs allow for cohesion in an interior. *Selection of Romilly pendant and wall lights in clear and etched glass, from £64.99, Soho Lighting*

FEATURE SARA EMSLIE **PHOTOGRAPHS** P43 (PETER BOWLES PORTRAIT) © JON DAY. P44 (KITCHEN) © MATT LOWDEN; (ARMCHAIR) © SEBASTIAN DEVENISH. P51 (SOHO LIGHTING) © TJ HUGHES. **DESIGNERS** P44 (KITCHEN) THOMAS HAMEL & ASSOCIATES. P51 © (CHARLES EDWARDS) © AMANDA BARING

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Creative ways with TILES

Be bold with colour and elaborate with design to add decorative charm inside and out

From natural stone to painted ceramic designs, tiles have long been used to create practical yet decorative surfaces in the home. Nowadays, with myriad shapes, sizes, colours and configurations on offer, it is easier than ever to enliven a decorating scheme with tiles. "Tile options have come a long way from the utilitarian choices our grandparents were faced with," Rob Whitaker, creative director at Claybrook, says. "Decorative patterns in bold hues for floors sit happily alongside wall tiles that burst with eye-catching colours or are in natural materials in interesting shapes."

Here we look at ways this practical and beautiful medium can be used throughout the home.

WONDER WALLS

In a kitchen, select tile designs that balance aesthetics with functionality, bearing in mind that smooth-surfaced tiles will be easier to keep clean than textured varieties.

Consider using a combination of patterned and plain tiles to introduce decorative interest, such as a hand-painted mural or panels above a cooker, or a colourful, patterned frieze across a wall.

Tiles in richly coloured or subtle tonal glazes produce dramatic variations, adding a dash of the extraordinary to what might otherwise be a utilitarian kitchen space.

For a traditional look, seek inspiration from country house kitchens and seek out the uneven character of handmade tiles with a crackle glaze in muted hues to inject period charm.

ABOVE LEFT Add decorative interest and rustic charm with panels of hand-painted tiles depicting farmyard scenes or motifs, landscapes and florals.
Cockerel six-tile panels, £133.90 each, Marlborough Tiles

ABOVE RIGHT Patterned tiles inject a band of colour between a co-ordinating plain alternative.
Cabrera Jasmin Blue tiles, £4.49 each; Cabrera White Gloss tiles, £1.19 each, Claybrook Studio

A GOOD VINTAGE

Readily sourced from reclamation yards or specialist suppliers, antique tiles have a particular charm and appeal. As Chris Gulson-Brooke, founder of Maitland & Poate, explains, "Reclaimed tiles lifted from the floors of heritage properties will display tiny chips and variations in patina from many years of previous use. It's these variations in the tiles that makes them so beautiful."

Plain antique stone and terracotta tiles boast a depth of colour and variation in tone not found in modern counterparts, and patterned encaustic tiles are very versatile, with just a small quantity needed for a pretty splashback or floor for a walk-in shower. Alternatively, use a selection of different designs together to create a patchwork effect or juxtapose with sections of reclaimed parquet timber or exposed brickwork to further complement their rustic, salvaged charm.

RIGHT These 100-year-old antique terracotta tiles are wonderfully worn and full of character. They can be used to add period charm to an entrance hall, boot room or kitchen. *Antique Burgundy Reclaimed Terracotta, £153.76 a square metre, Artisans of Devizes*

Elevate the design credentials of the classic brick tile with solid colour blocking and a mix of configurations. *Shoreline Ceramic Glazed Gloss tiles in Sunset (top) and Shingle (bottom) £79.80 a square metre, National Trust Tile Collection at The Sarsen Stone Group*

STYLISH EMBELLISHMENT

Bold use of pattern and colour, combined with clever configuration, can make a bathroom very beautiful indeed. For a modern twist on tradition, take classic brick tiles and experiment with different ways to position them. Lay them horizontally to make a room appear wider, and vertically to visually heighten a space, or herringbone-style for a pretty decorative look. For dramatic results, position blocks of solid, contrasting colours next to each other, whilst for a more subtle application of colour, use slender pencil tiles in bright hues to create a stripe effect.

Cement tiles can be suitable for both walls and floors, so use ornate patterned designs strategically to create visual cohesion in a small wet room or to 'contain' a bathing area within a larger space.

BELOW Simple yet striking star motif tiles are combined with plain to add playful pattern to a zoned bathing area. *Luna Fennel tiles, £5.10 each; Plain Fennel tiles, £3.36 each, both Bert & May*

IN THE ZONE

Use pattern to create cameos of interest by mixing tile designs and colours. Many patterned tiles come with accompanying border designs to create a rug-effect central panel in a room or to zone a section of a room for a specific purpose. As Colin Roby-Welford, creative director at Fired Earth, explains, "Border and corner tiles give floors a really 'finished' look, framing the floor and ensuring that it takes centre stage."

Alternatively, a simple striped tile or a plain tile with a relief decoration can be used to create effective borders for more elaborate designs, particularly where a single colour is used, resulting in a calm, cohesive overall result. Border tiles can also be used as a wall divider with different designs of tile above and below.

TOP RIGHT Tiles depicting traditional motifs in heritage colours add authentic charm to a period home. Use a border tile in a hallway or boot room to create a 'rug' effect. *Patisserie Sucre 2 and Patisserie Sucre Border tiles, £3.14 each, Fired Earth*

RIGHT A striped tile acts as the perfectframe for a delicate leaf-patterned tile in this sophisticated bathroom scheme. *Felce tiles, £8.04 each; Stripes tiles, £11.79 each, both Balineum*

MAKE AN ENTRANCE

Geometric designs work well and provide a degree of restrained formality in entrance halls. Large, plain-coloured tiles can make a narrow hallway appear larger when laid in a classic chequerboard configuration.

Tiled floors that were hugely popular with the Victorians are ideal for creating a welcoming feel in a dark period hallway, with their intricate patterns of tiny multi-coloured tiles. Modern-day alternatives use bold designs such as hexagons, diamonds, chevrons and heraldic-style floral emblems on larger-scale tiles to dramatic effect. Source cement tiles that are at least 15mm thick and use outdoors to add a matching pathway of pattern leading up to the front door.

LEFT Orderly and elegant in their design, marble floor tiles are synonymous with grand entrance halls. A traditional monochromatic colourway also allows room for a little frivolity in the decoration with a pretty fondant pink paint colour perfect for the walls. *Fitz Honed Marble tiles, £82.80 a square metre, Mandarin Stone*

These colourful hand-illustrated terracotta tiles are the result of a collaboration between Balineum and artist Wayne Pate. Display singularly or as a series on shelving for some whimsical and affordable modern art. *Wayne Pate Tile Collection I, from £21.60 each, Balineum*

ARTISTIC OPPORTUNITY

Tiles as works of art elevate this simple and functional design staple to a whole new level. The flat clay surface lends itself to all sorts of creative illustration and expression, and artists' handmade and hand-painted tiles can be sourced from independent galleries. The Crafts Council will also have listings of artists who specialise in this medium.

Create a statement surface by forming a large-scale abstract mural in a bathroom or kitchen. Alternatively, elsewhere in the home, a single, large-scale tile can be framed like a painting within plain tiles or, for a decorative installation that can be easily changed as mood dictates, place cherished pieces on shelves with other decorative objects, ceramic or otherwise.

ABOVE RIGHT Designer Marianne Smink of Smink Studio reworks classic geometric shapes to create bespoke installations. Each tile is hand-moulded and individually screen-printed. *After Lowry tiles, £300 a square metre, Smink Studio*

EXPERT COMMENT

Designers offer insights on choosing tile materials and working with pattern

PLAYFUL WITH PATTERN

SUSAN DELISS, *textile designer and interior decorator*

"I like to bring a space alive with a sophisticated combination of pattern and colour, from figurative and floral motifs, to stripes and geometrics. Patterned tiles are great as they are big on personality, but they can dominate a room. As a tiled area is relatively permanent, I always advise clients to think twice about using anything too fashionable. Antique tiles are difficult to source, but if you can get them, use them as the key style element and design the rest of the room around them.

I like to enhance a room's sense of function using patterned tiles – I had antique-looking Delft-style tiles painted with Norfolk terriers for a US client's mud room and dog shower. A single panel of eye- catching, patterned tiles can transform a charmless kitchen or bathroom; choose the tiles first, then paint walls a really warm colour and add coloured textiles and pictures that pick up on the detail."

TILING WITH NATURAL MATERIALS

ROBERT MOORE, *interior designer, Moore Design*

"Stone and marble have been used by civilisations for centuries for their strength and beauty. They come in an array of wonderful hues and eye-catching textures, both on the surface and sometimes figured with pretty vein markings, and even with tiny fossil deposits. I love working with natural materials as this is what nature created – every single piece is different. In my London kitchen, I have used a pale blue-grey-toned French limestone which gives the look of the original flagstones that had been lost. For a client's bathroom project, I laid the marble floor tiles on a diagonal grid to make the space feel wider and add interest whilst still being pared-down and muted in tone. Marble and stone comes in ready-formed tiles of varying sizes to solid slabs, making it more accessible to get a luxurious look that is practical too."

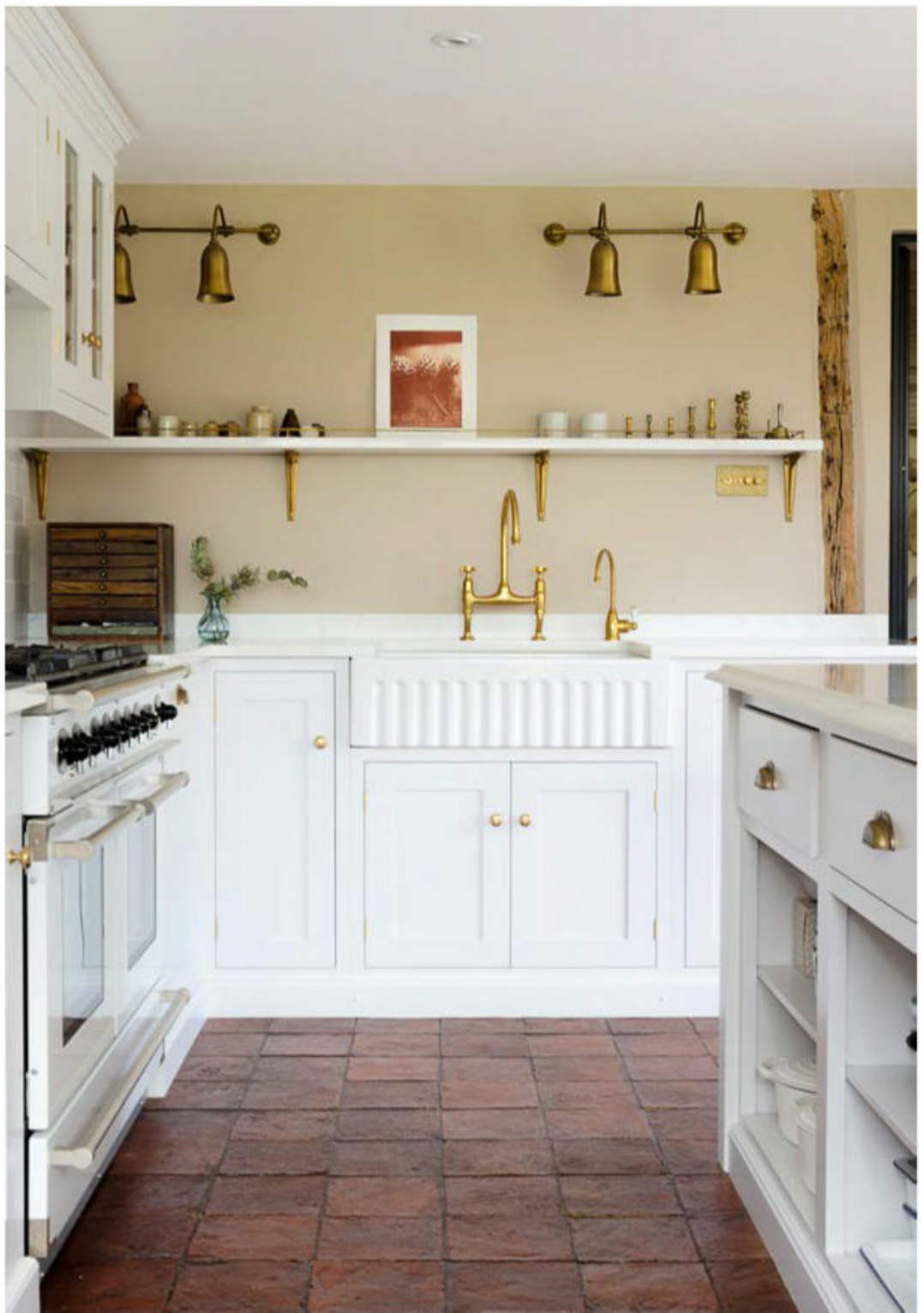
TAKE TO THE FLOOR

A tiled floor is durable and waterproof, making it the number one choice for practicality, but preparation is key, so be sure to lay onto a subfloor that is level, structurally sound, clean and dry.

Natural materials work wonders in kitchens, complementing other popular materials such as copper, steel and wood, so embrace the enduring tactile properties and colourways of stone, terracotta, limestone or slate. Source tumbled or riven slab-style cuts for a homely rustic feel, or make an urban statement with polished tiles in geometric shapes. A rustic choice on the floor could be combined with a sleek stone worktop in a kitchen.

Marble will always make a sophisticated statement, either softly with delicate grey hues or by adding drama and opulence, with deep veining in rich green or pink tones.

For a contemporary touch, consider a pale-toned, polished and scratch-resistant porcelain, or even a terrazzo-effect porcelain, with as much intricate detail as its original marble counterpart.



BELOW Seal modern terracotta tiles with a layer of antique beeswax for an authentic feel and to allow the rich and varied tones of colour to shine. *Tiles from £40 a square metre, Floors of Stone*

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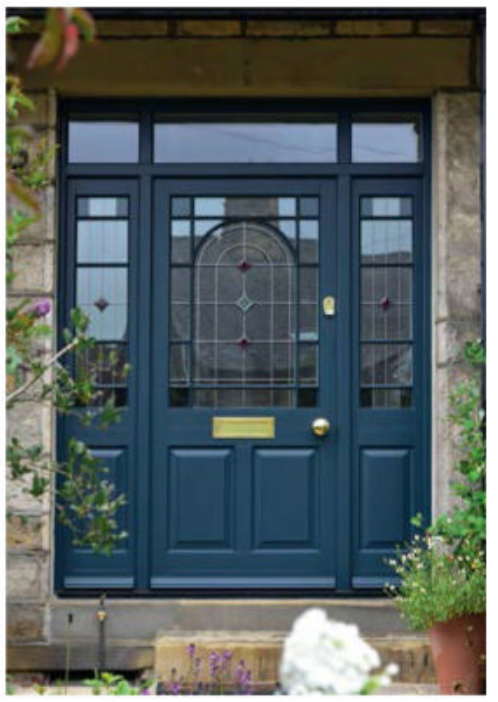

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Designed by artist Sara Baldwin, this handmade mosaic includes custom stone and glass such as emerald, tourmaline, opal, tiger's eye and rose quartz. *New Ravenna Chinoiserie mosaic, £5,994 a square metre, West One Bathrooms*

MARVELLOUS MOSAIC

It is hard not be attracted to the idea of a mosaic when the beauty and elaborate design of such a distinctive aesthetic date back over 4,000 years in history. Made using tesserae – small blocks of glass, tile or stone – mosaic patterns can be laid in simple geometric styles or elaborate, colourful ways.

Whilst stone and tile mosaics are naturally suited to both floors and walls, both inside and out, or even as an inlaid panel on a table or work surface, glass mosaic tiles come in an dizzying array of colours and are a particularly attractive way to tile walls in a wet room or bathroom. The combination of water droplets and the light-reflective qualities of the glass will create a delightful shimmering effect.

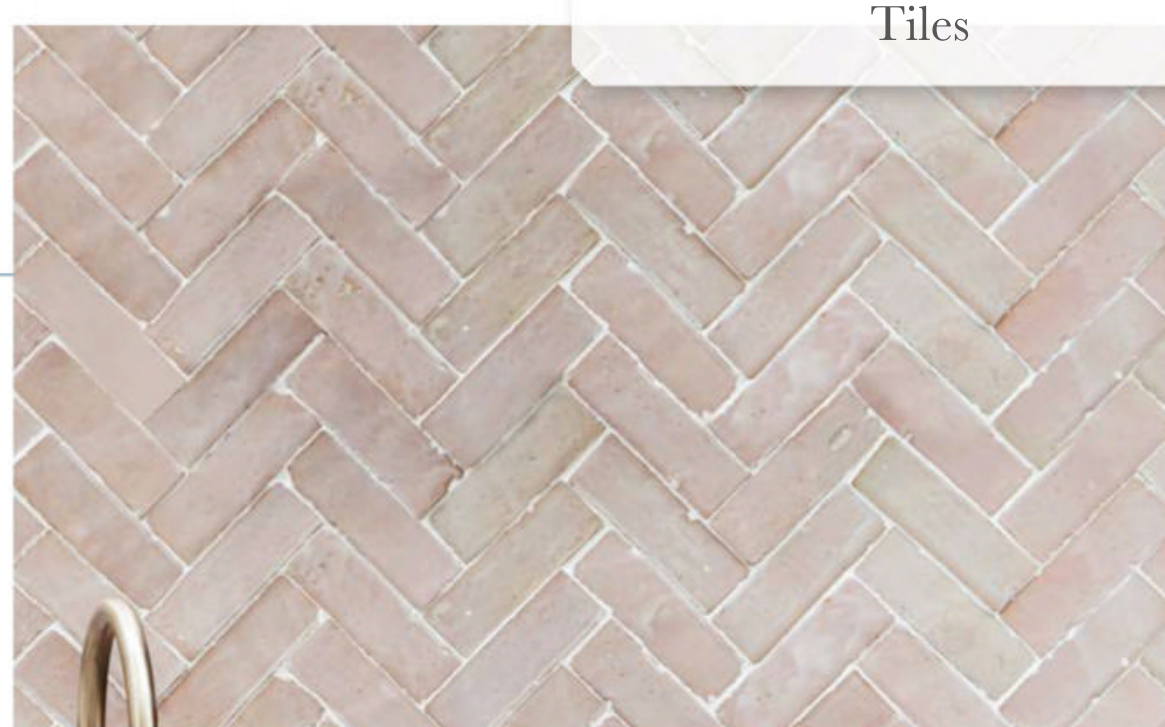
For ease of application on large surfaces the vast majority of mosaic tiles come as ready-to-lay sheets. If seeking a show-stopping bespoke design, perhaps for a cloakroom, this should be installed on site by a specialist.

VERY MOORISH

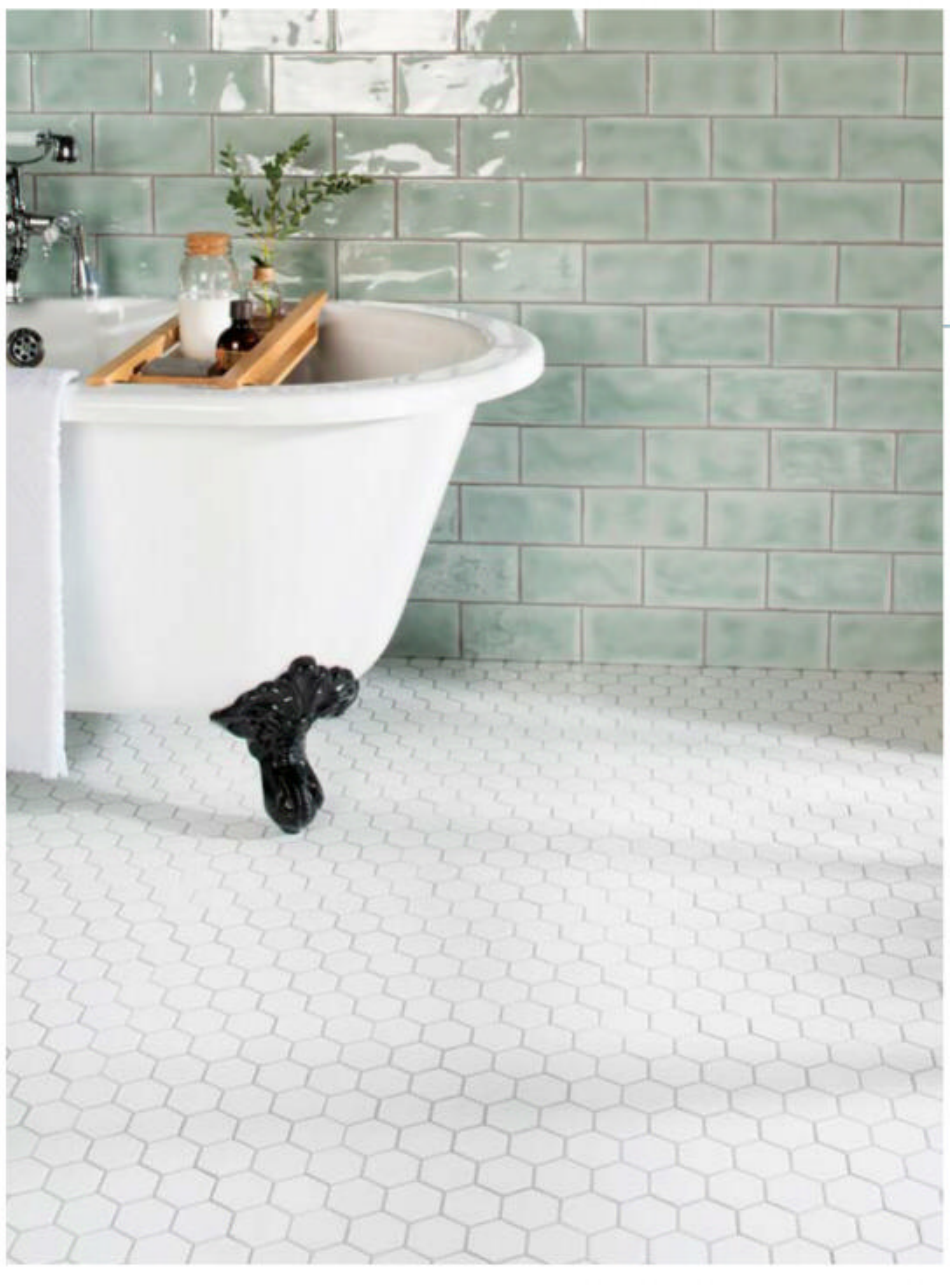
Handmade using centuries-old traditions, encaustic clay tiles from Morocco and Europe are much revered for their raw finish. Created by pressing coloured clay into a mould, they are durable enough for exterior spaces, too.

"Encaustic cement tiles are perfect for period English homes, adding pattern and colour to traditional surroundings," Damla Turgut, founder and creative director of Otto Tiles, explains. "I particularly love the juxtaposition between contemporary and traditional styles, and their versatility. You can use them outdoors as well as indoors, on walls, floors, showers, splashbacks."

For a similar injection of exotic charm, Turgut suggests light-reflective, high-gloss tiles such as the brand's Zellige or Bejmat to add sparkle to an interior devoid of much natural light. The slightly uneven surface of each tile undergoes multiple layers of glaze, resulting in a beautiful pearlescent and shimmering finish.



RIGHT The beauty of the Bejmat natural clay tile lies in its hugely tactile and light-reflective surface with tiny imperfections – a result of each one being chiselled and glazed by hand. *Ecru Rose Bejmat tiles, £1.05 each, Otto Tiles*



FILL IN THE GAPS

A mix of cement, lime and colour pigment, grout is a fail-safe way of sealing a tiled surface and preventing dust, water and debris getting between individual tiles. It can be used as a decorative tool, too, as it comes in a variety of different colours, allowing for plenty of creativity. Dark grey or black grout are practical options as they will not show discolouration as easily as their lighter counterparts. They will also work wonders in emphasising the clean lines of classic shapes such as squares, hexagons and brick tiles, adding an additional layer of decorative interest. Use with plain white tiles for a statement monochromatic effect. Alternatively, introduce a cheerful, contemporary note with bright colour combinations such as pink grout with grey tiles, orange grout with yellow, or blue with green for maximum visual interest.

