

The

ENGLISH HOME



Celebrating the essence of English style

May 2022 | Issue 207 | £4.99 | UK Edition

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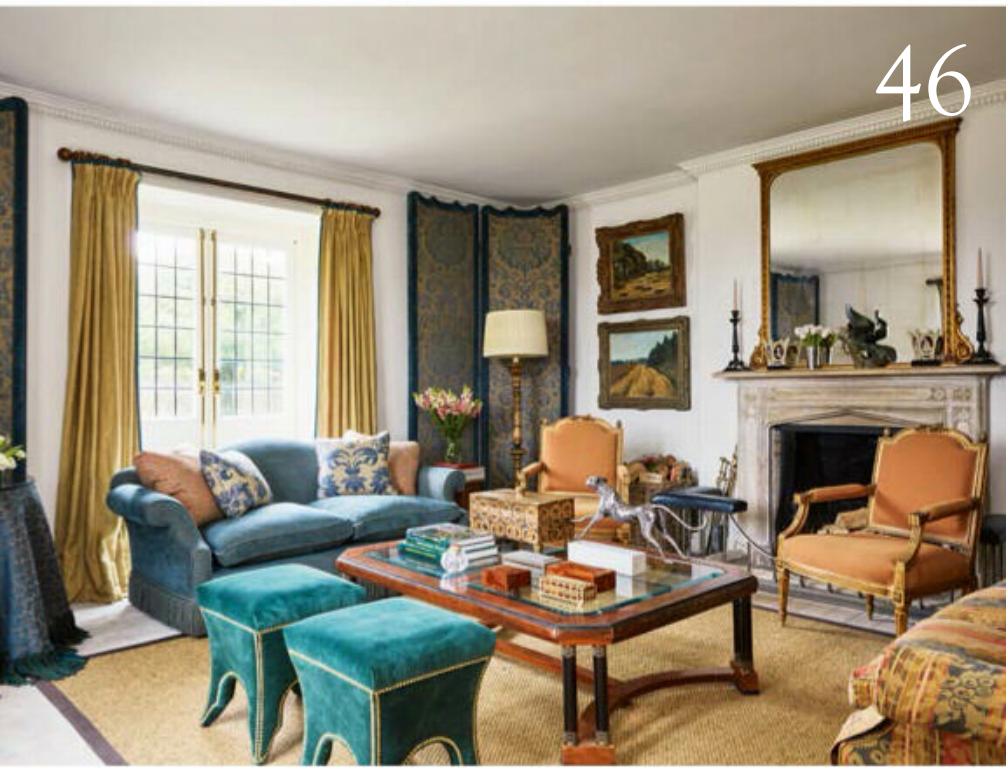
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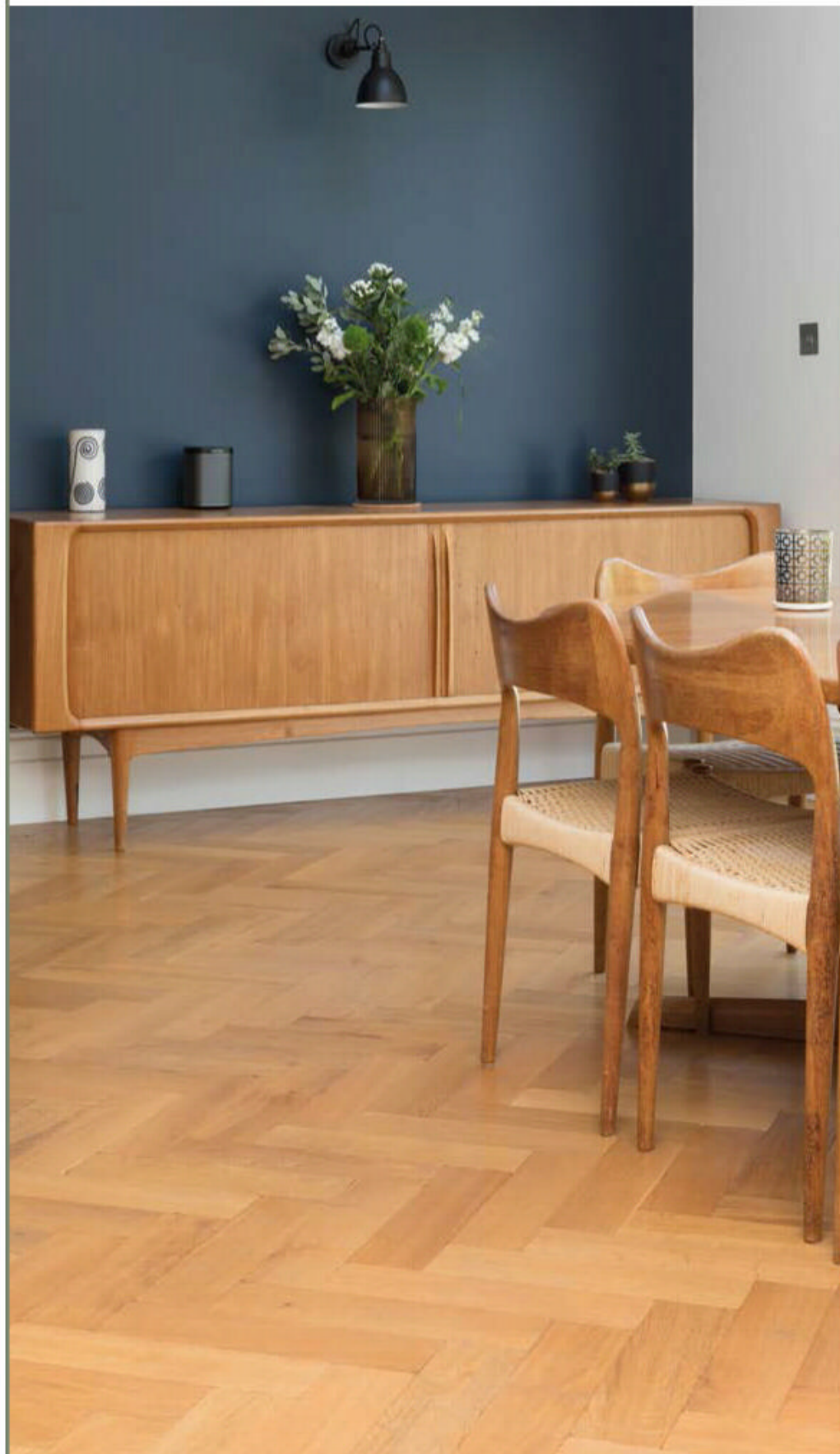
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Turn to page 72 for
decorating ideas
inspired by nature.
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A letter from home



Just as our homes have taken on a new significance over the last few years, so too have our gardens. With more of us making the most of our outdoor space for summer living, we consulted leading garden designers for this Gardens Special issue to find out where best to invest and where we can make clever savings

when considering garden updates, from adding a new patio to planting (p114).

We are also hugely inspired by the beautiful garden Sophie Conran has created at her Wiltshire home (p90), and plan to seek further inspiration now that historic and notable gardens are open to visitors again, including the selection of examples we map out and explore on p122.

Blurring the boundaries between the glorious outdoors and our interiors feels right for our current times. Bringing the palettes and motifs of the garden into the home to create calm, uplifting interiors is something the English have done for centuries, and we look at the latest ways to do this on pg 72.

From the smallest updates to more indulgent buys, you'll find this issue brimming with ideas for adding beautiful botanical buys to your home and for making your garden your own private escape outdoors this season. All we need now is some sunshine!

Samantha

Samantha Scott-Jeffries, Editor



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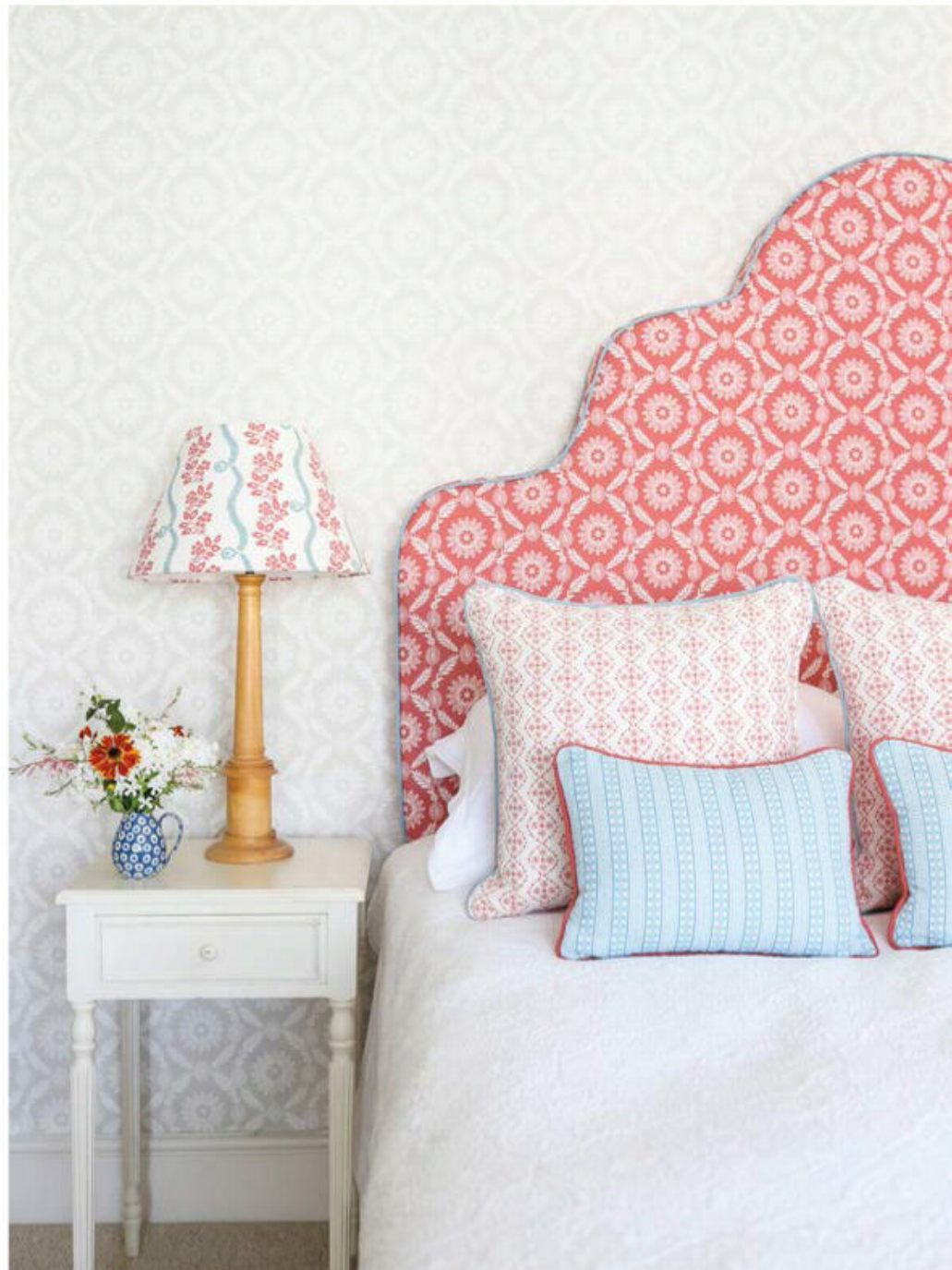


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CONTACT US

Editorial 020 7349 3700
The English Home, Jubilee House,
2 Jubilee Place, London SW3 3TQ
Email theenglishhome@chelseamagazines.com
Website theenglishhome.co.uk
Advertising/Publishing 020 7349 3700
The Chelsea Magazine Company Ltd
Email info@chelseamagazines.com

EDITORIAL

Editor Samantha Scott-Jeffries
Managing Editor Sarah Feeley
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Homes & Lifestyle Editor Clair Wayman
Editor-at-Large Kate Freud
Editorial Assistant Nell Whitaker

ADVERTISING

Group Sales Director Catherine Chapman
020 7349 3709; catherine.chapman@chelseamagazines.com
Head of Sales Operations Jodie Green
Advertisement Manager William Bernard
020 7349 3749; william.bernard@chelseamagazines.com
Senior Sales Executive Alice Leeson
020 7349 3711; alice.leeson@chelseamagazines.com
Sales Executive Lurna Barry
020 7349 3712; lurna.barry@chelseamagazines.com
Advertising Production 01202 472781; allpointsmmedia.co.uk

PUBLISHING

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Publisher Caroline Scott
Circulation Manager Daniel Webb
Business Operations Manager Sarah Porter
EA to Chairman Sophie Easton

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Group Digital Manager Ben Iskander
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PRODUCTION

Reprographics Manager Neil Puttnam
Printing William Gibbons Ltd

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 4 MAY 2022

THE ENGLISH HOME (UK EDITION) ISSN 1468-0238 (PRINT)
THE ENGLISH HOME (UK EDITION) ISSN 2397-7086 (ONLINE)

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The English Home
Tower House, Lathkill Street
Market Harborough
Leicestershire LE16 9EF
Tel 01858 438 854
Email theenglishhome@subscription.co.uk
(UK and Rest of World)

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
UK £72 (12 issues)
Overseas £90 (12 issues)

NEWS DISTRIBUTION
Seymour Distribution Ltd
2 East Poultry Avenue
London EC1A 9PT
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH
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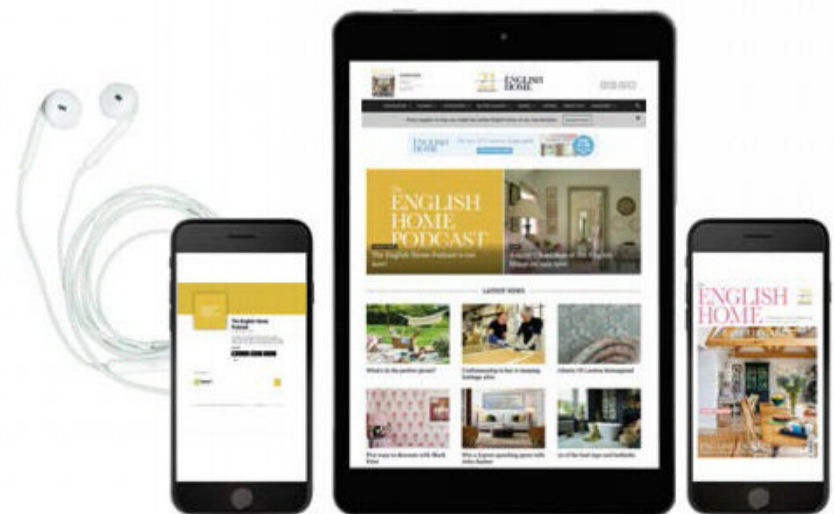


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NOTEBOOK

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SPOTLIGHT ON... *Chic Britannia*

Legendary fashion designer Dame Zandra Rhodes is as famous for her colourful designs and exuberant patterns as she is for her fluorescent pink hair. Her new collaboration with silk weaving house

Gainsborough – The Britannia Collection – is an alluring blend of refined grandeur and her bold, liberated, free-flowing style.

A duo of new fabrics, Fabulous Frills and O-Gee Whizz, in four different colourways, have been woven using traditional practices on heritage looms at Gainsborough's historic mill in Suffolk. Presenting

hand-painted designs, Zandra worked with Gainsborough and delved into its archive to refine the final fabrics. She says: "I am honoured to collaborate with historic British mill Gainsborough and its talented team for this new collection. I look forward to seeing our designs in palaces and intimate abodes." gainsborough.co.uk >



The Magic Of Outdoors

Matthew Williamson for John Lewis

The great outdoors was the inspiration for Matthew Williamson's new 90-piece home range for John Lewis & Partners. It features mix-and-match lamps, cushions, throws, mirrors, bedding, towels and more, all imbued with his signature bold aesthetic.

Matthew says: "From majestic peacocks strutting their plumes in Holland Park to the quintessential English blooms of a country garden, the collection explores all the wondrous elements found on our doorstep. Be it butterflies fluttering over a floral meadow, or a deep, inky blue starlit night sky, I wanted to capture that feeling of outdoor magic. Designing this collection feels close to my heart as I have long admired John Lewis and have inherited my parents' fondness for the brand. The extensive nature of this collection is really exciting, nothing like I have ever created before." johnlewis.com



Revel In Pure Nostalgia

Louise Roe launches Sharland England

After a decade living in Los Angeles, English fashion journalist and presenter Louise Roe moved back to England and launched a warmly nostalgic interiors brand inspired by her countryside childhood.

Named after her great-grandmother, Sharland England is, in Louise's words, "a pipe dream turned reality that has captured my heart entirely. It's thrilling to finally put into practice my greatest joy: interior design." From furniture to frilled cushions and romantically reupholstered antique chairs, natural materials like rattan abound, with an emphasis on traditions, craftsmanship and sustainability. We look forward to featuring Louise's home on our pages this autumn. sharland-england.com



Celebrating Traditions

Amechi Mandi's new wallpaper collection

Amechi Mandi's Nigerian and Cameroonian heritage is a key influence on his designs, which explore indigenous African traditions, textiles and cultures and reimagine them with fresh, fun and exciting items that add character to any home.

His charming designs have been made into nine vibrant wallpapers in collaboration with design atelier Dado, featuring striking prints and palettes.

Amechi, who has a degree in furniture and product design, says he is "excited about the collab with Dado and the beautiful wallpaper designs we achieved. My Kirdi collection has been so well received beyond expectations. It has always been my dream to use the lesser known textiles from my African heritage in contemporary interiors. I couldn't be happier with the outcome."

dadoatelier.com; amechihome.com ▶



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Mary Queen Of Prints

Fashion designer Mary Katrantzou's new rugs for The Rug Company

Mary Katrantzou became a sensation the moment her fashion designs debuted on the catwalk at her graduation show. Industry eyes were on the Central Saint Martins Fashion MA graduating class of 2008 thanks to alumni such as John Galliano, Stella McCartney and Lee 'Alexander' McQueen. All at once, she secured elite stockists for her *trompe l'oeil* prints of oversized jewellery on dresses, started her own label, spawned countless imitations and earned the lasting moniker 'Queen Of Prints'.

Today, Athens-born, London-based Mary is an internationally successful fashion designer who has recently launched a collaboration with The Rug Company. Entitled 'A Life In Pattern', it features two rug designs, in two colourways, capturing the magic and movement of her clothes gliding down a catwalk. "By drawing inspiration from our archival prints, our intention is to create beautiful rugs that resemble works of art and permeate a sense of timelessness in one's space," she says.

Inspired by Mary's autumn/winter 2019 collection, which examined the elements of earth, air, fire and water, the 'Feather Marble' design sees swathes of ombré tones moving rhythmically across the rug. Earthy notes and deep purple hues feature in the Maroon colourway, whilst a lighter palette of

blues and neutrals are chosen for the Midnight version.

The beauty of spontaneity is explored in the 'Splatter' rug, with a nod to Jackson Pollock. It is available in the unashamedly joyous Bright colourway, and Silver with a spectrum of grey tones and silk accents, harking back to her autumn/winter 2013 collection which highlighted form and shape over colour.

"People think I'm a maximalist at heart because I work with so much colour, pattern and texture," says Mary. "But I'm more of a purist, in that pattern and form need to come together. The rug collection was looking back at a huge archive of print and trying to figure out what would translate the best in interiors, and specifically in a rug. It was interesting to take patterns that were mapped around a silhouette and look at them when they are freed from that, when pattern can live alone in its purest form. It's so incredible to look at the craftsmanship of something being done knot by knot by knot and the intricacy of these pieces."

Woven by The Rug Company's expert craftspeople using fine Tibetan wool and silk, the rugs are fully customisable and can be made as wall-to-wall and runners. This is Mary's second collaboration with The Rug Company, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary. therugcompany.com ▶





INTERIORS ARE FOR LIVING, NOT JUST LOOKING

I design original, habitable interiors that don't look designed. Blending the old with the new, the pre-loved with the pristine, I create comfortable spaces that are perfectly imperfect.



Seasonal Splendour

New RHS benches by Sitting Spiritually

Sitting Spiritually – the only bespoke swing-seat and bench-maker endorsed by the Royal Horticultural Society – recently launched four new RHS benches, each themed for a different season.

Handcrafted in England from Forest Stewardship Council-certified oak, with a design strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, each bench comes with a hand-carved seasonal insert: Spring features daffodils; Summer a rose (*above*); Autumn has oak leaves and acorns; and Winter features snowdrops.

Blossoming Showcase

RHS Chelsea Flower Show returns

Classic William Morris designs will be reimagined in garden form as part of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, which will make its welcome return to the capital from 24 to 28 May.

Iconic patterns Trellis and Willow Boughs will inspire the garden, which is sponsored by Morris & Co and designed by Ruth Wilmott. Plants depicted in Morris's designs will be included alongside English cottage garden favourites.

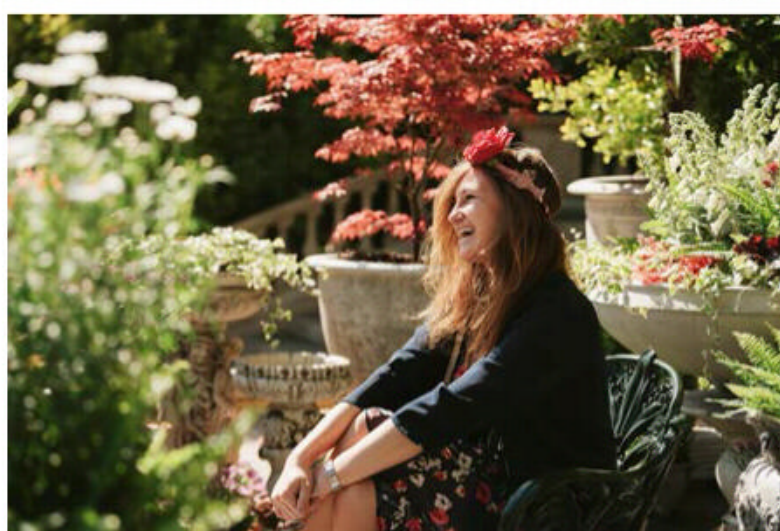
This will be just one of countless must-see attractions at this year's show. Visitors can peruse gardens meticulously designed by industry names such as Chris Beardshaw, Andy Sturgeon and Sarah Eberle, and enjoy wonderful shopping opportunities for both garden and home.

The Great Pavilion will be filled with the glorious sights and scents of spring and some of the world's best growers and nurseries offering stunning displays and expert advice.

rhs.org.uk

Based in Lyme Regis, Sitting Spiritually was founded in 2004 after founder Martin Young was not permitted to open his newly created garden to the public in aid of charity as part of the National Garden Scheme (NGS) as there was nowhere for visitors to sit. Trying and failing to find a wooden swing seat like those he had admired in American films, Martin bought some local oak, and using skills from the carpentry apprenticeship his father had insisted upon, made his own.

Not only was Martin subsequently given the green light to open his garden to the public, but six visitors commissioned him to make them a swing seat – and a new business was born, with his wife Celia making the cushions. sittingspiritually.co.uk



Diary



London Craft Week, 9–15 May, will see over 300 events staged across the capital, showcasing work by more than 400 makers from 25 countries. londoncraftweek.com



Visitors to The Petworth Park Antiques & Fine Art Fair in West Sussex, 13–15 May, will have free access to the 17th-century National Trust house, too. petworthparkfair.com



Treasures from across Europe are on show at The British Museum for *The World Of Stonehenge*, a landmark exhibition on the site's history and mystery. Until 17 July. britishmuseum.org

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Refined designs in fresh palettes create an update on a classic look for spring

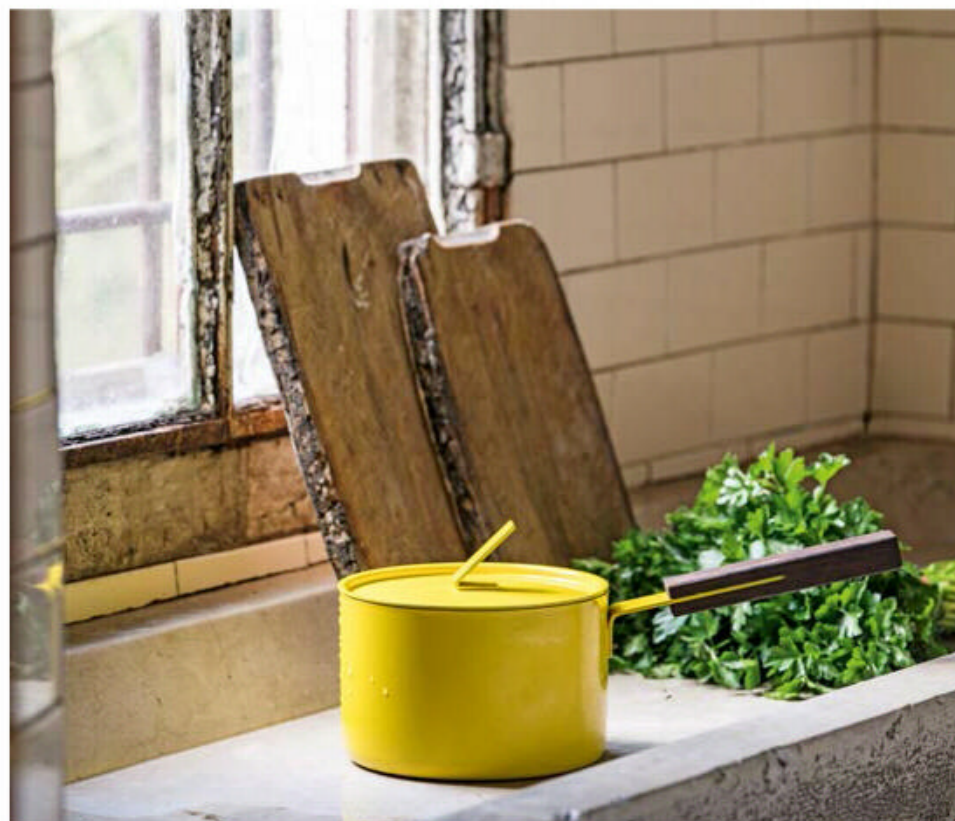
CORNISH CONNECTION

The Cornubia collection, named after the Latin for Cornwall is the second collaboration between Ben Pentreath and Morris & Co. Bringing a delicate awakening of a budding Cornish landscape while paying homage to the Arts and Crafts movement, the revived iconic patterns in bright hues, contrasted here (right) in three textures, add a wonderful originality to a room scheme. *Woodland Weeds wallpaper*, £119 a roll, *Cornubia collection*, Ben Pentreath x Morris & Co



TRUE TO TRADITION

Drawn from a traditional English design, the hand-formed bulbous glass held within a brass frame (above), finished in Antique Verdigris patina, is a staple of Jamb's new collection. Other pieces include elegant chairs and tables perfect for instilling a classic and refined look, all taken from original designs and sensitively reproduced. *Berrington Lamp*, £3,800, *Jamb*



FLASH IN THE PAN

Inspired by a 1960s Nordic mood, KN Industrie's brightly coloured kitchen pieces have been collected by Day True to provide an elegant on and off the hob performance. Brighten weeknight suppers with colourful kitchen equipment that stacks and operates efficiently. *Yellow KN Saucepan*, £78, *KN Industrie* exclusive in the UK to *Collected by Day True*

BRAND NEW

A new furniture and accessory brand to the Design Centre Chelsea Harbour, Charles Orchard's playful take on scalloped and rattan furniture is full of colour and optimism. A mixture of rattan and lacquer, drenched in 11 bold colours marks a proud entry into the UK design market.

*Wave dining table, £1,120;
Trellis dining chair, £380,
both Charles Orchard ▶*





REFINED ELEGANCE

Mid-century nostalgia interwoven in a sleek art deco finish makes up One World's SS22 furniture collection. A versatile look, these classic French and rustic shapes in a washed-out tone are good for both classic interiors and the more contemporary look. *Woodcroft old pine and iron dining table, £1,695; Norton framed beige dining chairs, £395 each, One World*



A VISUAL FEAST

The newest collection from Truffle Tablescapes epitomises founder Kate's long-standing love for interiors. Showcasing the best of wildflowers, greenery and colour, and styled with pretty linens, Wildflower Garden is perfect for long lunches over the May bank holiday.

Braided Seagrass placemats, £42 (set of four); Wildflower Garden tablecloth, £130; Hessian napkin bows, £8 (set of four); Wildflower Garden linen napkins, £24 (set of two); Copper Burnished Candle Holder Duo, £14, all Truffle Tablescapes ▶

PLAYFUL PATTERN

In four colourways, this new feline print from Divine Savages is inspired by designer and co-founder Tom Kennedy's appreciation for early animation chase scenes. Birds swooping and cats watching them around the delicate motifs could inspire budding imaginations in a children's room or nursery.