LEFT Grout colour can be used to unify different sizes and shapes of tiles within a single space. Here the same shade of grey has been used on the hexagonal floor tiles and rectangular wall tiles. *Mosaic Porcelain White Hexagon tiles (378mm x 322mm), £5.45 each; Cosmopolitan Mint Brick tile, £89.95 a square metre, both Original Tiles*

FEATURE SARA EMSLIE **PHOTOGRAPHS** P54 (MARLBOROUGH TILES) © ADAM CARTER; P55 (ARTISANS OF DEVIZES) © ADAM CARTER; P57 (SMINK STUDIO) © VAN SARKI STUDIO; P60 © NEW RAVENNA

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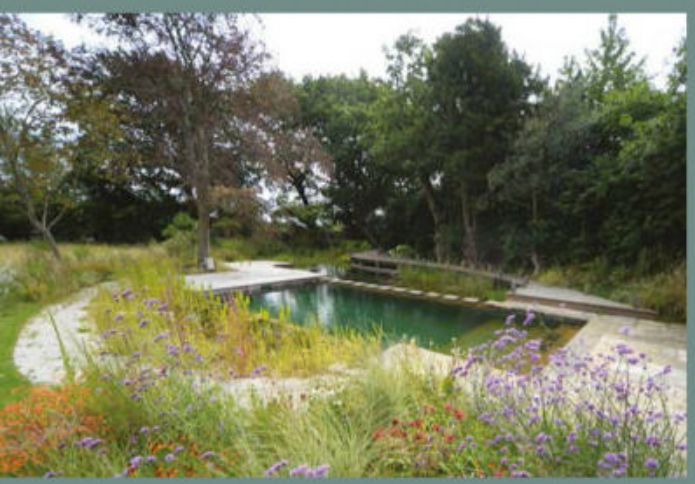

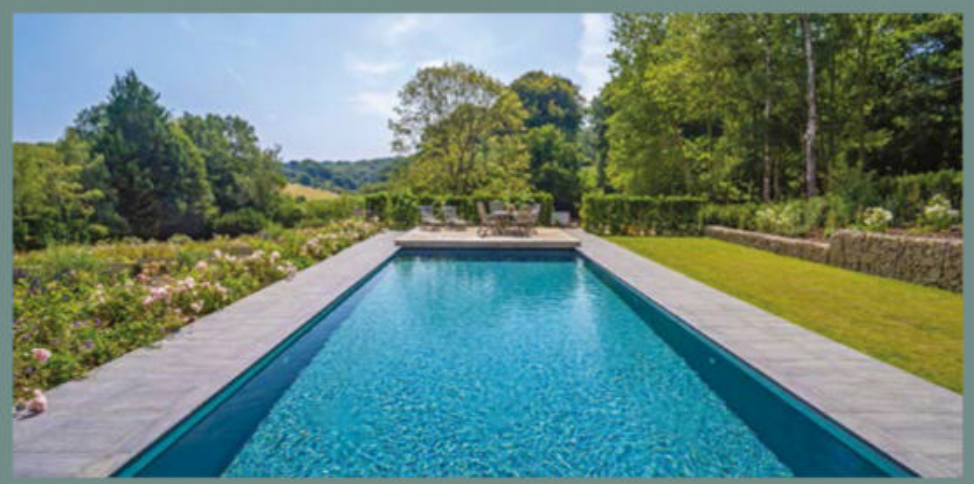

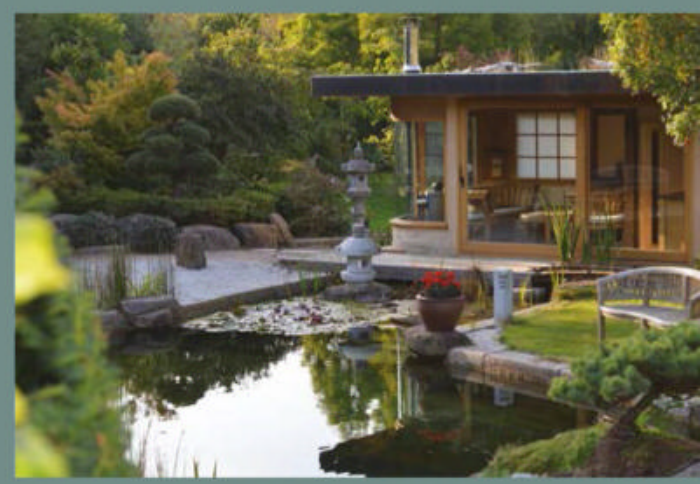

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Sustainable WAYS TO DECORATE

From buying antiques and repurposing furniture, to sourcing recycled textiles or eco-friendly paint, there are plenty of ways to be more sustainable in interior choices

Embracing a sustainable lifestyle with its enlightened approach to furnishing and decorating is quite a challenge. With so much to consider, it is heartening to discover how many companies serving the interior are already taking positive steps to reveal where their materials come from and even flagging up their biodegradable packaging.

Whether moving house or redesigning a tired room, consider whether pieces can be repurposed and if not, find an alternative to landfill. When sourcing new furnishings for an outdated room, the task is to make sure each piece will be an ethical buy. Upholstery without foam content and locally made furniture in wood from managed forests are useful starting points.

Antique and vintage furniture leaves no adverse footprint, which is why more of us are searching for such pieces. These can either be extremely costly or remarkably inexpensive. In particular, old chairs in classic styles and reasonable condition can be found to match every budget and readily transformed with a new slipcover – linen ticks the sustainable box for that.

KITCHEN RETHINK

When a kitchen needs an update, consider repurposing first. Painting cabinets will transform them and subtle sheen is currently a favourite finish, with Intelligent Satinwood from Little Greene or Modern Eggshell from Farrow & Ball designed for the task.

Replacing a worktop can be transformative and Diamik Glass has two versions with a sustainable back story: Decorok is made from 100 per cent recycled glass, and Ecorock from 85 per cent glass plus pigments. This hardwearing material, made from crushed bottles, jars and glasses destined for landfill, is scratch, heat and stain resistant. In terrazzo, speckled, mottled and plain colours, concrete effect is currently the most popular look.

If a complete change of kitchen is essential, consider buying (or selling) a pre-owned or ex-display kitchen. The selection at Used Kitchen Exchange changes daily, with examples from design-led companies such as Roundhouse and Smallbone. Many include worktops and appliances. Keen to establish its eco-rating credentials, the brand quotes a researched carbon saving of around 5,000 kilograms for every kitchen it sells, which, it says, is "around one year of being carbon neutral for a family of four".

ABOVE A kitchen is given a full paint treatment. *Cabinetry, Lead Colour, £75.50 for 2.5l Intelligent Satinwood; walls, China Clay, £53 for 2.5l Intelligent Matt Emulsion; floor, Linen Wash, £74 for 2.5l Intelligent Floor Paint, all Little Greene*

OPPOSITE Changing from a light to a deep finish on cabinetry with paint is an established way to give a kitchen a new look. *Cabinetry, Railings, £73 for 2.5l Modern Eggshell, Farrow & Ball*

EXPERT COMMENT

Specialists offer insights on using sustainable natural materials and reclaimed pieces

KEEPING THE HISTORIC FABRIC

ADAM HILLS, *director of Retrouvius Reclamation and Design*

"Many people come to us when embarking on an eco-project. I tell them my first rule is not to strip out historic fabric in a house. Preserve its heritage instead. That demands fewer new materials and often less money as well. When I'm sourcing salvage, I get excited by design excellence and materials: precious hardwoods in doors, mahogany joinery from museums, and teak worktops from science labs that can be cut down to fit a domestic kitchen. Then there's reclaimed marble and limestone for walls and floors, materials that are expensive to quarry and transport. We have English alabaster from a convent in stock that could find a new home cladding bathroom walls instead of tiles. Antique textiles are of interest, too, and we took delivery of three van-loads of leather clearance from a commercial upholsterer. Thinking of new ways to repurpose the reclaimed is at the heart of reducing waste and the key to sustainability."

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

VICTORIA MEALE, *sustainable interior designer, Victoria Meale Design*

"The earlier I come into a project, the greater the opportunity for it to follow a sustainable route. First I tackle glazing, insulation of ceilings, walls and floors, and recommend a wet or electric underfloor heating system. Unless the building is 'tight', heating goes straight out, so good insulation is a long-term investment not a short-term fix. I recommend natural materials everywhere, wood or coir on floors, carpet – only when a client requests it – in 100 per cent wool. Limewash or paint are my preferred wall treatments and the eco-friendly paints I use most are Edward Bulmer Natural Paint and Eico. I place materials thoughtfully, so tiles only in areas of the kitchen and bathroom that need to be watertight. Fabrics for curtains and upholstery in my projects are 100 per cent linen, hardly ever cotton because of its production issues, wool, too, for throws and cushions. I try to persuade clients to reupholster furniture rather than buy new, and support British furniture makers who work in wood. Being sustainable requires work; it's not an easy option."

NATURALLY COLOURFUL

Choosing the most sustainable paint really needs a doctorate in chemistry, but it is safe to say that most well-known brands have made huge advances in reducing or eliminating noxious and oil-derived ingredients from their products.

Edward Bulmer Natural Paint and Earthborn are two companies that supply detailed information about their paint recipes. "The way to think about paint is to ask 'what is it made of?'" says Edward Bulmer, interior designer and founder of his eponymous paint company. "If it's made with alkyd, acrylic or vinyl resins, it is made from crude (dead) oil and is not genuinely eco-friendly. If it is available in every colour under the sun, it will most likely be tinted with chemical colourants and not what are traditionally called pigments. If it is a water-based paint, that is only meaningful if it is free of VOCs. If it is not, it is still in part a solvent paint."

LEFT Styled with antiques from Lorfords by interior designer Edward Bulmer, this sitting room features walls in Azurite by Edward Bulmer Natural Paint to echo the strong blue seen in the rug

RENEWED PURPOSE

As well as buying old instead of new, consider updating existing pieces of furniture or even radically transforming them to suit a new scheme. Be sure that an inherited piece or second-hand buy is not something of importance or high-value before making alterations. If it is safe to proceed, let imagination run wild to create a bespoke piece for a decorative scheme.

Chalk paints such as Annie Sloan or Frenchic are easy to apply and come in a host of colours, from classic shabby-chic to bright and bold. Different finishes can be achieved with waxes, or by highlighting details with metallic paint or metal leaf.

Consider adding a new surface to transform a table top, or repurpose a piece completely. A cabinet can be transformed into a glamorous cocktail bar, an old console into a vanity unit, complete with a sink, for a smart solution in a new bathroom.

RIGHT A sideboard has been revitalised with a lively paint colour and gold leaf detailing. *Capri Pink, from £5.95 for 120 ml Chalk Paint, and all other paints, Annie Sloan*

NEW FROM OLD

Buying antique, vintage and second-hand furniture or new pieces made from reclaimed materials is an approach that gives individuality to interiors as well as saluting sustainability.

Home Barn hosts this combination of furniture and homewares in its seventeenth-century tithe barn. "People come looking for unusual items with character," says Sally Wilkie, co-founder of Home Barn. "We love rustic antiques, and small tables, painted cupboards and old wooden stools are customers' favourites. Our dining tables in reclaimed pine and elm are made locally and we love the weathered look of the timber. It is satisfying that the sustainable approach has also becomes fashionable!"

Heyl Interiors is another source of indoor and outdoor furniture, here edging towards industrial in combining reclaimed pine with steel. "Our wood comes mainly from floor joists salvaged from abandoned buildings around the UK," explains Jade Lambert, founder and owner. "We also use railway sleepers, again in pine, and these are tanalised for long-lasting protection especially when tables are used outdoors."

ABOVE Reclaimed elm trestle dining table, handmade from salvaged Victorian planks, retains characterful knots and open grain. *Table from £1,950, Home Barn*

COMPLETELY FLOORED

When a room is being extended or a damaged floor replaced, reclaimed boards are the top sustainable material for the task. The Reclaimed Timber Company stocks flooring to suit contemporary extensions and period properties. Antique pine, wide rustic English oak, parquet and boards in ash, elm and maple are among the selection. Similar stock held at Lawson's Yard also includes floorboards from known sites, bead-jointed boards, Douglas fir and reclaimed French barn boards.

Bamboo is a strong contender, too, for a sustainable new floor. "Bamboo is a grass growing in naturally occurring forests across Asia," explains Chris Elliott, director of the Bamboo Flooring Company. "Foresters select individual poles to cut when they're around 10 metres high and 25 centimetres wide. The bamboo doesn't then have to be replanted, it simply continues to grow, in fact, it grows faster than we can use it."

Bamboo floorboards with wide and narrow grain patterns are as strong as oak, and when strand woven (bamboo fibres compressed under extreme heat and pressure) they are more than twice as strong as oak. The downside to bamboo is the eco-cost of transporting it across the world.

RIGHT Bamboo is an exceptionally hardwearing and sustainable choice of flooring. *F1013 solid carbonised strand-woven 142mm bamboo flooring, £30,99 a square metre, The Bamboo Flooring Company*

BELOW A French Arras bench from Violet Grey Decorative Antiques was manufactured by Grassin Baledans and featured in its 1874 catalogue. Constructed from half-round wrought-iron tubing it has claw feet to stop it sinking into the grass

METAL MATTERS

Metal is a great survivor and there are exceptional antique and reclaimed pieces to be found across a range of items at reclamation companies such as English Salvage, which has a well-organised stock list. Find antique metal benches, chairs and cast-iron tables at Violet Grey Decorative Antiques and Appley Hoare Antiques.

Moving indoors, demand for genuine antique metal bedsteads is running high. One leading source of these is Bed Bazaar, whose sister company, Sleeping Partners, custom-makes mattresses to fit a bed of non-standard size. "We have all types of carefully restored metal beds, including four-posters," says Ben Goodbrey at the company, "with a number by RW Winfield, a maker of high-quality beds from 1840 to the 1860s." Established antique-bed specialists in different parts of the country include Seventh Heaven, Victorian Dreams and Wessex Antique Bedsteads.

ENTICING RECYCLING

A number of textile companies are striving to make use of material that might otherwise go to waste. Ian Mankin's Zero Waste Initiative makes use of surplus yarns and offcuts to create limited editions of specially designed fabrics.

Amongst a host of sustainable collections, Prestigious Textiles has launched an Eco collection using recycled polyester and sustainably grown organic cotton; Kirkby Designs has four collections using materials that are recycled and fully recyclable; and Weaver Green is known for its rugs and textiles made from recycled water bottles.

Rug designer Jennifer Manners has also turned to this medium for her Re/Purpose collection: "We are particularly excited that whilst we are able to use repurposed plastic water bottles in a hand-knotted rug construction for a more sustainable option, the high-performance aspect of the fibres (being stain-resistant and bleach cleanable) makes them ideal for the hard-wear of real life. This is when sustainable initiatives thrive: solving a functional challenge with an environmentally sound solution while not compromising on beauty or design."

ILLUMINATING IDEAS

Vintage lighting has an established following, with lighting companies such as Skinflint sourcing and restoring lighting from the 1920s to the 1970s that has been salvaged from demolished factories and civic buildings in Britain and Eastern Europe. Skinflint takes each light fitting apart then cleans, repairs and rewires it to take LED bulbs, the most sustainable option. All its light fittings are certified by the UK Lighting Industry Association (UKLIA), with a lifetime guarantee that includes repairs and a buy-back scheme. "We research the manufacturer of each light to find when and why it was produced, so its story is preserved as well as its patina," says Chris Miller, Skinflint's co-founder.

Trainspotters Lighting came out of work in general reclamation. Early on, stock came from the demolition of English factory complexes, and now includes pieces from European sources. Each fitting is restored and rewired to current standards. "People wanting industrial style in their homes choose our pendants in cast metals, steel and enamel," says Jesse Carrington, co-founder. "They do also tell us they choose reclaimed because it's sustainable."

LEFT A row of 1950s Czech pendants above the island and extendable British machinists' work lights around the dining table help define this Arts and Crafts home refurbishment. *Lighting, Skinflint; interior design, Brooke Copp-Barton*

ABOVE Repurposed water bottles are not only a sustainable fibre choice for a hand-knotted rug, but a hard-wearing option too. *Hand-knotted recycled plastic Malibu rug, re/Purpose collection, £2,527 (1.8m x 2.4m), Jennifer Manners*

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FABRIC FIX

Antique fabric pieces are often small in size, bringing uncertainty over how to introduce them meaningfully into rooms. Lucy Bathurst of Nest Design makes furnishings incorporating special, often personal, fabrics, from antique prints to vintage lace. She works the old with natural plains in arrangements to suit a particular space. "Whatever fabric I team with a treasured piece," she says, "the common denominator must be the soul-giving quality the antique brings to its interior."

Moving house often necessitates new curtains but not if The Curtain Exchange can help. Set up in 1990, it sells top-quality pre-owned curtains on commission. "When people move house or make a mistake in choice of fabric, it's good to be able to sell and also to buy well-made curtains," explains co-founder Juliana Galvin. With more than 150 sets for sale, The Curtain Exchange only accepts lined and interlined curtains without marks, sun fading or fraying, that come from smoke-free homes. "Stock includes curtains in silk, damask, weaves, prints and plain and striped linens," says Galvin. "We've saved a huge number of curtains from landfill over the years."

RIGHT Vintage oriental embroidered silk wallhangings framed in velvet ribbon hang above a slipcover for the bedhead created from a piece of vintage Indonesian woven textile, hand-stitched onto raw silk. Cushions in antique Japanese kimono silk have hand-stitched velvet borders. All pieces designed and stitched by Lucy Bathurst, Nest Design

FEATURE CELIA RUFEY **PHOTOGRAPHS** P64 © JAMES MERRELL. P65 (VICTORIA MEALE) © ZAC FRACKELTON. P68 (VIOLET GREY) © TOM HARGREAVES. P69 (SKINFLINT) © MEGAN TAYLOR

SLEEP SOUNDLY

As we spend a third of our lives in bed, the health benefits of sleep should not be compromised by possible chemical residues in the bedlinen. Cotton, described as the world's dirtiest crop, accounts for sizeable proportions of the world's insecticide, fertiliser and water use during growing and processing, raising questions over its choice for bedding. Bedlinen companies have taken note, and whilst organic is a word frequently mentioned, the accreditation to look for is GOTS, the Global Organic Textile Standard.

Cotton and linen grown to organic standards and certified as such by independent bodies is then processed according to GOTS rules. Ecosophy is one company supplying cotton percale, cotton jersey and linen bedlinen awarded the GOTS accolade. "All machine-spun yarns are exposed to chemicals before and during weaving, dyeing and finishing," explains Kate Anderson, Ecosophy's founder, "but GOTS has strict rules about which agents can be used if the textile is to meet its standard. For example, only environmentally benign oxygen-based bleaches are allowed." Other members of this elite club include Sleep Organic, Square Flower, Little Leaf, Strawberry & Cream Home, Dip & Doze, with Pure linen bedlinen from de Le Cuona a recent addition.

LEFT With certification from Fairtrade and the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), this cotton sateen duvet set with embroidered cord lines, from £150, is part of a bed linen collection at Sleep Organic that includes organic wool pillows, duvets and mattress toppers

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Walls painted in Acquatic from eco-friendly Edward Bulmer Natural Paint

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CONSIDERED WAYS WITH ART & ANTIQUES

Enhance interiors with artwork, period pieces and treasured objects by ensuring they are positioned and lit to show them to best advantage without being obtrusive

Introducing art and antiques to any room adds not only interesting and intriguing colour and patina, but also very welcome character. As Camilla Clarke, creative director of design studio Albion Nord, says: "A room without art, is a room unfinished." The same goes for older items of furniture as well as smaller pieces such as ceramics and glassware, from family heirlooms to carefully considered acquisitions.

Here we look at how to ensure that such much-loved and unique possessions fully complement their setting and are shown to their best advantage, whether they are hung on the wall, arranged in a cabinet or simply placed against a complementary background and carefully illuminated.

LIGHTING FANTASTIC

Good lighting elevates a display enormously. The most effective (and expensive) option is to use a framing projector, which must usually be inset in the ceiling and will focus the light into a pattern to perfectly illuminate the artwork but not the surrounding wall.

Much simpler choices are ceiling-mounted, adjustable spotlights, a track system, or picture lights fixed either to the wall or the picture itself. Experts recommend a colour temperature of 2,700 to 3,000 kelvins, which is a slightly yellowish to a neutral warm white (some say early paintings, created by candlelight, should be lit by 'warmer' bulbs). Colour rendition is important, too – a high-quality bulb will show off the vibrancy of all colours, including trickier reds; look for a colour rendering index (CRI) of at least 95. Kate Wilkins of Home Lighting Ideas adds: "If artwork is behind glass, it is important to check that it is non-reflective and protects against UV. The angle of light is significant to avoid glare."

ABOVE TM Lighting supplied the Slim Light Pro picture light, a made-to-measure, minimal, contemporary design, finished in antique bronze plate, for this chic townhouse space designed by Rebecca Hughes Interiors.

CAREFUL CO-ORDINATION

It is advisable to ensure that a work of art does not jar with its surroundings. One way to create an overall scheme in which a painting feels wholely, yet subtly, integrated in a room is by repeating colours found within the work in nearby furnishings and accessories. In this way, for example, the delicate shades of an abstract oil could be replicated in a pair of lampshades; the tones of a favourite painting found in cushions and a rug; and the rich paint colours and gilt frame of a traditional portrait echoed in pieces of antique furniture. ▶

Handsome tones of brown and cream with metallic highlights elegantly link this traditional portrait with the environment of fine antiques and beautiful architecture in which it is hung. The interior design is by Mark Gillette.

BUYING ANTIQUES

Whether adding to a collection or buying a first piece, these experts offer a few tips to help with making the right choice

BUYING A STAND-OUT PIECE

LENNOX CATO,
Lennox Cato Antiques

"One of the golden rules when considering buying a feature article is to buy what you like. Don't buy for investment or if it's on trend. Spend time browsing through websites and interior magazines to find your style. The item doesn't need to be the same period as your home; mix and match, even new homes can still accommodate antiques well. If you're a little unsure about your choice, ask the dealer if you could try it in situ before you commit. Most dealers, if logistically practical, will suggest this, a department store will never carry that service."

BUYING PAIRS

MAX ROLLITT,
Max Rollitt Antiques

"Pairs of antique items are usually worth around three times as much as each individual item would fetch. Pairs can be items which were made to belong together, and it is pleasing to find a pair of objects which have survived without being separated. Similarly, there is serendipitous joy in finding an item which can be paired with one you already have to create a 'matched pair'. Pairs can be used, for example, either side of a fireplace or window, and give a pleasing symmetry to a room. It's worth bearing in mind that there is a virtue in not being too symmetrical in a design, it's better not to be led by it. Pairs of mirrors, bedside tables or wall lights are particularly useful, but again not essential, I tend to take objects on their merit."

ABOVE In this eclectic scheme by Thompson Clarke, a pair of gilded-ceramic antique lamp bases make a subtle statement at either end of a carved-wood console table.

ONE KEY PIECE

Displaying just one single, large-scale work of art – a painting, wall hanging, ceramic or glass work, or perhaps a sculpture – is one of the simplest and most effective ways to create a dramatic statement. This works particularly well in a high-ceilinged room, stairwell or double-height space, where smaller pieces can get 'lost'.

On the other hand, there are times when one oversized piece in a small room can be highly striking. Consider how the work relates to the overall proportions and architectural detailing of the space, ensuring that it is balanced by a large-enough wall, shelf, table cabinet or other support or backdrop, so that it appears full of impact without being overwhelming.

ABOVE A bespoke bronze sculpture by Edward Waites takes centre stage in this private home designed by Nicky Dobree. It sits on a Christian Liaigre wenge table and is positioned in a hallway that connects several spaces. It has been spotlit for maximum effect so that it can be seen from all directions.

COLOURFUL BACKDROP

Neutral walls are not the only way to show off a work of art, much-loved collection or valued antique; a splash of well-chosen background colour can prove invaluable in drawing the eye and providing a foil for the display itself. The darker the colour, the more drama is introduced, and dark colours are also, of course, perfect for contrasting with white or pale pieces.

Charcoal, navy, deep green or crimson will add gravitas to a simple collection of white ceramics, for example. When deciding on a background, aim to complement one of the colours from within the object or objects on display. Creating a mood board using colour swatches may be a real help with this, and it may be useful to ask a paint showroom to colour-match an item exactly.

RIGHT Crockery, glassware and other kitchen paraphernalia take on a still-life quality when carefully arranged on the dark olive background of these open shelves.
Chichester 5ft Open Rack Dresser, £2,235, Neptune

BELOW The mustard wall in this Hampshire farmhouse creates a warm, welcoming room and also makes a handsome foil for the dark-wood antique tables, lamps and frames. The rug is also antique, and the bespoke Dean sofa is by Max Rollitt, who designed the room.

ON THE WALL

There are various options for hanging groups of photographs or paintings, with the simplest being to fit them in identical frames and hang them in ordered lines. Matching or similar frames will also help co-ordinate a less regular arrangement of pictures (this works well with, for example, family photographs on a stair wall).

To pull together a disparate grouping, start by laying the potential artworks (which could also be mirrors, plates, embroideries or pressed seaweed, for example) on the floor and assessing how the elements work together. If necessary, remove some, make substitutions or consider reframing. One way to unite them is to group them into an overall rectangle, or at least align them on three sides.

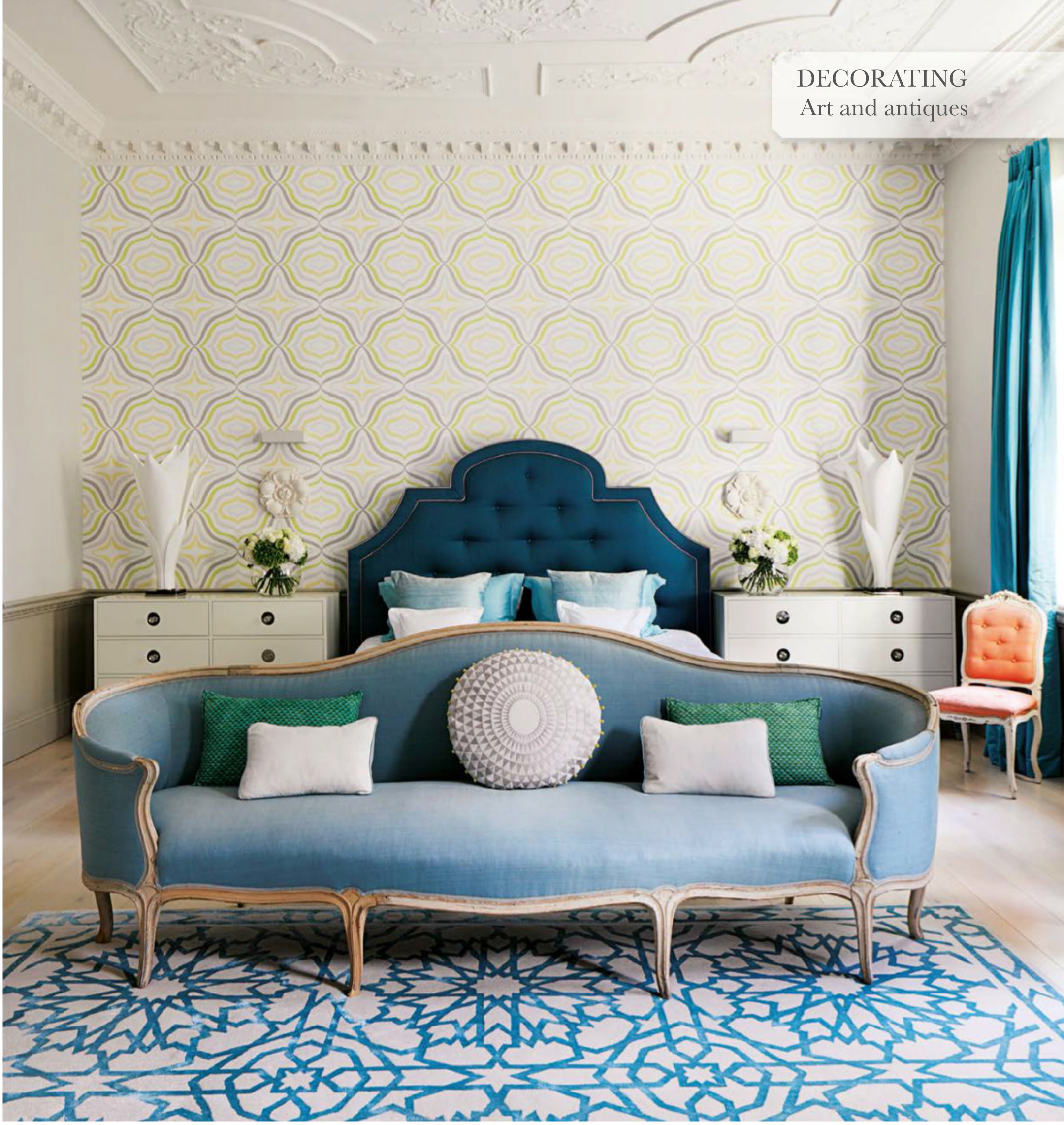
A completely freeform arrangement can be intriguing, though it helps if the 'ingredients' possess at least one common factor, whether it be shape, size, colour, texture or material.

RIGHT In this dining room by Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors, a collection of antique plates from a variety of different places creates a display. Their similarities in shape and colour pulls the hanging together, with its overall circular outline echoing the individual plates themselves.

SYMMETRY AND PAIRS

There is something very pleasing about the mirroring and doubling that results from a symmetrical arrangement of two identical objects. It often makes a great deal of sense to show off antiques or works of art in sets of two – a pair of silver candlesticks on a dining table, a pair of lamps on a hallway console or a pair of chairs either side of a window, for example – especially as plenty of antique pieces are more valuable when in pairs. That said, even everyday and modern items can look good when displayed symmetrically, as the resulting feeling of balance is calming and elegant.

LEFT This entirely symmetrical arrangement of antique furniture, works of art and accessories recreates the sparse beauty of a Regency room. All the pieces are from Lorfords.



OLD AND NEW

The ‘layered’ interior that combines pieces from different periods and places is always a charming, welcoming and characterful space. With even more intent, however, it is possible to juxtapose old with new more deliberately and dramatically.

“A strategically placed antique in a very modern interior adds an added element of unexpected surprise, and the juxtaposition creates an even stronger statement,” Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors explains. “For a modern interior, if only having one antique, be brave and choose something extraordinary to make it a statement piece. The same goes for a period home. Make sure that your modern pieces are a bold choice and are in stark contrast to the antiques in the room. This gives each integrity and importance.”

ABOVE In this striking bedroom by Rebekah Caudwell, an antique sofa contrasts with modern elements, including a geometric rug by Martyn Lawrence Bullard from The Rug Company, all unified by a soothing range of blues.

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PERFECTLY FRAMED

Challenged by the sheer choice of picture mounts and frames available? There are conventions that help (though confidence does allow rule-breaking to create unusual effects).

Mounts should increase in size according to the size of the picture; use extra-large mounts for additional impact and a more modern look. White and off-white mounts are subtle and easy to use anywhere, whilst coloured mounts are more decorative and can be used to co-ordinate with the colours within a room.

Frames should also be proportionate to the picture size, their style chosen to complement the style and period of the picture, as well as the colours within it and those of the room in which it will be placed. An expert framer will give excellent advice, and inspiration can be found in art galleries, museums, magazines and online.

RIGHT Round or oval frames make an interesting departure from the norm.
Sandberg Ekeblad Blue wallpaper, £85 a roll, TM Interiors

COLLECTIONS ON DISPLAY

Objects *en masse* have great impact, with the end result being highly effective and at times greater than the sum of its parts.

There are several tricks to help organise arrangements of grouped items. First, match the scale of the pieces on show with the area in which they will be displayed, so that they are neither too small nor too large for their shelf, cabinet or area of wall. There may be a rationale to grouping by colour, material, shape, artist, period and so on, but if nothing springs to mind, start by positioning one or two of the strongest, most striking items first, with larger pieces at the back of the display.

Work towards a flow of shapes, a strong overall structure and an emphasis on the most interesting characteristics. If a piece jars within the group, remove it and display it separately.

LEFT This bespoke cabinet features shelving and display areas for books and decorative items, whilst the cupboards below allow for discreet storage.
Green Kensington Library, from £3,600, Neville Johnson

FEATURE KATHERINE SORRELL **PHOTOGRAPHS** P76 & P77 (MAX ROLLITT) © TOM MANNION; P76 (LENNOX CATO) © KAREN BENGALL PHOTOGRAPHY; (SCULPTURE) PHILIP VILE; P81 (SANDBERG) © IDHA LINDHAG

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ABOVE A George II mahogany chest of drawers combines with contemporary furnishings, all from Anbôise

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Whilst the virtues of hard flooring such as wood and stone are many and varied – durable, easy to clean and resistant to everyday use – they cannot compete with carpet, rugs and natural flooring for bringing softness, texture and warmth underfoot through the house. The issue of controlling sound transmission, especially in a busy family home, also lands a winner in soft flooring's court.

Fitting any new flooring is an investment and it is important when considering laying carpet and natural flooring to take a realistic approach and factor in the cost of quality underlay and expert fitting. There is little point in choosing an expensive carpet and cutting corners on the underlay. The appearance and life expectancy of the new flooring depends on it.

ABOVE A runner is particularly inviting in a passage that opens into a room or garden. The perspective invites anyone passing to walk that way. *Morocco Tetouan sisal runner, £68 a linear metre, Kersaint Cobb*

OPPOSITE PAGE Discreet patterning in a carpet adds a practical as well as a visually appealing base note to a room. *Dune Moiré, £97.99 a square metre, Timorous Beasties for Brintons*

EXPERT COMMENT

Flooring specialists share their advice on which yarns and fibres to choose for different areas of the home

QUALITIES OF NATURAL PLANT FIBRES FOR SOFT FLOORING

LORNA HAIGH, *creative director, Alternative Flooring*

"Coir, jute, seagrass and sisal are the four main natural weaves used as carpets, rugs and runners. Coir, spun from the coarse fibres on coconut husks, is hardwearing and can be laid in most areas including on stairs. Jute, woven from the fibres of the *Corchorus* plant, feels good underfoot and is best for low traffic areas. Seagrass, harvested in coastal areas of Vietnam and China, is softer than coir and makes characterful weaves. Though hardwearing, it isn't suitable for stairs. Sisal comes from white fibres in the leaves of the spiky *Agave sisalana* plant grown mostly in Africa. Being white it dyes well, and can have flecks of colour added to its range of weave structures. It also works well on stairs.

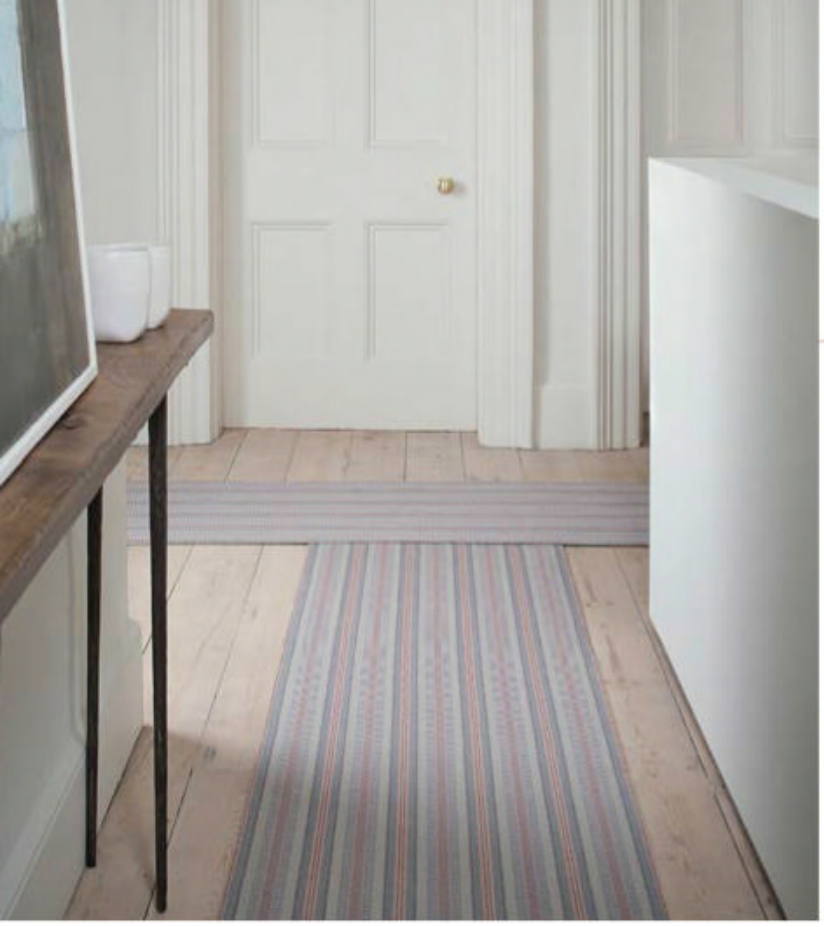
Most natural fibre floor coverings are latex-backed to give stability to the textural weaves. The care regime for fibre floor coverings includes vacuuming with suction only. They don't enjoy getting wet, and can be pre-treated with Intec, a stain inhibitor that coats the fibres and allows spills to be dealt with quickly before they sink into the weave."

YARNS THAT GIVE CHARACTER AND WEAR TO CARPETS AND RUGS.

DAVID WHITEFOOT, *technical director, The Carpet Foundation*

"Wool is the best carpet fibre for its combination of properties. It recovers well from flattening and is reasonably easy to clean. In fact, it naturally conceals soiling because the fibre is relatively opaque, so light doesn't travel through it and that's quite significant. However, wool isn't best for durability, and companies offering all wool carpet do so in loop pile constructions or in high tuft density and pile weight.

In the early 1960s, it was found that blending up to 30 per cent nylon with wool eliminated durability issues. Since that time, wool-rich carpets have generally had a pile of 80 per cent wool, with 20 per cent nylon. Nylon is exceptionally durable and similar to wool in many of its properties. When 80 per cent wool is combined with 20 per cent polypropylene instead of nylon, its main purpose is to use a less expensive yarn. Polypropylene is also very durable, but it doesn't recover from flattening as well as wool or nylon, which affects appearance retention and is best in low, loop-pile carpets. Low melting point polyester is increasingly a component in woven and tufted carpets because, added in small quantities to a blend of wool and nylon or polypropylene, the scattered polyester fibres help prevent pile yarns from untwisting and from shedding loose fibres."



ON THE MOVE

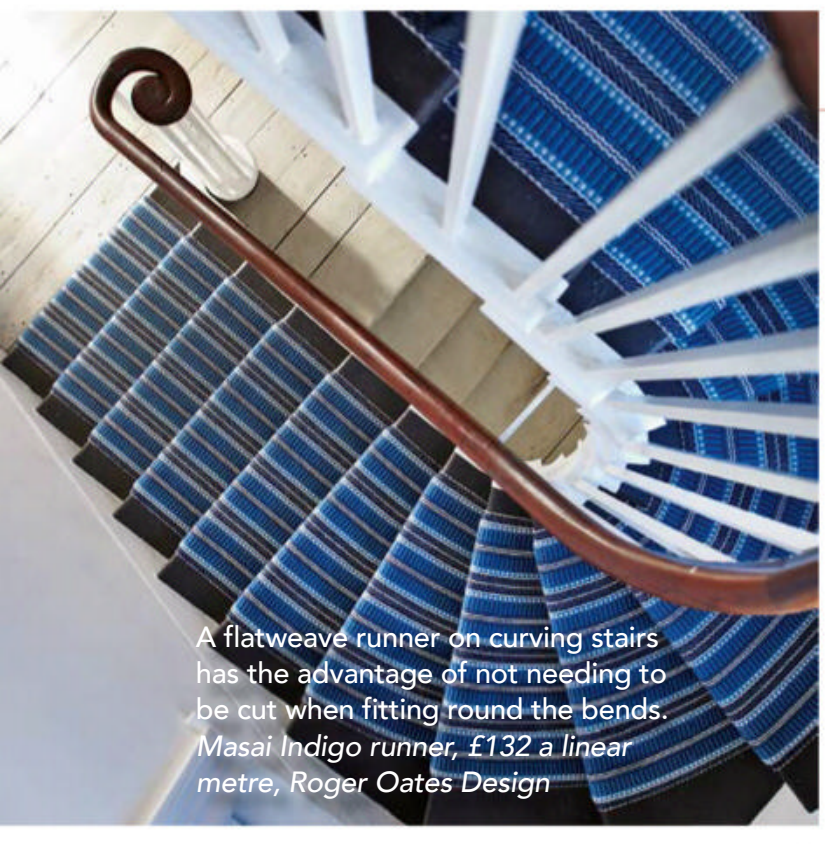
Runners have an independent life beyond their popularity for stairs. They are a moveable feast, directing traffic across halls, along landings and corridors and, particularly when striped, bring perspective into play, drawing the eye beyond the runner's end point. A runner can also be employed to define an area, such as a desk sited at the side of a living space or bedroom. Narrow-width stair runners will fit some locations; wider runners can be cut to size from broadloom carpet or natural weaves and have edges bound, often in a contrasting colour. Runners will need an appropriate underlay to keep them in position whether on a hard floor, carpet or natural flooring.

LEFT A striped runner adds definition. *Lennox Clover runner, £132 a linear metre, Roger Oates Design*

BELOW A large rug flowing under seating feels luxurious and anchors the space. *Cirrus, £1,750 a square metre, Winch for The Rug Company*

SIZING UP

Choosing the right size of rug and deciding how to place furniture in relation to it is an issue Emma Elles-Hill, showroom director at The Rug Company, advises on every day. "One approach for a sitting room is to choose a large rug, framed by the surrounding floor and which can accommodate all seating and smaller furniture comfortably without anything tipping off the edges. Another favourite approach is to have the rug visually flowing under the main seating with legs half on and off. Some people worry that the furniture will rock when placed like this, but it isn't so: the furniture settles and anchors the rug in place. In a situation where a pair of sofas are positioned face to face before a fireplace, another option is to allow the rug precedence and keep the sofas close to it on each side but not on it."



A flatweave runner on curving stairs has the advantage of not needing to be cut when fitting round the bends. *Masai Indigo runner, £132 a linear metre, Roger Oates Design*

UPSTAIRS & DOWN

Stairs are a major route through the house and carpet minimises the sound of people in transit. Choosing a single carpet colour is an accepted way to link rooms right through the house for simplicity and space enhancement. Cavalier Carpets and Cormar Carpets each offers wool rich broadloom ranges in up to three different pile weights (and prices) to reflect levels of use in different rooms, from stairs and living rooms to adult bedrooms.

Stairs can also seize the moment to make a statement with a runner, and many come in widths sized for stairs. For Andy Guard, creative director at Roger Oates Design, the brand's striped flatweave runners have two advantages over conventional pile carpet. "With a wool flatweave you are looking at the side of the yarn, so get a very crisp defined stripe. Flatweave has an element of stretch too, so follows the line of stairs accurately, even around spirals. It comes on a roll and is fitted in one piece without cutting. We call it upholstery for stairs."

Among natural floorings, sisal is the one to choose for stairs. Alternative Flooring supplies Sisal Herringbone runners, and Kersaint Cobb's Moroccan runners are sisal stripes in restrained and vibrant colourways.

SQUARING THE CIRCLE

Curves are always glamorous and when a sofa is curved, a round rug can provide its mirror image. Round rugs also have a role hosting dining tables, particularly when the table echoes its shape. However, a square or rectangular rug works equally well under a round dining table. Whatever the rug's shape, it is the relative size of rug and table – especially if the table extends – that must be calculated carefully. The rug must be large enough for chairs to be pulled back by diners without the back legs coming off the edge of the rug.

Framis rug, from £3,572, Mary Katranzou for The Rug Company

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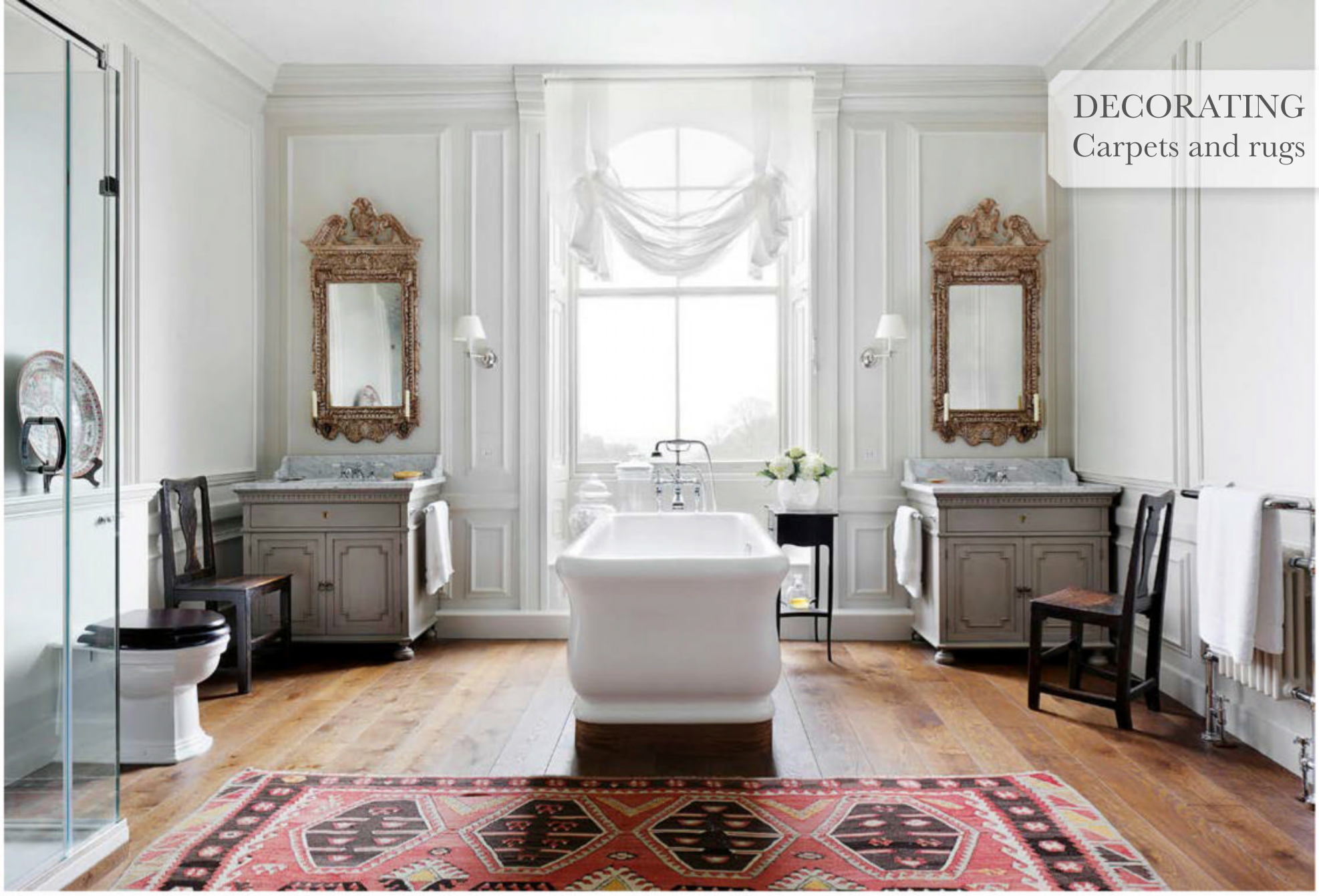

ANTIQUE APPEAL

Carpets and rugs from Persia and Turkey began to appear in English interiors in the early seventeenth century, when smaller sizes were routinely used to cover tables – an idea ripe for revisiting. Vegetable-dyed wool in antique rugs gives subtle colour variations that sit perfectly on old wood and stone floors, but also on sisal and jute floorings, and even on pile carpet when a thin carpet-to-carpet underlay will be needed. Rug Anti-Kreep from Interfloor is one to try.

Interior designer Henriette von Stockhausen adores working with antique rugs. "Most of my interiors have them, even bathrooms (*above*). I tend to choose kilims with more colourful open patterns for less formal rooms, such as snugs and bathrooms, and Tabriz and Ziegler rugs for formal rooms, as they cost more and when the material is precious, such as silk, are more appropriate."

ABOVE A kilim is always interior designer Henriette von Stockhausen's rug of choice for a bathroom, as in this instance. "They are less problematic with water than other rugs," she explains.

SOFTLY, SOFTLY

Stepping out of bed onto a forgiving surface is one of life's small pleasures. For relaxed movement around the bedroom, a fitted pile carpet is kindest to bare feet. Barefoot Wool and subtly striped Barefoot Marble in 100 per cent wool from Alternative Flooring have a deeply indulgent pile. When a rug is laid over a wood floor, a natural weave or a carpet in the bedroom, designers suggest choosing a large rug to go under the bed and extend at least 60cm on three sides to frame it. The rug can then stop short of bedside furniture or run back to the bedhead wall. In a small bedroom with the bed against a wall, a small rug or runner can take on the comfort role, useful too in a child's room.

LEFT Framing the bed is a classic way to place a rug to greet early morning feet. *Tumbling Blocks rug, £926 a square metre, Riviere for Zoffany*

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PRACTICAL APPROACH

In a family house, a good deal of thought goes into deciding how well a fitted carpet will retain its looks day to day without needing an extensive care package. Intentions to vacuum regularly and attend to spills speedily exist alongside the unpredictable nature of everyday life. This has fed an increasing interest in carpets with subtle patterns, a little more concealing than a plain.

Timorous Beasties has tamed its famed pattern exuberance in Grain du Bois and Moiré for Brintons. These Axminster weaves in 80 per cent wool and 20 per cent nylon have extra heavy domestic qualities.