Bye Bye Birdie, £140 per roll, Divine Savages





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SUMMERTIME SLUMBER

Newly launched enchanting hand-blocked offerings from Sarah K encapsulate the rich hues of high summer roses. In a range of products from wash bags to quilts, these high-quality linens with delicate motifs add a subtle hint of timeless English design. *Pink Ditsy pillowcase, £28; Scarlet Scallop pillowcase, £26; Baby White Scallop pillowcase, £22; Pink Mini Elephant quilt, from £135, all Sarah K*

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

Little Greene's exterior paint collection can stand the test of time as it is formulated from the same technology as paints designed for lighthouses and bridges. Come the warmer months, a fresh lick of paint on exterior walls, doors and furniture will make all the difference whilst lolling in the garden sunshine. *Woodwork, Air Force Blue Traditional Oil Gloss, £75 for 2.5l; Wall, Gauze Intelligent Masonry Paint, £75 for 5l, both Little Greene*

AN ENGLISH ROSE

Flora Roberts' second wallpaper collection for Hamilton Weston celebrates the magic of the spring and summer seasons with a largely floral theme. Quintessentially English, this design (right) would look fabulous rambling in and around a drawing room, bringing the best of a garden inside. (See p72 for more decorating inspiration on bringing the outside in.) *Peony Garden, Blush, £367.50 a roll, Flora Roberts x Hamilton Weston* ■



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SHOPPING



Floral linen lampshade, £58, Helen Round

Macarons from The English Garden collection, from £30 for six, Emma Dodi Cakes



Dinner plate, £39.90 for six; tea cup and saucer, £24.90, Rose Garden collection (available from 15 May), Villeroy & Boch



The English Garden linen tablecloth, from £245; napkins £24 each, both Mila-London



Julia wallpaper, Spring Green, £145 a roll, Elizabeth Ockford



Clover tile, Emily Mitchell, £165, The Shop Floor Project

COUNTRY GARDEN

Bring the glorious beauty of an English country garden into the home with joyous floral motifs depicting native favourites from wildflowers to the classic tea rose. The taste for English botanicals is evident in many new pieces for spring, with painterly techniques capturing the ethereal beauty of blossoming petals or graphical designs modernising trailing foliage for a crisp look. Of course, blowsy chintzes epitomise the classic English country garden look in full bloom with peonies and roses bursting across fabrics in cheerful, gay abandon.

(See p72 for more inspiration on bringing the outdoors in.)



Sakura frilled edge cushion, Vintage Rose, £145, Inchyra

Margot Olive Floral babouche slippers, £42, Bohemia Design



Allendale fabric, Sage, £55 a metre, Warner House

Floribunda Daydream, printed velvet, £34 a metre, Antheia collection, Blendworth



Curtains, Hydrangea, Summer, £20 a metre, Floral Flourish collection, Clarke & Clarke



Peony Sage linen pillowcase set, £69, Antipodream

Rose door knocker, £132, Adams Mack



Large flower knob, £2.99, Knobbles & Bobbles



FEATURE KATY MCLEAN
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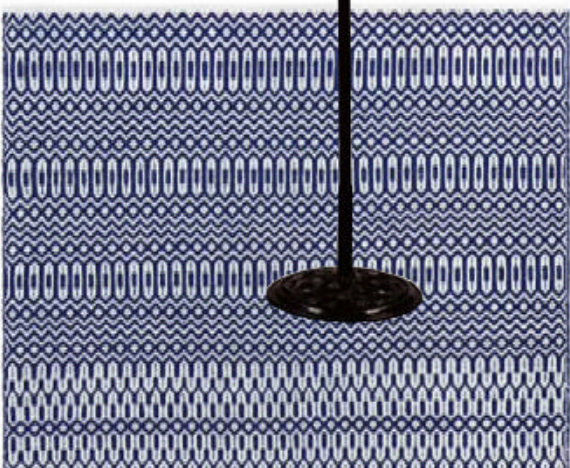
www.tetrad.co.uk

SHOPPING



Balinese fringed parasol, Mint/Silver, £375, Raj Tent Club

Mika Blue outdoor rug, from £219, Moda Furnishings



Gypsum Tropic cushion, £75, Andrew Martin



Cushions (from left): Geo Stripe, Ticking Stripe, Maisie, £46 each, Rebecca Pitcher



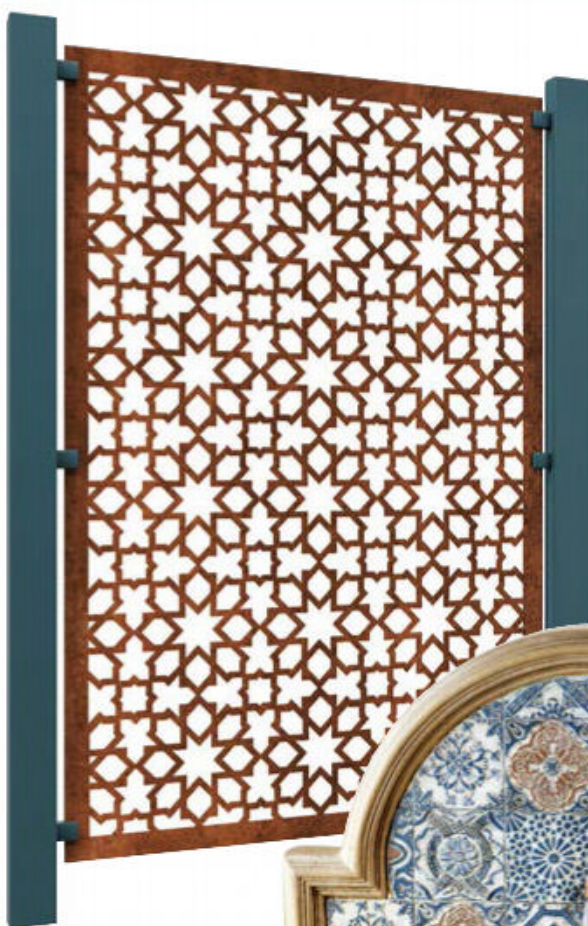
French-style swinging garden chair, £525, Rockett St George

DECORATING AL FRESCO

Planting and landscaping create the framework, backdrop and ambience of a garden, but just like a room indoors, a few well-chosen decorative accessories can make all the difference and bring it to life. Consider it much like a room and include a clock, a statement seat, soft furnishings and heat and light sources for the evening. Whether adding comfort with rugs and cushions, a spot more colour with pretty tiles, or even a soothing water feature, these details will elevate an outdoor space into a welcoming place to spend a lazy afternoon.



Bibury timber planters, from £476; terracotta pots, from £15, all Neptune



Marrakech corten steel fence panel £429, Stark & Greensmith



Bee Hotel 2.0, £26.99, Beevive



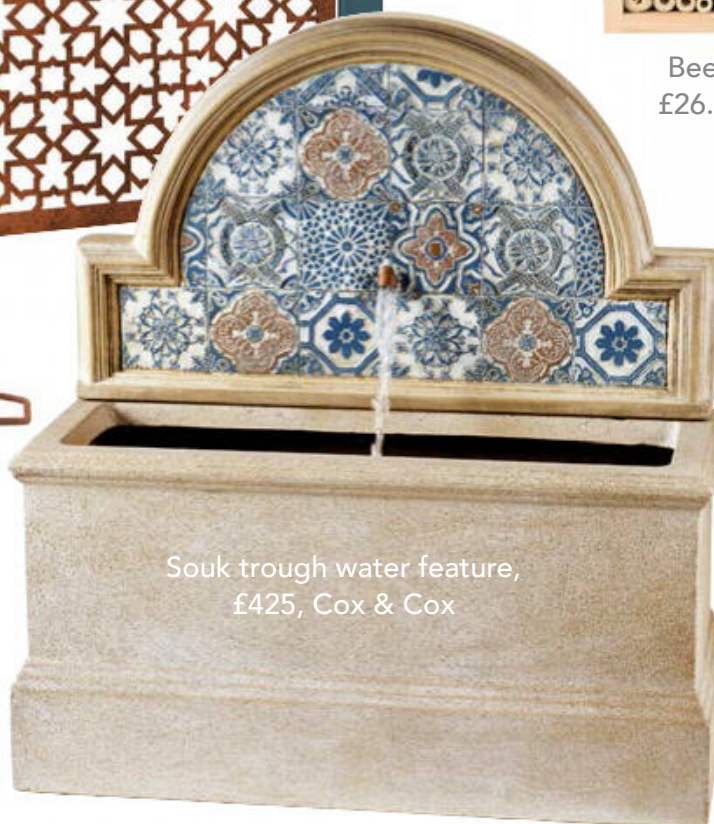
Pink Pradena tiles, £74.70 a square metre for porcelain, £165 a square metre for encaustic, Bert & May x Fired Earth



Antique Brass skeletal outdoor wall clock, £99, Beaumonde



Potco Spark Rust fire pit, £75, Sproutl



Souk trough water feature, £425, Cox & Cox



Oval gold lantern, £34.99, Dobbies

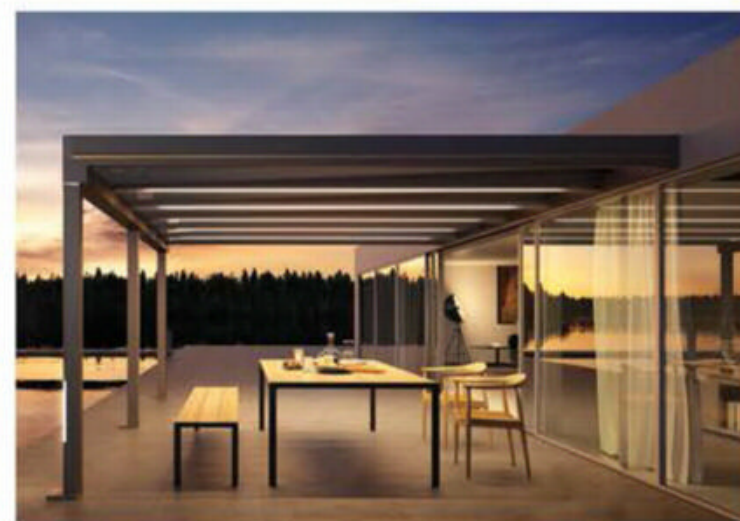
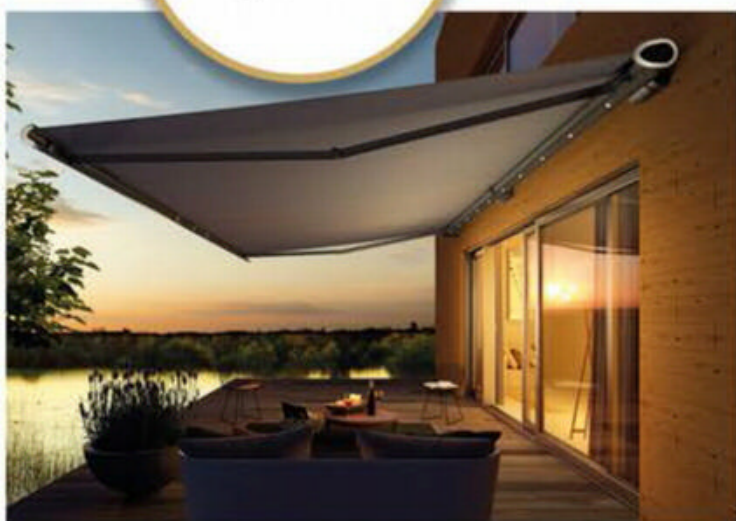
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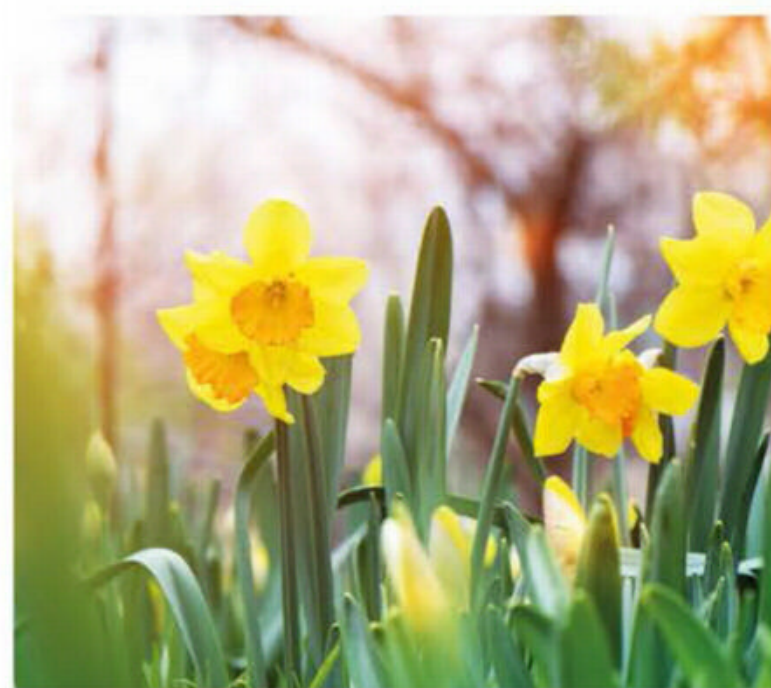


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THE EDIT

Editor-at-Large Kate Freud explores a colourful mix of pattern, print, flooring, lighting and outdoor furniture



COLE & SON

With block-print designs, screen prints, original drawings and wallpapers representing styles from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, it comes as no surprise that fabric and wallpaper brand Cole & Son has one of the most important historic archives in the industry.

Founded in 1875 by John Perry, the brand's designs have adorned the walls of many historic houses, including Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament, as well as its collaboration with Historic Royal Palaces, so it is no surprise their new collection has taken on a regal flavour.

The Great Masters collection, inspired by the magnificent architecture, interiors, collections and gardens, pays homage to the master artisans, craftsmen and celebrated monarchs who shaped the six iconic residences cared for by Historic Royal Palaces. From Hampton Court Palace with its unique mix of Tudor and baroque style, to Kensington Palace with its decorative Victorian charm, and the imposing Tower of London, each design is steeped in history, and the intricacy of the drawings needs to be seen to be believed. cole-and-son.com

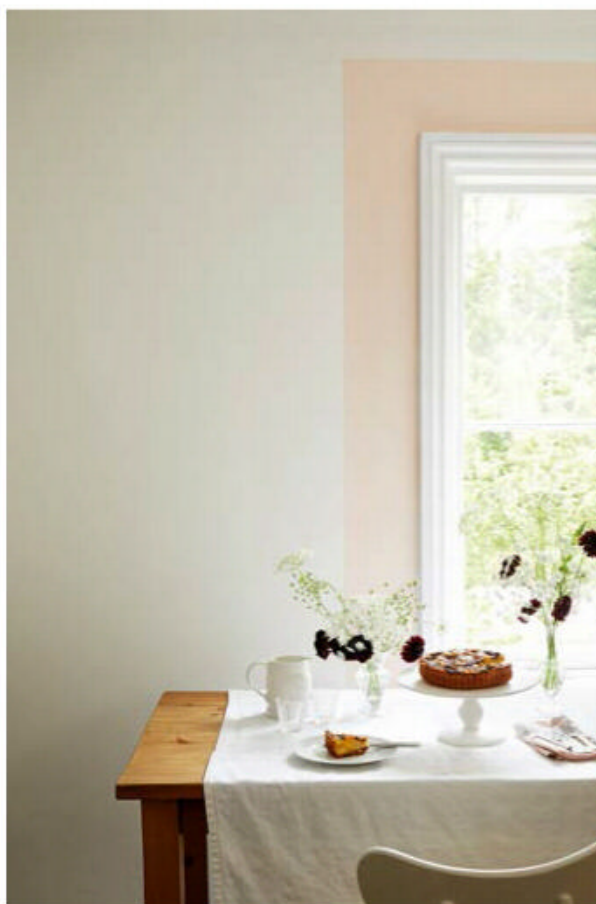


EARTHBORN PAINTS

When the Dison family launched Earthborn Paints back in 2002, it was with one clear objective in mind – to create a sustainable, environmentally friendly alternative to conventional paint, without compromising on beautiful colour.

Still run by the family today, Earthborn has spent years perfecting a blend of paint that is healthier not only for the environment but also for our homes. Add to that, the paints are vegan-friendly, child- and baby-safe, and free from harmful emissions and odour, the only problem is which colour to go for.

With 84 glorious shades to choose from, there is something for every scheme, including Lily Lily Rose, the brand's Colour of the Year 2022, in all its tranquil blended lilac, pink and grey glory. This spring, there is also the ever cheerful Peach Baby and light turquoise Milk Jug for subtle pops of colour in pastel tones. earthbornpaints.co.uk ▶



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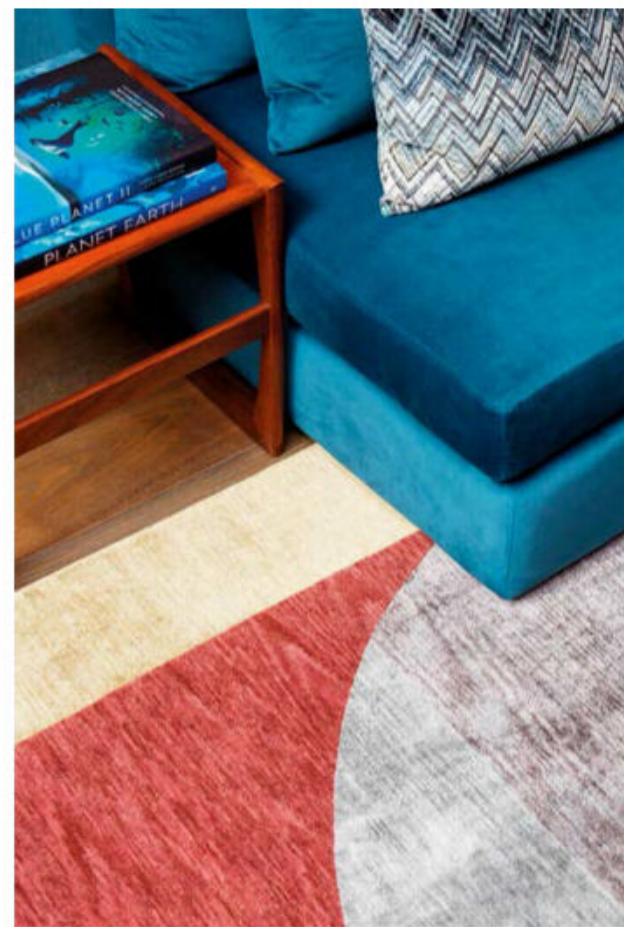


JENNIFER MANNERS

Rug designer Jennifer Manners has always found inspiration for her creations from the far-flung corners of the world she visited during her previous career in international news. After retraining as an interior designer at Central Saint Martins in London, she founded her company in 2012, designing rugs that would tell a story and immediately setting herself apart through her use of innovation, colour and a passion for the technical side of handmade rugs. She and her team work with the world's most influential interior designers and architects, creating truly individual pieces for each project.

So, when she joined forces with award-winning interior design studio Zulufish we knew we were in for something special. Designed to celebrate both form and function, the rugs are produced in a palette of rich, earthy tones that imbue a natural, architectural feel to modern spaces. The four-piece collection explores a myriad of shapes from circles to ovals, and all designs are handcrafted from the finest bamboo silk and Himalayan wools.

jennifermanners.co.uk



BRIDGMAN

Pioneered by three generations of expert furniture-makers since 1977, Bridgman has created the kind of award-winning furniture and accessories that have redefined how we spend time relaxing and entertaining in our homes. For example, the brand's waterproof outdoor cushions were developed over six years to ensure resistance to stains, spillages and the erratic English weather. Its outdoor furniture is made with fade-resistant fabric, so it does not lose its colour over the years in the sunshine.

This year, to celebrate its 45th anniversary, it Bridgman has designed

the Ascot Modular Collection, each piece upholstered in beautiful fade-resistant, fully waterproof and highly stain-resistant fabric for the ultimate al fresco lounging experience in the comfort of your own garden.

Also keep an eye out for the Monaco Collection, drawing inspiration from luxury yachting, each dining and lounge chair is crafted using premium polyethylene rope, expertly handwoven, intertwined and knotted around an aluminium frame to create a minimalist look perfect for modern outdoor living. bridgman.co.uk



BESSELINK & JONES

Lighting brand Besselink & Jones has come a long way since its humble beginnings more than 60 years ago. Today it is better known for creating specialist projects for luxury hotels like the Ritz in Paris and the Astoria in St Petersburg, as well as numerous private residences.

The company expertly converts ceramics and decorative treasures into unique lamps, as well as restoring everything from delicate antiques to heavy chandeliers. Based at its workshops in London, its team comprises engineers, woodturners, designers, draftsmen and artists, and some of the finest millers, spinners, platers and polishers in the world.

For spring, look out for the brand's elegant Sirius Star Lantern (above right), which beautifully diffuses light around a room, or the Byron Carved Chandelier in Antique White, for pared-back country-style glamour. besselink.com ■



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Bold green tones flow all the way around the kitchen. The cabinets are painted in high gloss Absolute Green from Benjamin Moore, with matt and gloss Kaleidos tiles from Domus Group above. The bespoke banquette window seat and Carrara marble and brass table are by interior designer Max Buston.



All in
THE DETAIL

An uplifting, contemporary mix of colour and pattern has brought literary agent Madeleine Milburn's Victorian home to life

FEATURE & STYLING CLAIR WAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER



‘It’s about making the house feel unified, but at the same time being playful and making sure there’s interest everywhere you look’

ABOVE Reclaimed oak from the Netherlands was used to make the extra-wide sofa in the conservatory. The Malahide wall colour from Edward Bulmer Natural Paint brings warmth to the space. The T-brace coffee table was sourced from Restoration Hardware in New York.

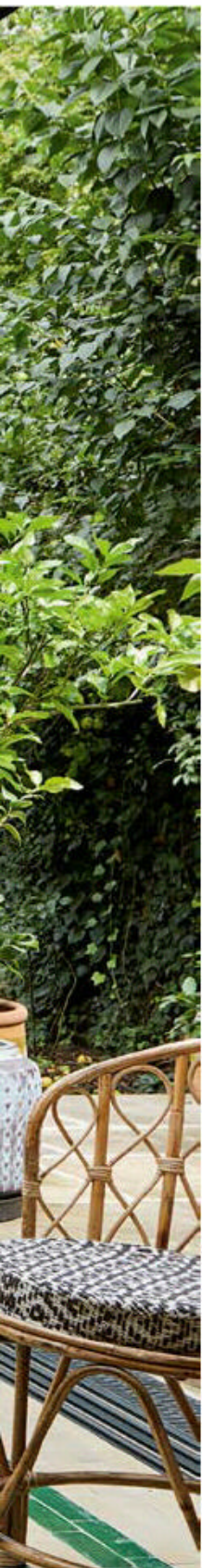
While out exploring the wide, tree-lined streets of Clapham in London one day, back in early 2018, literary agents Madeleine and Giles Milburn spotted a house for sale that immediately captivated them. “It wasn’t a route we’d normally take, so it was pure chance that we saw the house. The road had a delightful atmosphere, with beautifully cared for front gardens filled with colour. It felt like a dream place to live,” remembers Madeleine.

Since the arrival of their daughter Hope, now six, the couple had begun to outgrow their two-bedroomed shepherd’s cottage in Clapham Old Town, so were keen to take a closer look at the enchanting three-storey Victorian semi-detached property. “When I first stepped inside, I remember the owner had been

cooking marmalade, and a delicious smell permeated the rooms,” Madeleine says. “The house was run-down but had a real charm that reminded me of my childhood home. I could tell it was a special place and I felt completely at home.”

Upon moving in, Madeleine and Giles decided to live in the house for a year to work out the best plan of action before commencing the renovation. During this time, they enlisted the help of Madeleine’s brother, Max Buston, who runs his interior design studio from a boutique shop on Richmond Hill. Max had redesigned the couple’s new offices in a converted warehouse nearby, and they were so impressed they asked him to redesign their house.

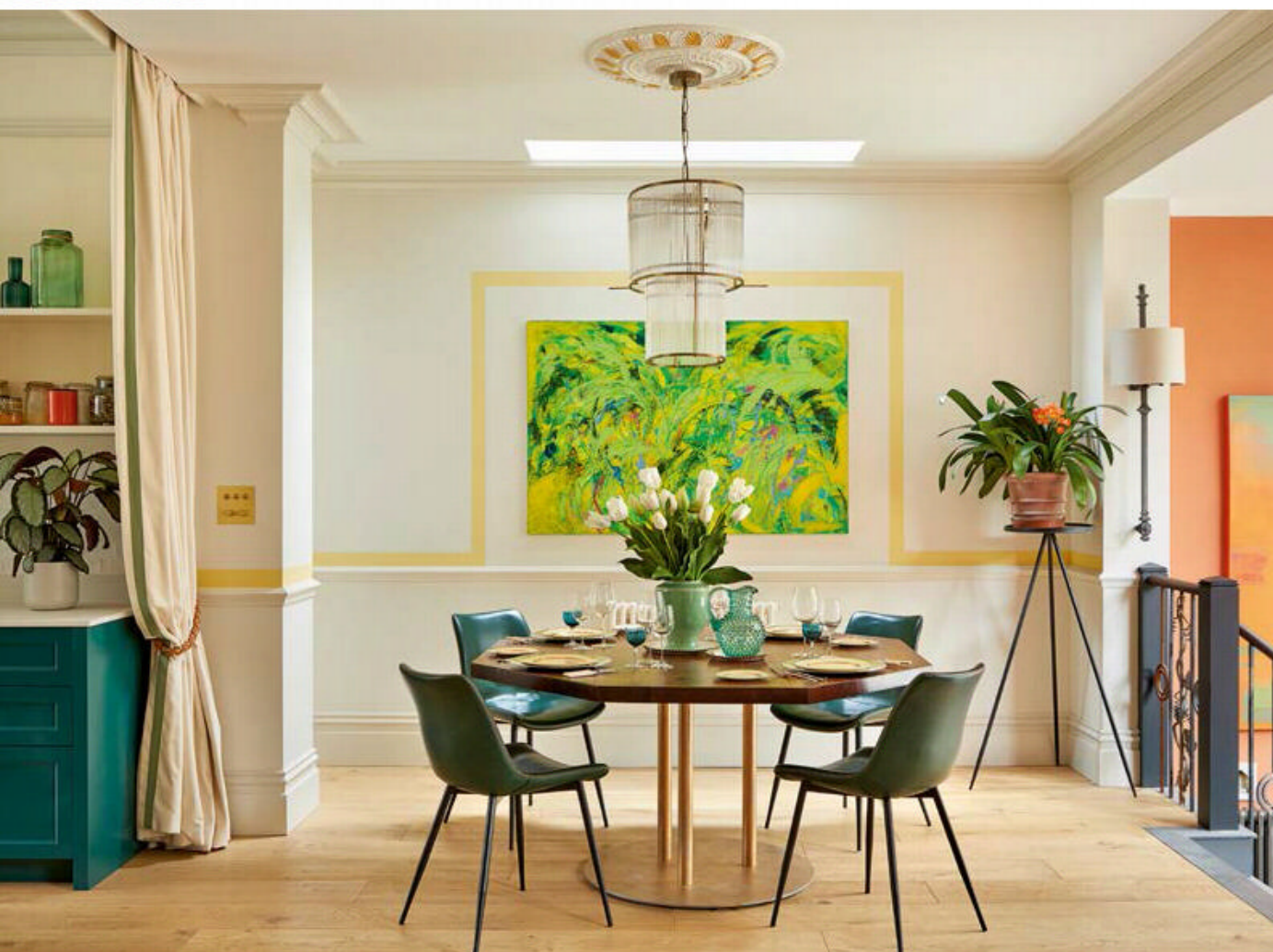
“In that first year, Max sent us on missions to define our taste,” Madeleine explains. “While we were on a ▶



RIGHT Blinds, hung at different levels for a playful feel, are made using a green linen called Travelling Light by Kit Kemp for Christopher Farr. The colourful bird prints are taken from a John Derian book.

BELOW LEFT An eye-catching painting by Madeleine and Max's mother, Ursula Buston, is framed by a yellow border. The bespoke octagonal dining table maximises space.

BELOW RIGHT The front door is painted in Glass IV from Paint & Paper Library. Max designed the front garden to have a Mediterranean feel.





A red and white geometric patterned sofa is the centerpiece, adorned with a vibrant green pillow and a white pillow featuring a green leaf pattern. A floor lamp with a colorful, patterned shade stands to the left, casting a warm glow. The room is brightened by a large window with patterned curtains, offering a view of a lush green garden. In the foreground, a stack of books is visible, including one titled 'GYPSY' and another 'BOMB DAMAGE'.

A wooden armchair with a brown leather seat and backrest is positioned near the window. A small round wooden side table holds a mug and a bowl. The window is dressed with patterned curtains and offers a view of a lush green garden.

A stack of books is visible in the foreground, including one titled 'GYPSY' and another 'BOMB DAMAGE'. A green and white striped ottoman is also present.



‘It’s been satisfying combining the Victorian character with a contemporary feel. We feel happy surrounded by all this colour’

business trip to New York for our literary agency, he gave us a schedule of shops to visit, including Restoration Hardware and John Derian. It was a real learning curve. We sent him pictures, and by the end of it, he had filled a whole shipping container that was sent over to the UK.”

The year-long renovation commenced in October 2019, and during this time, the house was taken back to its bare bones and reconfigured to suit modern family life. Once everything was stripped back, it became abundantly clear just how dilapidated the house was. “It hadn’t been touched for 30 years, and everything needed to be renewed,” Madeleine says.

“As soon as we started taking the plaster off the walls and carpet off the floors, we realised that the house was falling down. It felt endless.”