Also worth noting is Wool Crafty by Alternative Flooring, a 100 per cent wool loop pile broadloom using the lights and darks of undyed wool in a variety of neat, mark-concealing designs. Adam Carpets has several useful patterns, too, in wool-rich broadloom: look for Revelation, Sylvan Shadows and Rustic Berber.

LEFT Working a neat pattern as a loop-pile carpet in light and mid-tone 100 per cent undyed wool is a clever route to joining style to practicality. *Wool Crafty Cross Celtic, £64.85 a square metre, Alternative Flooring*

UP THE WALL

Many rugs have the visual appeal of art and this connection is being realised in two ways. One is by choosing a rug design that makes a visual connection with important artwork in a room. The other approach is to hang a well-worn rug on a wall to extend its life and its owner's enjoyment of its art. This well-established practice has generated a trend for displaying other hand-worked rugs in the same way.

A favourite location for hanging a large rug is the stairwell, where the space amplifies the drama of the rug's design. To prepare a rug for the wall, sew a canvas sleeve along the back of the rug at the top, slide a 2.5cm dowel through the sleeve and rest it on brackets fixed to the wall.

RIGHT Felted wool rugs, handmade in Kyrgyzstan, are not only hardwearing on floors but their colours and patterns also make them popular wallhangings. *Rugs available in various sizes and to commission, from £165, Felt*

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WEAVES, TUFTS & KNOTS

Techniques for producing carpets and rugs have a rich and varied history, both here and further afield.

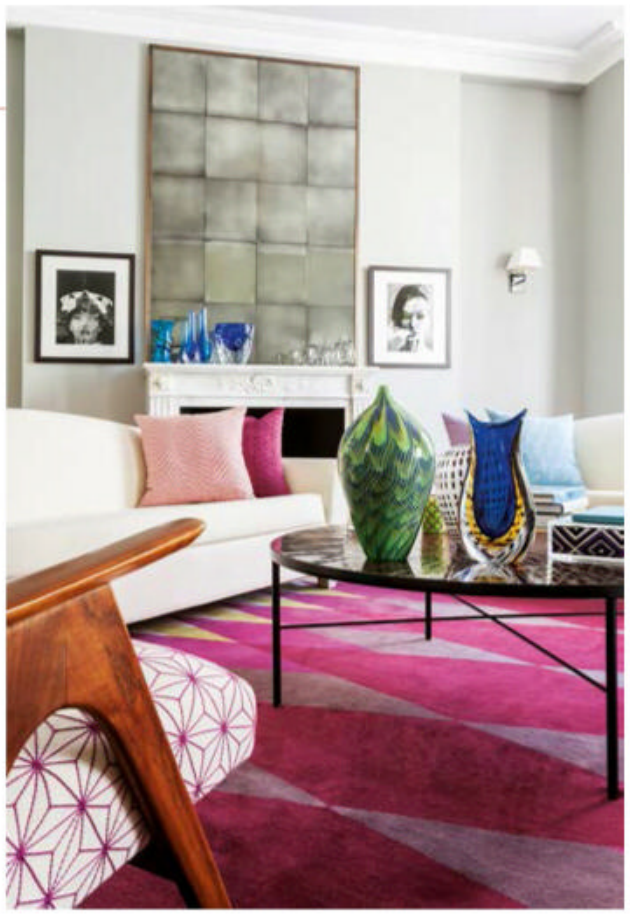
In England, the availability of wool brought the first carpet loom to Wilton, Wiltshire in 1741, and to Axminster, Devon in 1835. Wilton (mainly plains) or Axminster (patterned) are traditionally wool rich and are woven through the backing, using much more of the wool than is used in tufted carpet production, where needles punch yarn through a primary backing and then apply a secondary latex backing.

Rugs made using time-honoured methods in other parts of the world – from Morocco in the West to China in the East, via Turkey, Iran, India, Afghanistan and Nepal – include kilims and knotted types.

"There are two main types of rugs, flatwoven (kilims) and piled (or knotted) ," says antique carpet dealer Joshua Lumley. "Both types are ancient traditions from central Asia, dating back millennia, which spread along trade routes with the rise and fall of great empires. Kilims are normally woven by the 'tapestry' technique and can often be used either way up. Knotted rugs tend to be very resilient, as the knot itself, at the base of every tuft of pile, gives the weave substance and natural durability. The foundation of the rug is woven (consisting of vertical warps and horizontal wefts) and then knots are tied, usually around pairs of warps, but sometimes (such as in Nepal and Tibet) around each single warp. These rugs are made up of thousands of knots, and sometimes, in the case of the very finest pieces from Iran and Turkey, knot-counts can stretch into the millions."

PATTERN APPEAL

As a celebrated designer of rugs and textiles, Christine Van Der Hurd is passionate about the positive role colour can play from the floor up. "Colour makes rooms come alive," she says, "but none of the colours I work with in my rugs or fabrics is a primary, I always mute the hard edges for subtlety. The approach I recommend when choosing an important rug, is to invest in one that offers the main design element in a colour you love and want to live with. Allow that colour to enjoy status on the floor then pick up the thread of other colours in the rug and move them around so that pattern, colour and texture are linked across furniture and at windows."



ABOVE An antique rug underpins a four-poster bed in a room of calm elegance that allows precedence to the floor where it is due. *Interior design, VSP Interiors*

LEFT Using colour from the floor up with clever pattern mixing across rugs and textiles is typical of the approach Christine Van Der Hurd brings to all her designs. *Rug, Elongated Diamond, Jewel, £1,130 a square metre, Vanderhurd*

FEATURE CELIA RUFEY **PHOTOGRAPHS** P84 © MEGAN TAYLOR. P89 (ZOFFANY) © ANDY GORE. P93 (VANDERHURD) © OSKAR PROCTOR

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Impactful *ways with* FABRIC

Discover clever ideas for making the most of this essential ingredient in decorating, whether for colour, pattern or texture

Fabrics are where many of us begin when furnishing and decorating a room. This is hardly surprising as they are the decorator's workhorse, bringing colour, pattern and texture into play. Fabrics are incredibly versatile too: we sew them, mend them, remake them, line or stiffen them to extend their use.

Moving house is one moment when change of use reveals how adaptable fabrics can be. Curtains from the old house seldom fit windows in the new. Unpicking and remaking them to fit the new situation is within the competence of many home sewers, and for the non-sewer, competent makers in every part of the country take on projects like this. Fabric from curtains in good repair can be remade as pull-down or Roman blinds, cushions, even slipcovers for a bedroom chair or headboard.

Getting to know how different fabrics perform is a reliable way to choose prints or weaves with staying power when buying new. Spending time in decorating shops discovering personal preferences will pay dividends. If looking for curtain fabric, establish whether the preference is for patterns printed on linen or cotton or a cotton mix. When plain curtains are in the frame, assess the drape factor. Look through collections of upholstery qualities to establish a personal take on texture, assess how an appealing weave might feel as seating and be sure to discover its wear rating before buying.

We not only see the fabric in our homes but we also touch it, therefore, meeting the tactile quality of silk on cushions, velvet on a chair, the cool handle of linen when curtains are drawn or a napkin is unfolded are moments to savour.

OPPOSITE PAGE A large-scale print set against a plain can define the mood of a room. Interior design, Turner Pocock
Darya Ikat Jewel, £176.40 a metre, Schumacher

EXPERT COMMENT

Advice on getting the best from fabric for seating

UPHOLSTERY CHOICES

JAMES COOK, *designer and owner of traditional upholstery specialist The Odd Chair Company*

"Sofas and chairs depend on the quality of their upholstery to retain their comfort and good looks. Signs of wear will be visible first on the fabric covering, so it's important to choose a quality that matches your lifestyle. One insider secret worth knowing about is the Martindale abrasion rating for fabrics, known colloquially as the 'rub test'. This test does just that; it subjects a piece of fabric to repeated rubs until it shows specific signs of wear and the number of rubs it has survived gives it its rating. Few high street seating suppliers quote the rating on their upholstery fabrics but it's well worth asking. If you can supply your own fabric, look at weaves with a rating of 40,000 rubs or more.

Quality cotton weaves or a cotton/linen mix are good choices for family sofas and chairs. They upholster beautifully and the fire-retardant finish, now essential on much upholstered seating, doesn't disrupt the handle on these. They clean well too, on fixed upholstery and removable covers.

Wool fabric is lovely to work with and the best new ranges don't bobble as some did in the past. Velvet is popular now, but a sofa will often have a seam on the back, as velvet can't run along the sofa back in a single piece with seat cushions in another direction because of shading in the pile."

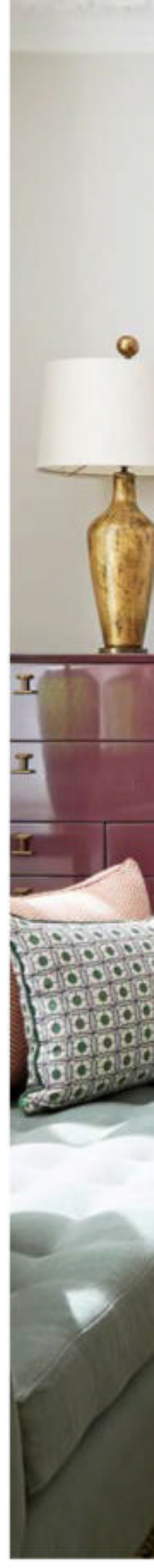
Pure silk curtains, cushions and a throw add sheen to the range of textures in a sitting room. *Kashmiri silk, £47 a metre, James Hare*

THE SILK ROUTE

With its trademark lustre, silk has for centuries been chosen for rooms of high status. Behind its face value, it has much to offer says Saffron Hare of silk company, James Hare.

"Silk takes dye like no other fibre because the cross-section of the thread is more triangular than round and this intensifies the effect of every colour, from the palest shades to the brightest," Hare explains. "Silk fibre is not uniform and that means it can provide a variety of weaves, from gossamer-fine to the timeless appeal of damask. Silk can also be woven to give a matt finish for a more contemporary feel, and, when woven with Merino wool, delivers a mid-weight fabric with exquisite drape." James Hare can also paper-back silk fabric for walls; its natural texture offers an appealing alternative to wallpaper.

Silk has a reputation for fading, so for curtains at a sunny window, consider binding the leading edges in a more robust fabric, with braid sewn over the seam for decorative effect. Though it might be tempting to consider heavier silks for upholstery, these have low resistance to abrasion, so only use them on chairs that trade on their purely decorative appeal.



EXPERT COMMENT

How to make the most of fabric used for window treatments

CURTAIN STYLE

REBECCA DAY, *co-founder of curtain-making company Merrick & Day and co-author of The Encyclopaedia of Curtains*

"Beautiful curtains depend on the way they're made up as much as the allure of the fabric itself. Unless you plan to make your own curtains, factor the making up cost into your budget. Whether your fabric is expensive or modestly priced, it is the quality of the lining and inter-lining (if used) that will enhance the status of the curtains and their life expectancy. A hand-sewn pinched or pleated heading is important too, as these allow curtains to hang in structured folds, something a gathered heading tape isn't able to achieve.

Adding detail to curtains will establish their impact, too. A plain border on leading edges and hems can frame a significant curtain pattern or pull a busy colour scheme together. On plain fabric, a 10cm-wide contrast border on leading edges is always stylish and one way to make curtains in an inexpensive fabric look seriously impressive.

Many of us are now sourcing fabrics online and choosing from small samples is a challenge. Try to see a full-width image of any fabric you are considering to understand the scale of the pattern and, with a large design, how it relates to the length of your curtains."

MAKING A STATEMENT

Sourcing fabric to define a room often results in a design perfect in every way except it will throw the budget out of the window. Rather than dismiss such a fabric from a project, interior designer Bunny Turner of Turner Pocock has a raft of ways to introduce costly fabrics without disturbing the economic outlook. “Cushions are the most obvious way to make a statement without consuming metres of fabric,” she says. “But, often these blow-the-budget designs are large scale and will work well as a Roman blind or on an ottoman, as they show off a bold design without extravagant use of fabric, and are better, in fact, than curtains, where you lose part of the pattern in the folds.”

Headboards are another way Turner uses a modest quantity of fabric to full effect. “In a bedroom I designed recently,” she says, “I hung a full width of the client’s much-loved fabric from a rail attached to the wall behind the bed, rather as a tapestry is sometimes hung. That’s another economical route to showing a limited quantity of fabric to maximum effect.”

An antique ikat makes a defining colour, echoed by the leather upholstery on the fender. Interior design, Turner Pocock.

LESS IS MORE

Devising a neutral room scheme without significant pattern or colour can be a safe or a brave approach to decorating. Calm certainly, but without variety somewhere in the mix, the result can be bland.

To make the brief for this sitting room work, interior designer Emily Todhunter of Todhunter Earle considered the room’s size and feel, its architecture, its acoustics, even its view. “Sometimes it’s brave to be very simple and elegant,” she says. “It allows the room to do the talking and it will do it in whispers. This is partly down to the playing off of shapes, curves against angles, and smooth surfaces against textures. The fabric elements conspire in this, so soft folds in the curtain drape create their own shadows. Silk cushions against embossed velvet combine softness and texture to be enjoyed in close encounters.”

Inspiring rooms designed in this way will introduce discreet colour in furniture, objects, or pictures to point up and interact with understated refinement.

ABOVE Detail informs the calm attitude of this sitting room with its mix of tactile textures on curtains and cushions. Interior design, Todhunter Earle.

Ana Engelhorn

INTERIOR DESIGN

I'M MORE COMFORTABLE WITH AUTHENTICITY THAN PERFECTION

I may be an interior designer, but I feel at home in spaces that are real, rather than overtly designed.
I mix old and new pieces to create beautiful, livable interiors that are perfectly imperfect.

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ABOVE This elegantly restrained scheme is further enhanced by co-ordinating patterned fabrics. *Curtains, Bourbon Flower, £369 a metre; bed curtains, Fleur de Lis Sprig, £148 a metre; bedcovers, Fleur de Lis Stripe £393 a metre, Chelsea Textiles*

IN STITCHES

Embroidered textiles provided pattern in the home before printed fabrics became available. Whilst still used for curtains, cushions, bedcovers and bed hangings, they are only used for covering chairs that are to be admired and rarely sat upon.

Linen, cotton or silk can all be embroidered by computer-aided machinery, with advanced programmes allowing textile designers to dictate the angle and length of stitches to get a range of effects, but are also still worked by hand.

Crewelwork in chainstitch using wool yarn on linen often takes themes from English and Indian tree of life crewels of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and is usually stitched in Kashmir by men for brands such as Marvic Textiles.

Men also hand-embroider in cotton thread on fine linen for Chelsea Textiles, whose sprig and vine designs are taken from eighteenth-century English and French embroidery. Sold by the metre, these pieces can be embroidered to size, with the linen joined to the required width and length and embroidered afterwards only on the visible area. This service can also be ordered for a shaped pelmet or headboard if a template is supplied.

ANTIQUE INPUT

"Antique fabrics carry a narrative," says Susan Deliss, textile designer, dealer and interior decorator, "and are forgiving, as the eye accepts minor faults or evidence of wear as part of their life story. They bring humanity to a room and that resonates with people."

Demand for antique fabrics has generated plenty of fakes, and true antique pieces are becoming increasingly rare, as Deliss explains. "Finding genuine antique textiles in a usable quantity is why I began to design my own fabrics. On my travels I still collect the whole gamut from antique linen and hemp, to old Indonesian resist-dyed cloth and African wax cloth. High craftsmanship is essential, even if the fabric is aged."

Although longer lengths can be made into curtains, and larger decorative weaves stitched onto a backing and hung on walls, Deliss explains that many pieces are only large enough for a cushion cover, part of the upholstery on a chair, or lampshades. "I recently used a gossamer-fine Turkoman silk for a lampshade and lined it with stripes of ikat from the lining of a Bukhara merchant's coat."

RIGHT Antique fabrics used in this bedroom include an Anatolian handwoven striped linen on the headboard, an antique English hand-stitched indigo-dyed quilt, and indigo-dyed, handwoven strip cloth from Burkina Faso draped over the side table. Antiques and design, Susan Deliss.

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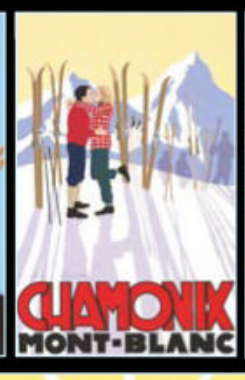

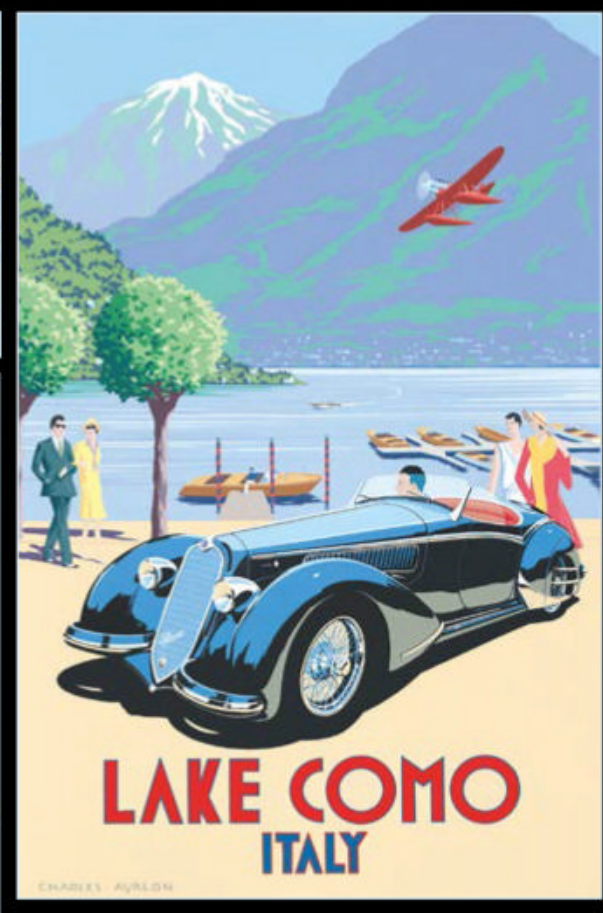

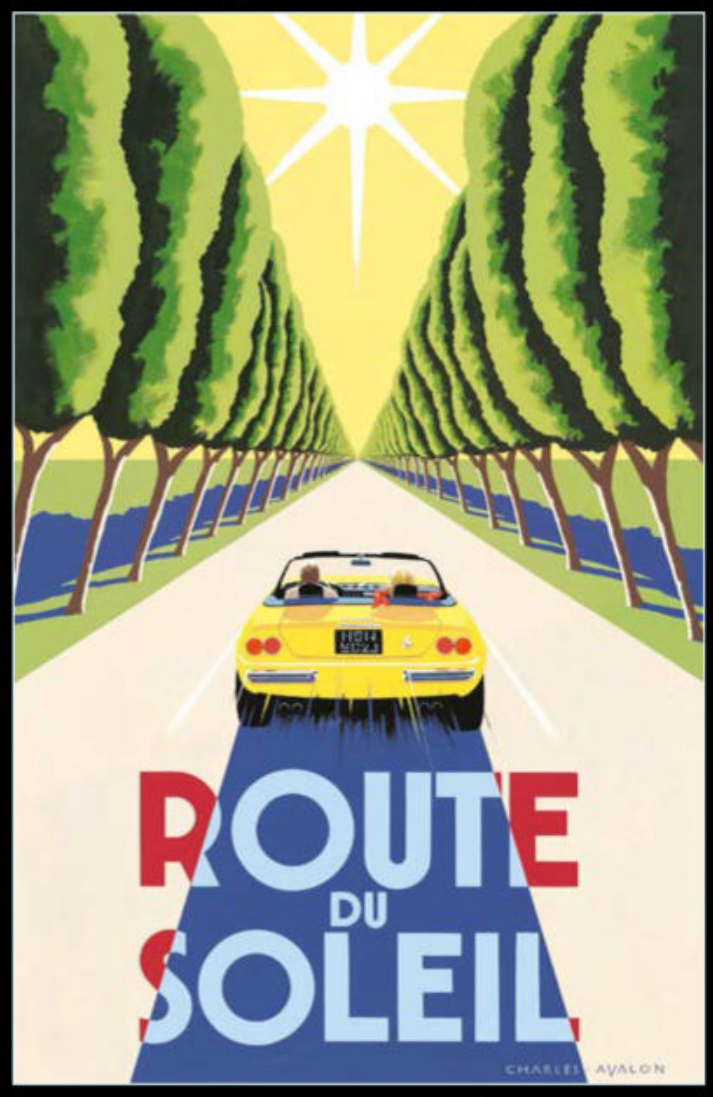

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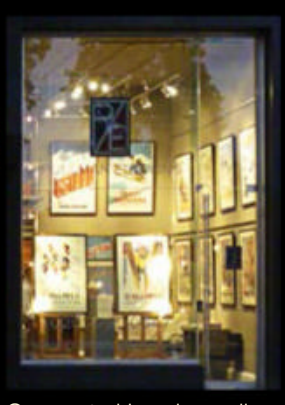

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LAYERED LOOK

Combining many patterned fabrics in a room without visual overkill is a rare talent, and Penny Morrison is an interior designer who owns it. There is much to learn from her approach. For instance, she will hang plain or semi-plain curtains making it easier to retain them when other elements in the room change. There has to be calmness too, she says, so she will never mass rival floral patterns together. Instead she layers designs, often starting with a small print in a faded colour on a sofa or chair then adding brighter colours and patterns in cushions covered in stripes, dots, checks and a variety of textures. "Some colour pairings drown each other," she declares, "whilst blues, greens and pinks lift each other."

A treasure chest of accessories is essential to the relaxed comfort of her rooms, where more pattern arrives with the layering of antique and vintage fabrics: a paisley shawl over a sofa, a Welsh blanket ever-ready on a side chair, an antique suzani flung over an ottoman. Lampshades from Morrison's own collection in vintage sari silks contribute further sparks of colour and pattern. "I would never light a room with lamps under a sea of cream shades," she adds.

ABOVE Confident patterns meet face to face in a drawing room, with layered cushions supporting the rich visual mix. Design and fabrics, Penny Morrison.

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Walling a room in linen is always warmly insulating. *Lilac Original on Oyster, £275 a metre, Bennison Fabrics*

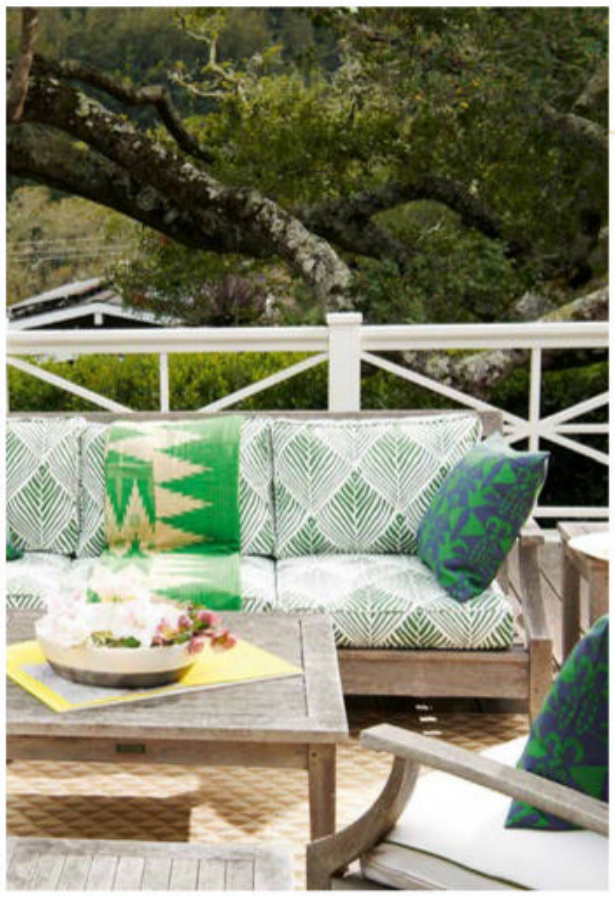
UP THE WALL

Walling a room in fabric as an alternative to paint or wallpaper takes plenty of fabric and considerable expertise, but the effect is richly rewarding. Closely woven cotton and linen prints are traditional choices.

Gillian Newberry, owner and director of Bennison Fabrics, has always been a fan and her hand-printed linens are perfect candidates for walling. "Fabric on walls provides a special type of insulation," she says. "It feels warm in winter and cool in summer, and when I use our florals, it brings the garden into a room." The size of the room will influence choice of design type and scale.

Newberry finds all-over florals and geometrics work well in smaller rooms and designs with a lot of background space or with symmetrical motifs look good in larger spaces. "The fixing method we normally use – aided by a very skilled upholsterer – is to frame the walls with thin wooden battens, then stretch and fix a layer of soft cotton lining, known as bump, to the battens. The fabric widths are joined then stapled over the bump onto the battens. We like to finish edges with double piping in the same fabric as the walling, but a good braid can also be used."

FEATURE CELIA RUFEY **PHOTOGRAPHS** P99 (TODHUNTER EARLE) © RAY MAIN. P101 (CHELSEA TEXTILES) © SIMON BROWN; (SUSAN DELISS) © ANDREW D STEEL. P105 (BENNISON) © KEN SPARKES; (SERENA DUGAN) © LAURIE FRANKEL



GREAT OUTDOORS

Fabrics for outdoor seating were first designed for use on boats. They still spend time on yachts and beside pools, but most of all, cushioning garden seating, in patterns and qualities now including chenille. Although these fabrics are water-repellent, cushions should never be left out in all weathers, as water will puddle on the surface and seep through the seams to wet the cushion inner.

The other advantages outdoor fabrics offer over those used indoors are resistance to fading and mildew. Most are acrylic or polyester weaves. Those with the highest resistance to fading are woven in solution-dyed yarn in which colour is introduced early in the process before the yarn is spun. This allows patterns to be woven rather than printed. Increased light-fastness in printed outdoor fabrics includes printing on solution-dyed cloth followed by machine-baking to stabilise the colours.

Although outdoor fabrics seem to recommend themselves for use in a sunny conservatory, this is prohibited for upholstery unless the fabric is also given a fire-retardant finish.

LEFT Create an elegant outdoor space with water- and fade-resistant fabrics. *Sofa, Bahia; cushions, Capretto, both Outdoor Performance Fabric collection, £215 a metre, Serena Dugan at The Fabric Collective.*

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Smart ways TO DRESS WINDOWS

Every window has the potential to be beautiful, it is simply a matter of dressing it in a way that makes the most of its natural assets

Windows are the focus of attention in any room, letting the daylight in and framing the view. Now that double glazing and efficient draughtproofing are more widespread, the insulating properties of curtains, blinds and shutters are not as important as they once were, but the desire to cover windows after dark, protect privacy and create a feeling of cosiness in winter and airiness in summer is still strong. How to go about it is the question. We highlight the main considerations with ideas for windows of all kinds, large and small, decorative and practical and show how a well-dressed window can be the keystone of any interior scheme.

PRACTICAL CHOICES

The most hard-working rooms in any home –kitchens and bathrooms – require window treatments that will resist the potential heat and humidity of their environment and bring pattern to places where plain colors often predominate. In well-ventilated situations, fabric blinds will perform perfectly well.

In open-plan kitchens, curtains provide a soft contrast to the hard surfaces and improve the acoustics in rooms that are used as much for entertaining as for cooking. Bi-fold doors are a feature of many kitchen extensions and purpose-made ultra-slim blinds that attach to each panel allow the window to open without raising the shade.

There is no doubt that fabric blinds and curtains make bathrooms feel luxurious, but where the possibility that a steamy atmosphere or water splashes could cause damage, shutters are a good looking and practical answer. They can be fine-tuned to give the right balance of light and privacy, and wiped clean to stay in pristine condition.

LEFT Rooms with a practical purpose can feel luxurious. Try using a striking design within a simple scheme to add personality.
Wallpaper, £95 a roll; fabric, £55 a metre, both in Knotted Sash design, Charcoal, Warner House

EXPERT COMMENT

Advice on specialist areas, terminology and technology

REMOTE CONTROL

SAM SHERVILL, *marketing manager, Silent Gliss*

Comfort, convenience and security are the main reasons our customers choose automated and motorised window treatments. Essentially, these are blinds and curtains, each fitted with a small electrically powered motor that can be operated by means of a wall switch, remote-control handset, app or computerised system. As well as making it easy to draw heavy curtains or those at hard to reach windows, some systems can be programmed to open and close at a particular time, to shade rooms when the sun gets too hot or to synchronise with lights or central heating for instant scene setting whether you are at home or not. A manual override can be used in the event of a power-cut and if you have guests unfamiliar with motorised window treatments, a clever 'touch and go' system will take over to move the curtains if they try to pull them by hand.

EXPLAINING THE HARDWARE

NICKY MUDIE, *interior designer and director, Violet & George*

Using a lath and fascia system is a traditional way of hanging curtains that we often use when we want full black-out as it blocks light escaping above the curtains. It is also useful to use when there is not much height above the window architrave. The system consists of a wooden board that projects from the wall above the window with a narrow fascia attached to the front edge, and this can be painted or covered with fabric. The track is fixed to the underside of the board and hidden by the fascia. When curtain poles are specified, we mainly go for metal, with a preference for skinny wrought-iron poles with simple ball or cap finials and a black, brass or bronze metal finish. In my view, curtain heading styles should be as simple as possible. The two that I usually opt for are inverted pleats for voile curtains and a double pleat for standard fabrics.

CHOOSING SHUTTERS

CHRISSIE HARPER, *customer experience manager, California Shutters*

Shutters come in a variety of formats and there is one to suit virtually any window. Full-height shutters are an equally popular choice for windows and patio doors. Choose slats that open all at once or a split mechanism that operates the upper and lower slats separately.

Tier-on-tier shutters cover the window with panels arranged in two banks, the top and bottom halves opening independently. This gives excellent light control, allowing you to fold back one set of panels fully or in sections to let light flood in whilst keeping others closed for privacy. Tier-on-tier shutters are a stylish choice for bay windows and practical for windows facing the street.

Cafe-style shutters cover the lower part of the window only, letting natural light into the room whilst maintaining privacy. They add character to a window and combine well with curtains for a softer look.

The ultimate in traditional style, solid, raised shutters have no slats and when closed exclude all light. They also provide a barrier against noise and promote a feeling of cosiness.

RIGHT A matching design for walls and windows creates intimacy and a sense of style.
Toile Baptiste fabric, £89.90 a metre; wallpaper £74.35 a metre, both in Ciel, Lewis & Wood
FAR RIGHT *Fleurie fabric, £89.90 a metre; wallpaper, £74.35 a metre, both in Anemone; sofa in Nantessa, Rhone £92.95 a metre, Lewis & Wood*

SURROUNDED BY PATTERN

Using matching wallpaper and fabric resonates with the eighteenth-century fashion for toile de Jouy, a printed textile which was used in bedrooms to cover the walls, furniture and bed hangings. The effect was elegant and enveloping, giving the room a cocoon-like atmosphere. Replicating the style is made easier by the availability of matching wallpaper and fabrics, but still requires a careful hand and, as so often in decorating, an acute appreciation of balance. Plain colours are a traditional foil to the pattern, as are stripes if a third element is needed in the scheme. Ensuring the relationship between fabric and wallpaper designs is sufficiently close presents a challenge to manufacturers. “Our wallpaper ground is a standard colour but our fabrics vary in tint and tone so we have to painstakingly match the two,” says Magdalen Jebb, creative director of Lewis & Wood.

A WIDER VIEW

Square or curved, bay windows are a feature of many homes and, despite their reputation for being difficult to dress, they can essentially be treated in the same way as other windows. Fabric blinds of any kind, hung at the individual windows, have a contemporary look and can be operated separately to adjust the level of light, whilst hinged, multi-panel shutters, hung cafe-style or to cover the whole window, help control privacy and light. Both can be used on their own or together with curtains for a more furnished effect.

Curtaining bay windows requires a large volume of fabric and curtain tracks or poles must have strong, secure wall fixings to support it. Tracks and poles may be made to measure or bent on site to fit the window exactly, with rings and gliders that by-pass the brackets. One way to spread the weight of fabric is to divide the curtains and stack them at the angles of the bay as well as the sides. The weight can be reduced further by hanging non-working dress curtains in windows with blinds.

LEFT Roman blinds made from a sheer striped fabric from her own collection allow light to flood into this dining area by Louise Bradley.

BELOW Voile curtains in a neutral tint diffuse and soften the light.
Eton Stone voile curtains from £283, Thomas Sanderson

LETTING IN THE LIGHT

For rooms that enjoy good natural light but have windows that are overlooked or with a poor view, translucent curtains and blinds provide a solution that is beautiful in its own right. Suitable fabrics exist to enhance any style of decor, from traditional lace to contemporary textured or transparent sheers, but a current and versatile favourite amongst designers is fine linen. Plain or with a printed or woven design, it looks fresh and breezy. Off-white and cream tones always work well, but coloured fabrics will change the quality of light in the room.

To minimise seaming which will show through and spoil the translucent effect of any window treatment, choose wide-width fabrics, and in the case of Roman blinds, attach hand-sewn rings instead of tapes to guide the cords. Hang curtains from discreet poles or tracks using slim rings or simple pleated headings that will not detract from the delicacy of the fabric. ▸

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ON THE EDGE

Bound or trimmed edges are a detail that enhances ordinary fabric window treatments and gives plain curtains and blinds a discreet touch of luxury. Applied to the leading edges of curtains, they look pretty when the curtains are drawn back. Trimming a blind or pelmet in the same way gives the window an integrated look.

If the main curtain fabric is patterned, choose a bobble, fringed, tasselled or beaded trim that picks out one of the colours, and where it is plain, go for a contrasting hue or tone. Bright coloured edgings against neutral or dark fabrics can look stunning.

Bound edges add decorative value, too, but they also have a practical purpose. An edging of contrasting fabric applied to the sides of a curtain or blind might eliminate the need to buy an additional drop of the main fabric to achieve the required width.

Curtains made from delicate fabrics can sometimes deteriorate along their leading edges due to sun damage, but a border of sturdier material will help them to last longer.

TOP IT ALL

Straight or shaped, plain or patterned, pelmets give windows a traditional finish. Interior designer Penny Morrison believes that they should be interlined, but not thickly, for a soft three-dimensional effect. "Trimmings on pelmets are very important for giving definition and showing off an attractively shaped edge," she says. "These can include a full, ruched trim or binding. Plain pelmets edged with a border taken from the curtain fabric work very well."

For a more streamlined look, Morrison suggests a gathered or box-pleated self-pelmet. "To let as much light as possible into a room, attaching a self-pelmet to curtains will give the effect of a pelmet when the curtains are closed and allow plenty of light to come in during the day when they are open."

When deciding the length of a pelmet, aim to keep it in proportion with the window. About one fifth of the total height is a reliable guide.

ABOVE In this elegant scheme by interior designer Sara Cosgrove, curtains edged with embroidered tape provide a discreet flourish. *Soutache embroidered tape, £223 a metre, Scalamandre*

LEFT Corner pleats lend a tailored look to the pelmet at this window design for a historic home by VSP Interiors.

ENJOY THE VIEW

There are few rooms where a window seat would not be a valuable asset. Even in a hallway, it would be a useful place to sit whilst taking off outdoor shoes. They are particularly well suited to bay and recessed windows where a built-in banquette or storage seat can turn a potentially under-used space into a relaxed dining area or a cosy nook in which to read or dream, but the lack of a recess need not be an obstacle. A bench seat that doubles as a radiator cover or storage chest can be built under virtually any window.

How best to shade the window depends on its position. Blinds of any kind are always a good choice, but recessed windows look pretty and all the more inviting if they are hung with curtains. A pole fitted across the front of the recess allows the curtains to be stacked back against the wall when open or drawn across to create a quiet secluded space behind.

THE LAYERED LOOK

Fitting multiple coverings at the same window to protect furnishings from strong sunlight and provide privacy has a long history, but whilst hanging a double layer of curtains is a favourite arrangement, it is not the only one.

Roller and Roman blinds work well with curtains. A black-out roller blind fitted behind a translucent panel ensures privacy when lights are turned on, and two blinds, one sheer the other in closely woven fabric, can be a neat solution at a smaller window.

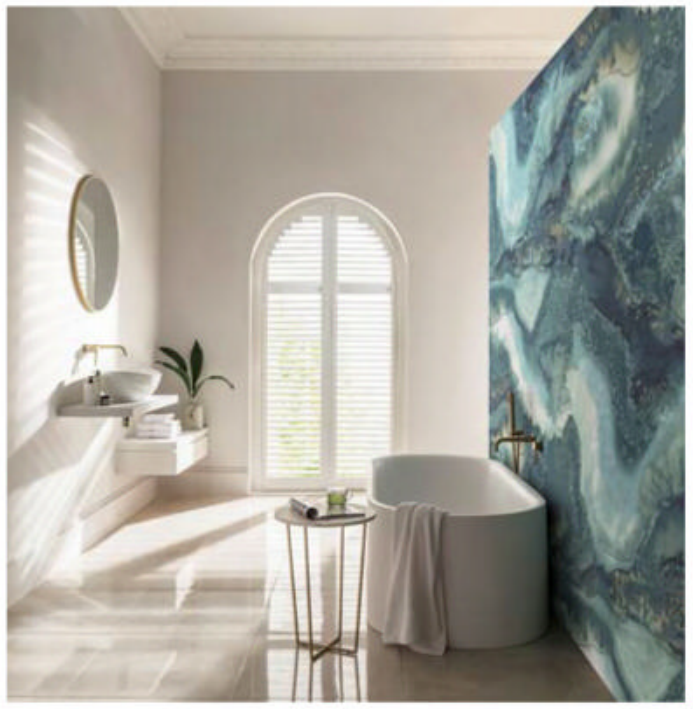
For curtains, a double track or double pole carried on one pair of brackets is the least invasive means of support, and most are intended to hold a combination of lightweight and standard curtains.

If a more elaborate layered design appeals, note how far it will encroach into the room. Nicky Mudie of Violet & George advises caution. "We try not to steal too much space," she says. "Before you know it, you've taken up 50cm, especially where there is a radiator under the window."

ABOVE Whilst these windows have shutters, curtains on simple poles add a layer of cosiness. *Curtains, Original Foxglove, £125 a metre; Pom pom trimming, £15 a metre, both Susie Watson Designs*

LEFT Adding a Roman blind behind curtains promotes a cosseting, enveloping feel in this bedroom. *Curtains in Feather Grey and Gris fabric, £40 a metre, Loom & Last. Roman blind in Loom & Last customer's own fabric – for similar, try Panama Stripe in Putty/Cream, £37.50 a metre, Ian Mankin*

FEATURE MAGGIE STEVENSON **PHOTOGRAPHS** P113 (SARAH COSGROVE) © HELEN CATHCART. P115 (COLEFAX AND FOWLER) © JAN BALDWIN



SLEEK SHUTTERS

A stylish alternative to fabric window treatments, shutters are a neat way to control light and privacy, and like any other aspect of decor they are subject to changing tastes. "Currently, people are drawn towards a clean and simple look, choosing full-height panels, wider slats and a bi-fold format so the shutters fold back leaving the glass completely clear," says India Hutchinson of Plantation Shutters.

Discreet controls contribute to the streamlined effect. Where classic shutters have a central tilt rod to adjust the slats, newer shutters offer the option of an invisible, internal mechanism linking all the slats, so when one is adjusted manually, the others move simultaneously.

Traditional solid shutters need no further enhancement in a pared-back contemporary sitting room. *Sofa in Quinton £155 a metre; chairs in Kimber, £87 a metre, both Colefax and Fowler*

ABOVE Wood-textured vinyl shutters are ideal for a steamy atmosphere. *Made-to-measure Waterberry shutters, from £649 a square metre, Thomas Sanderson*

MAKING CONNECTIONS

In rooms where there are windows of different shapes and sizes, it can be a challenge to forge them into one coherent scheme. Perhaps the easiest way is to make the link through fabric. Choose a distinctive pattern and use it throughout in a way that suits each window. By keeping the treatments simple, the fabric will become the focus of the scheme.

Where window sizes vary too greatly for one pattern to suit all, related designs from the same fabric collection can unite them. A small-scale pattern or a stripe at smaller windows will sit very well with a large-scale pattern at a full-height window of French window.

Another strategy is to select one window as the main feature in the room and design a treatment that will make it a strong focus. Subsidiary windows can then be dressed in a much simpler way, echoing elements of its design to ensure a there is a visual link.

RIGHT Curtains at the French windows set the scene whilst a Roman blind in the same fabric at the window leaves space for a window seat. *Curtains and blind, Nikita Red, £90 a metre, Kate Forman Designs*

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Innovative ways with PASSEMENTERIE

From a simple run of piping to luxurious fringing, adding trims to soft furnishings elevates the ordinary to the extraordinary

The icing on the cake when it comes to interiors, passementerie adds a layer of decorative detail and a tailored, professional finish to soft furnishings. From braids, fringes and tassels, to pom-poms, beads and embroidered borders, there is an abundance of trimmings to choose from. Whether seeking to inject contrast, create unity between different pattern choices or enliven a plain fabric, adding a trim to window treatments, upholstery, cushions and lampshades imparts a sense of opulence and personalised character. Here we look at the many ways to give interiors a special finishing touch with passementerie.

Chic additions

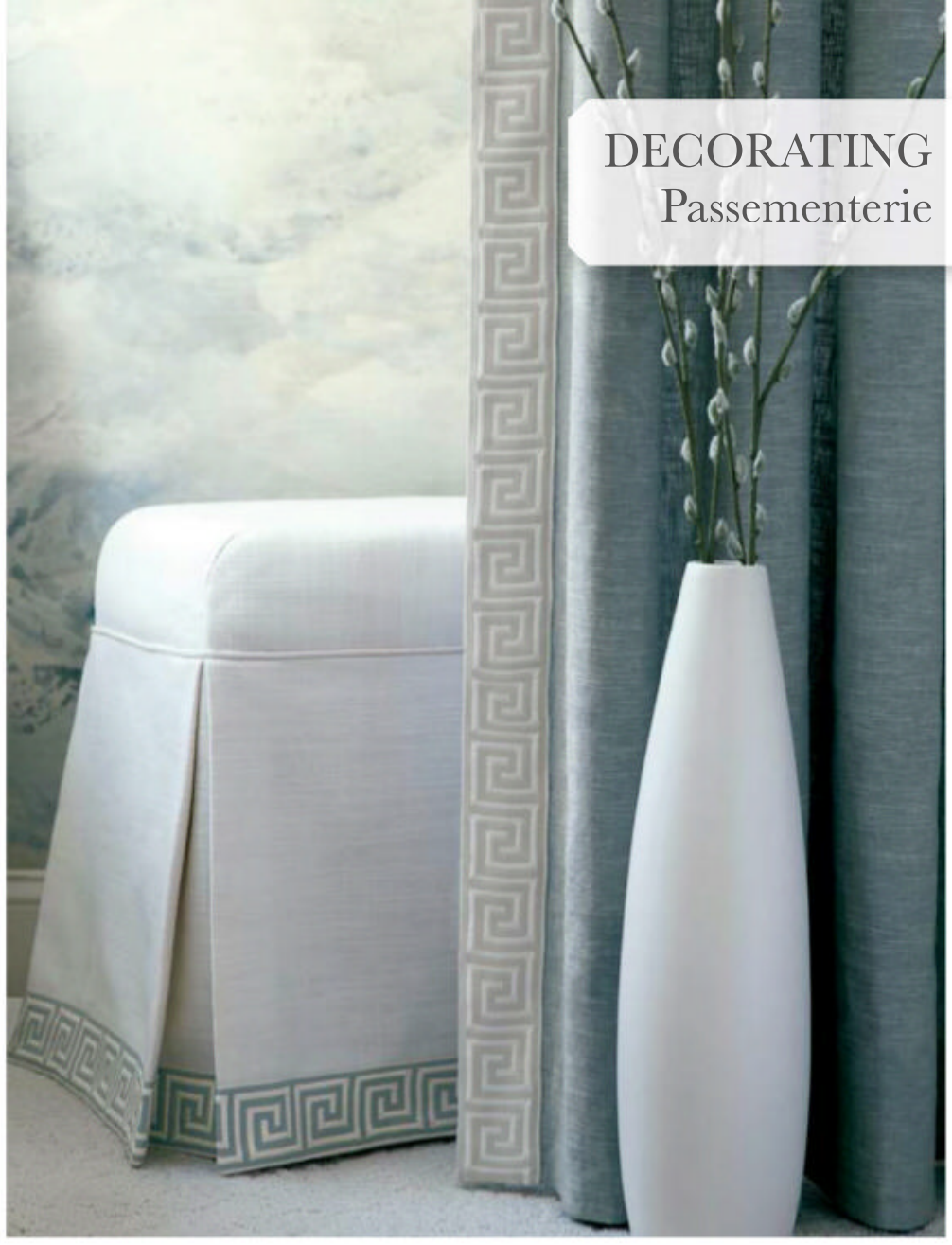
One of the easiest and most effective ways to use passementerie to add flair is on cushions. Tape, both narrow and wide, can be used to create the outline of a square, as a single decorative stripe down the centre or two inset from the edges. Classic piping adds a smart finish, and in a contrasting fabric it draws the eye and helps unite other upholstered elements in the room.

For a playful approach, consider attaching pom-pom and fringe trims as an alternative to piping. A long-length-fringe trim – either used singly or layered for an exciting textural addition – will add a hint of decadent 1920s-style glamour.

ABOVE RIGHT A bolster cushion is enhanced with fringe trimming in a co-ordinating hue.
Bolster in Olive/Ochre, £110 a metre, with Cut Ruche Fringe in Gold, £33.20 a metre, and all other fabrics, George Spencer Designs
RIGHT Embroidered wide tape and contrasting piping add decorative interest.
Trianon Floral tape, £52 a metre, Nina Campbell at Osborne & Little

LEFT Make a footstool look tailored by finishing with an embroidered tape to give it a neat, defined edge. *Emily embroidered tape, £88.80 a metre, Travers, at Zimmer + Rohde*

BELOW Add interest to a plain blind with a patterned trim. *Abstract Border, Serpentine, £44 a metre, and other fabrics, Villa Nova*



Border line

Use stylish wide tapes or braids to add a tailored finish to upholstery and curtains. A simple woven texture in a contrasting colour offers a neat edge on an armchair or footstool, whilst a more decorative choice, such as an embroidered design, will provide add a distinctive note of character.

As well as creating a chic finish, tapes can be used to create a bespoke design, such as a stripe or border on a box pelmet to co-ordinate it with a border on curtains or blinds, plain or patterned. Roman blinds can be personalised with trimmings along the base or to create a border either on or inset from the edges. Trimmings can also accentuate crisp angles or bring a softer edge to geometric lines.

ABOVE A border in the same design can be used to unite different elements in a room. *Greek Key Borders in Sea Crest and Porcelain Blue, £68 a metre, Samuel & Sons*

BELOW Simple but effective use of piping accentuates edges and curves. *Sofa in Umi, Mist, £65 a metre; piping in Kelby Linen, Moonstone, £79 a metre, both Ian Sanderson*

EXPERT COMMENT

The crafstmanship and skill required to create exquisite passementerie

SKILLS & EXPERTISE

MARISA GUTMACHER,
executive design director, Samuel & Sons

"Passementerie: the very sound of the word evokes grandeur. What we have also come to know as trimmings, is a term whose medieval etymology in European languages is from the words for 'hand-work'. Indeed, the most beautiful masterpieces in the world of trimmings, from antiquity through to now, are pieces that have incorporated a great amount of careful handcrafting, from the initial design through to the finished work.

Whilst tassels and tie-backs may be the most iconic and best-known passementerie, the use of various types of gimps, braids, borders, cords, fringes, rosettes, bullions, tufts and frogs represents a broader variety of ornamental applications, both at the window and for upholstery.

There are many facets involved in producing trimmings. Most borders, gimps and fringes are woven either on traditional mechanised looms or on handlooms. Tassel fringes are then embellished with hand-cut and -tied tassels. Fringes that incorporate yarn-covered beads are also covered and then strung by hand. Embroidered, beaded or appliqué border patterns can be created entirely by hand or in combination with machine embroidery, depending on the level of complexity and the overall aesthetic.

When it comes to more elaborate trimmings, there are many components to prepare ahead of weaving and assembly. This could range from a series of micro-yarn-covered cords (guipures) that, when woven together, create the scallop of a crete trimming, or the intricate yarn-covered wire flowers and vellums that, when assembled in a row, create the ornate over hangers that cascade over tassel tie-backs and bullion skirting.

To put this level of complex production into perspective, Samuel & Sons' handwoven Chevallerie Crete takes 250 weaving hours to create 100 metres, and that's only after the loom has been warped and various guipures produced. On a different scale, an ornate single tassel tie-back, such as our Palais Single Tassel Tieback with Jamines, the components of which are 95 per cent handmade, takes 20 hours to produce.