Site visits were often nerve-racking, and it was Max who was the calming force. “There was a point when we were standing in the house, and we looked up, and there was no roof, no floors, and basically just four walls; it was terrifying,” recalls Madeleine.

Having the opportunity to be involved in the renovation right from the start gave Max a blank canvas and full scope to create fluid, free-flowing spaces that connect with the outside. Besides removing walls and creating a tranquil bedroom suite on the top ▶

ABOVE The Ursula Buston artwork over the fireplace was commissioned to enhance the sitting room’s colours.

OPPOSITE The curtains are in GP & J Baker’s Trebizon, while the sofa is in Gaston y Daniela’s Lecco Rojo. Cushions in Willow by Sister Parish add dynamism.



ABOVE LEFT The serene principal bedroom suite, where an Indian kantha bedcover, from Max Buston Design, ties in with cushions made using Palio fabric from C&C Milano. Tigre ribbon, also from C&C Milano, adds interest to the walls. Max's boutique shop is now open. To learn more, visit maxbuston.com

floor, Max opened up the ground floor so the kitchen, dining area and sitting room all interlink. The dining area was once a dark, unused space with a low ceiling, but thanks to Max's ingenuity, the ceiling was raised and a light well added.

A wide, wrought-iron staircase leads down from the ground floor into a tropical-style conservatory at the back of the house, with striking Moroccan tiles laid in an elaborate pattern. Evoking far-flung places, the new spacious conservatory has replaced a poky lean-to garden room that was cut off from the rest of the house by a wall. Once the wall was removed, a stunning vista was created, allowing the family to enjoy uninterrupted views from the front to the back of the house. "The long vista is one of the most magical aspects of the house - sitting at the kitchen table, with

sunshine pouring in through the bay window, you can see all the way through to the glass extension, with views of trees blowing in the breeze in the back garden," says Max.

Max, who previously worked on design projects around the world as designer and hotelier Anouska Hempel's studio director, gently pushed Madeleine and Giles out of their comfort zone. Myriad colours and patterns are interwoven to create inviting interiors. The effect seems effortless but is a precise alchemy.

Every weekend during the pandemic, Max, Madeleine and Giles would look at fabrics, colourways and mood boards. "We were inspired by a stay at the Crosby Street Hotel in New York and wanted the interiors to be uplifting, vibrant and punchy. Our vision was for every room to have an



‘We wanted the interiors to be uplifting, vibrant and punchy. Our vision was for every room to have an artistic feel, like a piece of art’

artistic feel, like a piece of art,” says Madeleine. A mix of Spanish, American and Italian patterned fabrics, in various scales, was eventually chosen to create an individual and cosmopolitan feel.

“The lovely thing about this house is that there is so much colour going on, but in a balanced way,” explains Max. “The patterned fabrics all have a soft, neutral background colour which creates a calm, unified scheme that’s also practical for family life. The walls are painted in pale shades of stone to offset the colour. The joy of working on this project was the amount of detail we could go into. Harmony, proportion and symmetry are fundamental to this design. It’s about making the whole house feel unified, but at the same time being playful and making sure there’s interest everywhere you look.”

These interesting details include whimsical painted lines and ribbon borders that frame artwork and bring vibrancy to the walls. Max has also focused on the play of light around the house. Kitchen cabinets and architectural mouldings have been painted in a high gloss to add shimmer. Backsplash tiles are a mix of matt and gloss, whilst mirrors on either side of the kitchen windows reflect light. Gold accents glow and add a feeling of warmth, particularly at night.

This attention to detail also carries through to bespoke furniture designed to fit the interiors and maximise space. A bespoke table has been teamed with a practical, banquette window seat in the newly designed kitchen, and a four-metre-long sofa was created for the conservatory so the family can lie back and look up at the stars. ▶

ABOVE LEFT The Aequus bath from William Holland brings a luxurious feel to the principal en-suite bathroom. The blind fabric is C&C Milano’s Pienza Rafano linen.

ABOVE RIGHT A built-in dressing table cleverly makes use of an unusual space.



As Madeleine and Giles are literary agents, Max was keen to make books a focal point in the sitting room and designed bookcases, edged in gold, to make the space personal to them. “Even though one wall is wider than the other, I’ve created the appearance of symmetry by installing a pair of bookcases measuring the same width, flanking the fireplace,” he explains.

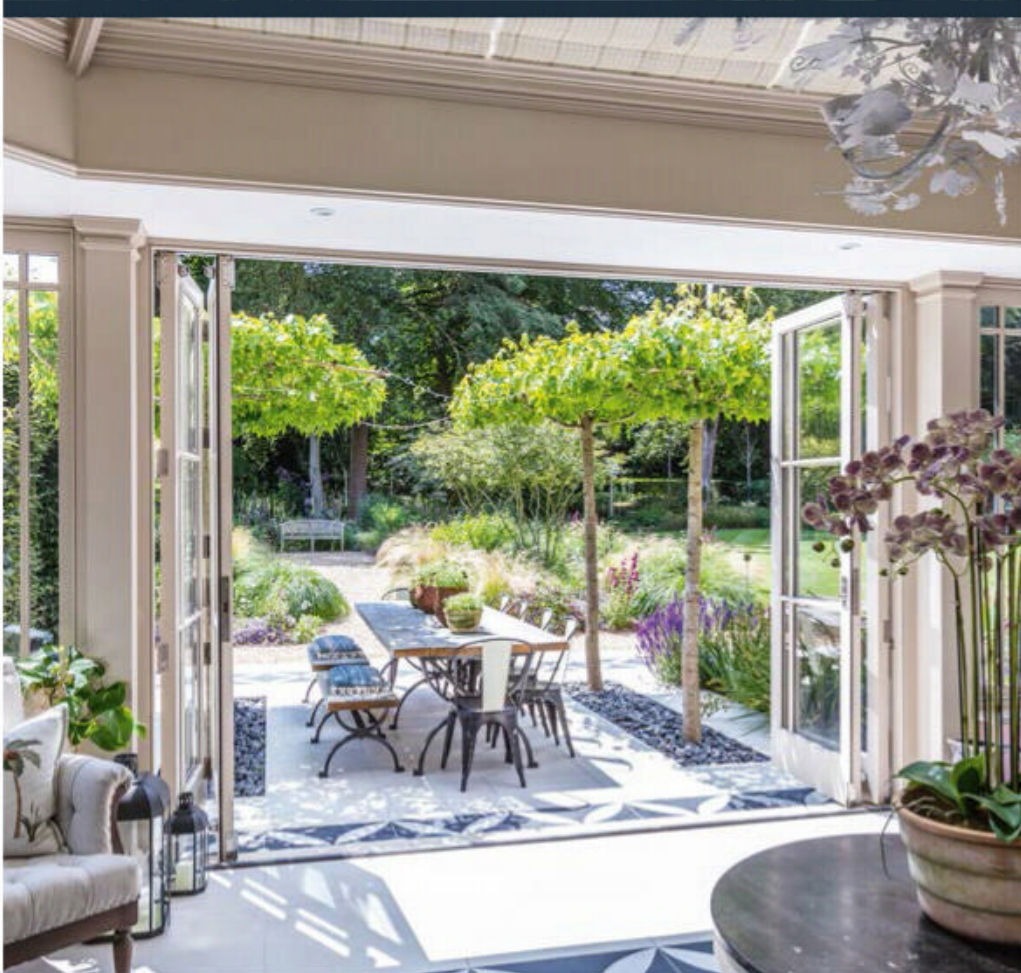
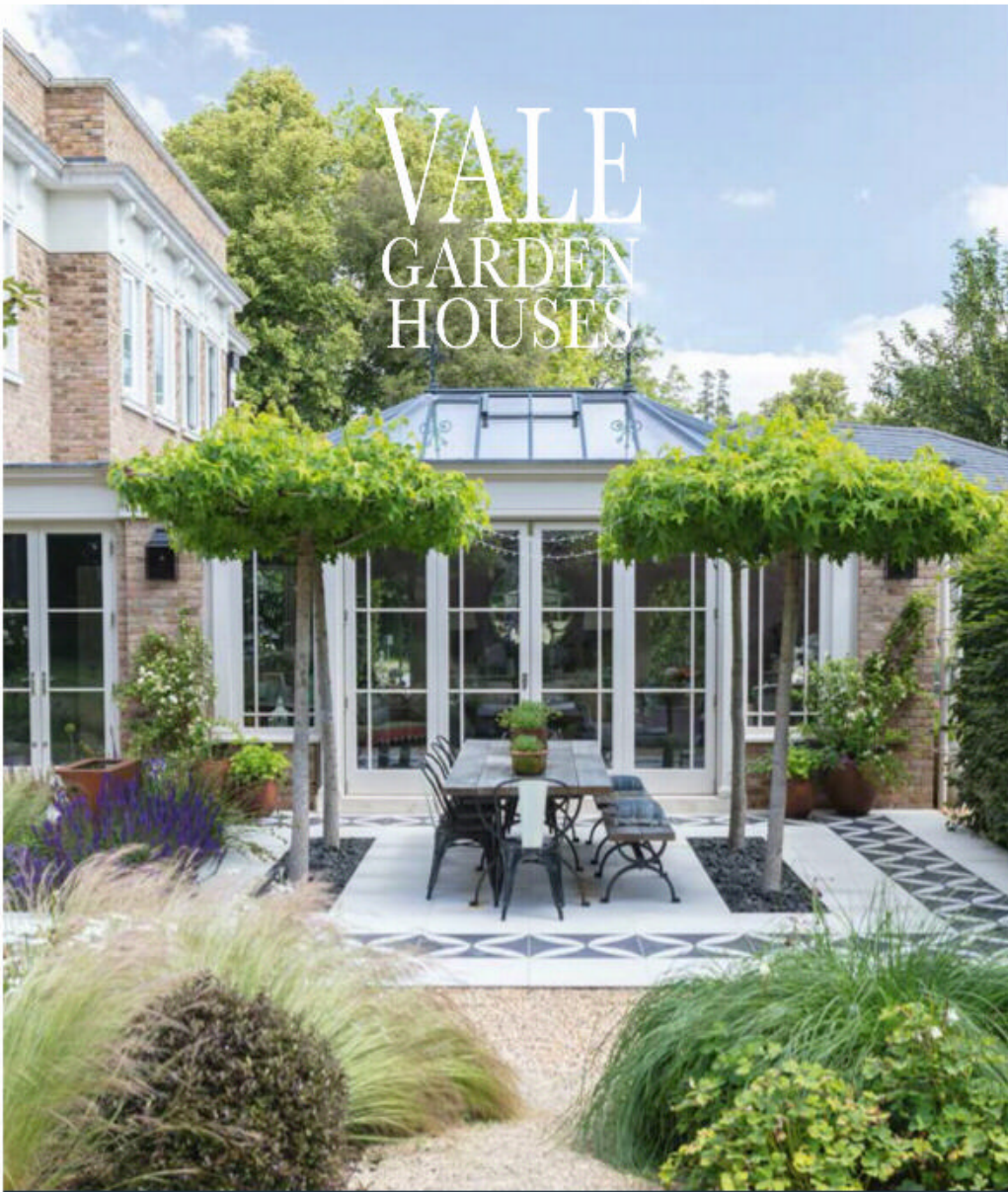
Fascinated by the history of the property, Madeleine and Giles discovered that the houses on the road were built around 1890 for middle-class professionals, and that a retired naval captain lived in their house in the early 20th century. Although a lot of the original plaster mouldings were unsalvageable, Max went to great lengths to source architectural mouldings that were in keeping with the era of the house.

Now that the interiors are complete, Madeleine, Giles and Hope are over the moon with their newly rejuvenated home. “It’s been satisfying combining the graceful Victorian character with a playful, contemporary feel,” Madeleine says. “We feel happy surrounded by all this colour.” ■

ABOVE In the guest bedroom, Tiger Tiger curtain fabric from Jim Thompson is combined with cushions in Painted Ikat by Helene Blanche. The lampshade is from Munro and Kerr and the Aristotle Greek Key ribbon running along the wall is by Samuel & Sons.

RIGHT A whimsical wallpaper called Sur Le Nil by Pierre Frey adds a fun touch to the guest en-suite bathroom.





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A light TOUCH

Updating a Cotswold manor house to suit contemporary life has been a rewarding challenge for interior designer Grant White

FEATURE & STYLING COSMO BROCKWAY
PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MCDONALD



LEFT The front of the house was aggrandised in the 1750s, a century after the original house was built. Today the honey-coloured facade is one of the most seductive in the area having been given new life by its adoring owner.

ABOVE In the original stone-flagged porch a 17th-century English stained oak settle provides somewhere to sit for a moment and admire the spectacular scenery from the front door.



‘Eschewing a traditional country house look, I have created rooms that are elegant, unfussy, playful and respectfully appropriate for the house’

ABOVE A French 19th-century gilt mirror in the entrance hall and a mirror at the end bring more light into the space and reflect a flower arrangement on a stone plinth in an Oliver Messel touch.

Interior designer Grant White remembers first glimpsing his enchanting Cotswold retreat as he came over a hill and saw it shimmering in the far distance, surrounded by hedged fields, nestled amongst trees. Manor Farm is so quintessentially English, it is a surprise to learn that Grant is, in fact, a Cape Town native, albeit one who has made London his base for the last three decades. A sought-after interior designer, he has worked all over the world, on residences from Mustique to Belgravia.

In 2019, shortly after acquiring the property, Grant, and his business partner, Aurelie Breliet, decided to

move from their large industrial studio in Parsons Green, London to the spacious farm buildings near the house. A prescient move when, six months later, the pandemic struck. Now, Grant’s commute to the office is a short stroll across the lawn, although he still spends a few days a week in London for meetings. Reflecting on his affinity for this beautiful, rather hidden, corner of Gloucestershire, he says, “This area captured my heart immediately, with its secret valleys, woodland, dingly dells and miles of dry-stone walls.”

Having previously rented a cottage on the Ditchley Park Estate, once home to the great decorator Nancy



Lancaster, Grant was used to the routine of a weekend escape, the car loaded with food, and friends invited for Sunday lunch. However, somewhere more long-term was needed. Grant knew Manor Farm well, as its colourful, aristocratic former owner was a close friend, and serendipitously, the property eventually became his. "Its rather austere exterior belied a faded highly-decorated and opulent interior," reflects Grant of his new home.

The charmingly rambling 17th-century farmhouse, with its mullioned windows and a gabled, honey-coloured facade, was grandly enlarged in the 1750s. The challenge for Grant was to somehow make it liveable for the 21st century. "It was tired and confusing," remembers Grant with a wry laugh. "A 1950s Formica kitchen, pastel bathrooms and brutal exposed central heating pipework were just some of the

issues." Once all of the offending elements were removed, the house was, in Grant's words, "forlorn". "The arrangement of rooms was not at all suited to modern life," he adds. The main reception rooms were at the front of the house, while the kitchen seemed distant and cold. The bones, however, were excellent. His energy and enthusiasm saw the house lose its 1980s embellishments and "open up and transform into a simpler, less formal, but elegant family house".

Grant also removed lowered ceilings, originally essential for heat insulation. This transformed previously claustrophobic rooms into capacious spaces with original beams and flooded with light. The house began to breathe, the relief felt palpable, and, in turn, he resolved to echo the sense of freedom in the interior decoration. ▶

ABOVE The velvet and Fortuny fabric screens in the library were commissioned in the 1970s by the Marquess of Bristol for Ickworth, his country seat. The studded green velvet stools are from Pure White Lines while the rug is from Sklum.

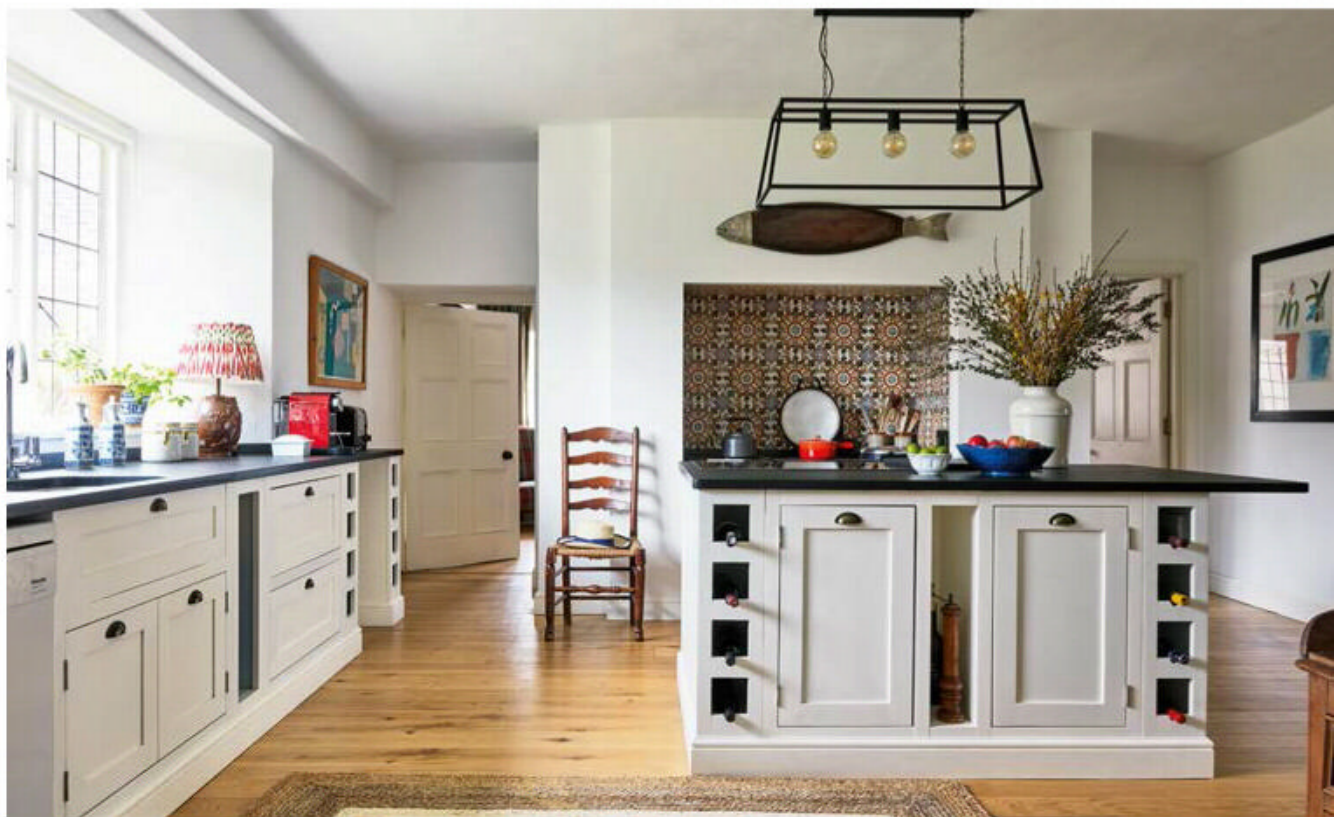


Tranquil yet impactful, the rooms are allowed to sit in comfortable silence rather than chatter with unnecessary flourishes

Eschewing a traditional country house look, Grant has created rooms he describes as “elegant, unfussy, playful and respectfully appropriate for the house”. A unifying blank canvas was conjured up with the use of Leyland’s trade white emulsion across each and every room. “Satisfyingly very inexpensive, given the amount the house needed,” he says, the warm white paint was the perfect neutral foil needed for his eclectic finds peppered around the interiors. The drawing room features a pair of stainless steel bookcases displaying traditional African art, in a striking nod to Grant’s heritage. At the same time, a side table dances with a collection of Ethiopian Coptic crosses and an oversized lamp for bold scale. Nothing is timid in his outlook or aesthetic.

The wide flags are a keynote of the central hall, which is lined, like much of the house, with antique gilt mirrors, oversized console tables and Florentine candlesticks. Tranquil, yet impactful, the rooms are allowed to sit in comfortable silence rather than chatter with unnecessary flourishes.

Manor Farm is a new chapter in Grant’s aesthetic and a skin he wears with apparent comfort and ease. The kitchen is a clear example of this confident approach, with an almost Mediterranean spartan ▶



TOP Mid-century leather and chrome Brno chairs by Mies van de Rohe in the drawing room complement the Paul Evans bookcases, which hold various African artworks. The painting above the stone fireplace is by Andrew Norrey and brings a contemplative depth to the space.

ABOVE Grant knocked through walls to create the airy open-plan kitchen with cabinetry by The Shaker Kitchen Company in Cirencester. The antique ladderback chair is a reminder that this is a country-house kitchen at its heart.

The carved 17th-century dining suite was inherited from an aristocratic friend and adds atmosphere to the dining room. Delft tulipiere vases are perfect for instant flower arranging.





‘This area captured my heart immediately, with its secret valleys, woodland, dingy dells and dry-stone walls’

ABOVE In the principal bedroom, the handsome four-poster bed was sourced at a local auction and sets the scene with a vintage Colefax and Fowler floral chintz. Grant bleached the floorboards to lend the room a more modern touch. Visit grantwhitedesign.com to see more of Grant’s interior design work.

cleanness, perfectly complementing the high ceilings and large windows.

In the library, Fortuny fabric cushions sing on a midnight-blue velvet sofa, next to undyed linen curtains edged in sapphire-blue. The effect, like everything with Grant, is both disarming and seductive. Ever inventive, he brought many of his tricks of the decorating trade into play when transforming his home. The patchwork of wooden floors was unified using a Norwegian ship deck oil called Faxe, while lightning strikes of colour were introduced with vibrant ikat lampshades from Pooky and Oka.

Upstairs, the pitched ceilings of the landing evoke a *Downton Abbey*-in-miniature feel. Grant often stands at the upstairs windows and gazes out across the glorious, far-reaching countryside, musing about life and how fate has brought him here. “Views across the fields here are timelessly English,” he says. Perched on the Golden Valley, with all its surrounding folds of land and woods, this charming country house has well and truly entered a new and exciting chapter. ■





ABOVE An upper-floor bedroom sports a striking gold-leaf painted antique Chinese screen, one of the many objets Grant, with his discerning taste, has found at the fine art sales he loves to frequent.



RIGHT The bedroom landing has been given a blue-and-white theme led by a beautiful vintage Nordic dowry chest. Grant's keen eye for detail leaves no space overlooked. LEFT The secluded swimming pool offers a tranquil spot to relax. The house is available for short-term holiday rentals. Visit manorfarmsapperton.com to find out more.





Modern COUNTRY

Interior designer Annabel Grimshaw has combined traditional floral patterns with modern touches to create her own unique version of English country style

FEATURE & STYLING JO LEEVERS PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

The walls in the sitting room are painted in Light Peach Blossom by Little Greene. The vintage armchairs are covered in Jardine by Colefax and Fowler, contrasting with the Pienza Chevron fabric by C&C Milano on the sofa. The ottoman is covered in Hemant by Penny Morrison.



Wilma the cat surveys the kitchen from the back door, which leads into a walled garden. The bench is Oka, with a cushion in Pueblos by Pierre Frey. Walls in Setting Plaster by Farrow & Ball add a natural warmth





‘I see it as a modern interpretation of traditional English style. I try to add something old, something new and something a little bit surprising too’

Annabel Grimshaw has always had a love of fabrics, wallpapers and paint, but since moving to this 18th-century house in a Somerset village, she has found herself erring towards styles that are rooted in nature. “Now we live in the country, I’m increasingly drawn towards patterns that involve flowers, leaves and birds,” she explains.

Annabel and her husband Daniel previously lived in London, in a Victorian house that exuded a far more sleek and contemporary character. However, four years ago, they decided to swap the streets of South London for the quiet byways of a Somerset village, heralding a new lifestyle for themselves and their two children, Frank, seven, and Margot, five.

“We were ready for a change of pace,” Annabel says. “We started to look around villages in Somerset, focusing on ones that were within easy reach of Bath because it’s a creative city that has good links to London. This village has its own identity and strong sense of community, which was also important to us.”

The house was one of only two that Annabel and Daniel viewed in the area and, initially, they were hesitant about taking on a such a large property. However, as Annabel runs Annabel Grimshaw Interior Design and Daniel runs his own design and construction company, they were under no illusion about how much work this house might involve, particularly as it is Grade II listed. “But once we had viewed the house, we couldn’t stop thinking about it and its potential,” she remembers. “It felt unique, with so much character.”

A bonus of this house was that it included a separate one-bedroom annexe, which Annabel now runs as a holiday let. This was redecorated first, which meant that the family of four could stay there while work progressed on their main house: “It was a bit of a squeeze, but as it was only for the short term we managed fine,” she says.

As anticipated, it took a little while for their building plans to be approved by the local council, but eventually Annabel and Daniel got the go-ahead for ▶

ABOVE The kitchen cabinets have been repainted in Ho Ho Green by Little Greene. The walls are painted in Setting Plaster by Farrow & Ball and the tiles are Ville by Milagros.



‘Moving to a period home in the countryside, I found myself embracing chintzes, florals, and fringing. I saw a new charm to them’

TOP LEFT Annabel in one the sitting room’s deep window seats. To see Annabel’s interior design work, visit annabelgrimshaw.com

ABOVE Annabel and Daniel’s Somerset home dates from the early 18th century.

ABOVE RIGHT The sitting room is painted in Hunter Dunn by Paint & Paper Library. A Matilda Goad lampshade tops a Pooky lamp base.

their modifications, which were in keeping with the heritage and character of the building. “Our main alteration to the layout was removing stud walls upstairs to create a corridor with bedrooms and a bathroom leading off it and a staircase at either end. Our suggestion actually gave the house a more satisfying and unified layout,” Annabel explains.

The core of the house dates from the early 18th century, with a one-up, one-down cottage next door joined at a later date and a more recent kitchen extension added in the 1980s. As Annabel and Daniel settled into the village community, they started to discover the history behind their home. “Almost everyone we’ve met has a story to tell about this house,” Annabel says. “We’ve heard about its past life as a bed and breakfast, and even how local people built the garden wall during the war. We immediately felt

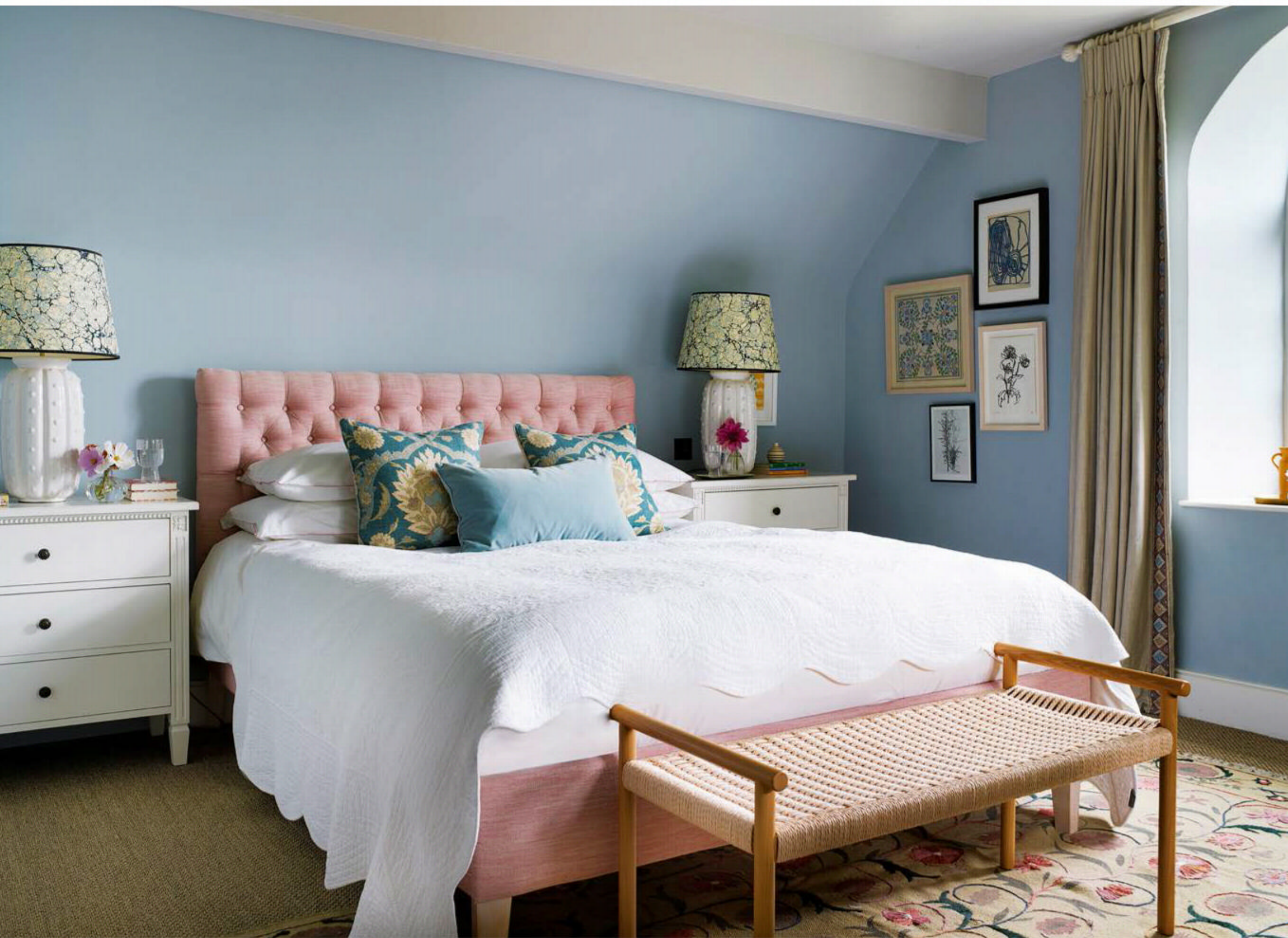
part of village life, simply through learning about the house’s past.”

Tuning into the house’s story was also how Annabel approached the decoration, by celebrating its past, but also adding subtly modern notes. Two reception rooms lie either side of the central front door and Annabel has created a different mood in each. “I’ve used traditional fabrics to create an immersive feel in each room,” she explains. In the more ‘grown-up’ sitting room on the right, a dusky pink backdrop is enlivened with extravagant motifs by Colefax and Fowler, deftly mixed with patterns by Penny Morrison, Pierre Frey and Lewis & Wood. “It’s a style that celebrates a sense of English eclecticism and works well with vintage furniture, which I’ve always loved,” Annabel says.

The family’s London home, which made an impact with moody dark colours and a modern kitchen, is ▶



A well-loved sofa in the sitting room is perfect for the children's TV and film nights. The centre cushion in Le Rocher Broderie by Pierre Frey links with the vibrant ikat print on the footstool. A set of prints by John Derian shines out against walls in Hunter Dunn by Paint & Paper Library.



ABOVE Bedside tables from Neptune flank the bed from Sofa.com in the principal bedroom. The Hartford table lamps by Vaughan are topped with marbled shades by Inq.Ink. The bench is from Zara Home.

LEFT Benaki wallpaper by Lewis & Wood brings an airiness to the bathroom. Both the bath and the basin are from Burlington.

now a distant memory. “Moving to a period home in the countryside, I felt a need to change our style,” Annabel explains. “I found myself embracing chintzes, florals and fringing. I saw a new charm to them.”

The sitting room, which lies to the left of the front door, is where the couple’s children tend to spread out and watch television or play games. With walls painted in a deep green shade it immediately has a different mood to the pink sitting room. “This room seemed to demand a stronger colour,” says Annabel, who added cushions in fabrics by Pierre Frey and prints by John Derian to bring this enveloping green to life.

While Annabel’s professional knowhow was invaluable when decorating the house, ultimately, she says, the house’s new style was led by the building itself. “Decorating our own home has taught me how important it is to listen to a house and its setting,” she says. “I wanted to work with the historic beams and inglenook fireplaces and honour them in a gently modern way.”



Panelling in the guest room conceals storage and Annabel upholstered the headboard in Vine Flower by Penny Morrison. The wall light is Pooky and the switch is from Jim Lawrence



‘We’re surrounded by fields and flowers, so I’m also bringing in the feeling of having nature on our doorstep’

Now that Annabel and her family are immersed in country life, she can also see how the countryside and their walled garden feed into her new style. “We’re surrounded by fields and flowers, so I’m also bringing in the feeling of having nature on our doorstep,” she adds. However, by choosing patterns that work together without being too ‘matchy-matchy’, Annabel has ensured her schemes always feel fresh rather than fusty. “I see it as a modern interpretation of traditional English style,” she says. “I try to add in something old, something new – and then a dash of something a little bit surprising, too,” she smiles. ■

ABOVE LEFT Soho Home cushions sit on a vintage bench on the landing.

LEFT In son Frank’s bedroom, beds in Duck Green by Farrow & Ball link with the green in the Lilian Martinez hanging. The papier-mâché fox head is by Edit 58.

TRUE ROMANCE

Antiques, art, long-cherished pieces and a flock of free-roaming chickens restore period charm to a Grade II listed Georgian farmhouse in Surrey

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH
STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR



The gold abstract art in the drawing room is Leah's own work and ties in with the gold coffee table from Ruth & Joanna. The vase is from Oka and the Alex blanket in Sea Holly is from Artisan Homeware.





ABOVE The long vintage console is the perfect fit for the large entrance hall. Westeros reclaimed pine console from Sweetpea & Willow is similar. The antique mirror is from local antique shop, Bourne Mill Antiques.

ABOVE RIGHT Chickens roam freely – much to son Raef and daughter India’s delight. The pillared porch was built to Leah’s design by a stone company.

RIGHT Leah has turned what was a cold office space into a boot room with shelves and benches painted in Little Greene’s Gauze Deep.





‘Having old things around me with bumps and cracks are part of who I am. I bought my first antique when I was eight’

Set on the edge of a market town, in the Surrey countryside, this Grade II listed Georgian house would not look out of place in a scene from a period drama, such are the handsome exterior and extensive grounds. Perhaps Leah Lane had this notion in mind when she decided a Georgian property was a must in the move from London with her husband, Rupert. “I am a hopeless romantic and grew up watching period dramas, I have seen them all, with *Pride and Prejudice* a favourite,” she says. “I loved the idea of living in a Georgian house – the symmetry, high ceilings and beautiful detailing – and I was not going to settle for anything less.”

Despite this, Leah nearly rejected this house after online photos showed an overgrown exterior. “I could not see the classic Georgian frontage,” she recalls. “It seemed more like a cottage, with an unattractive Sixties porch and the tops of windows bricked-up.”

However, Leah and Rupert had a tough wish list to fulfil in their house search, wanting to live in a market town close to a station and within an hour’s commute of London – and the location of this unpromising-looking house appeared to be ideal. Half-heartedly, they booked a viewing and were pleasantly surprised.

“Up close I was delighted to see the property looked more Georgian than I had thought,” Leah says. “Inside was empty, and although there were not many original features, there was the perfect mix of cosy rooms, a huge kitchen and a wonderful grand drawing room with beams and a corner fireplace. Then a deer appeared in the garden, and I knew instantly I could live here.”

The couple moved in December 2015, relocating from their London maisonette to start a family; at the time, Leah was pregnant with their son, Raef, who is now five, whilst their daughter, India, is two. ▶

ABOVE The panel above the fireplace in the snug is a clever solution to conceal the television.

Framed prints are pages from an old botanical book and Artisanti sell similar.

LEFT A simple picket fence surrounds the house. Leah and Rupert have kept the immediate gardens as simple and traditional as possible.



ABOVE Leah sanded and oiled the original kitchen worktops, painted the cupboards in Fired Earth's Top Hat and added wooden knobs from the Suffolk Latch Company. **RIGHT** On display in the utility room are Leah's mother's vintage scales and baskets and her grandmother's copper moulds. Similar can be found at The Antique Dispensary.



Keen to know more about the property's history, the couple spoke to neighbours and discovered it had been a large farmhouse on one of seven farms owned by the nearby castle estate. Its roots go back to 1718, noted by the date engraved on the weather vane, with the entrance hall, drawing room, snug and the rooms above all part of the original building. Additions came later to extend the back and side of the property.

With five bedrooms and five bathrooms, the house had plenty of space, leaving the only major change to create a walk-in dressing room and generous en-suite bathroom to the principal bedroom. "Overall, the interiors lacked charm, with modern faux-wood flooring and sockets dotting the walls," says Leah. "I gradually reinstated period features and furnished the rooms with antiques, old furniture, knick-knacks, art



‘That is exactly what an English country house should look like – slightly worn, a few rough edges, yet classic and elegant’

and furnishings to make the house feel more comfortable and lived-in.”

Leah researched decorating ideas by collating old pictures of Georgian houses on Pinterest. She also took prompts from her beloved period dramas – the Georgian sofas in the drawing room are similar in style to those seen in *Sense and Sensibility*. Interior designer, Ben Pentreath, provided another source of inspiration. “I love the way he adds warmth by mixing patterns, such as stripes with chintz florals,” Leah explains. “It’s timeless design and for me that is exactly what an English country house should look like – slightly worn, a few rough edges, yet classic and elegant at the same time.”

Leah has always favoured heritage paint colours over wallpaper – when she was 21 and such specialist



colours were difficult to source, she managed to hunt down an Indian yellow for her living room. That said, she is careful to make sure paintwork does not look too fresh or too new. “Decoration needs to seem as though it has always been there, so I have taken inspiration from Georgian colours, such as sage green in the principal bedroom, beige pink for the snug and then added blues and pinks in furnishings and fabrics as the thread between rooms,” she says.

Antiques play a part in achieving this ambition, too. Leah rarely buys new, with a passion for the old deep-rooted from childhood. “I grew up in an Edwardian house and often went shopping with my mother for antiques,” she says. “Having old things around me with bumps and cracks are part of who I am. I bought my first antique when I was eight ▶

ABOVE LEFT The kitchen faces the back garden. Plans are afoot for a new orangery to extend the kitchen. Leah made the gypsophila flower garland.

ABOVE RIGHT The dining area in the kitchen is furnished with a pine Victorian dining table. Similar can be found at Antiques Atlas. The pretty Narrow Pleat porcelain pendant light is from deVol.



‘I reinstated period features and furnished with antiques, knick-knacks and art to make the house feel more lived-in’

ABOVE The panelling, designed by Leah, is painted in Little Greene’s Pearl Colour Pale. The bed is from Feather & Black and the side tables are from Oka. **RIGHT** Marble wall tiles lend the en-suite bathroom elegance. Similar tiles are available at Walls and Floors. The Turkish rug is from Sunbury Antiques Market.

– an antique pram for my teddies – and have loved old things ever since.”

Walnut furniture and Bergère cane seating are some of Leah’s favourites, taking pride of place in the principal bedroom and in various other spots around the home, along with Victorian side tables, chinoiserie lamps and antique rugs. Some pieces came from her mother, as well as gifts from her mother-in-law, Rupert or friends, otherwise Leah went searching online. “Being persistent resulted in some great furniture buys, I cannot understand why people want to get rid of such amazing pieces,” she says. “However, I will always pop into an antiques shop if I am passing and I am pretty much at our local one every other week, buying smaller things, like pretty vases, mirrors, antique shells.

I am a visual buyer, if it’s old I will generally love it, and I think that is the point.”

Leah is enjoying the process of rolling back time as much as she enjoys living with the end results so far. A bigger change is still to come – an orangery across the back of the house. At the front, wisteria climbers have been scaled back to proportions that complement the architecture, with the most striking addition being the Georgian-style pillars. “Period dramas were a wonderful source of inspiration for finding an appropriate design and I am really pleased with the outcome,” she says. “It’s hard to believe the house had been left empty for three years, and when we first came here, we had to walk through grass up to our knees to get in. We wouldn’t want to live anywhere else now.” ■



ABOVE "The colour and tone of the walnut chest of drawers is beautifully warm and lovely for a bedroom," says Leah. Vinterior sell similar chinoiserie vases.



ABOVE The large principal bedroom has space to accommodate an original Bergère blue velvet suite. The Mill Shop Online sells similar cushions.
 RIGHT Knocking together two bathrooms created the dressing room off the principal bedroom. The Victorian chair on castors belonged to Leah's mother.



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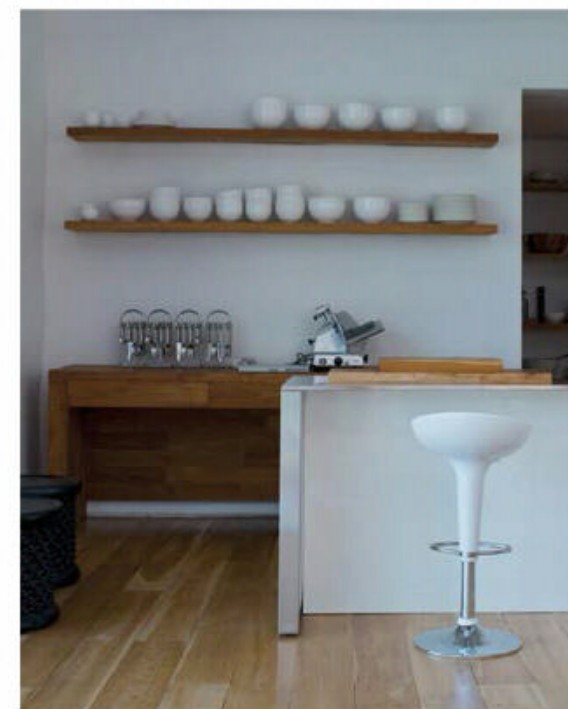
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DAY DREAMING

Our Gardens Special edition offers plenty of inspiration for making a beautiful outdoor 'room' in which to enjoy the beauty of nature. Make it all the more comfortable with an indulgent day bed to sink into and listen to the chirruping of birds and buzzing of bees in a dreamy langour. This stylish canopied offering will keep things cool on blissfully sunny days and look equally chic in an urban courtyard garden, by a glamorous poolside, or set in a secluded part of a rambling country garden. Dress with boldly patterned cushions for added character.

Karama Daybed, £1,695, plus cushions from a selection, all Oka



Interior
OASIS

Bring the natural world inside with
plant motifs, nature's hues
and organic textures



As the weather brightens and warms up, the boundaries between indoor and outdoor life blur. Embrace this way of living with interiors that echo the garden and beyond to create interiors that are soothing and uplifting..

Green hues are an obvious place to start, creating a connection with the world outside. Adding patterns in botanical designs – gentle trailing leaves, bursts of floral colour and climbing foliage will further enhance the relationship between the two spaces. Use the palette from the garden for inspiration, bringing in pale pinks or yellows, crisp whites and bolder cornflower or sky blues for cohesion.

Consider natural textures for flooring, with stone or wood in spaces that directly connect to the outside, adding warmth and comfort underfoot with rush or coir rugs or carpets in bedroom or living areas.

Furniture, too, can provide a link between inside and out, with bamboo or rattan pieces providing a relaxed contrast to tailored, upholstered chairs. Consider rustic, simple finishes on wooden furniture to provide a gentle association with the outdoors, or, if keeping to polished, refined pieces, introduce decorative choices that are related to the garden.

Ensure views to the garden and beyond are made the most of, with doors and windows opening out to vistas, allowing fresh air and warm breezes to waft through on sunny days. Create a window seat or position furniture to be able to enjoy the view when venturing outside is not an option.

Finally, from house plants to freshly cut flowers, or even an indoor tree, bringing the natural world inside will truly offer the organic, inspiring and natural beauty of the garden to enjoy year-round. ▶

OPPOSITE Use flowers to inspire an interior palette. *Pink Harmony, Salmon Peach, Dusk Pink* from £27 for 0.94l, Benjamin Moore

ABOVE Position furniture to enjoy views to the garden. *Cythera extendable dining table, £1,495, Oka*



STYLE NOTES:

- A nature-based scheme can be balanced with smart period features, antique furniture and refined finishes.
- Echo colours from the garden, such as pinks, yellows, blues and whites, with a green or neutral backdrop.

ABOVE Introduce a sense of the outdoors with an immersive design. Wallpaper, *Aula, Hummingbird*, £171 a roll, *Romo*

RIGHT Enrich neutrals with fresh cornflower blues. Dining chairs, *Verbena, Blueberry*, £25.20 a metre, *Meadow collection*, *Prestigious Textiles*





ABOVE An updated classic chintz design in smart greens and pinks is a sophisticated choice for a period home. Lavenham, rose, £95 a roll, Warner House Fabrics

ABOVE RIGHT Chic stripes and a beautiful green and gold chest of drawers form a subtle way to create synergy with the garden. Kingston chair in Szepvis Stripe linen £1,500; Sarkozi Embroidery wallpaper, Taupe, £135 a roll, both Mind The Gap

RIGHT The combination of zesty green paint, a large leafy motif

wallpaper and a bamboo sofa frame offers a polished yet playful nod to garden style. Wallpaper, Tropicane, Chelsea Green, £111 a roll; Chelsea Green paint, £75 for 2.5l Architects' Eggshell, both Paint & Paper Library

BELOW Combine geometrics that echo trellis with delicate floral prints and embroideries in a stylish blend of greens and pinks. Wallpaper and fabrics, all Ashmore collection, GP & J Baker ▶





ABOVE LEFT Blush, sage and mellow yellow sets a dreamy natural scheme. *King-size Emily upholstered bed frame in Aquaclean Harriet Rose, £649, and all bedding and furniture, John Lewis & Partners*

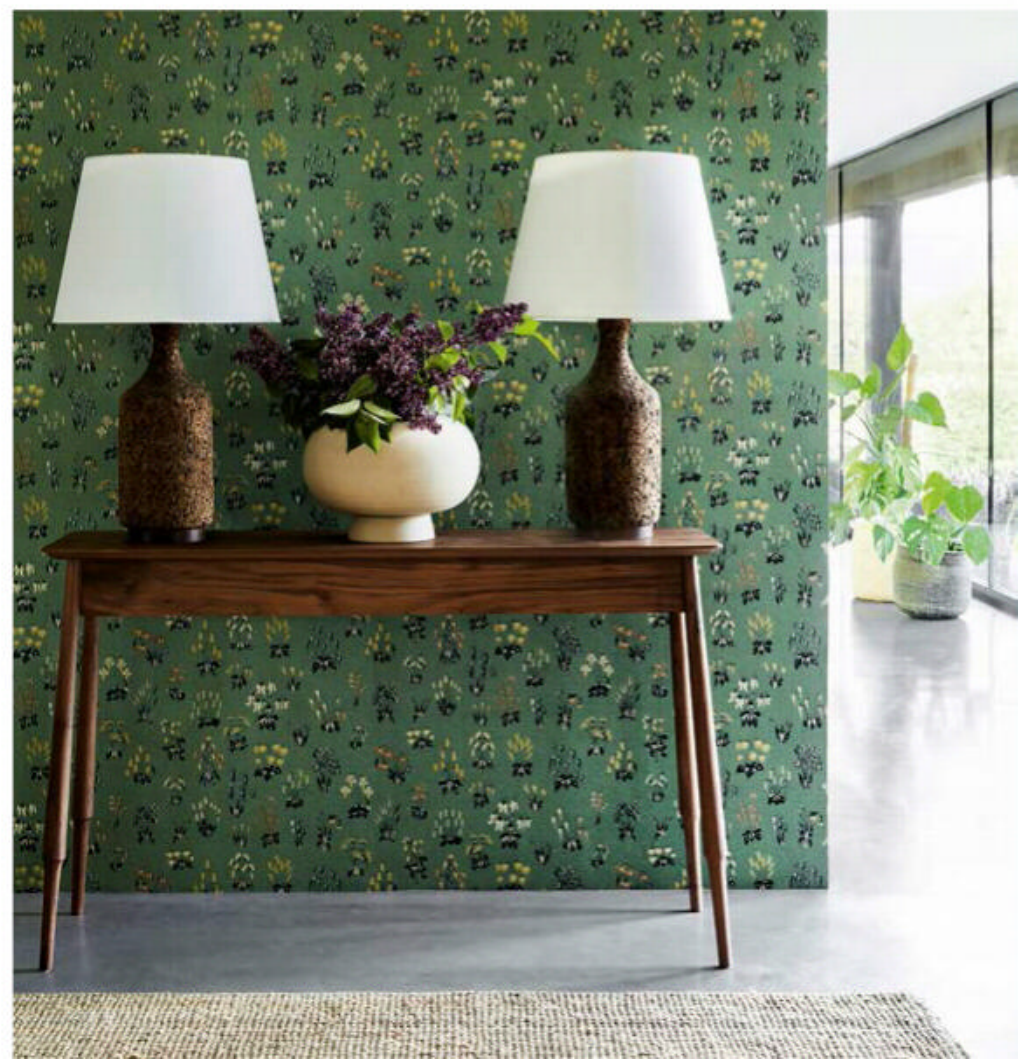
ABOVE RIGHT Rattan and wood furniture offers a connection to the outdoors. *Rattan folding chair, £99, and all furniture and accessories, John Lewis & Partners*

LEFT Colours from the garden continue into this romantic bedroom with a few floral details for good measure. *V&A Paradise cushion, Rose, £75, Arley House*

RIGHT Botanical wallpapers instantly evoke the outdoors. *Wallpaper, Millefleur Tapestry, Garden, £175 a roll, Little Greene*

STYLE NOTES:

- Use plants and flowers to bring elements of the natural world inside.
- Create a connection through textures and materials. Wood panelling can softly echo fencing. Wood, stone and natural fibres for flooring blur the boundaries.





Enliven a sleek scheme with luxurious chinoiserie. Here used as panels, rather than all over the wall, the effect is of a custom artwork. Try Fromental for similar. Hampton sofa, Twill Beige, £5,860, Kingcombe ▶



STYLE NOTES:

- Bring aesthetics of outdoor furniture inside, with bamboo, rattan or caned pieces.
- Allow large botanical motifs to trail across walls and curtaining.
- Consider the view and make the most of the light and fresh air.



ABOVE Create a perfect garden room complete with loungers for enjoying a day inside and out. *Inside & Out* outdoor fabrics, plains £192 a metre; stripes, £206 a metre, George Spencer Designs

FAR LEFT A classic country look, combining leafy prints with checks and stripes for a relaxed, considered living room that connects to the garden beyond. *Blinds, cushions and armchair, Woodfern, Old Blue, £85 a metre, and all other fabrics, Colefax and Fowler*

LEFT A contemporary take on a traditional tree design works well for a modern country home. *Wallpaper, Orchard, £230 a roll, Osborne & Little*

FEATURE KATY MCLEAN PHOTOGRAPHS P73 © DAMIAN RUSSELL. P75 (WARNER HOUSE) TERRY CLIFF; (PAINT & PAPER LIBRARY) © PAUL RAESIDE. P78 (OSBORNE & LITTLE) © JON DAY



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THE *Victorian* TERRACE

The most familiar styles of English housing offer a wealth of history, architectural flair and decorative inspiration. In this new series, we celebrate the unique characteristics of period homes and how to decorate them

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE

LEFT The ubiquitous brick faced, often-painted Victorian terrace typically features a two-up, two-down arrangement, although many have been reconfigured and extended over the years.

From stuccoed townhouses to flat-fronted former workers' cottages, Victorian terraces are among the most ubiquitous of British housing stock. Nearly a quarter of today's population live in mid-to-late 19th-century homes, many of which were built during the boom of the Industrial Revolution across the country.

These terraces vary in size, scope and detailing from town to town and even street to street – a reflection of the speed at which they were constructed during a fast-changing economic landscape. As a rule of thumb, early examples tend to feature plainer, Georgian-inspired facades, with later builds becoming increasingly ornate.

Prized for their decorative features, including sash windows, slate roofs, ornate mouldings, encaustic flooring and tiled fireplaces, Victorian terraces are also configured in a way that can be challenging to modern living, which has since evolved to embrace open-plan, multi-functional spaces and enhanced eco-credentials. Despite this, a creative architectural and decorative approach can easily unlock the magic of these properties, making them timeless in their appeal.

LAYOUT: *A balancing act*

Although it can be tempting to strip out a space when modernising, it is often more beneficial to play to its existing strengths. "Victorian homes have so much to offer," says architect Rodrigo Moreno Masey. "Though there will be times when significant remodelling is unavoidable, it's frequently in smaller, more surgical solutions that the biggest impact can be made."

Focus first on a gentle reappraisal of the building's layout, bearing in mind that integral elements such as cornicing, fireplaces, open stringer staircases, skirting details and architraves can all be preserved, even if they are removed, rejigged or repositioned elsewhere during renovation.

Many terraces feature a two-up, two-down configuration, with a back addition over two floors. Though proportions tend to be generous, hallways are nearly always narrow and middle living spaces often suffer from a lack of light. "These homes are largely limited to a width of four to six metres, so the footprint feels narrow and long," says Nick Horvath, architect at Momo & Co. "Look for opportunities where you can visually enjoy the full scope of the house. One option is to form a larger opening between the entrance hall and front living room. You could use a pair of glazed French doors and two additional fixed glass panels which the doors can fold back onto. It's a solution that draws in light and makes the space feel more generous."

Try thinking counter-intuitively, too: a middle sitting room can be enhanced just as it is. "Preserving a division between the more formal sitting room and the 'middle' room of a Victorian home will ensure each space has a clear definition," adds Zulufish's Caroline Milns. "Adding glass doors instead of traditional brick walls can introduce a sense of modernity and a softer definition. A skylight in the centre of the roofline will also allow much-needed natural light to pour through the core of the building, permeating every floor."

If a reconfiguration is being crafted to suit family life, bear in mind that the traditionally darker middle room can alternatively be a good place to house utilities, especially if the building is being extended. "Making room for 'back of house' zones, such as a cloakroom, pantry or boot room is essential for daily life, and these don't need much natural light," says Horvath.

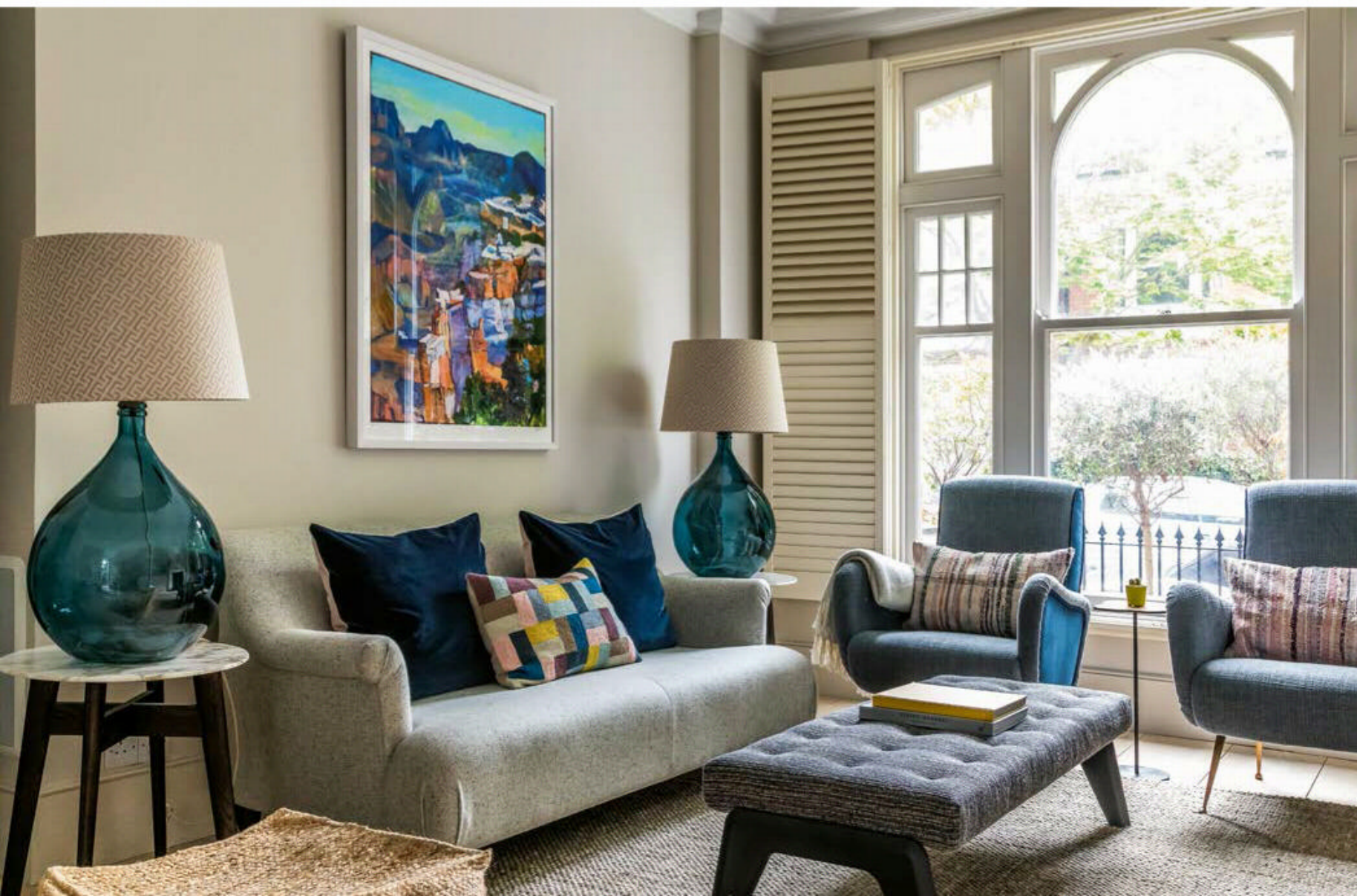
Reorganising a Victorian terrace in this way enhances our connection to it from a contemporary perspective – and if its key characteristics are respected, all the better. "The layering of these details makes all the difference," says Horvath. "Buildings like these have a story to tell." ▶



ABOVE In this hallway, renovated by Momo & Co, traditional encaustic flooring sets the tone. Its graphic, monochrome pattern is echoed in the interior paintwork and edged stair runner.



RIGHT This middle room, designed by Sarah Peake, has been uplifted by contemporary Miro prints. A sideboard by Fiona McDonald provides a focal point in the absence of a chimney breast.



LEFT In this room designed by Alice Leigh, simple shuttered window treatments allow the architecture of the building to shine. A classic furniture arrangement makes the most of the room's proportions.