The weavers who produce passementerie are far and few between, scattered across the globe. Those involved in the production process undergo extensive training in hand-work, weaving and construction details. They must possess meticulous attention to detail and dexterity, whether they're weaving on a handloom or hand-embroidering a border pattern.The most sophisticated passementerie requires the finest craftsmanship, which is achieved through attention to every detail from the yarn quality, to construction, colour mixing and colour placement. Passementerie is one of the great art forms in the world of home furnishings."

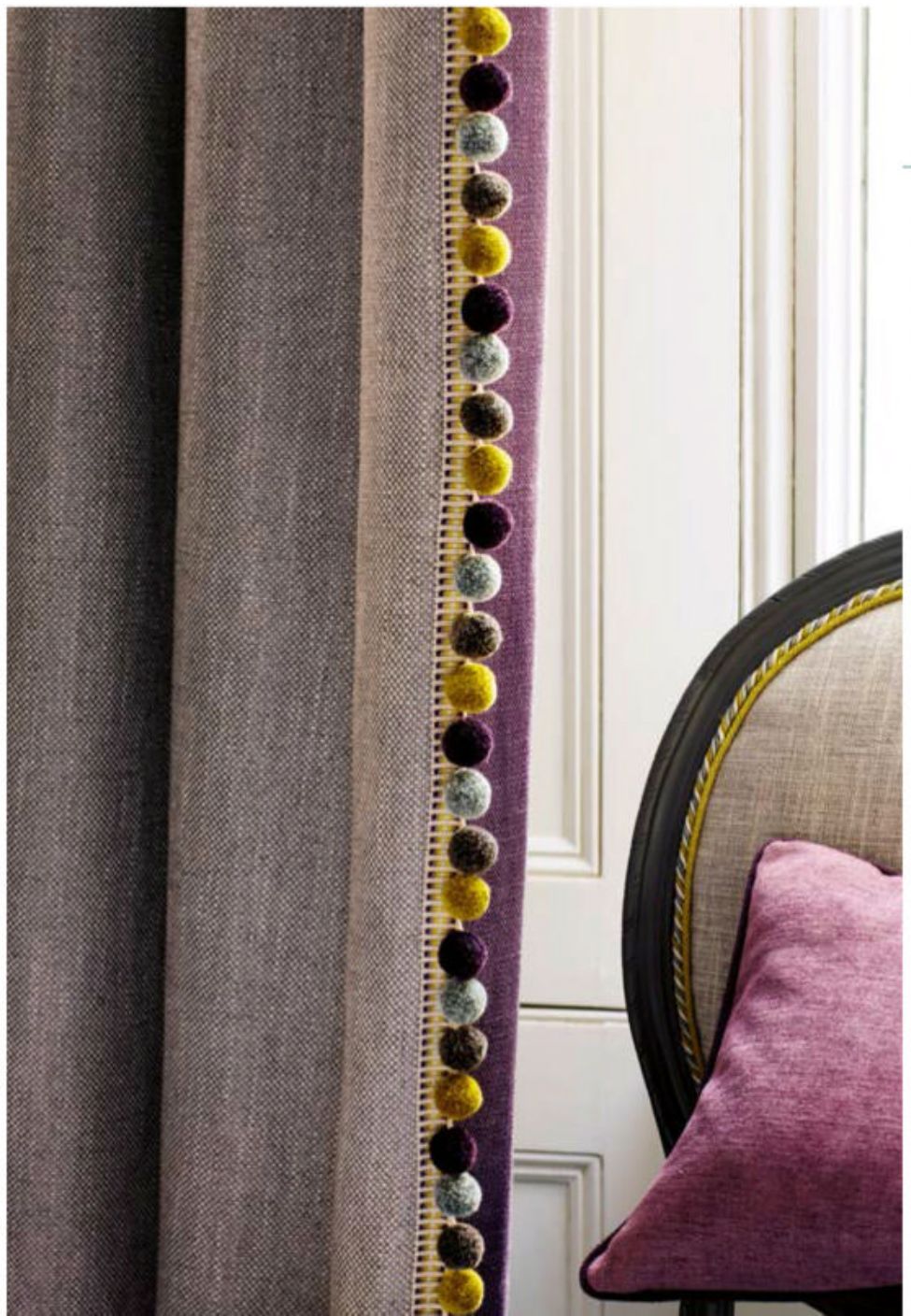
Touch of grandeur

Curtain tie-backs can take the form of a simple but decorative tape, such as a quilted or embroidered design or a chunky twisted rope, for a contemporary, chic look. For grander and greater impact, classic, opulent tie-backs with long tassels and fringing can be works of art in their own right. Often teamed with handcrafted wood moulds covered in silk thread or ribbon, adorned with braided cords and other intricate details and long, opulent tassels, or even feathers and crystals, tie-backs are a luxurious addition to a window dressing.

ABOVE These decadent tie-backs feature opulent lengths of fringe, complete with mini-tassel fringes to echo the trim used on the curtain edge. *Chevallerie double tassel tie-back in Argent, £550, Samuel & Sons*

ABOVE LEFT Twisted cord creates long strands of bullion fringe on this custom-made luxury tassel, showcasing carefully honed artisan skills.
Cleopatra tassel, £95 each, Wendy Cushing Passementerie

ABOVE RIGHT A glamorous tie-back with suede-covered moulds and a skirt of goose feathers adds panache to a window dressing in a sitting room or bedroom.
Contemporary double tassels tie-back, £220 each, Spina



Frame the view

Used on the leading edges of curtains, passementerie can create a polished, decorative finish as well as adding colour, pattern and texture to a scheme. Beaded fringes, wide braids or even tassels can be highly effective. Consider adding trims to leading edges not only for decorative but also for practical reasons, for instance to protect an area where delicate silk fabrics might be damaged by sunlight. The bottom of a curtain, too, can benefit from the panache brought by the addition of a special trim; a luxurious fringe sweeping the floor looks rather fabulous.

For a classic approach, swags or pelmets with fringing will elevate a plainer window dressing. A border could also be used horizontally to create a distinction between two fabrics – a handy device if curtains need to be extra-long. Another device is to add horizontal lines of a favourite trim to personalise a plain linen.

ABOVE Here the leading edge on the curtain is repeated on the cushions to create unity and add an extra dimension to luxurious plains. *Scala braid, Blue, £65 a metre, and all other fabrics, James Hare*

RIGHT Pom-pom trims cannot fail to bring a playful element to a room. These ones unite all the colours in the scheme too. *Curtain trim, Tivoli Fringe in Mulberry, £63.50 a metre, and all other fabrics and trims, Romo*

Playful ideas

ABOVE Scallop edging on the curtain and pom-poms on bedding add a final flourish to a child's bedroom. *Paints and ticking linen, all Annie Sloan*

RIGHT A cheerful llama design on a border adds a sweet touch in a nursery. *Llama linen border in Natural, £110 a metre, Samuel & Sons*

Passementerie is a wonderful way to add charm to children's rooms too, especially if a room is in plainer or more grown-up fabrics. Adding a whimsical trim in colourful pom-poms will bring a smile to children and adults alike. There are also decorative woven tapes with characterful designs, such as llamas, which will transform neutral decor into something more magical. Experiment with creating scalloped or ruffled edges, or by adding tassels to blankets, curtains and blinds for a small but powerful element of fun.

Creative flair

Passementerie need not be just for curtains, upholstery and cushions. Consider using it to add tactile detail and character to other furnishings – perhaps covering lamp bases in ribbons or edging shelves with a fringe. Lengths of chunky trims could be used in lieu of fabric to re-cover a footstool – simply wrap lengths of a cord or braid around it and layer it with fringing. A lampshade can be decorated with trims too. As well as the obvious choice a fringe around the base, tapes, braids and cords can be attached to add layers of interest and pattern.

LEFT A shelf is given a decorative flourish with an opulent, tasselled trim. *Halle Jasmine in Carmine Rose, £668 a metre, Watts of Westminster*

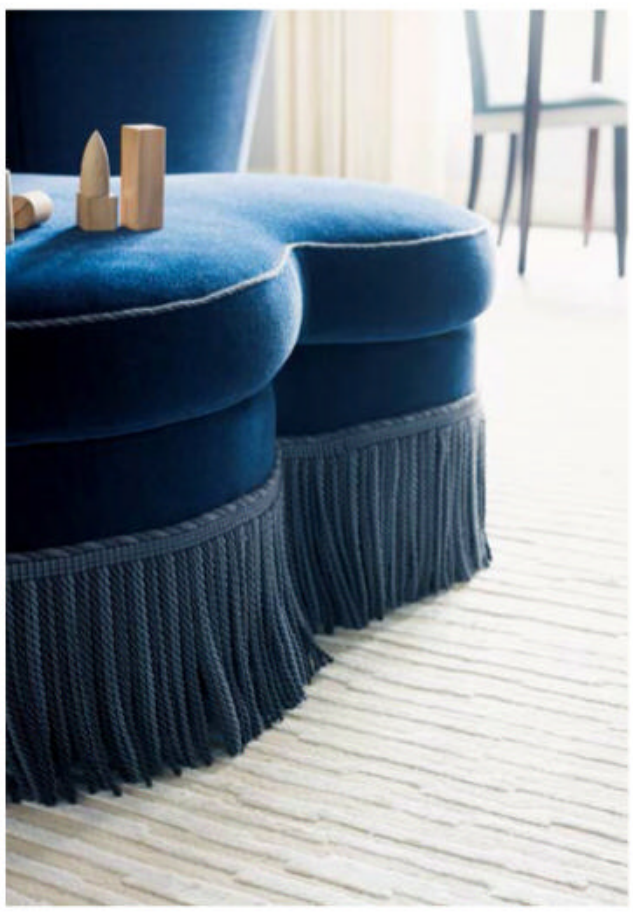
RIGHT Long fringing adds a luxurious, 1920s feel to this elegant chair. *Neox extra-long fringe, £38.40 a metre, Houlès*

Fringe benefits

There has been a resurgence in adding fringing to sofas, footstools, chairs and even lampshades in recent years. This look works well with velvet upholstery, adding another layer of opulence. A deep bullion fringe, which is made from cords, is the most popular choice, but looped or brush fringes also look smart. Lampshades with a brush fringe look particularly fine.

Materials such as leather can be cut into narrow strips to create a fringe-effect, and of course, beads, pom-poms and other tassels can create a fringe. The long bullion style, however, creates a beautiful balance between modern and traditional style for a dose of charm and opulence in more pared-back schemes.

ABOVE Long fringes inspired by art deco glamour add opulance to lampshades. *Broadway fringe, Sapphire, from £11.25 a metre, Jones Interiors*



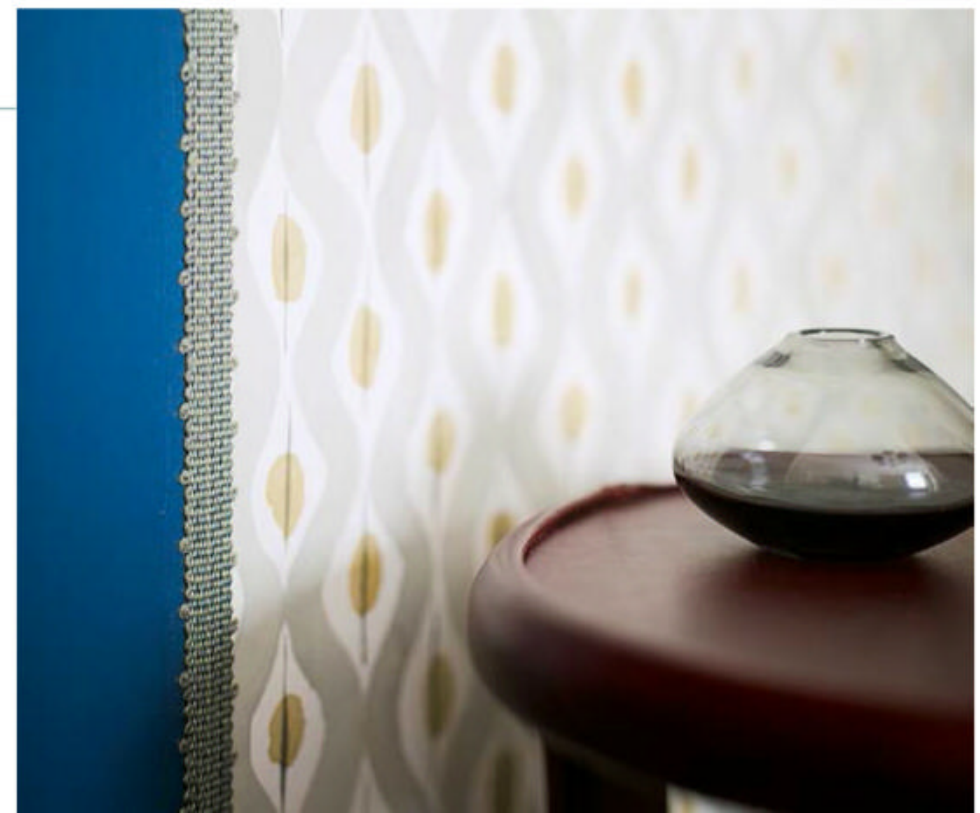
RIGHT This room by Barlow & Barlow puts a modern twist on classic style. The passementerie used – including the border on the curtains and tassel fringed chairs – brings a fresh feel.

LEFT A deep bullion fringe accentuates the curvaceous velvet footstool in this scheme by Gunter & Co.

RIGHT Add extra texture and character to a maximalist look with brush fringing on lampshades. *Wallpaper, lamp-shades and lamp bases, all Mind the Gap*

Finishing touch

Fabric walling is a luxurious way to decorate a room and is best when completed with a braid for a polished, tailored look. Designers such as Nina Campbell are known for adding this decorative detail to cover edges or seams, much like piping on a cushion. Ribbon or tape can also be used to create a border between different wall treatments, such as wallpaper and paint, or to add texture.



RIGHT Braid is used to add a tailored finish to walls in different finishes in this scheme by Gunter & Co.

FEATURE KATY MCLEAN **PHOTOGRAPHS** P119 (TRAVERS) KIP DAWKINS; P122 (HOULES) STUDIO DES PLANTES

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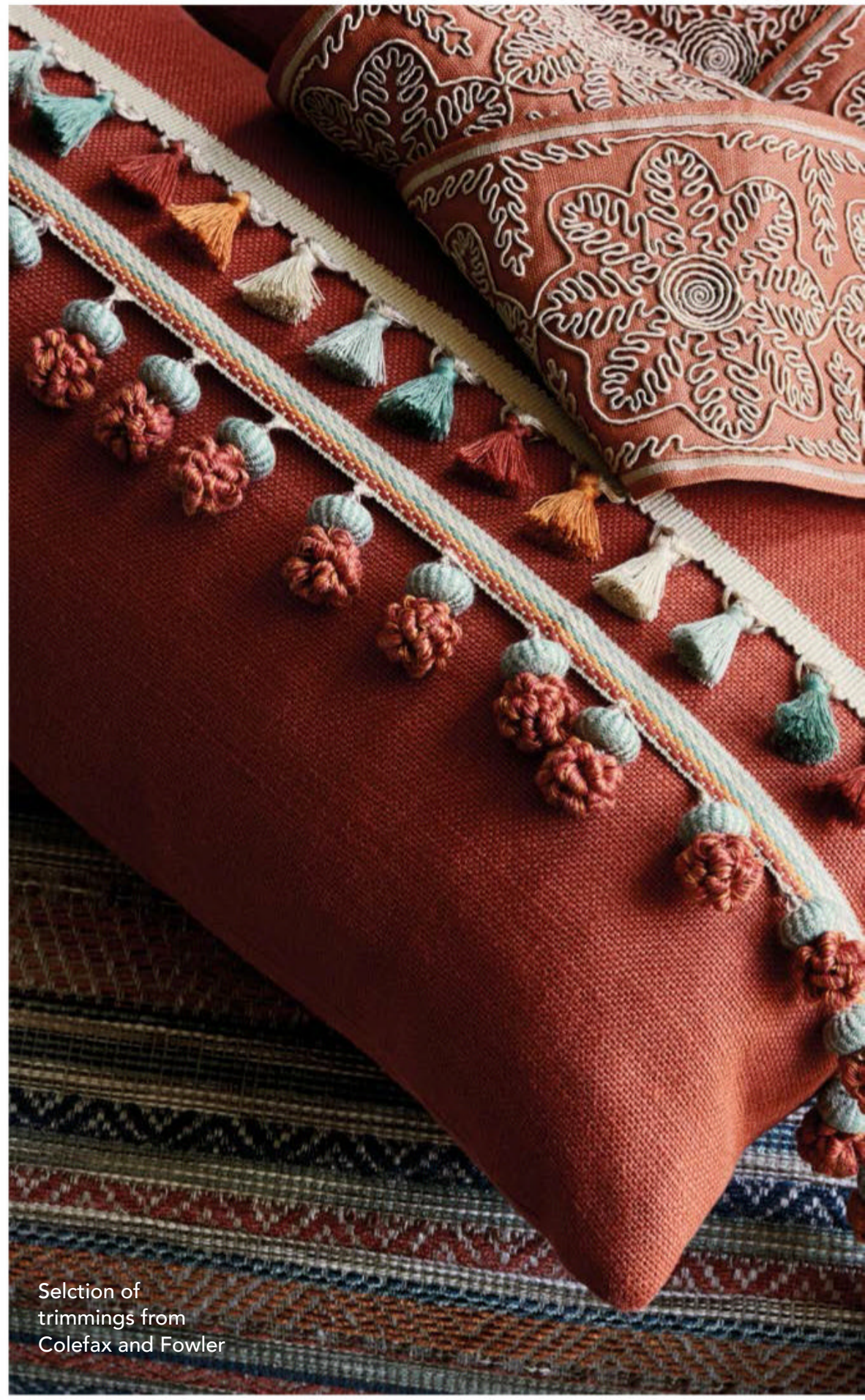

Selction of trimmings from Colefax and Fowler

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43 DOS AND DON'TS OF COUNTRY STYLE

Interior designers share their advice for creating a country home that is practical, welcoming and beautifully considered

JUSTIN VAN BREDA

Interior and bespoke furniture designer

1 DO remember the natural light. The light in the English countryside changes throughout the year and there is often a pronounced difference from winter to summer not just in the level but in the tone of the light indoors as the inside surfaces reflect the amount of greenery that surrounds the house. When picking wall colours or fabrics consider that changing light. What feels cosy in winter and cool in summer? Some colours can seem soft in summer but move to the acidic in winter, so avoid bleached white or primary yellow bases in soft furnishings. A hint of natural white, pale tobacco or pale creamy yellow will work well across the year. And, if you can be bothered, you can always rotate your soft furnishings in spring and autumn – it's always exciting to add or remove details with each changing season.

2 DO keep it crooked. Country homes are never straight – provincial architecture is deliciously hodgepodge and in most homes, even regimented Georgian properties, you couldn't drop a plumb line. Embrace that crooked imprecise nature and work with it, using rounded, softer shapes. Steer away from hard, clean lines and angles and embrace details like Victorian millwork joinery and gentle curves in furniture.

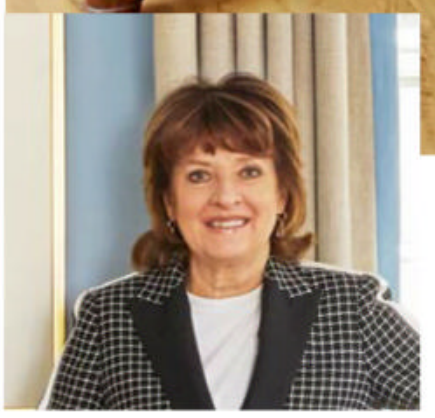
3 DON'T be too old-fashioned when it comes to kitchens and bathrooms. The idea of recreating the idylls of Regency country life is enticing but, in practice, nothing beats good plumbing. Kitchens and bathrooms are relatively modern inventions and their style should reflect that. Quarter-turn ceramic taps are a brilliant option and you can crank them on energetically. Ample quantities of immediate hot water is one of the most luxurious things in life. Modern well-appointed kitchens are better than those that stay true to the traditional features but mean you have to walk a thousand steps to make a cup of coffee.

ROSANNA BOSSOM
Interior designer

4 DO alter pieces of old furniture to make them work with today's requirements. Check they are not of value first, but many pieces can be given a new lease of life. We recently created a drinks cabinet from a Georgian bookcase, fitting in a wine fridge, lighting and an antique mirror to the backs of the shelves.

5 DON'T be too precious. Although practicality plays a big part in our design process, we also love using timber floors in kitchens and the occasional bathroom carpet. The first scratch or stain hurts, but over time the marks add character.

6 DON'T be afraid of colour. We love a bright boot room. Colour can help distract from all the mud, and makes a great statement. In a recent boot room project (*below*) we used Farrow & Ball's India Yellow to warm up what was a rather dark, small space.



JOANNA WOOD
International interior designer

7 DO keep it natural. Stick to natural textures everywhere in the house. Silk, wool, cotton and linen are all incredibly versatile (and work really well alongside each other) meaning you don't need to incorporate anything that doesn't feel 'at home' in the setting. Keeping materials natural also applies to furniture, whether that's existing pieces upcycled for a new space, or a well-loved antique.

8 DO make use of rugs. Install (or keep) hardwood flooring and layer rugs on top. Fitted carpet doesn't fit the narrative of a classic country house. By avoiding anything synthetic, you'll stay within the traditional style. Hardwood flooring is also much more practical for rural living; an animal on the loose is far worse on fitted carpet than it is on a rug.

9 DO consider the history. Architecture and architectural features are what make country houses so special and give them their charm. The country style exaggerates those features so that the house retains its own character and its history. It does mean that you have to be especially careful when you're planning your space. It's so important to get scale right.

10 DON'T be afraid to add art. Nothing makes a home more personal than art. Go for a real mix of mediums – drawings, oil paintings and prints, all displayed together alongside family photos. Mixing things together to suit you. Something slightly eclectic gives a room a real sense of character and an art wall is a great place to experiment.

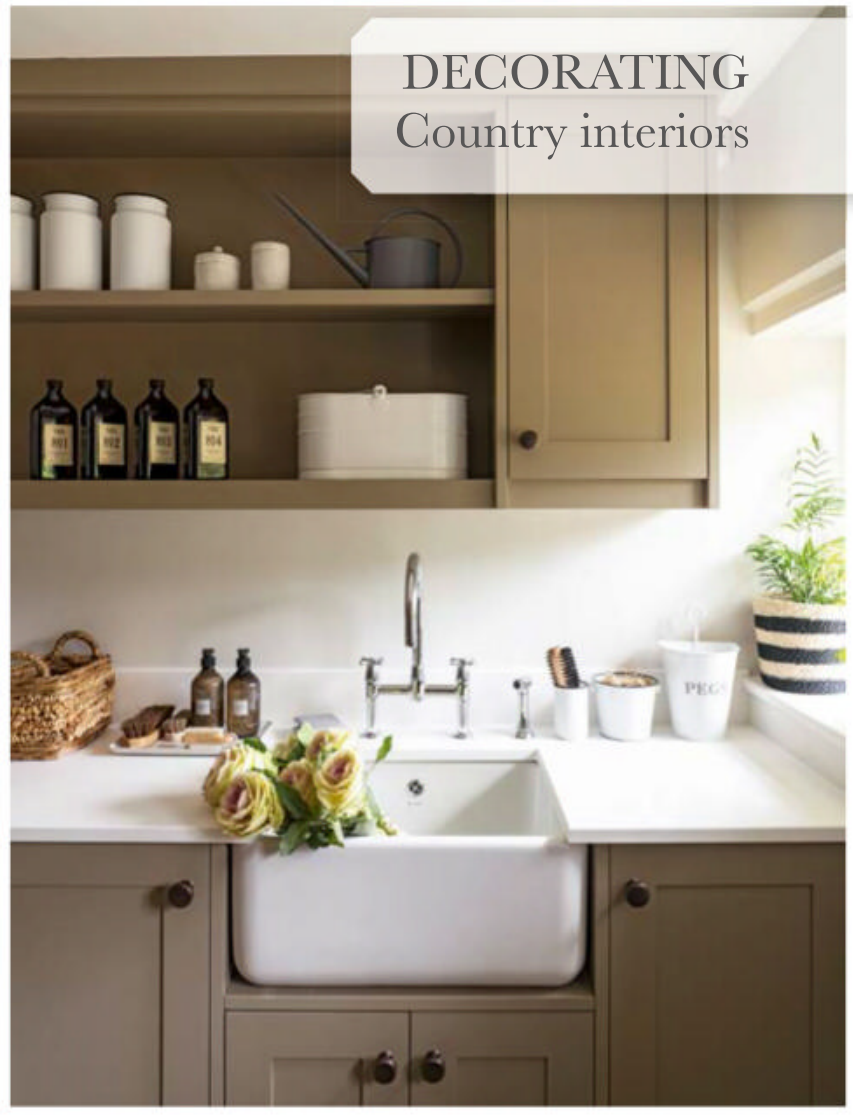
11 DON'T go contemporary with lighting. Be very careful of contemporary lighting. Country homes have wall, floor and picture lighting. Candles and fireplaces should feature heavily. The home should have warmth (both literally and figuratively) and anything like LED lighting will strip a space of both.