SPACE: *Room to grow*

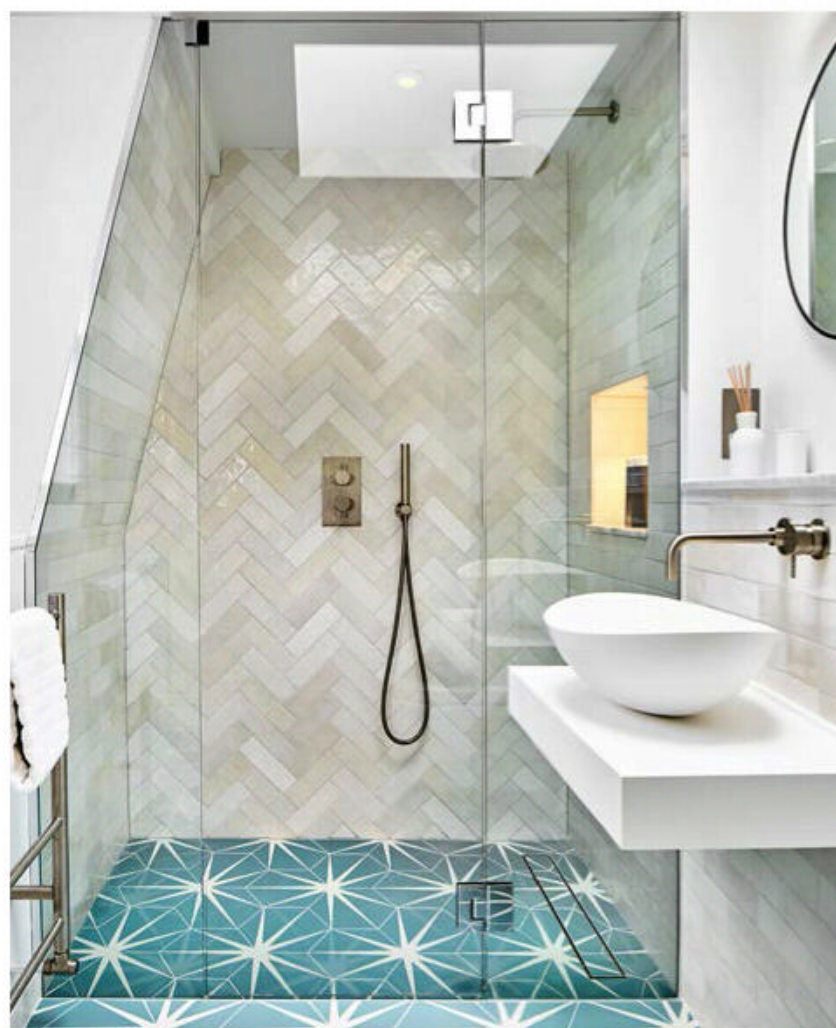
Preserving the existing footprint of a Victorian terrace or deciding to expand it is an important consideration, as is whether to echo the building's vernacular or opt for a contemporary addition. "The biggest challenges we see are width, light and storage," says Moreno Masey. "Most renovations include the brief to open up the space and connect the front door to the garden via an uninterrupted sight line."

For roomier living spaces, a side return is a classic solution. "It's cost-effective and creates valuable communal space for families where it's needed the most," Moreno Masey advises. "And garden rooms are often undervalued as an affordable and easy way to add living space. Many don't need planning and can be quite big, so there is an opportunity to do something striking."

When planning a rear extension, it is natural to stay within reasonable depths. A three-metre addition tends to look most proportional to the original building. "However, often we don't extend to the back at all as rear gardens are small," says architect Michael Schienke of Vorbild Architecture. "Instead, we might remove an existing old outhouse from the rear, channeling more light into the deepest part of the home, locating a redesigned kitchen-diner in the space created by the original side return."

Adding bedrooms in the roof can be a good step, too. It is worth remembering that all mid-terrace properties have the possibility for a full-width rear dormer. Successful conversions usually involve continuing the staircase up into the loft from the first floor and adding a bathroom or shower room where the ceiling is highest. Expect the remaining space to be as big as the rear first-floor bedroom plus about a third of the front bedroom, combined.

Even without adding an extension, it is possible to reorganise the interior of a house to provide cleaner circulation and improve function. "We achieve this in multiple ways, increasing the heights of internal doors, repositioning the staircase, opening up between rooms and providing a clear vista from front to back," says Chris Pring, senior architect at Hodgkinson Design. ▶





OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE In this bathroom scheme by Laura Stephens, a freestanding double basin and a marble chequerboard floor lend a classic feel.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BELOW loft conversion by Momo & Co features a shower room with a generous skylight.

ABOVE LEFT Soft pink textured wallpaper adds a contemporary note to a bedroom by Zulufish.

LEFT A contemporary kitchen extension by Zulufish allows for space-saving banquette seating.

ABOVE In this kitchen extension designed by Laura Stephens features boxed-in steelwork (top left) to suggest beam-like breaks in what would otherwise be a large, blank ceiling. Glazed tiles and a Shaker kitchen add character.



ABOVE Floor-to-ceiling painted joinery frames an elegant seating area while providing characterful display storage in this bedroom designed by Kitesgrove.

RENOVATE: *Restore & Refresh*

Victorian terraces make excellent backdrops for contemporary as well as more traditional schemes. “The key is to preserve or restore architectural elements such as cornicing and architraves,” says interior designer Susie Atkinson. “The mix of old and new is interesting. I find that even if an extension is more contemporary, it can add unexpected depth overall, because it shows progression in building materials and ideas.”

Considered storage is a good way to introduce a note of cohesion. “To combat any sense of coldness when it comes to rear extensions, I often use traditional-style joinery, such as a v-grooved hand-painted kitchen, which might tie in seamlessly with tongue-and-groove bookcases elsewhere,” says Sarah Peake of Studio Peake. “I also include plenty of cosy textures and patterns to make the space feel warm and welcoming, and in some cases, to make up for any lack of original features.”

Effective storage can be built into dead corners to optimise space. “In a recent project, I designed a ‘dog-legged’ storage box which is narrower behind

the front door so that it can still open easily,” says interior designer Laura Stephens. “It features cubby holes for shoes and the wider end has a handy drawer for hats and gloves. A slim console shelf sits over the radiator, serving as a practical space to store keys but also allowing surface space for the warm glow of a table lamp.”

Robust materials that age well with time are beneficial. “Natural textures such as timber, marble and stone work beautifully,” says Kitesgrove’s Katie Lion. “Not only does this approach improve your environmental footprint, but materials like these breathe better, last longer and improve our well-being.” Try using contrasting textures, such as polished-concrete flooring juxtaposed with exposed brickwork, elegant wood panelling combined with fluted glass cabinetry, or graphic Crittall doors that chime with the rhythm of traditional timber parquet flooring. Remember that a simple, honest palette detailed well, will look beautiful for many years. ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT

Tongue-and-groove joinery in this design by Studio Peake provides a textural contrast in this contemporary extension.

'Dog-leg' storage in this entrance hall by Laura Stephens leaves room for the front door to open fully and has cubby holes to accommodate shoes.

In this design by Studio Peake a combination of open and concealed kitchen storage adds depth.

A narrow bench and a simple metal coat rack provide practical hanging and sitting space in this scheme by Hám Interiors.





PHOTOGRAPHS P108 © CHRIS SNOOK, P109 (MOMO & CO) © JULIET MURPHY, P110-111 (LAURA STEPHENS) © CHRIS SNOOK, (MOMO & CO) © JULIET MURPHY; (ZULUFISH) © GUIFRE DE PERAY, P112 © MARK BOLTON, P113 (HAM INTERIORS) © ALEXANDER JAMES, P114-115 (LOUISE ROBINSON) © ANNA STATHAKI



FAR LEFT In this scheme by Louise Robinson, rich mid-green tones pick out the hues in the inset tiling of the original fireplace.

ABOVE Contemporary furniture and modern fireplace tile slips offer a fresh take in this scheme by Studio Peake.

LEFT A contemporary inset fire is offset by grasscloth wallpaper in this scheme by Elmwood Design.

RIGHT Louise Robinson teams a generous round mirror and mid-century-style pendant with more ornate antique pieces.



DECORATE: *tales of the unexpected*

Often a showcase for travel, adventure and exotica, Victorian interiors were known for their clash of cultural influences – colour, pattern, fabric and texture were as popular then as they are now. It is a good reminder that buildings like these are a natural backdrop for a sense of playfulness and delight, which means a relaxed approach pays off. “For example, in my experience, the tones of original fireplace tiles and hallway flooring almost never ‘fit’ with the hues of an updated scheme, but sometimes that mismatch can be magical,” says interior designer Louise Robinson. “I value the authenticity and craftsmanship of rich tile colours such as dark green, blue, crimson and brown over box-fresh reproductions in neutral tones.”

There are also times when there is value in adding a playful contemporary contrast such as restoring a

damaged fire surround with monochrome chevron tiles, or bringing a stripped-out fireplace to life with a contemporary inset gas fire, complemented by textured grasscloth wallpaper and the graphic silhouette of a generous round mirror. Surprising design elements such as a splash of jewel-coloured fabric or a decorative wallpaper can create vibrant pause points.

“As the Victorian era was all about exploration, it seems fitting that we use an eclectic mix of antique, vintage and contemporary pieces when decorating these homes,” reflects Violet & George’s Nicky Mudie. “Celebrate the space, rather than fight it. The bones of the building should feel as if they have always been there, with new additions as contemporary as you want them to be. An approach that’s eclectic, thoughtful and comfortable will always allow this well-loved architecture to sing.” ■

SHOPPING



VICTORIAN
Decorating
UPDATES

Breathe new life into a Victorian terrace with pieces that have a knowing nod to authentic style and some colourful modern additions, too

- 1 The Bead mirror, from £1,450 (bespoke colour), Reid & Wright
- 2 Oxford Vintage pendant light, Squid Ink Blue, £90, The Soho Lighting Company
- 3 Audrey Loveseat, Velvet Ochre, £2,295, Soho Home
- 4 Bobbin console, £1,759, Turner Pocock for Chelsea Textiles
- 5 Raffia Scallop lampshade with red trim, from £132, Matilda Goad
- 6 Great Ormond St, £110 a roll, Little Greene
- 7 Trieste burnished radiator, from £52.56, The Radiator Company
- 8 Morris black-finish cast-iron insert, £790, UK Architectural Antiques Limited
- 9 Audubon velvet cushion, £75, Emma J Shipley
- 10 Turquoise five-pearl candlestick, £180, Margit Wittig
- 11 Paint in Oratory, Brompton Road and Threadneedle, from £28 for 1l Marble Matt Emulsion, Mylands
- 12 Solid brass door knob in aged brass finish (NCC1073), £270, Beardmore
- 13 Petra encaustic cement tile, £160.80 a square metre, Otto Tiles
- 14 Tay bath in painted finish, from £4,700, Drummonds
- 15 Colonel accent chair, Turmeric, £699, Sofology

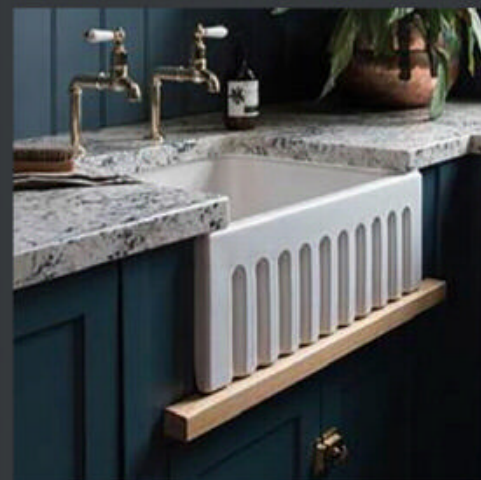
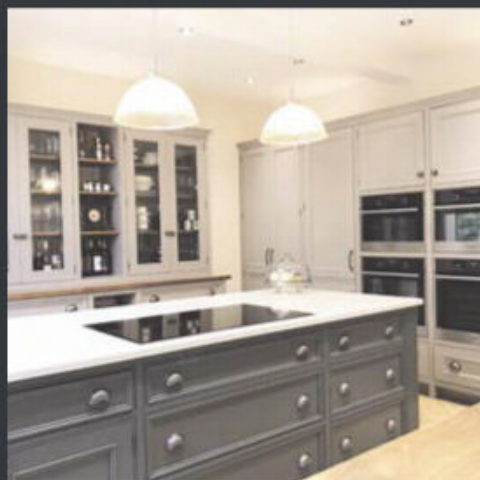
FEATURE KATY MCLEAN
PHOTOGRAPH (MARGIT WITTIG) © SIMON BROWN



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A series of rectangular beds behind Sophie Conran's smart Georgian home feature a stylish combination of late-spring performers.

The Artist's PALETTE

Designer Sophie Conran is renowned for producing homeware adorned with exquisite floral motifs, so it is little wonder that her abundant Wiltshire garden is such a true reflection of her talents

WORDS CATRIONA GRAY
PHOTOGRAPHS BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER
PORTRAIT JUSTIN POLKEY





Anyone who is familiar with Sophie Conran's range of homeware knows that the designer has a deep love of nature. Floral motifs blossom across linen napkins and twine their way around candle holders. There is a plenitude of vases, in different shapes and sizes, designed to hold everything from a couple of delicate stems to a large armful of abundant branches. Even her most well-known line – the long-running tableware collection for Portmeirion – sees a simple white dinner service elevated by a nod to the outdoors, its organic, concentric pattern evoking the ripple of water in a pond or the circles in a tree stump.

It comes as no surprise, then, to discover the care and attention that Sophie has put into her garden, at her home set in the heart of the Wiltshire countryside. Along the approach to the house, via a long, winding drive, there are cherry trees

laden with frothy white blossom, underplanted with masses of bulbs, the early snowdrops giving way to wood anemones and fritillaries as spring progresses towards summer.

Upon reaching the front of the house – a Georgian manor in honey-coloured Bath stone – it is evident that Sophie is passionate about gardening. Climbing roses cover the mellow, neoclassical facade, and the steps up to the front door are flanked by an array of terracotta pots, planted each season with an ever-changing display of blooms.

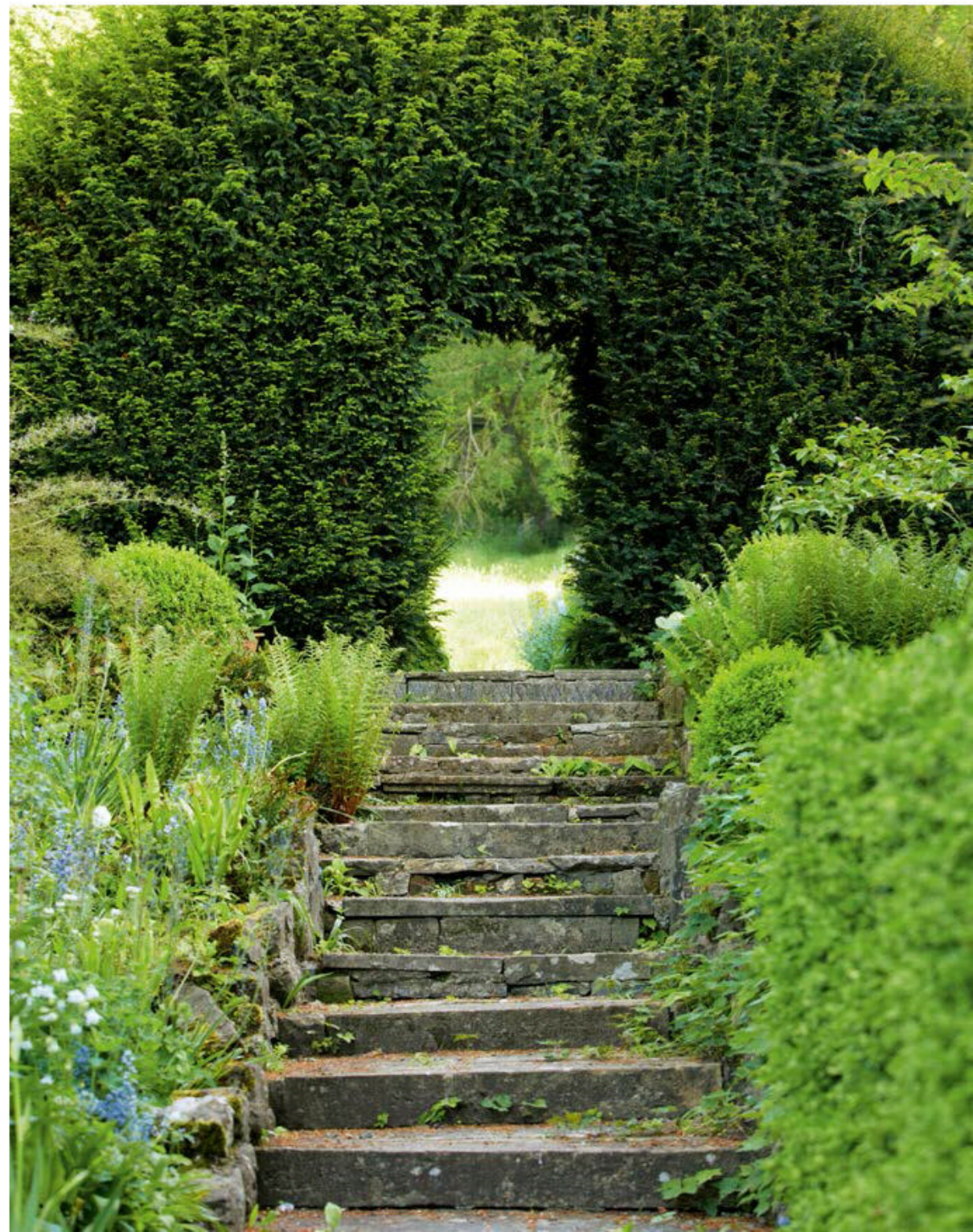
Sophie bought the property in 2013 and, over the past eight years, has been restoring and adding to the original planting scheme. “The garden had been quite neglected – there hadn't been much done to it for about 25 years,” she says. “So we've been piecing it back together again, bit by bit, as well as adding some new features.” ▶

ABOVE LEFT Peonies rub shoulders with sweet rocket and foxgloves.

ABOVE RIGHT Sophie enjoying the garden with her dog Mouse and her son Felix's dog Apollo. Sophie wears a dress by Pink City Prints.

RIGHT The beds next to the house brim with alliums, lupins and euphorbia, with large box balls for a sense of solidity.





‘I’m really trying to make everything as alive as possible, filled with flowers and buzzing with bees’

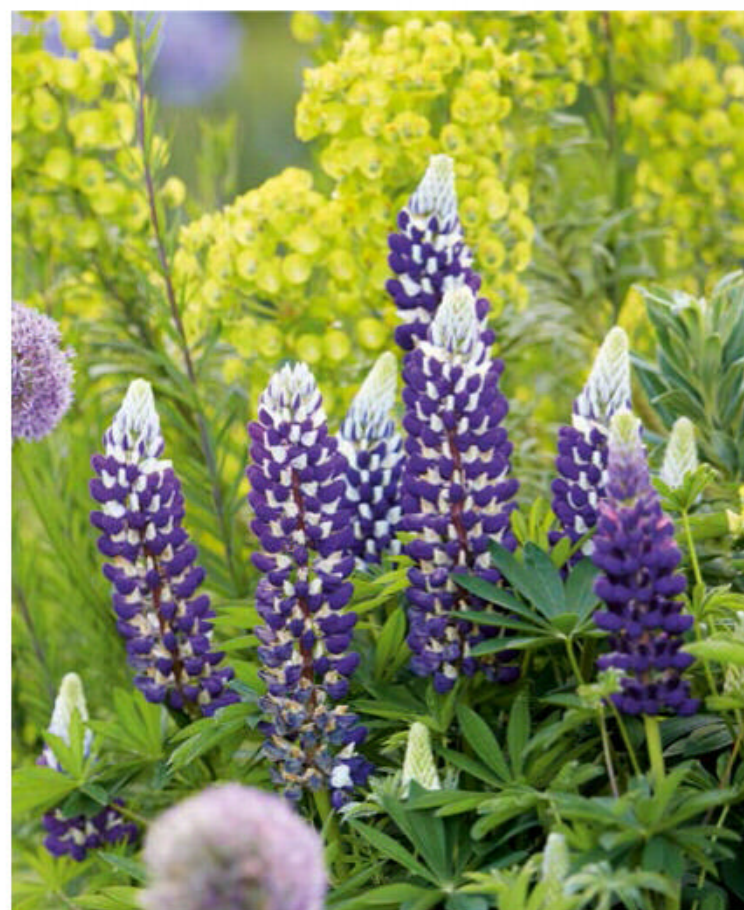
The sheer scale of the project might have felt daunting to some: aside from the gardens that surround the house, there is a separate vegetable garden, a fern garden, a pond, a meadow, and some 30 acres of woodland. However, Sophie, the daughter of famed designer and restaurateur, the late Sir Terence Conran, grew up watching her parents embark on a very similar journey of their own.

“When I was younger, my family moved to a house in Berkshire not all that far from here,” she recalls. “There were falling-down greenhouses and dilapidated walled gardens filled with Christmas trees. I saw it as my playground and watched my parents as they slowly rebuilt everything, from the vegetable garden to the fruit cages. It gave me a blueprint of what I could do here.”

Having completed several courses in horticulture and honed her eye at her previous gardens in West Sussex and Dorset, Sophie was well-placed to begin the transformation at her new home, although she has allowed it to evolve gradually rather than making a rigid plan. “This place talks to me – it tells me what to do,” she maintains. “I suppose it’s a mixture of instinct and a sympathetic view of the house and its surroundings. I want to create a feeling, so I’m really trying to make everything as alive as possible – filled with flowers and buzzing with bees, butterflies and birds. It’s a place to enjoy, and to be immersed in nature.”

One of the first things she did was to put in a new set of beds at the back of the house, which, in May, brim with a sea of alliums. Their pompom heads, in hues of pink, purple and white, add a playful and colourful note, especially when set alongside velvety irises, purple lupins, and frilly masses of hesperis. The rounded shapes of the alliums are echoed in the clipped box balls and euphorbia, which add year-round shape and structure to the borders.

Traditionally, 18th-century manors like this one would have been surrounded by acres of parkland with the gardens kept well away from the house. By introducing planting immediately around the ▶



ABOVE Huge windows look out to the terrace.

LEFT Euphorbia with ‘King Canute’ lupins.

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

On the lawn, a set of furniture is perfectly positioned to take in the meadow views and a lovely specimen Judas tree, *Cercis siliquastrum*. Rosa ‘Madame Alfred Carrière’ grows on the wall of the house.

Self-seeded plants in stonework and a relaxed clipping regime give the garden a laid-back air.

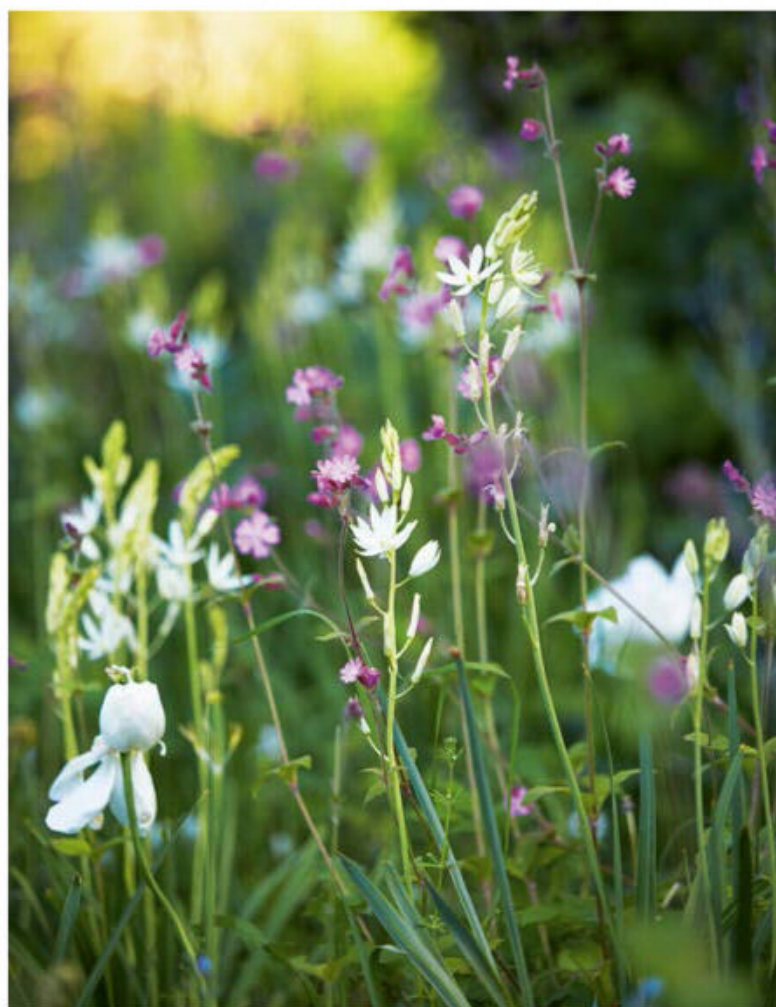
Alliums and bearded iris intermingle with fern-like fennel fronds.



ABOVE *Clematis montana* var. *wilsonii* in full bloom.

RIGHT White camassias with red campion.

BELOW The sweeping driveway leading to Sophie's Georgian manor.



'I get very excited about plants – I want all of them. I've planted masses more white alliums'

property, Sophie has created the maximum possible impact when looking out from the huge, floor-to-ceiling windows on the ground floor, as well as integrating her home with the garden.

This is particularly in evidence when you step out of the drawing room and onto the long stone terrace that runs along the back of the house. From there you can look out across the borders to the fields beyond, while Sophie has made a virtue of the slightly dilapidated nature of the terrace itself. "The terrace is made from bits of old stone floors – great big slabs that are completely falling to pieces – so I've interplanted it with erigeron, creeping thyme, and aquilegias," she explains. There are even some hollyhocks and *Verbena bonariensis* dotted among the paving stones, while 'Madame Alfred Carrière' roses spread across the walls, adding to the sense that the place is literally blooming with life.

To the right of the house, the land sweeps up a hill covered in woodland, consisting mostly of old beeches. Every May, this delightful area is carpeted with drifts of wild garlic, which scents the air with its distinctive tang. Sophie – who is a keen cook and has written several cookery books – picks and uses it in the kitchen to make pesto and garlic butter, and to flavour everything from soups to sautéed mushrooms. She also obtains an abundance of produce from her vegetable garden, which is another ongoing project. "We've just had a fantastic new greenhouse reinstated on the site of an old one, using the existing foundations," she says. "It was made by Woodpecker Joinery, and we're thrilled with it." Raised beds contain rows of brassicas, root vegetables and globe artichokes, and close by are two tunnels made from coppiced hazel, one of which is covered in sweet peas, the other with different varieties of beans and gourds.

Sophie has more plans afoot, working alongside the two full-time gardeners who keep the grounds running smoothly. The fern garden, long-neglected, is being replanted, as are the borders at the front of the house. Existing plants are being catalogued throughout the garden and new ones are constantly added, including three paulownias, commonly known as foxglove trees because of their clusters of spectacular lilac blooms.

"I get very excited about plants – I want all of them," she says, laughing. "I've planted masses more



white alliums, including ‘Mount Everest’, and I love *Nepeta* ‘Six Hills Giant’, which just goes on flowering for months on end. One of my absolute favourites is a peony called ‘Coral Charm’ – it’s particularly beautiful because it starts out a wonderful coral colour before fading to pink and then ends up turning almost white.”

Alongside the careful planting are plenty of self-seeders, including red campion and linaria, which have been given the freedom to romp through the garden, filling in gaps and creating a cheerful abundance of flowers that feels both romantic and quintessentially English. It’s the sort of place that you never want to leave – and, for now, Sophie certainly isn’t planning to. “I really love living here,” she concludes. “It keeps me fantastically busy – there’s always so much to do!” ■

This article originally appeared in our sister publication The English Garden. Spring issue on sale 23rd March. See theenglishgarden.co.uk



ABOVE The land around Sophie’s Wiltshire home includes a pond and meadow, as well as 30 acres of woodland.

LEFT ‘Mount Everest’ alliums bring a cool freshness to late-spring planting schemes; add clusters of their bulbs in autumn for a display of stylish globes.

CALLAGHANS OF SHREWSBURY

SCOTTISH SPIRIT

How, following a mid-life career change, the British painter Donald McIntyre followed his roots back to his love of painting in Scotland





As the artist Henri Matisse once said, “creativity takes courage”, something the British painter Donald McIntyre (1923–2009) must have heeded to when, at the age of 40, he left his well-established career as a dentist to pick up his brushes and paint for a living. His love of art, however, was engrained long before, when, as a child he learnt to paint.

Despite being born in Yorkshire, he spent his most memorable childhood years on the dramatic coast of west Scotland. During this time, McIntyre would explore the rugged coastline looking for different vistas to paint. Once he finished school he followed his head rather than his heart and headed to Glasgow to train as a dentist. His love of art, however, was never far from his mind, and it was during this period he also found himself attending evening art classes at The Glasgow School of Art.

Near his home in Garelochhead, a colony of artists had settled under the influence of James Wright RSW, with whom McIntyre studied, and the pair soon became great friends. Under Wright’s watchful eye, McIntyre developed a palette firmly rooted in the Scottish tradition, combining strong colours with simple impressionist brushstrokes. The desire to paint professionally became stronger as the years passed, hence his decision to become a full-time artist at 40.

ABOVE *Bwrthyn at Bryn*, oil on board, 53cm x 79cm, captures the beauty of a small cottage nestled in the foothills of Welsh mountains.

OPPOSITE PAGE The oil on board painting *Calf Island*, 50cm x 61cm, is a perfect example of how McIntyre captures the beauty of the British Isles, using French-inspired Fauvist colours.

By the late 1950s, he had moved to North Wales (where he resided until his death in 2009), but remained within the traditions of the radical Post-Impressionist Scottish Colourists, who enlivened the Scottish art scene with the fresh vibrancy of French Fauvist colours. Each summer, he would return to paint on his beloved Iona, a tiny Scottish island, and these *en plein air* paintings now rank amongst his most popular pieces.

Particularly taken with his works are Daniel and Stella Callaghan, who own the prestigious art gallery Callaghans of Shrewsbury and have long collected and sold pieces by McIntyre. Specialising in European 19th and 20th-century oils and watercolours the Callaghans have garnered a reputation worldwide over their 35-year history for their extensive knowledge of European art and artists. “What’s so captivating about McIntyre’s work,” Stella explains, “is that there is something for everyone. Whether you want a showstopping piece for the wall or are looking for a small snapshot of countryside tranquillity, the joy of McIntyre’s work is in bringing all the beauty of the great outdoors in.”

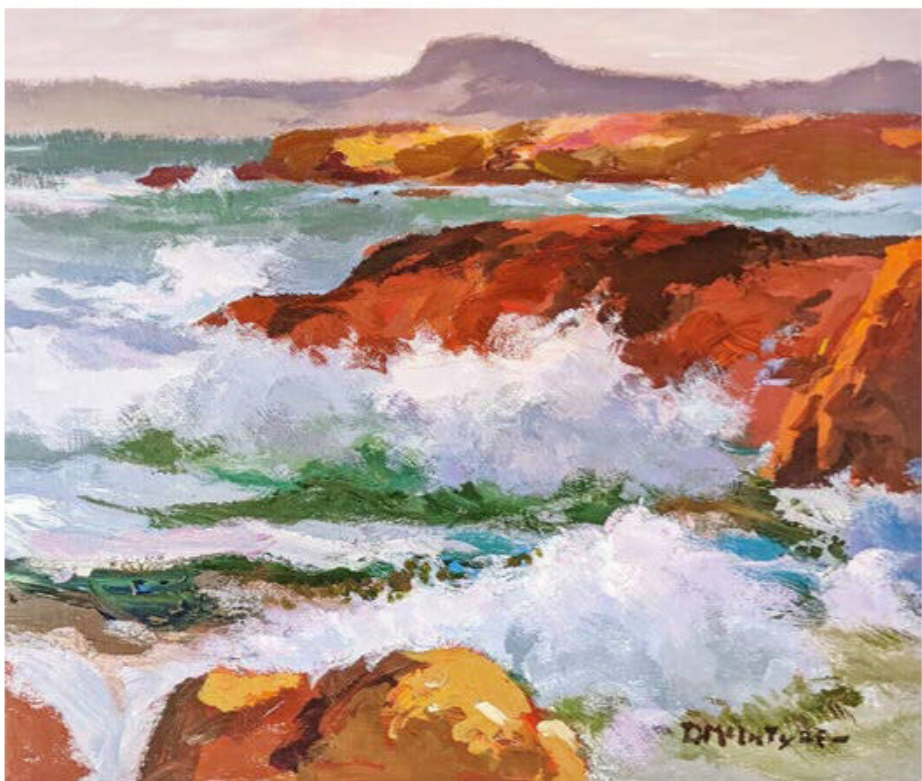
By setting up his canvas wherever the moment took him, McIntyre was able to capture nature in its most undisturbed state. Whether rain, snow, sleet or shine, he created each piece in the setting which inspired it, ►

PARTNER FEATURE

RIGHT *Rocky Shore* oil on board, 35cm x 43cm, like the majority of McIntyre's works, is set in Scotland, perfectly reflecting the coastline's stillness on a calm day.

BELOW McIntyre was able to capture the essence of people with just a daub of paint or a simple brushstroke, as seen in *Sunlit Beach*, oil on board, 15cm x 20cm.

BOTTOM McIntyre's oil on board painting, *Western Seas*, 51cm x 61cm, clearly demonstrates how brilliantly the artist is able to capture the quality of light.



allowing him to vividly capture fleeting light conditions with boldly colourful and simplified compositions. He would often abbreviate architecture or figures into a few simple blocks of colour, which became his signature style.

In his oil on board painting *Western Seas*, one can almost hear the waves crashing against the weather-worn rocks of the shore set against the misty skyline. This is a stereotypical quality of McIntyre's work, capturing the fleeting, glimmering quality of light.

Bwthyn ar Bryn captures the beauty of a small bwthyn (or cottage) in the foothills of a Welsh mountain range, ochre tones lending warmth to the work. There is a sense of spontaneity in the swiftness of his brush strokes, but it becomes apparent each one is artfully placed to create the illusion of ruggedness.

Rocky Shore, also set in Scotland, is all about the stillness of the scene. Like a picture postcard, the crystalline seas seem to slowly lap onto the empty beach, creating a sense of peace and solitude. The palette is bright yet understated, again typical of McIntyre's work.

These pieces really demonstrate the universal appeal of McIntyre's style and illustrate why it is no surprise his works are held in both public and private collections across the globe. "By taking the Scottish Colourists' style and applying it so beautifully to other picturesque stretches of coastline around the British Isles," Daniel explains, "McIntyre truly puts the beauty of the United Kingdom on the world stage." ■

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FIRM FAVOURITES

Hard flooring, from timber to porcelain, serves as an important backdrop to any room, so it pays to choose carefully, both in terms of form and function

For centuries, properties - from country estates to cottages - have featured hard flooring. Today, classic stone, tactile timber, handcrafted tiles, reclaimed surfaces, and even manmade alternatives, can benefit the traditional home, bringing both comfort and warmth to bedrooms or living areas and low-maintenance resilience to kitchens and hallways.

Expert guidance and a careful appraisal of size, style and function to guarantee suitability for specific spaces should help ensure all the right elements are considered when tailoring choices to individual rooms. After all, a well-fitted hard floor will typically last a lifetime, so it is important to get it right both in terms of style and practicality, as well as ensuring a sympathetic fit to surroundings.

BELOW Parquetry inspired by heritage originals lends an air of formality to a room. Walnut Premier unsealed parquet wood blocks, from £96 a square metre, The Natural Wood Flooring Company



Sitting room floor

Busy reception rooms require a fine balance of durability versus comfort, so those looking for traditional, warming wood floors should choose durable hardwoods.

Versatile solid boards are the authentic option here, and can be sanded and refinished as required, but engineered floors may prove easier to install and more stable. Opting for wider widths or reclaimed floor boards will lend a traditional feel in most homes.

“Timeless herringbone, chevrons or block parquet inject character and make a statement,” says Robert Walsh, CEO of Ted Todd. “Just bear in mind room size as, while larger areas can visually accommodate geometric patterns or panels, such as Parquet de Versailles, small spaces often benefit from free-flowing designs.”

For those requiring a flexible all-round timber, mid-toned oak provides a versatile backdrop in all settings. Alternatively, sophisticated darker tones or walnut can be employed to bring drama and a sense of presence to formal areas, while softer wax or oil finishes impart a more natural lived-in quality and lacquers offer a classical elegance.

Thanks to its warming, mellow tones, “Natural stone can bring a soothing quality to living areas,” suggests Isabel Fernandez, director of Quorn Stone. Along with replica porcelains, natural stone is also a hardy yet smart choice in rooms that lead out to the garden or where continuity demands flooring carries through to a conservatory or orangery.

Buff sandstone or limestone flags, teamed with a cosy rug, are a staple of the country home. By contrast, uniform, etched, honed or machine-cut stones work well in formal or urban environments, and decorative cut or slab marbles inject an air of luxury and gravitas. ▶



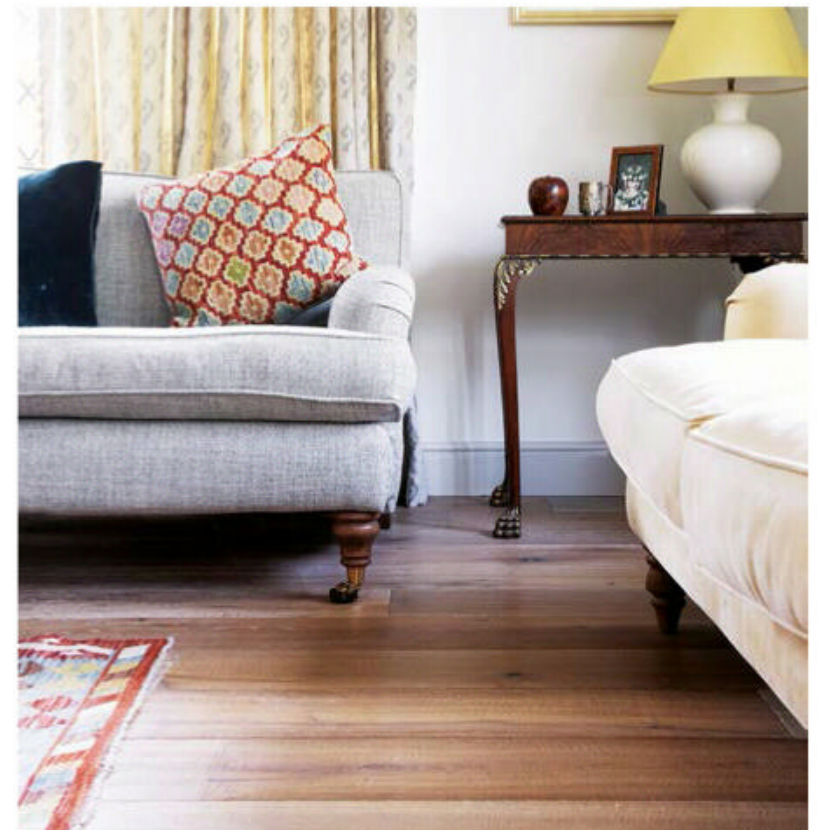
This laser-cut timber design pays homage to the work of master cabinetmakers. Intarsia engineered oak with wenge inlays, from £354.55 a square metre, Devon & Devon

RIGHT The surface of this natural grade engineered oak floor has been handscraped and the grain enhanced with white oil for extra definition and texture.

Handscraped Light Smoked Hardwaxed Oiled Oak, from £66 a square metre, Beswick Stone

BELOW RIGHT Replicate the look of traditional timber with low-maintenance, high-quality porcelain tiles, teamed with underfloor heating for warmth underfoot. *Chianti Rovere wood effect porcelain, £142.80 a square metre, Lapidica*

OPPOSITE PAGE Hardwearing oak flooring is a perennial favourite in the English home and popular chevron or herringbone patterns add decorative appeal. *Prime Grade Oak Chevron in Canvas, from £144 a square metre, Trunk*





Replicate the look of traditional herringbone parquet in a kitchen with a low-maintenance, hard-wearing porcelain alternative. Chatham Oak wood-effect matt porcelain tiles, £63 a square metre, Ca'Pietra



Kitchen floors

Flooring that shrugs off the dirt and rigours of everyday life is essential in the hub of the home, and stone has long been a perennial favourite in the English home. Robust granite, high-density limestone and water-resistant slate are the traditional stone choice here. Marble is best avoided as it is easily damaged by anything acidic.

Safe, non-slip, textured, tumbled or riven finishes will prove ideal for classic kitchen styles. “And can be more forgiving when it comes to everyday crumbs and dirt,” points out Fernandez. Larger tile formats with minimal grout lines offer easier maintenance. “We often suggest using a versatile 900mm by 600mm tile as it tends to work well in both small and larger areas,” Fernandez adds.

Alternatively, tactile terracotta and brick offers warming appeal particularly suited to older country-style properties, although both will require regular sealing to prevent staining. So, as is the case for more precious stones or timber, do consider replica porcelain alternatives, which, unlike decorative ceramic floor tiles that may break on impact, are an almost indestructible and more versatile design option. “Porcelain can also be a fantastic choice when extending onto a terrace or patio to create a seamless flow between house and garden,” suggests Colin Roby-Welford, creative director at Fired Earth.

Higher maintenance timber floors can be used to impart character to any setting and are particularly effective when looking to bring unity alongside an injection of warmth to larger, open-plan schemes. Opting for engineered flooring over solid boards might be preferable as it should avoid movement or possible warping due to moisture. Ideally choose a design with surface texture to provide extra grip underfoot. ▶



ABOVE LEFT Durable clay-baked geometric tiles can be used to create infinite patterns and create flow between a kitchen and hallway. *Victorian Geometric floor tiles in Harrogate, from £115.95 a square metre, Original Style*

ABOVE RIGHT Larger format stone tiles in tonal variations add interest underfoot in large kitchens. *Farrow Grey Limestone tiles, from £49 a square metre, Quorn Stone*

RIGHT A hand-distressed, rustic finish helps recreate age-old patina. *Shanklin Rustic Hand Grade extra-large oak engineered planks finished with hardwax oil, from £262.74 a square metre, Havwoods*





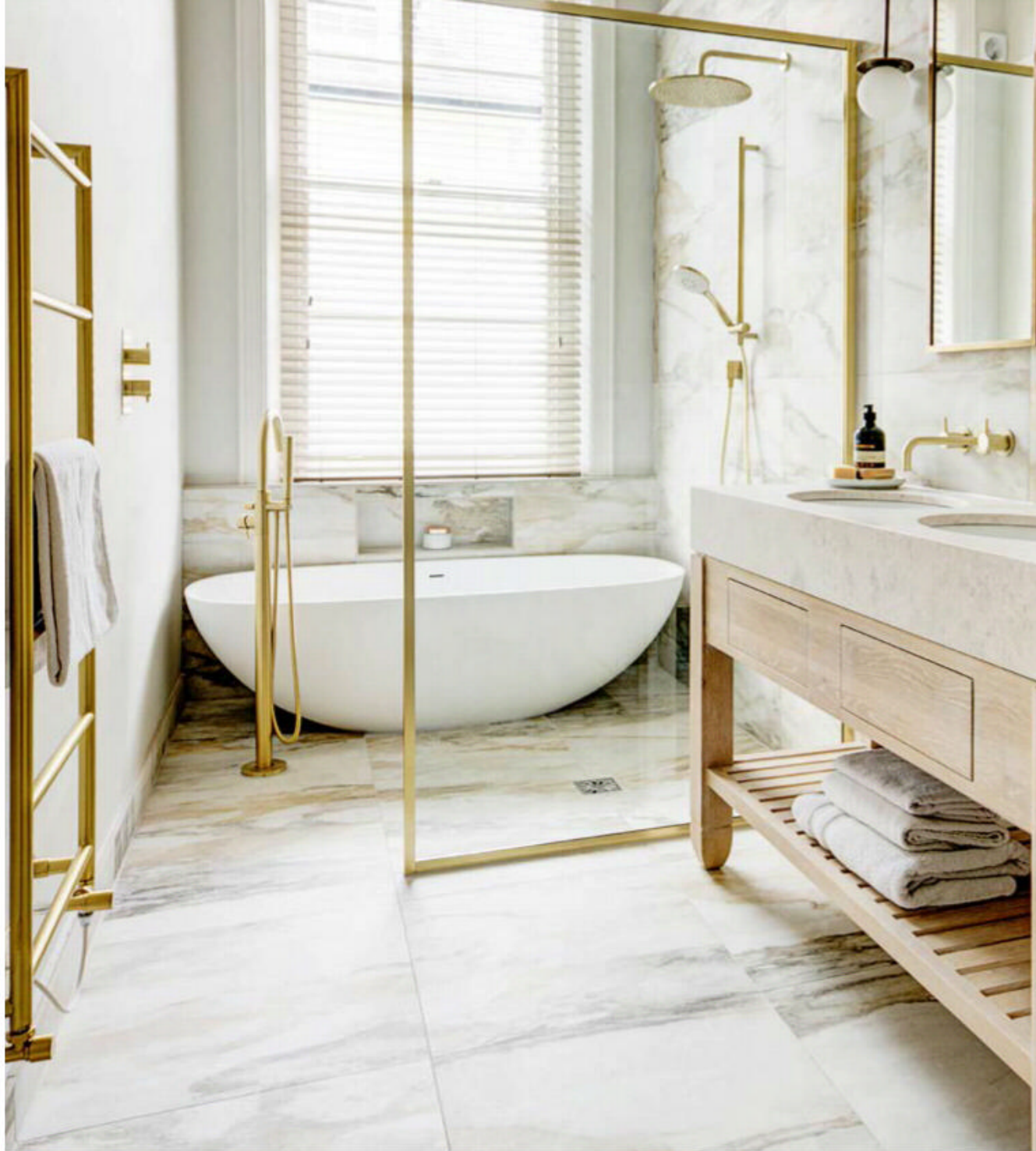
Bathroom floors

It pays to be practical in the bathroom. Where possible choose hard flooring that can be teamed with underfloor heating to ensure warmth and comfort underfoot, alongside compatibility with the latest energy-efficient solar panels and heat pumps.

Well-sealed stone is a natural companion to most house styles as well as to underfloor heating, and traditional travertine, limestone or slate are popular options, while marble is best for a luxurious hotel look according to Hamish Smith, managing and creative director at Artisan of Devizes. “As, whether crisp white, dramatically dark or perfectly pink, each tile offers unique intricate veining,” he says. Whatever the choice, “do be aware that matt and textured finishes are more slip-resistant than polished stone,” advises Jason Cherrington, director at Lapidica. Decorative mosaics offer natural grip underfoot, however, opting for larger tiles and uniform finishes will help compact areas appear larger.

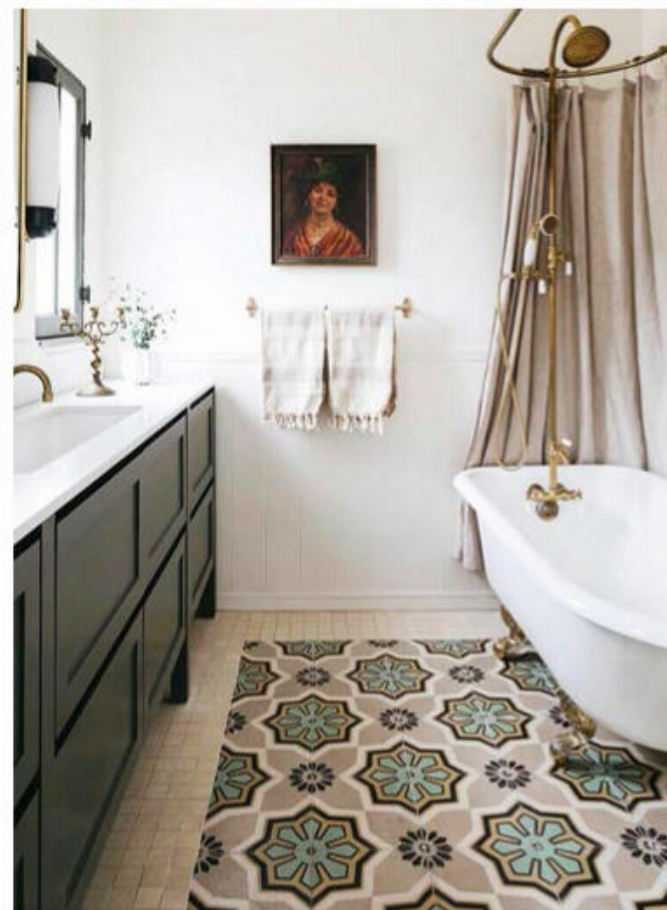
Where weight is an issue and reinforcing floors is not possible, stone can be substituted for robust, lookalike porcelains, with precision-cut tiles offering an almost grout-free finish in grander or urban homes. Timeless timber planks that defy eras or more formal parquet are also prime candidates for porcelain replication. “However, don’t dismiss the real thing,” says Ted Todd’s Robert Walsh, “as with the right care and finish, engineered hardwoods are a viable option and suited to underfloor heating. Select wide boards to stretch smaller rooms visually.”

Investing in reclaimed ceramic, encaustic or terracotta tiles can also bring added detail and authenticity to rural or smaller properties. Patterned ceramic, geometric and border tiles tend to work well in cottage-style or Victorian homes. “The key is to think about scale and balance,” says Roby-Welford. “As a general rule, larger rooms can take bolder designs that might otherwise crowd a smaller space.”



ABOVE Marble brings opulence to bathrooms, with mosaics offering slip resistance underfoot. *Diamond Sawn tiles, £126.16 a square metre; East Hampton basketweave honed mosaic marble, £164.22 a square metre, Fired Earth*
RIGHT American designer Kirsten Blazek used Vejer reclaimed tiles for this feature floor. *Reclaimed patterned tiles, from £198 a square metre; Reclaimed terracotta tiles, from £158 a square metre, Bert & May*

TOP LEFT & ABOVE Digitally printed porcelain tiles can recreate the meless quality of stone or marble and are lighter and can be easier to maintain. *(Top left) Mimica Iceberg rectified porcelain tiles, from £38.40 a square metre, Mandarin Stone*
(Above) Bathroom designed by Obsidian Interiors. Antique Marble porcelain tiles in Macchia Vecchia, from £58.80 a square metre, Lapidica





Bedroom floors

With warmth and comfort a priority in the bedroom, traditional timber is the natural choice, and ideal for those with allergies or asthma. Both softwoods and hardwoods in solid or engineered formats are an option here, and those worried about noise, should look to deep-pile rugs to dampen footfall and provide extra comfort underfoot.

Taking cues from surroundings or structural timbers can help determine floor styles, with European oak and Douglas Fir tending to be popular choices, as they combine texture, depth and warmth with a versatile neutral palette. “Opting for paler, neutral tones can also create the illusion of a larger, brighter area which is crucial to well-being,” says Walsh. Whereas darker wood tones, such as walnut or teak, instil a feeling of sophistication and charm in grander settings.

Specifying an oiled or waxed finish should enhance any timber’s warm appearance, natural texture and grain, and tends to be more fitting in most bedrooms than glossy lacquers. Selecting floating, engineered boards can negate the need to lay structural boards across joists, allowing for the direction in which the flooring is laid to positively influence proportion. “In a narrow room, for example, laying boards horizontally will help create an illusion of additional width,” explains Peter Keane, director of The Natural Wood Floor Company.

For an authentic time-worn patina, consider sourcing period appropriate antique and reclaimed timber. “Which, incidentally, is often harder than new,



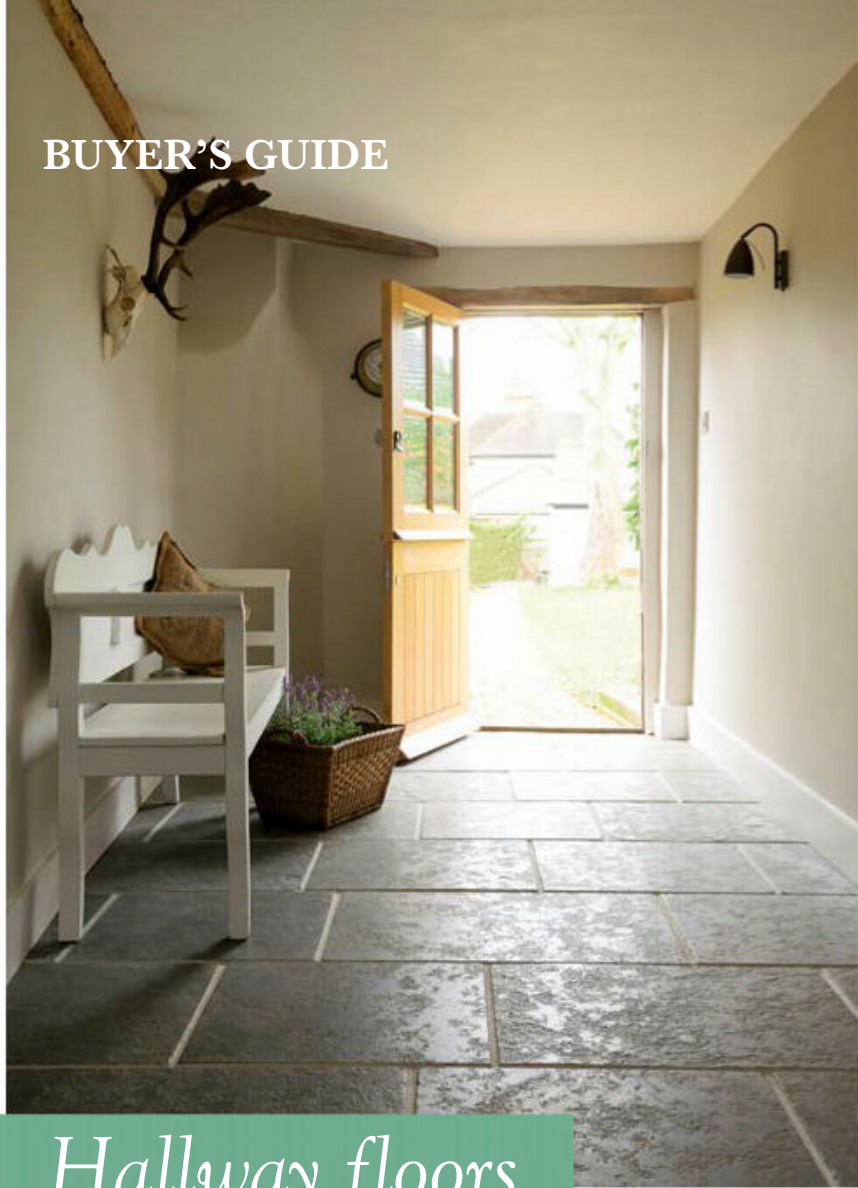
as it is already weathered,” says Alex Main, director of The Main Company. Alternatively, where new is preferred, look to specialist finishes and textured surfaces akin to an aged floor.

Alternatively, tiles offer an opportunity to inject pattern, depth and character in more relaxed settings, particularly warm-to-the-touch terracotta, stone, cement or clay encaustics. ▶

ABOVE LEFT A natural, oiled oak floor in a mid-hue is ideal for a more traditional look. *Guildhall oak flooring finished in hardwax oil. Solid boards, from £94 a square metre; engineered boards, from £93 a square metre, Broadleaf*

ABOVE RIGHT Sustainable antique or reclaimed timber has a warmth and resonance all its own. *Dark Colonial Teak solid boards, £POA, Rare Finds Collection by Ted Todd*

LEFT Modern decorative motifs on handmade encaustic tiles bring a new dimension to a classic bedroom. *Sunset patchwork encaustic cement tiles, £138 a square metre, Otto Tiles & Design*



Hallway floors

In entrance halls, highly resilient, characterful stone and timber is likely to be considered the traditionalist's choice in most settings and will only improve with age.

Favouring hardwoods, such as versatile oak, over softwood should help avoid marks and dents in these high-traffic areas. Meanwhile engineered timber can prove a more practical option than solid wood, as "the multi-layer core of an engineered board creates an incredibly robust and stable surface," says Keane. Look to premium or select grades of timber for a sophisticated knot-free finish and natural or rustic grades for a more relaxed aesthetic. Those looking to improve on smaller proportions, may wish to follow Walsh's advice to "introduce a herringbone or chevron laying pattern to draw the eye through the space and make it feel bigger".

When it comes to stone, practical tumbled or riven flagstones remain an enduring rustic option, but for a more formal feel, consider crisp chequerboard or honed tiles, or intricate, decorative inlaid and border designs. Definitive surfaces include granite, marble, travertine and slate.

"Limestone is a great all-rounder, as it is naturally non-slip when left unpolished and brings a wonderful tactile quality to any space," says Roselind Wilson, owner and creative director of Roselind Wilson Design. Look for variegated finishes and formats to imbue depth and character, and add interest in larger entrance halls; or by contrast, install tiles in diagonal patterns to enhance narrower areas.

For those preferring colour and pattern, resilient Victorian encaustic or geometric tiles, by the likes of Original Style and Craven Dunnill Jackson, will define and bring character to townhouses.