LUKE EDWARD HALL

Artist & interior designer

12 DO embrace a confident colour palette. I think there is this idea that we need to rest and recharge in the countryside, which can be true (and certainly is for me a lot of the time), and in order to do this we need to be surrounded by white and beige. This feels reductive to me. The colours we have on the walls and in furnishings at home in the Cotswolds bring about different feelings: they energise, and make spaces feel joyful, warm and inviting.

13 DON'T ignore a country cliche. When we first moved to the country, I wanted it all: china dogs, chintz curtains, fringes on armchairs. All of the things that might have made less sense in our London flat. I always love the idea of embracing a cliche. It's what you do with these items that really counts: pair old-fashioned china with brightly coloured walls, a chintz fabric sofa with a contemporary side table. The tension between objects is what makes an interior exciting.



PIPPA PATON

Interior designer

14 DO focus on creating usable boot and utility spaces. Ideally you should be able to access them directly from outside. It is useful to have a large, deep sink for washing muddy boots, arranging flowers and washing dogs (or to have a separate dog shower). There should also be lots of space for hanging coats, including wet ones (in a drying cupboard if space allows). We like to design cubby holes for everyone's boots and shoes, with allocated spaces for each member of the family and guests, and somewhere to sit and pull boots on and off. This is an area where practicality is key and wipeable surfaces and floors are imperative.

15 DO have a pantry or back kitchen off the main kitchen. As rural life inevitably means the nearest shop is a car journey away, it is important to be able to store sufficient provisions to avoid the need to be popping out every five minutes. A larder or pantry is the ideal way to do this as everything can be easily seen and, on the whole, a pantry is more cost-efficient than kitchen joinery.

If there is sufficient space, we have found – as entertaining becomes more relaxed and dining rooms less prevalent – that a back kitchen is extremely valuable, as it allows the detritus of dining to be hidden from view and dealt with at leisure.

Country kitchens are busy places and need to cater for many different events, from a family supper to a shoot lunch. Ensuring there is a place for everything and everything has a place is crucial.

16 DO have practical flooring. Floors should be easy to care for and should not show up muddy footprints and paw prints. Opt for flagstones, large porcelain tiles or rustic graded timber, or use contemporary materials such as polished concrete or resin.

17 DO embrace the elements of the countryside. Natural fabrics such as wool, linen, leather and sisal all create a tactile connection to the land around us. A neutral palette allows you to embrace and layer the colours of the countryside.

18 DON'T skimp on lighting, in terms of quality, amount and in certain areas, where needed, lighting controls. Historic country homes often have small windows and therefore rooms can be dark. Make sure you have layers of lighting – task, ambient and decorative – that can be adjusted to suit the mood. Lighting controls will allow you to easily achieve pre-set 'scenes' of lighting for different occasions and tasks.

PAOLO MOSCHINO

Co-owner with partner Philip Vergeylen of Paolo Moschino for Nicholas Haslam

19 DO consider the garden part of the house. A country home should hug you from the moment you walk through the gates – the gardens should be part of the package. Don't use too many colours in the gardens and think about winter when most of the plants lose their leaves. I like to use evergreens like buxus and shape them like big clouds so the views from the house are beautiful all year round. Scented plants like jasmine are nice near the front doors.

20 DO make it special for guests. A tray with water and chocolates or biscuits next to the bed in guest bedrooms is a must, together with a good book. Don't use plastic bottles but pretty glass jugs. You can pick them up at any country or antique fair

21 DON'T use overhead lights in a dining room. Soft lighting like table lamps or lots of candles is much nicer – and makes you look younger!

22 DON'T ever use scented flowers on a dining table. They take away from the delicious smell of your dinner.

23 DON'T follow the fashion of the year with colours or furniture. Try to keep to classics for the bones of the house. You can, of course, add a few accessories, such as cushions or interesting objects, which are easily changeable.

24 DON'T use bold colours for the main reception area. You can be a bit more adventurous for guest bedrooms. Guests like to have a surprise and they only stay for a short time.

EMMA SIMS-HILDITCH

Founder and creative director of Sims Hilditch

25 DO consider including a dog shower in your boot room. Country living usually comes with a certain element of mud, particularly when it comes to pets. Protect your home interior by installing a dog shower in your boot room, or even outside. We recommend using a minimally porous Dijon tumbled stone on the floor and walls of a dog shower as it is easy to clean and beautiful to look at. To ensure continuity and flow you might consider laying this stone in various locations throughout the rest of the house as it is perfect for creating a country aesthetic.

26 DO consider the durability of your fabrics. For those adopting a country lifestyle which might cause wear and tear to your home, it is a good idea to select durable fabrics, particularly if you have pets and/or children. For upholstery, we recommend choosing fabrics with a Martindale rub count of more than 18,000. This should ensure the longevity of your furniture for years to come and avoid the expense of constant replacements.

27 DON'T be taken in by trends. The essence of English country style is timeless and elegant, which means that it never goes out of vogue. The addition of multiple trends to a country home interior can disrupt its innate beauty, taking it away from its country roots. Select natural materials and retain as much of the property's original fabric as possible.

28 DON'T buy all new furniture. Country style is brimming with character, so incorporate a mix of old and new furniture in your home. Antique furniture sourced from a market or dealer is a great addition to a bedroom or sitting room, and creates a pleasing contrast when paired with the sharp lines of a mirror or more contemporary light fixtures.

HENRIETTE VON STOCKHAUSEN

Interior designer, founder of VSP Interiors

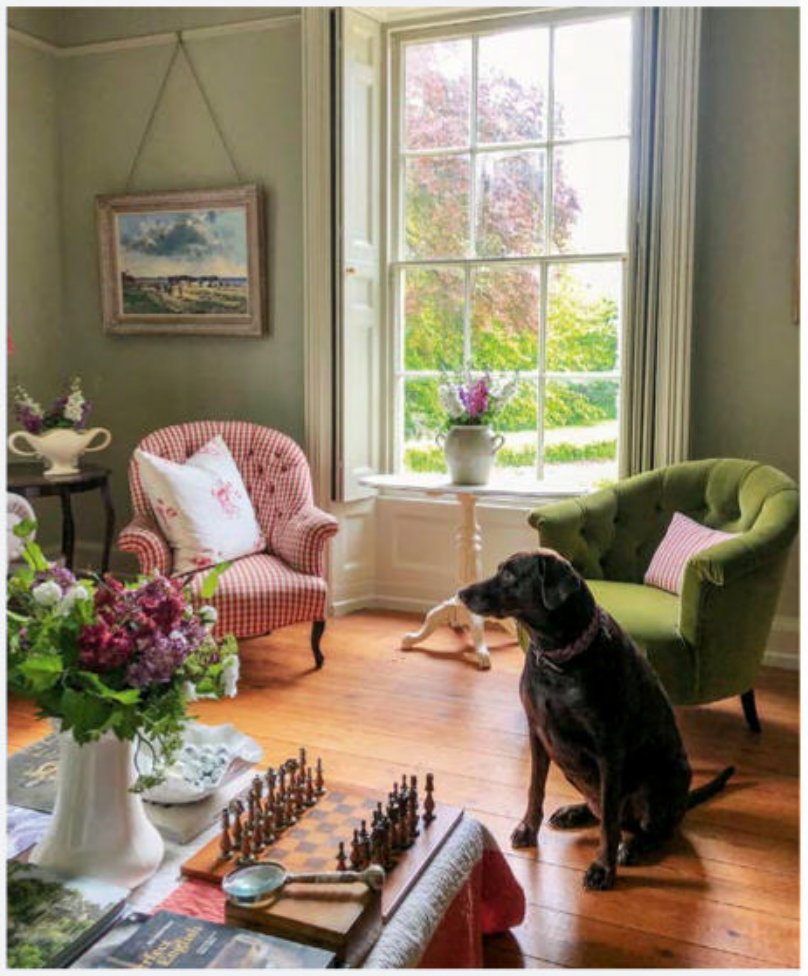
29 DO try to incorporate antique furniture and fabrics, lots of rugs and tapestries. The latter have a story to tell and lend a sense of settled comfort. They can be used in all sorts of ways, like upholstery or headboards etc, and can be found at numerous different auctions. Not only is buying 'old' good for the environment in terms of the item being recycled, but the craftsmanship will be incredible, each one being made to a very high standard.

30 DO try and let the house speak by honouring the architecture and the historical details. Let details like architraves and cornicing shine through by avoiding adding things that will detract or fight with them. Where necessary, look to have period features carefully restored by a professional.

31 DO support local artisans and makers. Local craftsmanship helps imbue character and often has a deeper connection to the location of the property. It is also important to support and protect those special heritage skills that are at risk of dying out.

32 DON'T forget to include a four-poster bed in as many bedrooms as possible. Nothing beats the comfort and cosiness that these provide, and it's such a treat for guests to arrive at a country house for the weekend and to be shown their fabulous four-poster bed.

33 DON'T forget lighting as this is a huge part of a room feeling comfortable. Consider having at least three light sources and always put them on a dimmer so they can be adjusted. Ask for the help of a lighting expert such as John Cullen.



PAULA SUTTON

Stylist and writer, Hill House Vintage

34 DO take your time. The beauty of country style is that it's meant to feel relaxed and gathered or collected over time, mixing new with antique and vintage pieces. An evolved and well-loved home is eclectic and interesting and is an expression of the home owner's life and personality. It's impossible to buy that feeling all in one go from a single shop and still keep the authenticity, so don't be in a rush to complete everything instantly, but take time to savour and enjoy the decorating process.

35 DO display collections proudly. But do not mistake collections for 'clutter'. Collections can be chic and beautiful when displayed well. A collection can be curated from anything. Whether it's a collection of framed prints, a collection of white stoneware, or blue-and-white ceramics hung together on a wall, a display can enhance an awkward space or area that otherwise feels too empty. I have collections throughout my home – from vintage copper jelly moulds in the kitchen, to a floral gallery wall along a staircase. Collections can elevate the most simple items to create a display that has more of a visual impact than an individual piece.

36 DO find your own style rather than trying to recreate a carbon copy of one particular designer or shop. It's absolutely wonderful to be inspired by what we see in books or on social media, but there is no better style to suit you than your own individual style. Also, don't be too swayed by trends. Trends are fun and can provide an interesting catalyst for trying something new, but be sure to carefully pick and choose the things that you genuinely like and that suit your taste and lifestyle, rather than let yourself be swept up in a potentially short-lived wave of mass enthusiasm.

37 DON'T throw out: upcycle, recycle and redo. Remember that changing the fabric on chairs, footstools, headboards and other upholstered furniture can dramatically change the look and feel of a piece without having to start from scratch. Don't be afraid to have things re-covered, reupholstered and repainted – especially when the shapes are already strong, or the item is sentimental. I remember having my dining chairs reupholstered, and everyone thought that I had redecorated the entire room!

SUSAN DELISS

Textile designer and interior decorator

38 DO indulge in comforts. Life generally slows down in the country, so places to linger longer deserve more focus. A bath rather than a shower; a really comfortable chair to read the Sunday papers; a mud room to separate at least some of the dirt and wet of the English countryside from the rest of the house. Think about adding a real fire or wood-burning stove in the hall if you have space. There is nothing nicer than a cosy fire.

39 DO Leave plenty of space for a freezer or food storage if your house is not near a shop. No one wants to have to leap in the car every time you need milk or a bag of flour. A walk-in pantry is another luxury to keep extra food and dishes organised.

40 DO consider where you place textiles and pops of colour. Here (*below*) we have used the structure of the bare window and the woodwork above it rather than a blind and have added colour and warmth with antique-textile cushions on this very comfortable window seat.

EMMA DETERDING

Interior designer, founder of Kelling Designs and KD Loves

41 DO make a statement with colour and pattern. The feeling of space you get in the country lends itself to being braver with colour. Embrace the opportunity to either use flashes of colour or go full-on and don't be afraid to use green, it will look fabulous. But try to make it harmonious, especially in the downstairs rooms. You want the spaces to really flow. Try to use a combination of colours, maybe repeating in different ways in different rooms.

42 DON'T use your old bed in your guest bedroom. It's the worst mistake anyone can make. In fact, if your own bed becomes uncomfortable, take the guest bed and buy the guests a new one. You want to give your guests the best night's sleep. Make sure the bed is as big as it possibly can be, with a show-stopping headboard and beautiful linens and pillows. Guests should be able to get into bed, relax and have a wonderful night's sleep.

FLORA SOAMES

Interior, fabric and wallpaper designer

43 DO think more is more. The layers of a room can often be the unexpected twist that makes a country house interior sing. I love pattern and print, and, often, a generally looser more informal look. It is an abundant use of a print in a room that can really make a striking impact.

We recently launched Enid's Ramble, a modern-day take on a toile de jouy, in an array of jewel colours. In a charming but very simple stable-attic bedroom (*left*), we relished using this print for everything – walls, windows, bedding, upholstery and lampshades. The final result is a cocoon of colour and cosiness, but, importantly, made less saccharine by the introduction of some unlikely and more robust pieces of furniture and accessories.

It is good to look at a room as a series of vignettes, as well as a whole, and, in doing so, think 'where is that not too tasteful or considered piece', since these remain the essence of a room when you walk away from it. ■

FEATURE KATY MCLEAN PHOTOGRAPHS P127 (ROSANNA BOSSOM BOOT ROOM) © JAKE EASTHAM; (JOANNA WOOD PORTRAIT) © ASTRID TEMPLIER. P128 (LUKE EDWARD-HALL PORTRAIT) © JAMES HARVEY-KELLY. P133 (SUSAN DELISS WINDOW SEAT) © ANDREW D STEEL

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43 DOS AND DON'TS OF TOWNHOUSE STYLE

Interior designers reveal their secrets for creating a beautiful townhouse that is practical for city living whilst being sympathetic to period features

CAMILLA CLARKE

Creative director at Albion Nord Design Studio

1 DO consider any heritage qualities with your house. If you have a Georgian or Victorian property, it's important to be sensitive towards these period elements and try and reinstate these heritage architectural features through the interior design. Combining old and new decor schemes helps to create a timeless aesthetic.

Carefully consider a combination of textures and materials that are sympathetic to any listed qualities but still add layers of warmth and interest, making each room feel comfortable and relaxed.

We are passionate about using natural materials such as oaks, linens, wools, silks and sisals at our design studio. Juxtaposing materials against each other is a great way to stop the space feeling static and is much more exciting to look at.

2 DON'T use quick-fix artwork. A design element to avoid, or perhaps consider in a different light, is the trend for gallery walls. There are many companies providing 'one-stop-shop' services where you can purchase prints and frames from the same vendor to 'get the look.' A far more appealing way to create your own gallery wall is to collect prints you love over time, visiting antique or vintage sellers for limited print runs or little framed oils. This way, your collection will be entirely unique, bringing a sense of your own personality to your home, rather than opting for 'Insta-approved' artworks.

LUCY BARLOW
Creative director and co-founder, Barlow & Barlow

3 DO make the most of a compact space. There are so many clever ways to make the most out of smaller spaces, from bespoke banquettes, to fitted cabinetry and clever storage solutions. It's often little nooks and awkward corners that turn out to be the best spaces, so don't overlook them.

4 DO be patient – not everything needs to be finished all at once. The most successful spaces are those that are layered with interesting fabrics, art, furniture and decorative objects, and finding the right pieces can take time. Buying too many things at once and all from high street shops or from those that adhere to very specific trends, can make for a very impersonal, showroom-style space.

5 DON'T be afraid of making a statement in a small bathroom. We always encourage a bold use of colour and pattern in our schemes, particularly when it comes to a secondary space such as a cloakroom or WC. Make the braver choice, add something a little unexpected and you'll find there is a lot of character in such a small space.

6 DON'T overthink things. The biggest thing we witness is people overthinking their choices, as if picking the wrong lampshade will ruin the house.

ALIDAD
Founder of Alidad and Studio Alidad interior design

7 DO make a home office an enjoyable space; this is more important nowadays than ever. Light is a key element in a home office, whether it's artificial or natural. Where possible, I will always try and place a home office in front of or near a window to allow for natural light and a view to look at for inspiration or some time out from the computer screen. As most things these days are wireless, you can store the additional technical equipment in a beautiful cabinet or armoire.

8 DON'T be absorbed by the functionality of storage. Remember, just because something needs to be practical doesn't mean it needs to be boring. I use a lot of églomisé glass in my work which provides a stunning decorative finish to wardrobe doors. You could also get storage doors to be hand-painted with a bespoke design and add beautiful detailing with ornate handles.

NICKY MUDIE

Founder and director, Violet & George

9 DO make your lifestyle the focus of your home. How do you like to entertain? How many people do you need to accommodate for meals regularly or occasionally? How can you make your space work with these numbers? When it comes to guests staying over regularly, what are their needs? Yes, your home is your castle, but it is also somewhere you want to be able to entertain effortlessly, a space that you feel comfortable welcoming your guests into. There is nothing worse than feeling uncomfortable in your own home! Think about how the spaces need to flex around you, your family and your social life and the areas will start to make sense to you in terms of layout.

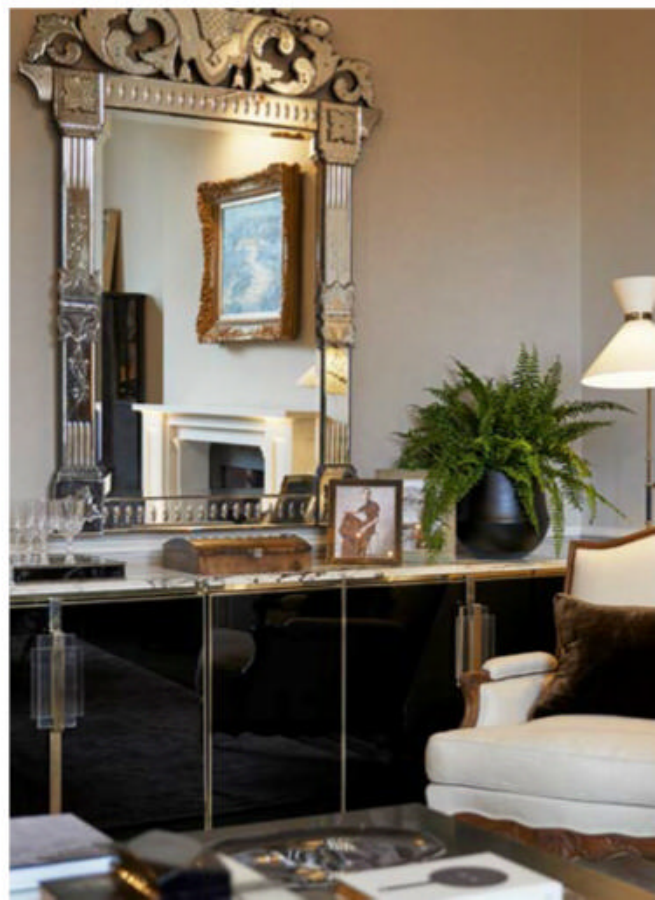
10 DO create a special, personal place. Conversely, you need to focus on your time relaxing in your home. When walking around a new space I am always drawn to the spot with the best light and the best view; I love to read and need a spot with lots of natural light and a link to the outside to relax into. This spot should then have an incredibly comfortable reading chair/s in it with good head and neck support for reading; a wing back chair or a sofa with neck support is ideal. Natural light should be supported by fantastic, directional reading lights.

11 DON'T rely on overhead lighting as your main source of lighting. Overhead lighting has one purpose only – to be able to see to clean. Your main lighting should come from statement pendant lights, wall lights, table lights and floor lights. All on dimmer switches to enable you to play with the mood depending on the time of the day – dim down as the natural light levels go down. Zico Lighting does some fantastic amber glass LED filament light bulbs which give off the same warm light as a traditional incandescent light bulbs, but which are better for the environment. They are more expensive but last a significant length of time.

12 DON'T cut off the outside world. I recently stayed in a rental house in Kent with my family. The location was fantastic, but you felt trapped. Without a sense of what was going on in the outside world, the house felt oppressive. There should be a sense of being comfortably supported by your home, not imprisoned. Make the most of the best views and where you are overlooked by neighbours or have less appealing views, ensure you disguise these windows with privacy blinds.

LOUISE BRADLEY

Interior designer and founder of Louise Bradley



13 DO expand your space. City townhouses are known for their narrow rooms with high ceilings. Expand your space and balance the proportions using mirrors – they can be grouped together to create a trick of the eye – or inbuilt to joinery to conceal a walk-in wardrobe or an en-suite bathroom.

14 DO mix antiques with new pieces to achieve an eclectic look. Including antiques within your home will also reduce the environmental impact of your project, especially when sourcing the items within your local neighbourhood. A mix of antique and contemporary is also a nod to the property's period and adds a historical layer, whilst the modern aspects of underfloor heating allow one to enjoy all of the functional aspects of modern luxury comforts.

15 DO open up the space. Opt for a light-filled open space to create harmony in your interiors and maximise the natural light, always. Whilst opening up your room, you can still retain zones for certain activities or times of the day – this can be achieved by grouping furniture or dividing the space with versatile pieces of furniture such an ottoman or double-sided cabinet.

16 DO add personal touches. A house is not a home unless it reflects your personality. Once you have carefully layered your interiors with colours, textures and patterns, it's time to make it about you. Bring to the forefront your most treasured possessions, favourite books – all the items that evoke positive emotions and will create an atmosphere of balance and harmony in your home.

17 DO consider the architecture individually. Interior architecture is the first layer of your home, and the interior design scheme is grown from there. It is important to always consider townhouses individually. They may look very similar from the outside but internally each home is unique, with a different aspect, varying natural light and orientation. It's always good to research the period of your property and bring to the forefront the elements that resonate with you the most and contemporise other elements of the design.

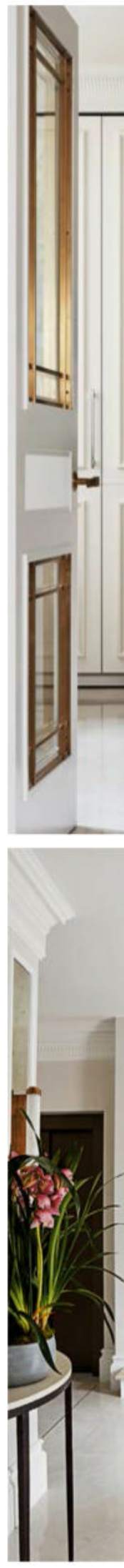
18 DON'T forget to layer the lighting. Lighting is key to creating the desired ambience in a space and being able to create a distinct atmosphere throughout the day. Opt for a combination of decorative chandeliers, wall lights and table and floor lamps to create a varied scheme. It's an easy way of ensuring you have many functional lighting options in your space too.

19 DON'T be afraid to shine. Reflective or metallic surfaces combined with glass chandeliers will lift any room, through the reflection of natural light. Paired with more traditional period interiors, this will help you achieve the balanced classic-contemporary look.

20 DON'T overpower your interiors with clashing colours and textures. Opt for muted shades and subtle textures as the base of your interior, and build them up layer by layer, like an artist would work with an oil painting. Matching delicate textures together will add refinement to your interiors, without being too overpowering.

KATHARINE POOLEY

International designer and founder of Katharine Pooley



21 DO be bold in smaller rooms. In an urban period property bedrooms can often be smaller than in the country, but don't think that this means your fabric and accessory choices should be safer or more neutral in hue or pattern. I find the opposite to be the case. For a recent townhouse bedroom (*right*), introducing a canary yellow bedspread and throws, and a large-scale yellow painting instantly revitalised the space and created a memorably beautiful room. Bright yellow ranunculus arranged in little vases also add a joyful dash of colour.

22 DO add details and flair with passementerie. My number one tip for an urban property is to ensure you keep trims at the heart of your bedroom scheme. In a lighter more tonal design they add much-needed interest and detail. I find my favourite curtain leading edges and trims and ribbons for cushions at Victoria Bain, Samuel & Sons and Frette.

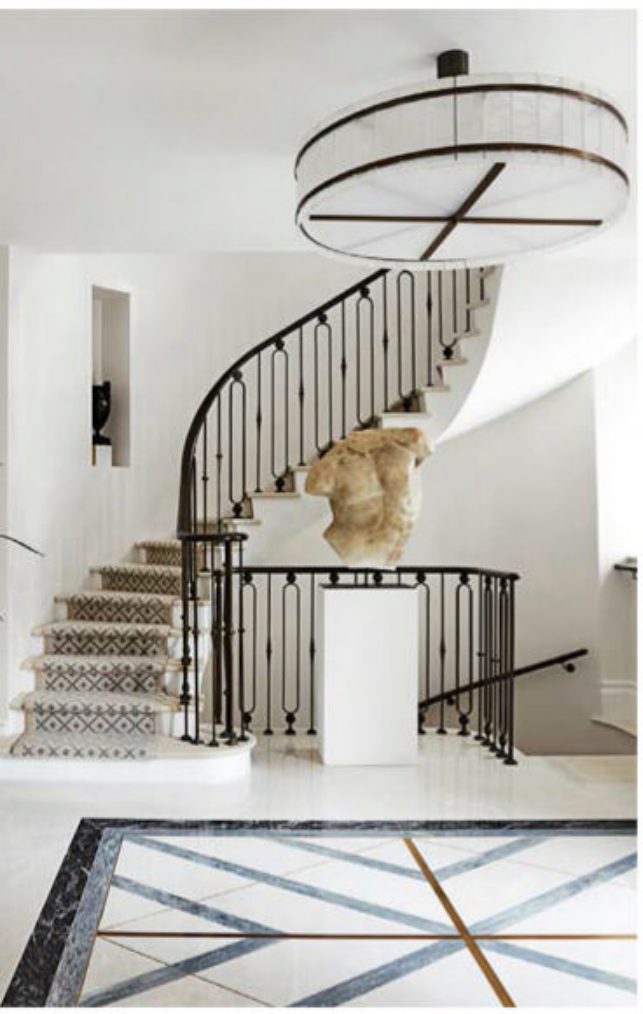
23 DO always try to include some pattern or detailing to your hallway floor. This is usually the first thing to greet guests so why not make a statement and set the tone for the rest of your home.

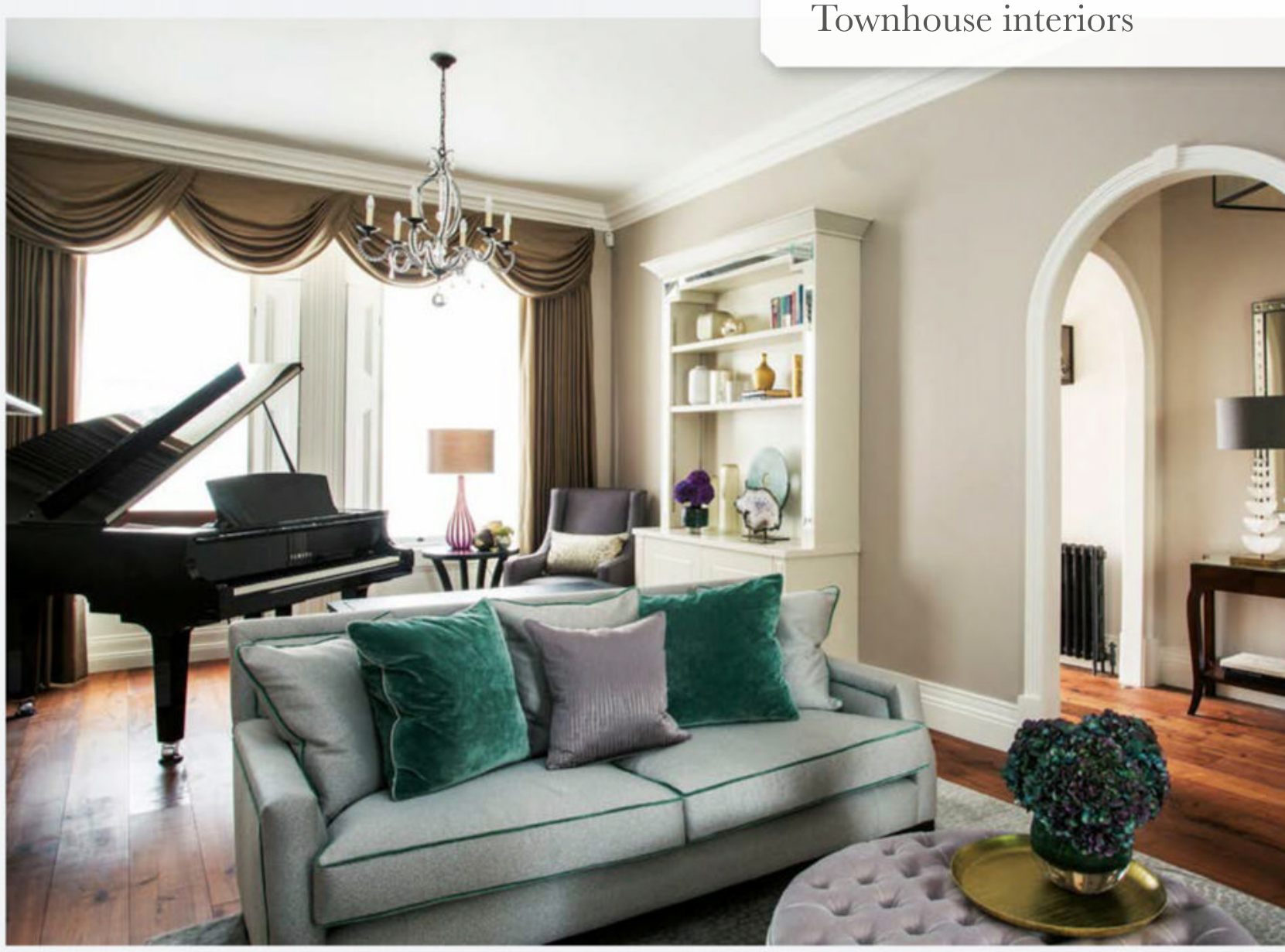
24 DO be intelligent with your kitchen storage to try to maximise a spacious feel; hidden cupboards work really well and should be embraced whenever possible. For a recent townhouse project, I had the cornice built forward and designed the storage cupboards to run all the way up to the ceiling. We then added mouldings and panelling to disguise the cupboards within the wall, it looks terrifically elegant and is such a chic backdrop to a contemporary kitchen island.

25 DON'T forget that in a hallway, antiques add interest and personality to even the most neutral or contemporary design. Introducing a few antiques will also attractively reference the architectural style of the building facade.

26 DON'T shy away from expensive papers. I am naturally drawn to hand-painted and patterned wallpapers for bedrooms. If large quantities of pattern terrify you, don't think you can't introduce the beautiful work by de Gournay and Fromental in smaller sections. Rather than doing the entire room, I often introduce two framed artwork panels either side of the bed. This works particularly well with chinoiserie designs and if you pick a paper with hand-embroidered detailing or gilt metallic touches the bedside table lamps will showcase this to maximum effect.

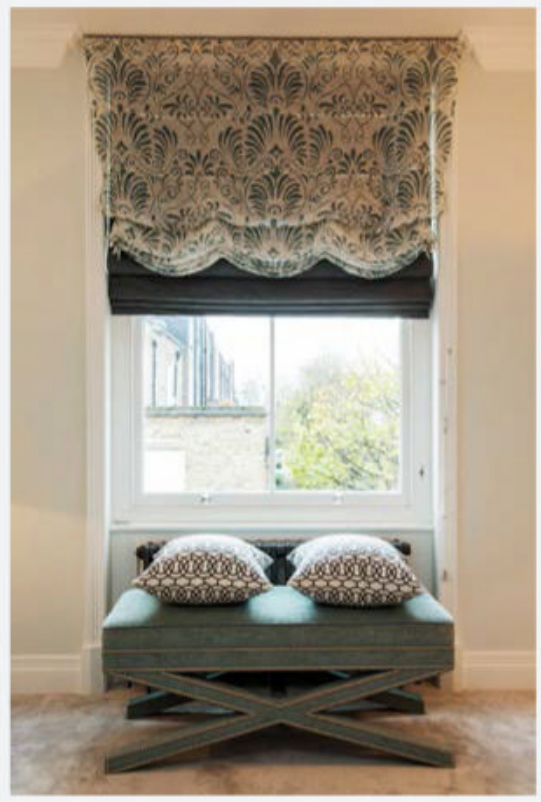
27 DON'T forget to add feature pendants over an island. Currently I'm drawn to bronze fittings, they add interest and are the perfect addition to lift a neutral scheme.





JULIETTE WRIGHT & NATALIE STEPHENSON
Directors, Stephenson Wright

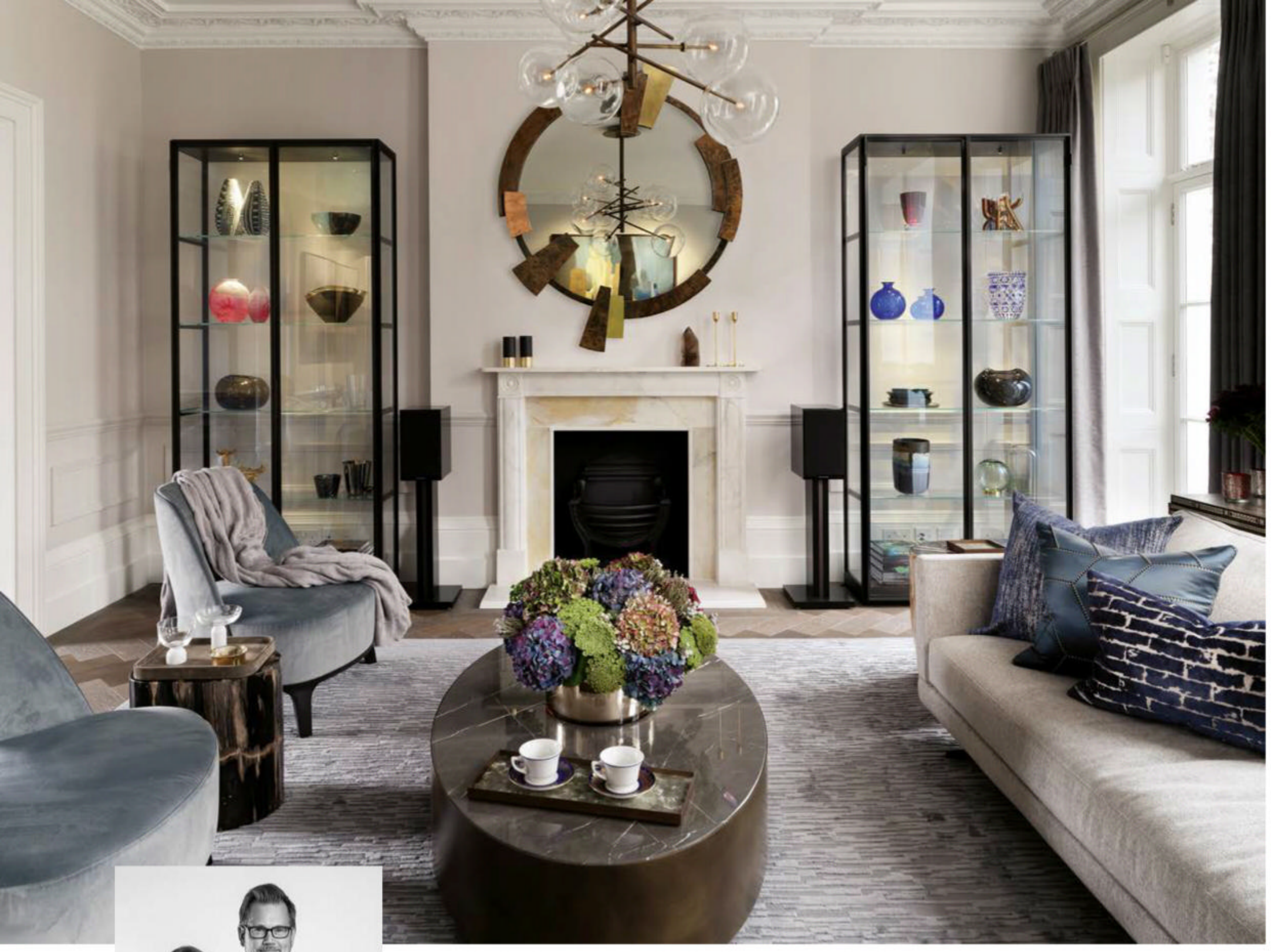
29 DO dress windows with style and practicality in mind. Sash windows lend themselves beautifully to blinds. Consider layering window treatments in interesting ways for added texture and to give you options depending on the time of day. Here, (*right*) a 'London blind' in a Designers Guild sheer fabric sits outside the window's reveal. This softens a heavier linen blackout Roman blind inside the reveal.



28 DO always include a mirror and linear sculptural console in the hall. They don't need to be big, and a half-moon design will fit most hallways. When dressed with an abundance of orchids in a thoughtfully chosen pot, or flowers, this gives the perfect focal point to draw people into your home.

30 DON'T miss an opportunity to use every inch of floorspace in a townhouse. A relaxing reading area on an extended half-landing could become your favourite part of the house. Not only does it create a soft viewpoint from the downstairs hallway, but it really does make a useful area out of a compact space. Consider the fabrics you use and lean towards soft mohair velvets and curtain fabrics which drape beautifully. You could also use a double-width sheer for extra fullness, and to allow natural light to flood in.

31 DON'T close off hallways. Hallways don't always need to be closed off to drawing rooms and can successfully form part of the flow of a ground floor in townhouse and increase the feeling of space. An elegant archway (*as above*) can lead into a drawing room. For cohesive flow, the same floor finish should extend throughout any adjoining areas for a visual link. Consider adding large antique mirrors or mirrored furniture in key places to increase the feeling of light and offer interesting reflections.



STAFFAN & MONIQUE TOLLGARD

Co-founders, Tollgard Design Group

32 DO make an entrance. Although we can all be absorbed by the fast pace of city life, it's important to feel a sense of escape once you step through the front door. To leave the worries of the day behind, we encourage you to create an entrance where you can take a moment to find balance in everyday life. Rituals like taking off your shoes, sitting down on a beautiful bench and looking up to find meaningful artwork on the walls are all examples of how this anchoring space can set the tone for your entire home.

33 DO make spaces work harder. Space is always in short supply and high demand in cities, which makes it paramount to make your spaces work hard for you. We heatmap clients' existing homes to see which spaces are over or under used and then make sure this functional map is more logically expressed in the new layouts.

Taking a multi-function approach to your rooms can help you to make better use of your spaces too. Dining rooms make for great studies, whilst a family room can transform into a formal reception space with effective storage and audiovisual solutions.

34 DON'T just collate, curate. Our homes say so much about us: the unique pieces gathered within them are filled with powerful memories and meaning, and root our identity into a new architecture and environment.

Rather than collating (hoarding) everything and filling every available space with wall-to-wall joinery, we help our clients to curate a collection of pieces that work in harmony with each other and their surroundings and give them the considered visibility to be enjoyed. Be brave and shed as much as you can, keeping only what brings you joy and what's relevant in this current chapter of your life. Find the forever pieces – not the clutter accumulated whilst you weren't paying attention. Then make the pieces that you cherish really sing.

35 DON'T think like the Victorians. We've come a long way from the rigid Victorians of London and their compact townhouses. Whilst many properties in the city are hundreds of years old, we shouldn't be afraid to create flexible homes that can answer the questions of living that we face today. The way we live has changed and we need flexible homes with spaces that can adapt and transform, encompassing open-plan vistas as well as private refuges.

NICOLE SALVESEN
& MARY GRAHAM
Co-founders, Salvesen Graham Interior Design

36 DO add as much storage as possible. To keep a townhouse functioning, you need to have space to put everything. In our townhouse projects we may not have space for various additional utilitarian rooms for our clients to squirrel away belongings. We overcome this with an intelligent floorplan, adding utility space or pantries and useful linen cupboards. Where this isn't possible, design and build in storage around your specific needs. Don't, for example, build endless bookshelves if you have a limited collection of books.

37 DON'T be afraid to use multiple layers of texture and pattern in your scheme. It is important to remember that a townhouse can be cosy and comfortable too. In combination with this, consider including a tailored detail like a smart trimming or a simpler, pared-back curtain heading to suit the typical scale of a townhouse.

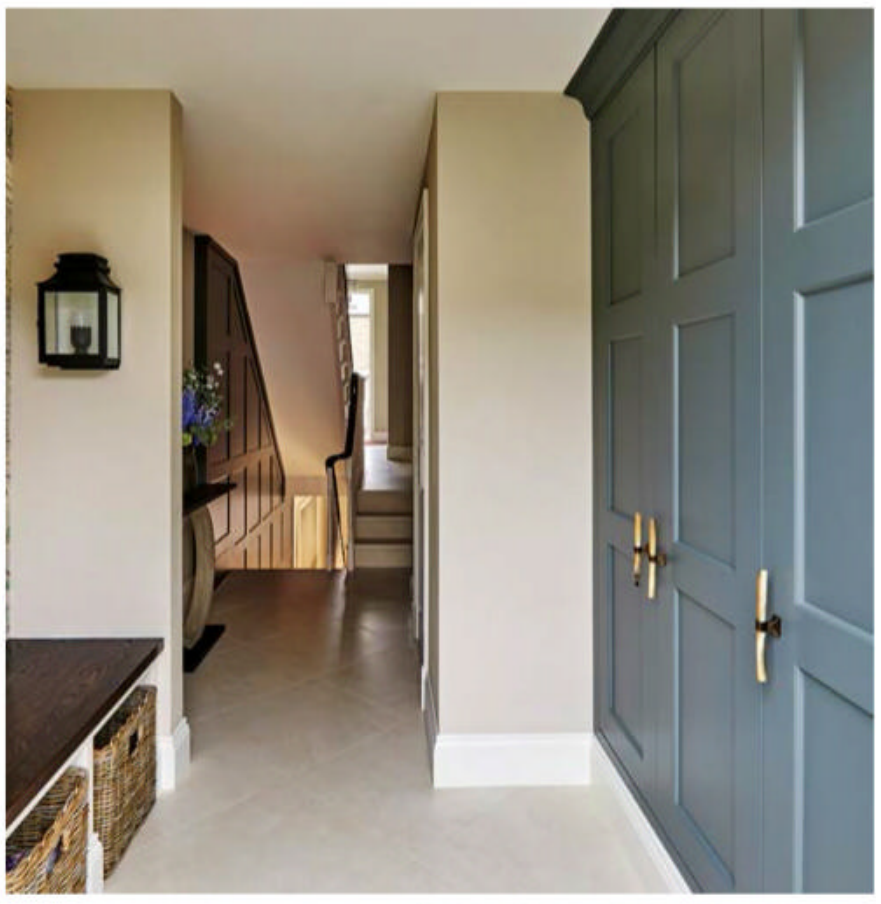
38 DON'T allow your space to become too cluttered. Where space is often more limited in a townhouse, it can be more important than ever to pare things back a bit. This doesn't necessarily mean limited colour and pattern or that you can't include a trimming or frilly edge, but do keep things a little more ordered. Symmetry is your friend in a townhouse and can help to keep a space looking pleasing to the eye, even if it is smaller and holding more furniture.

39 DON'T forget to use quality and timeless details if you want your home to have longevity. Sometimes the joy of a townhouse is you don't need to be such a slave to the history of the building. In a more modern building, you can add details such as panelling, or a trimming around the room where there might not be a cornice. If the detail doesn't exist in the fabric of the building itself, then incorporate it into design details such as trimming the leading edge of a curtain, or a skirt on a chair.

EMILY TODHUNTER
Co-founder, Todhunter Earle Interiors

40 DO use every inch available to maximise the space in the house. I think it's more important to get usable space in the attic areas, where are you have light and views, than to spend money on digging a basement. We have done some very successful bedrooms in rooms with sloping ceilings that you might have thought were unusable. It often means applying for permission for a dormer window or a skylight, but it's worth every ounce of effort to get these permissions. You often find yourself faced with a ceiling that slopes in one direction. It's much prettier to put a bed in an alcove with a double pitch. So, if necessary, create that alcove.

41 DO try to maximise the feeling of width of the house. Most townhouses are narrower than you would like them to be. This often means you have a long narrow entrance hall with stairs ahead and a double room on one or other side with two fireplaces. The layout is a difficult one. If possible, try to reorganise the house to get one really good room spanning the width of the house and preferably overlooking the back garden.



42 DON'T build a basement without enough ceiling height, natural light or fresh air. There's nothing worse than a dark depressing basement which smells musty and has cost a fortune! Introduce light wells as much as possible and make them attractive.

43 DON'T underestimate what will make family life easier. It is surprising how stressful the school run can be if you haven't got a practical kitchen, easily accessible storage for school bags, a family bathroom or loo nearby. You may want to make the back door a nicer area than you had previously thought. You don't want to be tripping over bins and old bikes when you're in a rush to get children off to school. ■

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ESSENTIAL RESOURCES for substantial projects

If undertaking more than decorating, this checklist will inform renovations, restoration or building works

BUILDING TRADE ASSOCIATIONS & REGULATORY BODIES

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY COUNCIL (CIC)
Representative forum for the professional bodies, research organisations and specialist business associations in the UK's construction industry. Maintains and operates the Construction Industry Council Approved Inspectors Register (CICAIR (*see below*)).
Tel: 020 7399 7400; *cic.org.uk*

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY COUNCIL APPROVED INSPECTORS REGISTER (CICAIR)
Body designated by the Secretary of State in England and Welsh Ministers in Wales that maintains and operates the list of approved inspectors qualified to undertake building control work necessary for building regulations approval.
Tel: 020 7399 7403; *cicair.org.uk*

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF BUILDERS (NFB)
Founded in 1896, this is the construction industry's longest-established trade association. Its website carries a public list of NFB-approved builders and a find-a-builder service.
Tel: 03450 578 160; *builders.org.uk*

FEDERATION OF MASTER BUILDERS (FMB)
The UK's largest trade association in the construction industry. Established in 1941, it is an independent and non-profit making body that carries a public list of FMB-approved builders and a find-a-builder service.
Tel: 0330 333 7777; *fmb.org.uk*

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS (RIBA)
Professional body founded in 1834 for the advancement of architecture in the UK and internationally. Carries a public list of RIBA-approved architects and a find-an-architect service.
Tel: 020 7580 5533; *architecture.com*

ARCHITECTS REGISTRATION BOARD (ARB)
Established by Parliament in 1997, the Architects Registration Board is an independent, public interest body whose work in regulating architects ensures that good standards within the profession are consistently maintained for the benefit of the public and architects alike. Carries a public list of ARB-approved architects and a find-an-architect service.
Tel: 020 7580 5861; *arb.org.uk*

OTHER

HISTORIC ENGLAND
Executive non-departmental public body tasked with protecting England's historic environment including listed buildings, gardens and monuments, as well as other protected sites. Carries full and comprehensive information on listed buildings, as well as pointers for those seeking renovation and restoration advice.
Tel: 020 7973 3700; *historicengland.org.uk*

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS (SPAB)
Founded by William Morris in 1877, the SPAB encourages and provides training for architectural professionals and craftspeople seeking to enrich and complement historic environments.
Tel: 020 7377 1644; *spab.org.uk*

THE GEORGIAN GROUP
Heritage conservation charity and national authority on Georgian architecture, created to campaign for the preservation of historic buildings and landscapes.
Tel: 020 7529 8920; *georgiangroup.org.uk*

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY
Charity founded by poet laureate Sir John Betjeman, amongst others, to protect Victorian and Edwardian buildings in England and Wales.
Tel: 020 8994 1019; *victoriansociety.org.uk*

THE QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOLARSHIP TRUST (QEST)
Charity dedicated to excellence in British craftsmanship, including conservation and restoration, through investing in talent, supporting education, sustaining skills and promoting excellence.
Tel: 020 7798 1535; *qest.org.uk*

A NOTE ON BUILDING REGULATIONS & PLANNING PERMISSION

As outlined on the Government's website, it is a legal requirement to check if building regulations approval is needed before constructing or changing buildings in certain ways. This can depend on the age and status of the property as listed with Historic England (*see left under 'Other'*), its location, and the extent of the work.

Building regulations approval is sought through a building control body (BCB), of which there are two types: local authority BCBs (council), and private BCBs (private inspectors approved by CICAIR – *see left under Building Trade Associations & Regulatory Bodies*).

Though individuals do not need to get approval themselves if using someone registered with a competent person scheme (CPS), it is highly advisable to carry out research and gather as much information as possible for best decision-making. Note also that building regulations approval is different from planning permission, which is sought through the local planning authority, and that both may be required.

For more background and up-to-date information on both of these areas, including the differences between the two, visit *gov.uk/building-regulations-approval* (includes details of competent person schemes and BCBs), and *gov.uk/planning-permission-england-wales* (includes details of local planning authorities). ■

ABOVE The sensitive restoration and extension of a Grade II listed house in the Cotswolds by Yiangou Architects.

FEATURE EVE MIDDLETON PHOTOGRAPH © YIANGOU ARCHITECTS

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