Look to equivalent porcelain patterns in replica stone or wood finishes for a truly maintenance-free option in all settings. ■



ABOVE LEFT Well-sealed, classic flagstones should resist all conditions and be easy to clean. Tumbled surfaces are a forgiving, non-slip option. *Tumbled antiqued ash limestone, £60 a square metre, Floors of Stone*

ABOVE Honed marble tiles are ideal for recreating classic chequerboard flooring which visually expands more restricted spaces. *Fitz honed marble tiles, £90 a square metre, Mandarin Stone*

BELOW An entrance hall is can be an ideal place to experiment with more decorative designs. Interior design by Mark Gillette. *Bespoke floor in PPX Honed Stone, £POA, Stone Age*



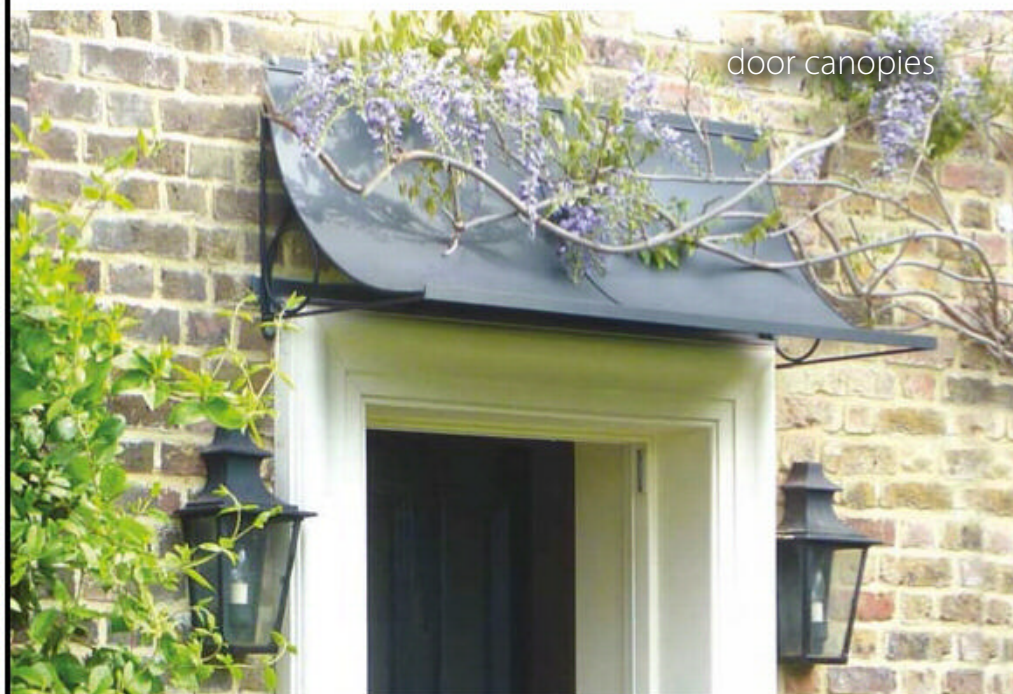


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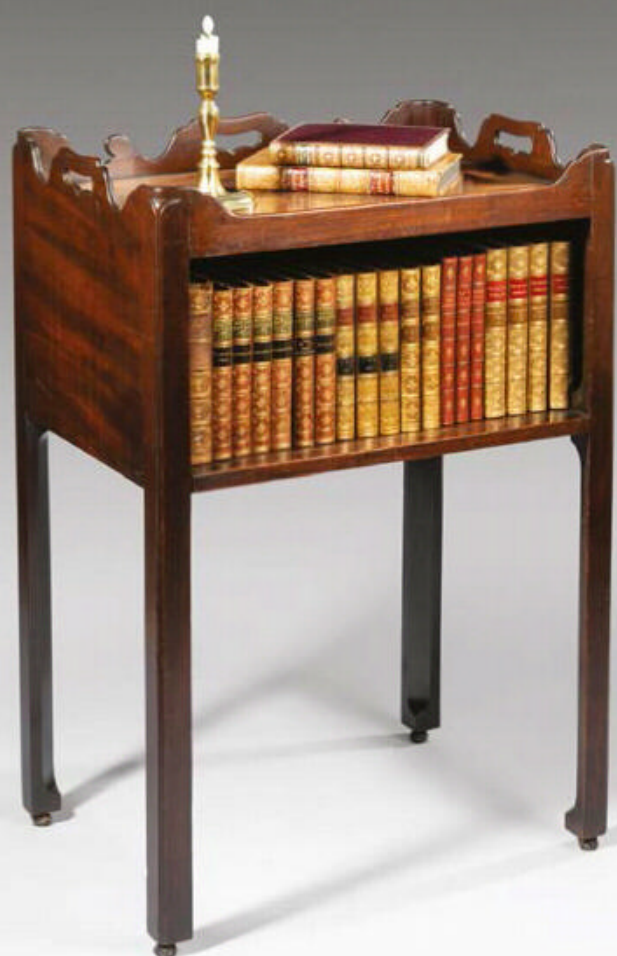
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NATURAL NARRATIVE

Decoupage is an artful-yet-simple technique to enrich furnishings and treasured objects with decorative paper embellishments that are lacquered to create a beautiful finish. Thought to originate from Eastern culture and introduced to Britain via Europe around the 18th century, decoupage is synonymous with classic motifs. Annie Sloan's new decoupage collection, the result of a collaboration with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), showcases illustrations of flora and fauna inspired by 18th- and 19th-century publications in the RHS Lindley Library's world-famous collections.

RHS Decoupage Paper Songbirds, £11.95 for a pack of two decoupage papers (700mm x 480mm), Annie Sloan

FROM PATCH TO PLATE

Matthew Fort

Jubilant that spring may have taken hold in his vegetable garden, Matthew charts the fruits of his labours



I was looking out of the kitchen window at my vegetable patch the other day and thinking what a marvel it was. The sun was bright. The air was warm. There was blossom on my greengage trees. Every prospect delighted. Best of all, I noticed the vegetable beds are coming to life. Just a few weeks ago they were filled with what appeared to be dark chocolate. Now they were marked by wavy lines of brilliant, feathery green where the seeds I sowed so assiduously have sprouted.

I love seeds. Have you ever taken a close look at them? Such tiny, unremarkable things, a bit dull on the outside, and yet within their insignificant forms is everything that is needed to turn them into an edible marvel with time, warmth and a bit of water. I may be a sentimental fool, but I still find it an abiding miracle, particularly when I see them popping up out there.

In the bed nearest the kitchen window, I can see the carrots (my old favourite, James Scarlet Intermediate, and last year's successes, Jaune du Doubs and Manchester Table); beetroots (Sanguina, Chioggia, Cheltenham Green Top); salads (Mortons Secret Mix and Grosse Blonde Paresseuse – a fabulously full-blown butterhead lettuce); and, finally, bush French beans (Aquilon and Cupidon).

Soon, most of these will need thinning out, one of the challenging but most vital jobs for the vegetable gardener who wants their vegetables to grow to critical mass. My mother, who was a very keen and knowledgeable gardener, always exhorted me to be 'ruthless' when it came to thinning. I use those long chef's tweezers because my fingers are too clumsy for such delicate work.

The bed beyond this first one is divided between broad beans (Stereo, Purple

Seeded) and peas (Douce de Provence, Magnum Bonum). I don't really grow enough of either to make a serious contribution to household consumption, but, honestly, there are few better things in life than picking a pod of either or both and popping the contents into your mouth as fresh as nature intended. They are an indulgence from any practical point of view, but there is a 'scientific' purpose behind it all. It is only by growing and tasting different varieties that I discover their different qualities and flavours, that some are more suited to this easy of cooking and some to that. It is a point of which I believe more chefs should be aware.

In the bed furthest from my kitchen window I can see the haulms of my potatoes (International Kidney and British Queen – a new variety to me) that take up half of it. They will need earthing up soon. The rest of that bed will be given over to courgettes (Romanesco, Rugosa Friulana) when I think they are ready to be transplanted outside.

Of course, there is a bit of a way to go yet. Rarely do things turn out exactly as I expect. The weather may turn capricious. Last year I watched aghast as sparrows and blue tits shredded my young salad leaves. For the time being, it is a matter of watching and waiting and dreaming and hope springs eternal and all that.

Now, what will I do with those early lettuce leaves?

About Matthew An award-winning food writer and critic, Matthew was Food & Drink Editor of *The Guardian* for 15 years and a judge on BBC TV's *Great British Menu*. He is also the author of four books on food and travel.



LETTUCE FILLED WITH MARINATED TROUT

A light and lovely spring dish, this can be a canapé or a dainty first course. Other fish, such as sea bream or sea bass, or even scallops can be used, although if using scallops, switch the lemons to limes.

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

750g trout
2 medium tomatoes
½ bunch of parsley
½ red onion
1 avocado
1 habanero chilli
2 lemons
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
Grated peel of half a lemon
Sea salt
1 butterhead lettuce (preferably Grosse Blonde Paresseuse)

METHOD

- Chop the raw trout into bite-size chunks.
- To prepare the marinade, peel and chop the tomatoes and avocado. Finely dice the onion and chilli. Juice the two lemons.
- Mix the trout and marinade ingredients together in a bowl. Add a pinch of salt and cover and leave for 15 minutes to cure. Then chop the parsley and stir into the mixture with the olive oil.
- Peel off the lettuce leaves, lay on a plate and add a generous teaspoon of the marinated trout onto each leaf until used up. Dust with the grated lemon peel and serve. ■

FOOD





Invest in elegant all-weather furniture. Kensington round dining table with six dining armchairs, £4,299, Bridgman

Dig deep OR SAVE?

From landscaping to lawns, experts advise on where to spend and where to save for a flourishing garden scheme

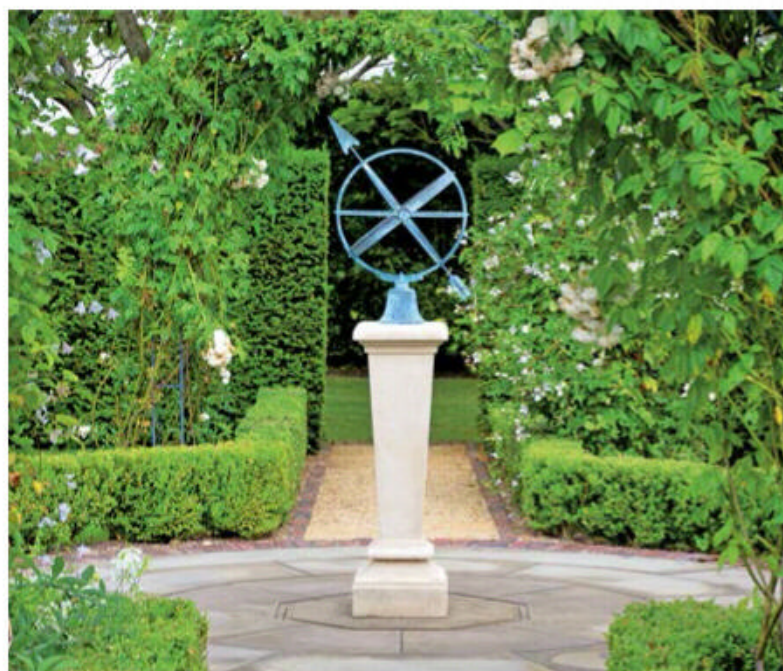
To create an outside space that will thrive and continue to do so over time, garden designers and consultants use their in-depth knowledge to advise clients where to invest to get the best quality and where to make smart budget decisions. Whether looking to create a new landscaped area in a large garden or simply improve a small patio courtyard, expert guidance on key areas to invest and save can help unlock a garden's maximum potential, whatever the style of garden and size of budget.

PATIOS & TERRACES

A patio or terrace is a place everyone congregates, and it is worth investing in groundworks. Isabelle Palmer, renowned city garden designer and founder of The Balcony Gardener, advises starting with hard-wearing materials: "Millboard [wood composite] decking is excellent and comes with a 30-year guarantee. Alternatively, opt for hard-wearing stones, such as limestone or granite. If you want to save money, slabs are more cost-effective than brick paving."

To source beautiful pots, garden designers advocate searching reclamation yards, antique suppliers and markets to select higher-value, eye-catching pieces or, for a smaller budget, find inexpensive containers to makeover. Palmer says, "Terracotta is cheap and easy to transform into a more expensive looking vessel. You can also transform it with Bauwerk paint, which is available in a plethora of colours." Charlotte Harris, from award-winning landscape design duo Harris Bugg Studio, adds, "Fewer, bigger pots make much more impact – and are easier to maintain – than a vast array of small ones. When you've planted them make sure to keep them replenished with nutrients – an organic biochar, such as Carbon Gold, is ideal for this. Used regularly, it will boost your plants for beautiful results."

For greenery, Emma McNamara, the National Trust's gardens and parks consultant for London and the south east of England, says, "Select plants that can be a constant feature; trees such as acers and small crab apples work well in containers and give year-round interest." She also advocates small plug plants: "They thrive when potted up, often growing larger and more healthy than bigger plants bought later in the season." ▶



TOP Opt for hard-wearing stone or outdoor porcelain. Galway Buff outdoor porcelain, £54 a square metre, Mandarin Stone

ABOVE Add a focal point. Inverted sundial pedestal with Zenith Armillary sphere, £2,200, Architectural Heritage

Spend or save?

- Spend on a hard-wearing surface that will last
- Visit reclamation yards, antique suppliers and markets to source one or two high-value large pots, or cheaper vessels to transform
- Choose eye-catching small trees that give good value and year-round interest
- Save by buying small plug plants that will thrive when potted up, growing large and healthy

Our expert panel of gardeners



Chris Beardshaw, director, Chris Beardshaw Design



Henrietta Courtauld and Bridget Elworthy, The Land Gardeners



Isabelle Palmer, The Balcony Gardener



Emma McNamara, National Trust Gardens and Parks Consultant



Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg, Harris Bugg Studio

BORDERS

When establishing a new border or revitalising an existing one, the secret is in the ground conditions. “The success of any border – whether it’s herbaceous, shrub or even a cut-flower border – lies in preparation of the soil,” says award-winning designer and plantsman Chris Beardshaw. “Invest in cultivation and incorporate good-quality, well-rotted organic matter to let your plants thrive, and if you are planting woody, rooted specimens add mycorrhizal fungi to get them off to the best start,”

To gain a better understanding of plants that will grow successfully, The Land Gardeners, along with other experts, suggest neighbourhood plant swaps to help avoid expensive mistakes and leave a larger proportion of budget to invest in rarer plants. It is also worth looking to perennials, for more choice and long-term prospects.

“Planting in 9cm-size pots, rather than two-litre pots, is the professional’s trick to plant economically, and, where possible, plant at the start of the autumn when the soil is still warm,” says Hugo Bugg, from Harris Bugg Studio. “That way, plants can start to establish over the winter, so, by spring, your garden will really have settled in and be flourishing.”

Spend or save?

- Invest in soil preparation and high-quality compost
- Save by swapping plants with friends and neighbours
- Perennials offer more choice and better long-term prospects
- Use the professionals’ trick of planting in 9cm pots to plant economically

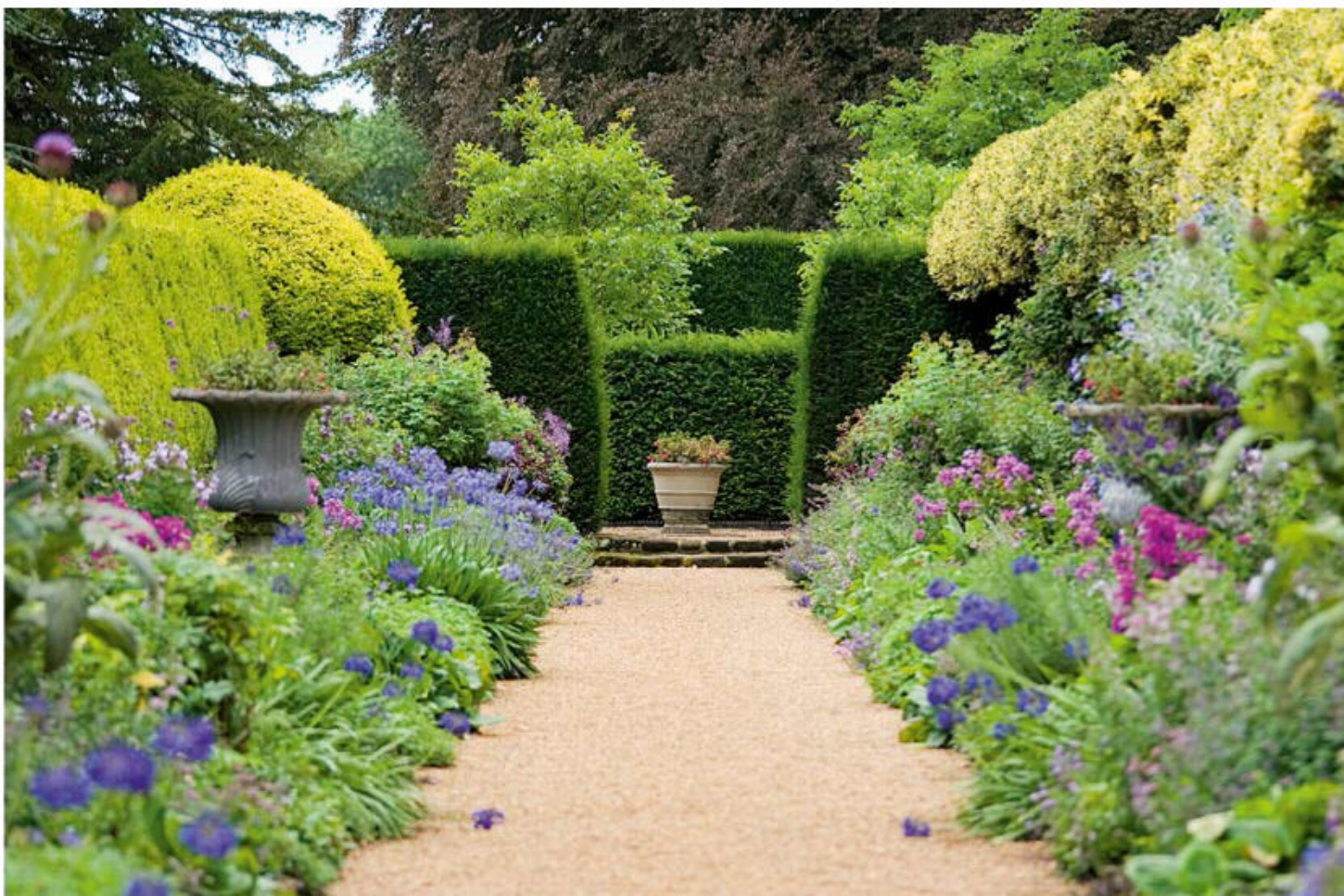
RIGHT To create a new border, Isabelle Palmer of The Balcony Gardener advises planting from the back and working forward, then widening the border with smaller plants at a later date.



TOP Buy small herbaceous plants that grow quickly.
Planting by Chris Beardshaw Design

ABOVE Fill townhouse borders with texture.
Landscaping services from Clifton Nurseries

LEFT Create an area to prepare and pot plants.
Potting bench with hooks, drawer and dry sink, £249.99, Gardenesque



Spend or save?

- Invest in desirable trees as a long-term feature and take time preparing the ground with high-quality compost and spend on protection from wildlife
- For smaller gardens, invest in a frame so trees can be suitably trained
- Local nurseries may be less expensive and will help avoid mistakes with detailed knowledge of different varieties
- Save by buying bare-root trees and planting in winter

TREES & BUSHES

It can require a large initial outlay to purchase sizeable trees and bushes, so giving them a good chance of success is crucial. “The best investment you can make is in preparation and planting, ensuring there is sufficient drainage, and the surrounding soil is not compacted,” says Bugg. “When planting, add bone meal or biochar to help with establishment, and don’t forget about protection – rabbits and deer love new trees, so guards in the countryside are a must. We often plant more mature, characterful specimens closer to the house for impact, then smaller more juvenile trees and shrubs further away.”

In smaller gardens, investing in a frame makes growing trees viable. “Pleached or espalier trees are a great way to make an impact without taking up much room,” Palmer says.

To potentially spend less, McNamara advises, “Use your local wholesale nursery for trees and shrubs, especially if you want many. They will have varying sizes of plants and can help you select based on their knowledge of growth rates.” ▶

ABOVE Bridget Elworthy, of The Land Gardeners, advises, “To save money, buy bare-root trees and plant them in the winter between October and March.” *Garden design by The Land Gardeners*
RIGHT Trees with distinct shapes or colours contribute year-round interest. *Cornus controversa ‘Variegata’, or Wedding Cake tree, £59.99, Crocus*



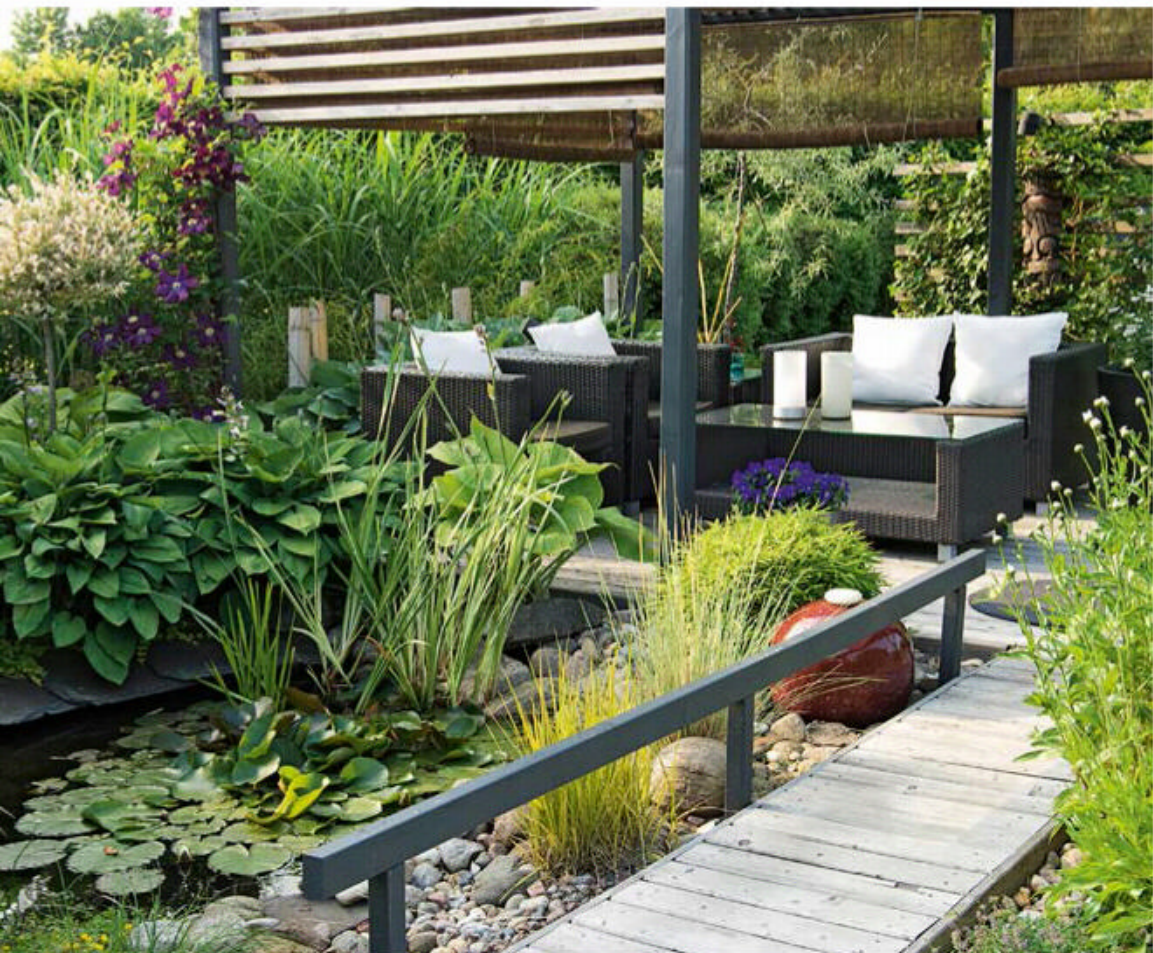


LANDSCAPING

Garden designers agree that landscaping is the most important area to invest in as experienced contractors will make sure structural elements, such as drainage, are installed properly to avoid future problems. “Your soil – the most important resource in any garden – will be looked after in the process, not compacted or treated carelessly, says Charlotte Harris of Harris Bugg Studio. She also advises investing in power infrastructure: “Considered, gentle illumination of key areas extends your opportunity to use the garden in the evening, but also your experience looking from the inside out. We always emphasise the careful touch of this, however, to minimise the impact on wildlife.”

From hedging to a terrace or walls, creating boundaries is a long-term investment in the garden that delineates different areas for varying purposes. “You can save money by using hedging rather than building walls,” says Elworthy. “However, it is worth spending money on a beautiful variety of hedging, such as yew which is more expensive and will take longer to grow, than, for example, leylandii or privet, which are faster growing but will not form beautiful, dense evergreen hedges.”

Elworthy advocates saving money by choosing smaller plants. “You will be surprised how a growing hedge gives immediate impact,” she says. “Think about using topiary and long grass in your garden to give your garden overall form, even in winter, as whilst the topiary will be costly the long grass will be inexpensive to maintain.”



ABOVE Invest in paving for heavy-traffic areas.

Dijon tumbled outdoor limestone, £54 a square metre, Mandarin Stone

LEFT Emma McNamara advises asking for references from contractors before any building work commences.

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT Prepare lawns for seasonal use.

Rollout bed, £70, Garden Trading

OPPOSITE MIDDLE Regularly water new grass from seed. *Burgon & Ball watering can, £32.99, Dobbies*

Spend or save?

- Invest in landscaping to ensure no costly mistakes are made
- Spend on lighting at the beginning of projects
- Hedging is an affordable alternative to walls, but spend on attractive varieties
- Use smaller plants, such as topiary and long grass, as an inexpensive way to create form in winter



Spend or save?

- Use the best-quality turf or seed to lay the right foundations
- Consider having fallow periods in summer to save on mowing
- Scarify a lawn in autumn to save on expensive seeds or turf
- Keep a lawn in good condition by feeding it nutrients in spring



LAWN CARE

Always on show, lawns can be difficult to keep healthy year-round. McNamara explains that when laying or sowing grass, investment is vital: “Use the highest-grade turf or seed available and use the correct grass mix for the growing area – for shade or high footfall etc. This will grow better and establish a lawn fit for purpose, and reduce the need for constant maintenance.”

Henrietta Courtauld, of The Land Gardeners, agrees preparation is fundamental. The Land Gardeners use their own microbial Climate Compost and Courtauld suggests saving by not mowing in summer. “All sorts of flowers will turn up and you can add others, such as ox-eye daisies. You can then mow towards the end of summer, and it only takes ten days to be back to billiard-table green.”

Once lawns are established, care can move into the save bracket. McNamara recommends scarifying lawns in autumn “to remove the thatch that will have grown over the summer, adding space and airflow around the roots”. Come spring, feed the grass to add nutrients after winter. ■

HARRIS BUGG STUDIO'S RESOURCES

- Landscape designers: British Association of Landscape Industries (bali.org.uk)
- Landscape lighting: Moonlight (moonlightdesign.co.uk)
- Antique garden ornaments: Lichen Garden Antiques (lichengardenantiques.com)
- Sourcing plants and nurseries: RHS Plant Finder (rhs.org.uk)
- Zinc and copper planters: Bronzino (bronzino.co.uk)
- Antique decorative vessels: Lily Antiques (lilyantiques.co.uk)

RIGHT Mow a path to create a summer journey around the garden.
Garden design by The Land Gardeners



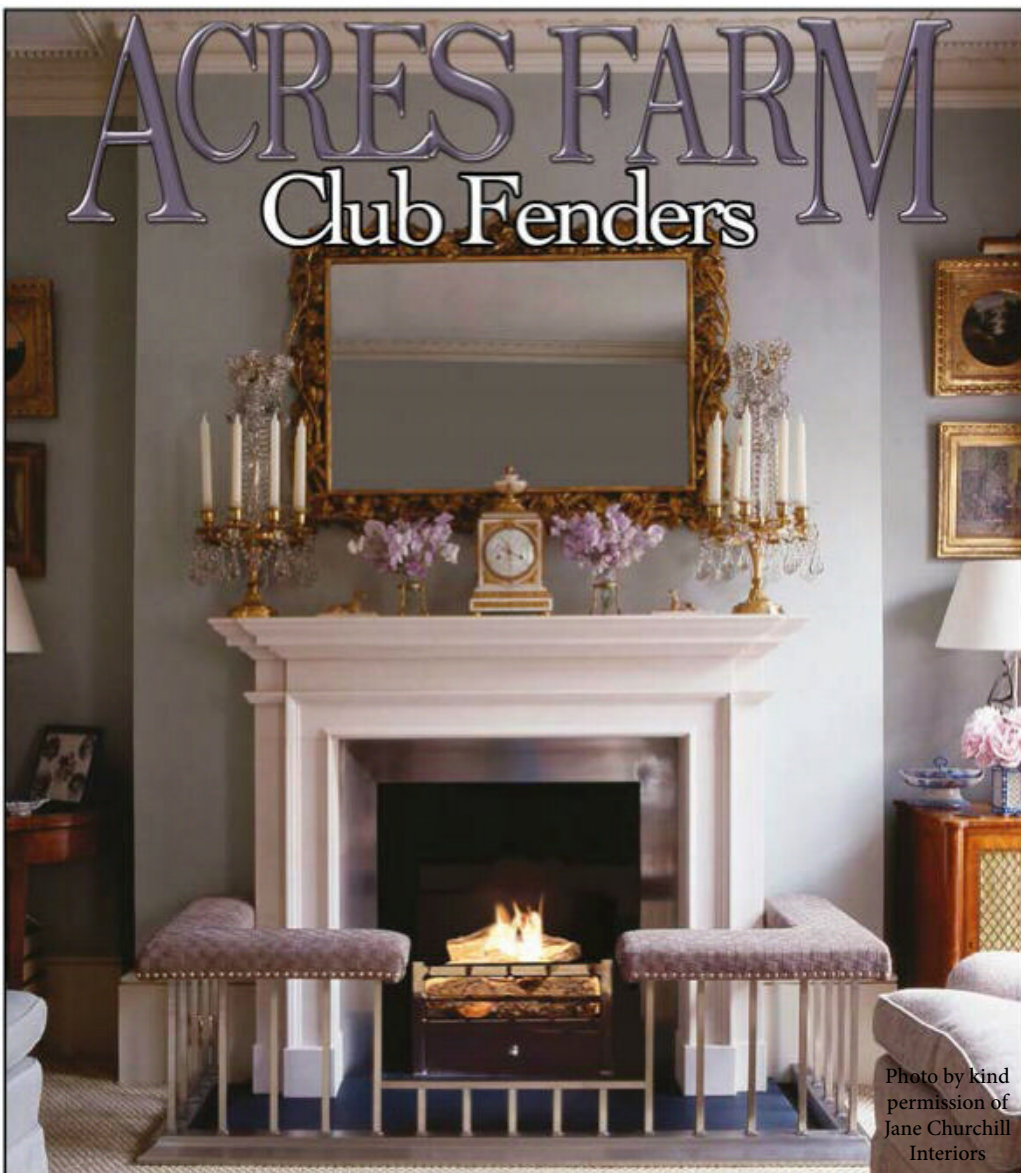


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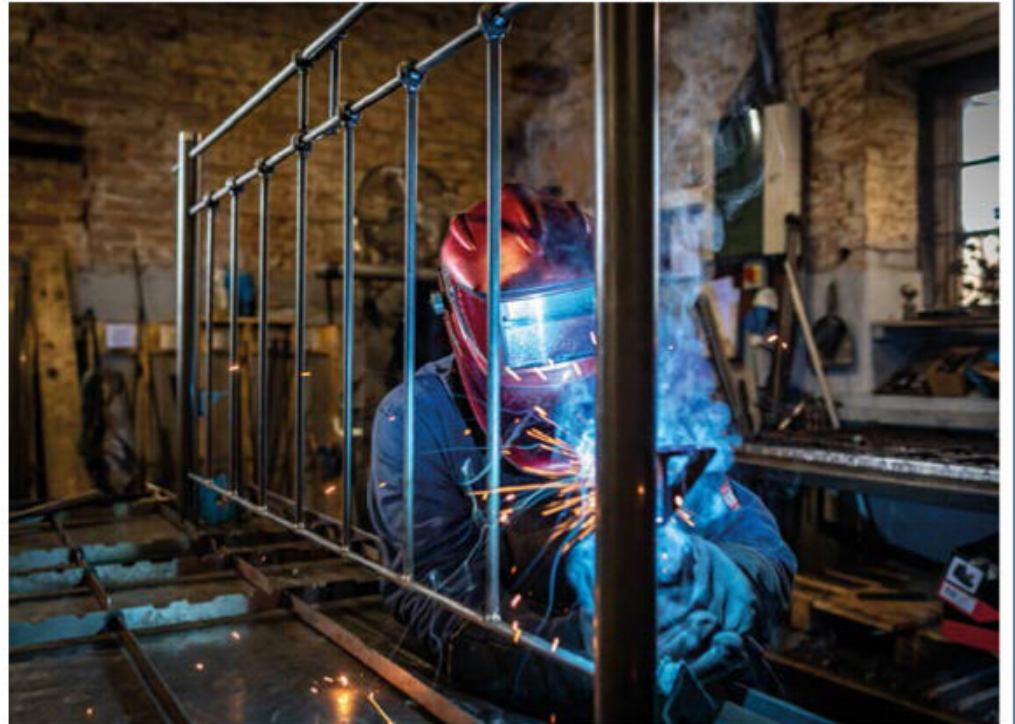


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DRAWN TO NATURE

Plan a trip to some of England's finest gardens with new illustrated map and guide *A Cotswold Garden Companion*

1 HIDCOTE, *Hidcote Bartrim, nr Chipping Campden GL55 6LR*

Where many of us might fall for a plant and then try to find a home for it, Major Lawrence Johnston (1871–1958) built whole gardens to accommodate his ever-expanding collections. The result is the archetypal Arts and Crafts garden with its famous tapestry hedges of hornbeam, beech and yew dividing the different 'rooms', from the Long Walk to the Red Borders and the Pillar Garden, where peonies dance among the topiary.

2 SNOWSHILL MANOR, *Broadway WR12 7JU*

Few gardens convey such a strong feeling for their creators as Snowhill. It was the work of inveterate collector Charles Wade (1883–1956), and clues to his delight in an object with a story are everywhere: in the armillary sphere, the water spouts, the doorknobs, the coats of arms, and in Wolf's Cove, the model village he painstakingly designed and built.

3 PAINSWICK ROCOCO GARDEN, *Painswick GL6 6TH*

Designed in the 1740s, this garden of flirtation, frivolity and frolics is the only surviving example in the rococo style in the UK. Its many walks, water features and follies continue to delight, along with more recent additions such as a maze. The snowdrop displays are renowned, and the yews in the parish churchyard are worth a look, too.

4 WESTONBIRT, *The National Arboretum, Westonbirt, Tetbury GL8 8QS*

An arboretum of two halves, comprising a woodland actively coppiced for bean sticks, charcoal and more, and the historic collection, laid out in the early 1800s with the crème de la crème of tree species that were then being introduced.

5 IFORD MANOR GARDENS, *Iford, Bradford-on-Avon BA15 2BA*

From 1899 to 1933, architect, garden designer and avid traveller Harold Peto turned this part of a steep, wooded valley of the River Frome into a little piece of the Mediterranean he loved so much, filled with cypresses, stone colonnades, Roman statuary and an elegant cloister like a miniature courtyard of the Alhambra. Today, the Cartwright-Hignett family continues his legacy, reviving the romantic atmosphere and formal terraces sprouting wisteria and rosemary at every turn, and evolving the design with new additions such as the Oriental garden.

6 BUSCOT PARK, *Faringdon SN7 8BU*

You will want to leave plenty of time for this gem, whose multitudinous (and still multiplying) avenues lead to new discoveries in every direction. In many gardens, the Four Seasons Walled Garden – with its fine pleached hop hornbeams, espaliered apples and planted lawns – would be interest enough, but here that's just the beginning. Harold Peto was the brains behind the seductive water garden which idly cascades its way to the lake; there is also a delightfully soporific Swinging Garden and, less peacefully, a small army of terracotta warriors hiding among the hedges.

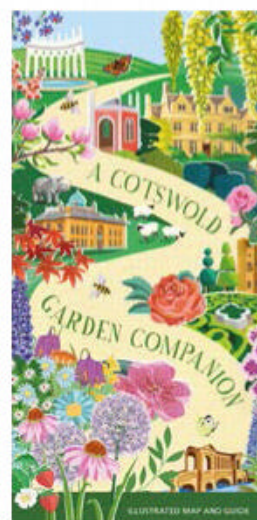
7 BLENHEIM, *Woodstock OX20 1PP*

The only non-royal, non-episcopal palace in Britain, Blenheim has always set out to impress. In 1710 architects Sir John Vanbrugh and Henry Wise laid out 17,000 trees as the Great Parterre, before Capability Brown removed all trace a few decades later. Emus and kangaroos were once kept here; the second wife of the 9th Duke of Marlborough (one of the earliest recipients of a nose job) had her face put on the sphinxes in the water terraces; and the 5th Duke, an avid botanist and plant collector, made gardens for his Chinese finds, for aquatic plants, and for his dahlias, roses, alpines and more, landing himself in considerable debt as he did so. None of these remain, although there is a more recent rose garden with views of the Great Lake, and a formal Italian garden with box parterres. But, for a little calm and solitude away from all the pomp, it is the Secret Garden you want, created in the 1950s by the 10th Duke as a place to escape the crowds.

8 BROUGHTON CASTLE, *Banbury OX15 5EB*

From the gatehouse of this austere moated manor house (the core of which dates back to 1306), the only sign of the gardens beyond is a single rose throwing its blooms above the curtain wall. But venture through that wall and the contrast is breathtaking, with borders overflowing with roses and dark-leaved berberis, cotinus and elders. The Ladies' Garden is the jewel in the crown – a romantic confection of fleur-de-lys rose beds surrounding a central honeysuckle underplanted with thyme.

A Cotswold Garden Companion (Finch Publishing, £8.50) features 55 gardens. Available from finchpublishing.co.uk ▶



WANDER IN *Wonder*

Discover more about the first-class design and planting inspiration on offer at the exquisite Cotswold gardens plotted on the previous pages

These delightful, quintessentially English gardens are brimming with inspiration and ideas to replicate at home, providing plenty of food for mind and soul. So why not pay them a visit this year, soaking up each location's individual heritage, setting and standout features to discover exactly what makes each one so special.

SNOWSHILL: *Intimate Arts and Crafts garden*

The result of a collaboration with artist and Arts and Crafts architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott (1865–1945), the garden at Snowhill Manor is enchanting and highly personal. A peaceful place to savour the seasons, the former farmyard was lovingly transformed in the 1920s into a series of evocative garden 'rooms', each imbued with a sense of mystery leading into another. Tempting vistas at the end of terraces and intriguing doors, steps and gateways encourage visitors to explore and discover the many varied architectural treasures that are carefully incorporated throughout the setting. Many features, including the dovecote and cow byres, were attentively restored, reviving traditional building skills and methods, with one becoming a well-loved outdoor dining room.

Snowhill, Broadway, Gloucestershire
WR12 7JU

Tel 01386 852410

nationaltrust.org.uk/snowhill-manor-and-garden

Open from 14 March to 30 October all week,
plus weekends in November



WESTONBIRT, THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM: *Rare and majestic trees from across the globe*

Dating back 200 years and spanning 600 acres, Westonbirt, The National Arboretum is home to 2,500 different tree species and five national collections. Established in 1829 by Robert Holford (1808–1892), it features exotic tree varieties that were first discovered on global plant-hunting trips he sponsored. Arranged aesthetically, it was initially divided by three main rides, but later spread across the valley into the existing mature woodland. See spectacular displays of rhododendrons and maples, and trees such as sapphire dragon tree and Madeira mountain ash that appear as Critically Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red list.

Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QS

Tel 0300 067 4890

forestryengland.uk/westonbirt-the-national-arboretum

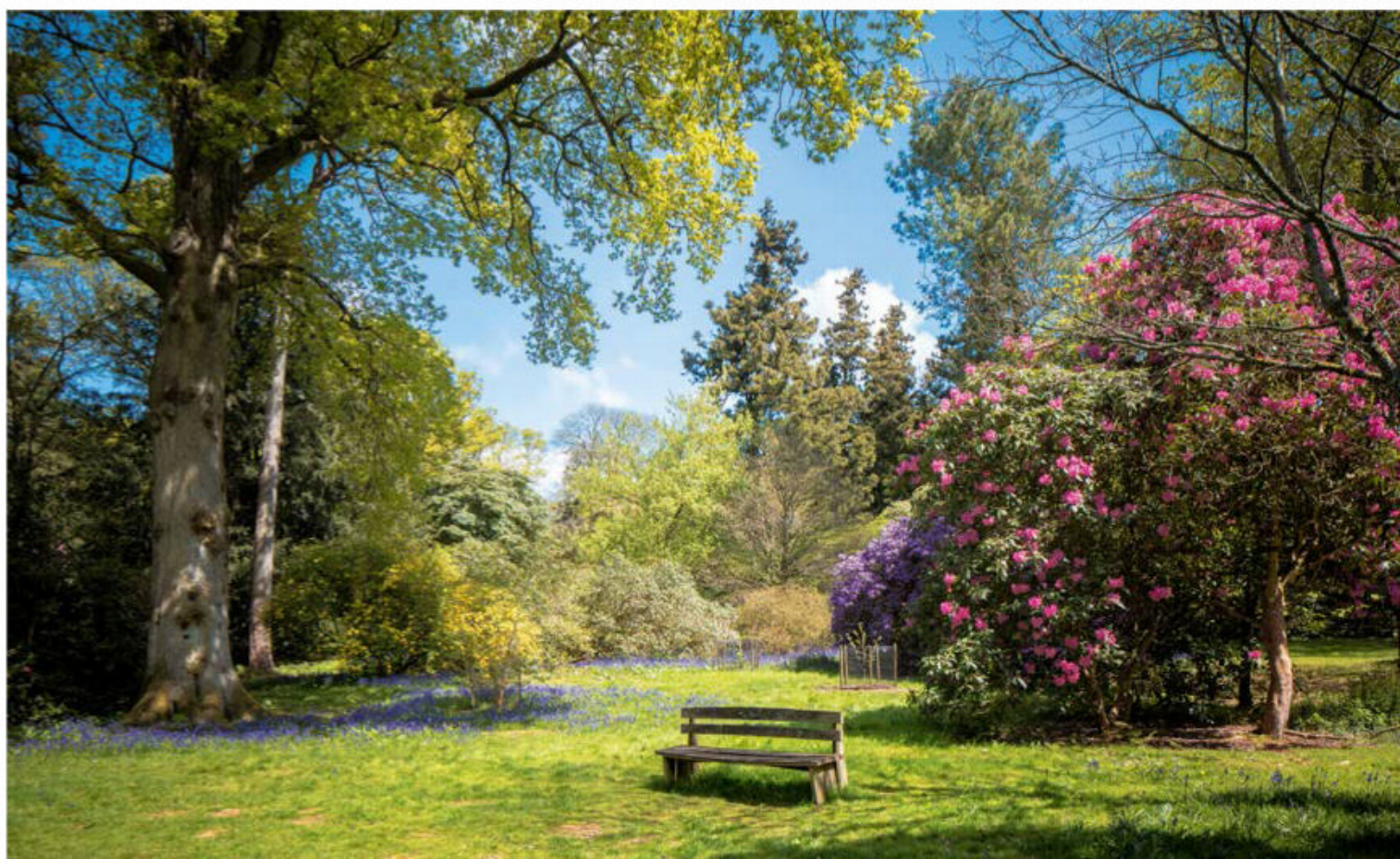
Open every day except Christmas Day



TOP Well Court and Sancta Maria Byre at Snowhill Manor and Garden.

ABOVE Steps and gate leading into Well Court in June at Snowhill Manor and Garden.

BELOW Arranged in the 'picturesque' manner, the many rare trees at Westonbirt, The National Arboretum originate from plant-hunting trips to Africa and Asia.





HIDCOTE: *Influential, charming garden rooms*

Set amongst the rolling Cotswold hills, these elegant Art and Crafts gardens have inspired many significant others, and are known across the world. Hidcote comprises a collection of smaller gardens bisected by long, open walkways and vistas. The exquisite White Garden is known to have inspired Vita Sackville-West's larger design at Sissinghurst in Kent, while The Old Garden, dominated by a stately Cedar of Lebanon, features a soft palette of subtle pinks, mauves and light blues. The property was bought at auction in 1907 and early garden designs were predominantly formal and circled the manor house. As more adjoining land was bought, the gardens became less tightly structured, flowing effortlessly into the wooded wilderness and the farmland beyond.

Hidcote Bartrim, near Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 6LR

Tel 01386 438333

nationaltrust.org.uk/hidcote

Open from 12 February to 30 October all week, plus weekends in November to 18 December

TOP Positioned close to the house, The Old Garden at Hidcote combines abundant herbaceous borders with a sense of mystery and intrigue.

MIDDLE RIGHT Narrow openings in dense yew hedging form a series of garden rooms at Hidcote.

RIGHT Delight in the many secret nooks and follies of Painswick Rococo Garden. Gothic detailing enhances the fanciful feel.

PAINSWICK ROCOCO GARDEN:

Meandering idyll filled with eccentric retreats

Designed as a 'fanciful pleasure garden', the interweaving pathways and wooded glades of Painswick Rococo Garden make it the perfect place to sit, socialise and reconnect with nature. Created in the eighteenth century as a venue for lavish parties and carefree living, the garden was well known and admired by many key society figures. Overtly romantic in style, the grounds are peppered with secluded seating areas and intimate follies, many painted in pastel shades with high Gothic architectural details. Spectacles not to be missed include the Exedra Garden in early summer with its sweet williams, fragrant heritage roses, and the Coach House in May adorned with dreamy wisteria.

Painswick, Gloucestershire GL6 6TH

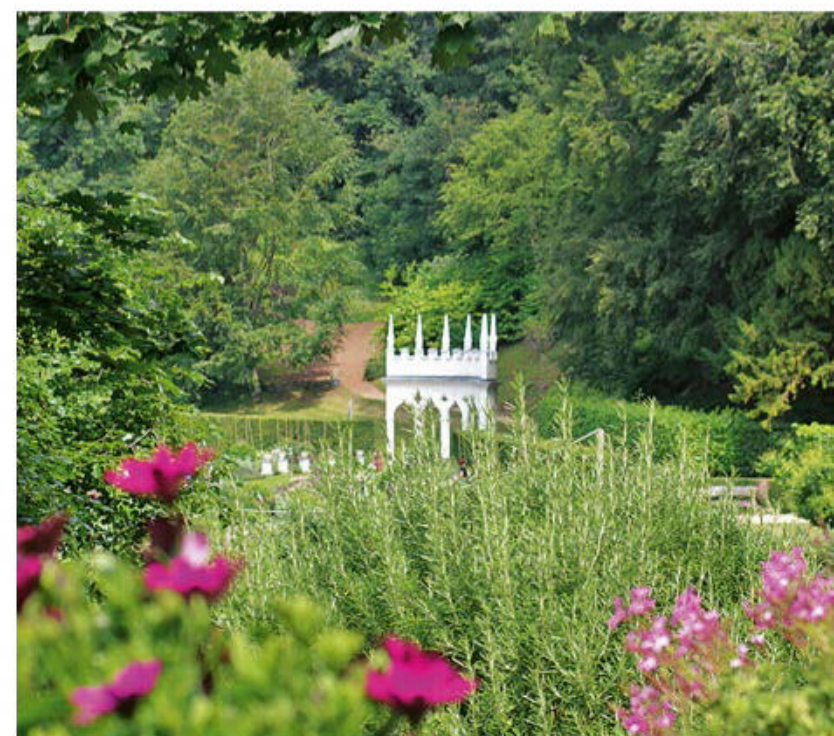
Tel 01452 813204

rococogarden.org.uk

Open Wednesday to Sunday from 1 March to 30 September

Open daily during school holidays from 9 to 24 April, 28 May to 5 June, 22 July to 4 September and 22 to 30 October

Open Thursday to Sunday in October, and Friday to Sunday in November ►





IFORD MANOR GARDENS:

A harmony of plants and antiquities

Bathed in historical detail, Iford Manor Gardens exude classical elegance. Born of a passion for design and history, this Mediterranean-inspired gem beckons visitors to explore, promising unspoilt rural views and architectural treasures around every twist and turn. Grade I listed, with several formal terraces, the gardens sit on the side of a steeply wooded valley overlooking the River Frome in Wiltshire. Classical statues and antiquities, many dating back to Roman and Medieval times, are poignantly positioned on plinths, columns and lining loggias and terraces, all beautifully highlighted by exuberant planting, including some of the original scented daylily and Turk's cap lily.

Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 2BA

Tel 01225 863146

ifordmanor.co.uk

Open from 1 April to 30 September, Wednesday to Sunday including Bank Holiday Mondays

TOP Explore the meandering paths of Iford Manor Gardens in early summer.

MIDDLE RIGHT Visit Buscot Park from late April to June to marvel at the Judas tree arch with majestic wisteria. Family home of the

BUSCOT PARK:

Bold design and contemporary features

An ever-evolving English landscape garden, Buscot Park is irresistibly charming. An 18th-century house with a 20th-century garden, Buscot Park embodies Italianate elegance with touches of the Arts and Crafts movement. A mix of formal gardens, modern walled gardens and extensive woods and parkland, the grounds are constantly being improved with contemporary sculpture and new areas of planting. The 20-acre lake with classical stone bridge forms a stunning centrepiece, whilst numerous tree-lined allées radiate out from the arch in the East Pavilion. Each has sheltered roundels punctuated by historic artefacts and present-day artworks. Faux Fall, a striking and sizeable water feature by sculptor David Harber, was commissioned in 2007 and could be interpreted as a 21st-century cascade.

Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8BU

Tel 01367 240932

nationaltrust.org.uk/buscot-park

Open from 1 April to 30 September weekdays and alternate weekends starting early April

present Lord Faringdon, it is an elegant blend of classical and contemporary features.

RIGHT The Temple of Aphrodite, designed by Harold Peto, sits on the shore of the Big Lake at Iford Manor.



BLenheim PALACE:

Spectacular parterres and picturesque parkland
Bestowed to the first Duke of Marlborough in honour of his victories over Louis XIV in the War of the Spanish Succession, this magnificent 18th-century palace and its gardens have always dazzled with pomp and spectacle. Designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in 1763, the picturesque parkland with a central serpentine lake is populated with carefully placed tree-dotted islands and vast stands of trees. Nearer the palace, manicured gardens include the impressive two-mile long Marlborough Maze, the early 20th-century, parterre-style water terraces and the Lavender Garden planted with nectar-rich plants and festooned with butterflies.

Blenheim, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1PP
Tel 01993 810530
blenheimpalace.com
Open daily from 3 March

BROUGHTON CASTLE:

A beguiling and romantic English garden
Unmistakably dreamy and overflowing with fragrant roses and frothy perennials, the summer-flowering borders at Broughton Castle are a must-see. The inner gardens and borders of this fortified ironstone manor house burst with life and birdsong during spring and summer and enchant with their bountiful blooms. With soft pink rose 'Paul's Himalayan Musk' sprawling over the west lawn garden wall, impressively deep herbaceous borders that run along the Bailey wall and plenty of stone arches laden with colourful climbers, Broughton Castle is a magical and mesmerising sight. The long border by the Gatehouse is a particular highlight, featuring a soothing palette of yellow, grey and blue hues featuring roses 'Marigold', 'Golden Wings', 'Windrush' and 'Schneezwerg'.

Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 5EB
Tel 01295 276070
broughtoncastle.com
Open from 1 April to 30 Sept 2022
on Wednesdays, Sundays and
Bank Holiday Mondays ■



ABOVE Much revered, the Blenheim Cascade capitalises on the flow of the River Glyme, boosted by additional pumps.

RIGHT Tall spires of sisyrinchium, verbascum, delphiniums and lychnis give the gardens at Broughton Castle a relaxed and intimate charm.



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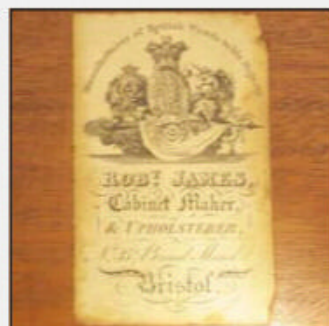
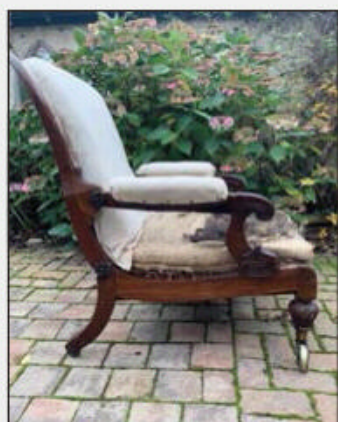
Library chairs by R Daws, George Minter, Foot's
Patent, Pocock, J Alderman, Samuel Pratt etc.

Campaign chests, chairs and other portable pieces by Ross of Dublin,
E Argles, Morgan & Sanders, Thomas Butler, William Pocock, J W Allen,
Gregory Kane etc

Tables, book cases, desks, Davenport etc by Wilkinson of Lugate Hill, James
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Also, original marble fire surrounds from same period.

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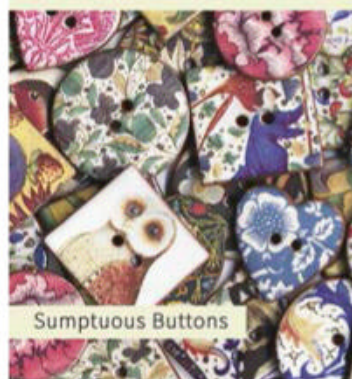


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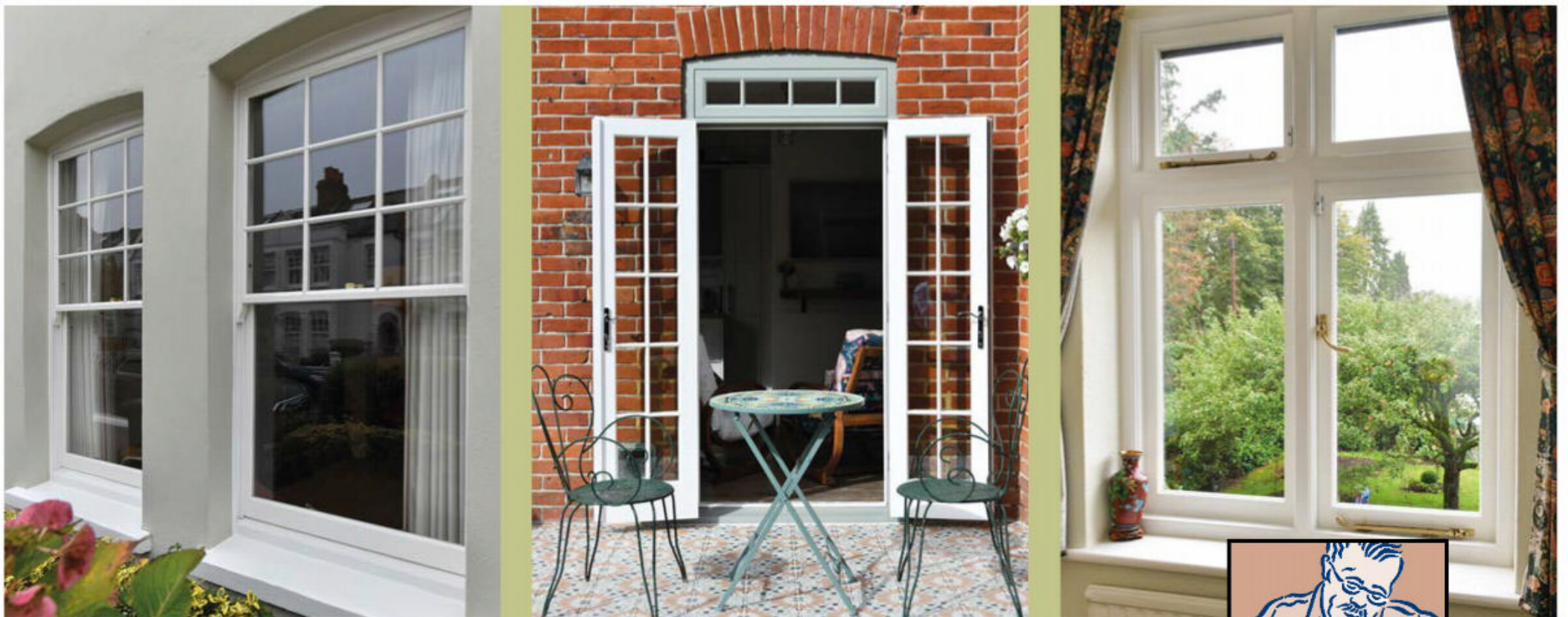


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My English Home & Garden

Garden designer and presenter of BBC *Gardener's World* Adam Frost welcomes us to the Lincolnshire home he shares with his wife, four children, two dogs and cat

How did you find your home?

Mrs Frost found the house online when we were on holiday in Morocco. She fell in love with it and thought it would be a good idea. When we came back and viewed it, we knew it was the right place for us.

Which came first for you, the house or the garden?

That's a close call as the house was great. It's eighteenth century, and built from local Lincolnshire limestone and has a real sense of place to it, with a Collyweston stone slate roof and lovely chimneys. But the garden was great too and clearly needed bringing back to life, which I have really enjoyed doing. It is still a work in progress with lots of hard landscaping and projects to get on with.

Can you tell us the history of your garden and what you have preserved?

The garden has clearly evolved over a long period and I imagine was originally a cottage garden, providing food for the house. I've kept some structural trees and shrubs, and there are really lovely old yew hedges and local Lincolnshire stonework garden walls, which provide the garden with a sense of place. We've also got some old fruit trees which we've regenerated.

What does your family love most about the garden?

It's got to be the vegetable garden. They all like to get involved and definitely all enjoy the produce. I love experimenting, growing the usual veg but also playing with something different, like wasabi and oca. Each year I like to play with something new. Last year it was the South American *Apios americana* tuber, which is a climber with beautiful flowers, and the tubers make really good chips.



Where does your passion for gardening originate?

It originated from my grandmothers – Scruffy Nan and Tidy Nan. Scruffy Nan had a really bohemian garden. It was an overgrown wilderness that was amazing to play and hide in. Tidy Nan had the classic straight lawn and borders on each side and she also had an allotment. My early memories of her are the smell of homegrown tomatoes on the vine and freshly cut grass.

Who has influenced you the most?

I've been lucky enough to become friends with designer Paul Smith, who has always fascinated me. I have also been inspired by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and the late Sir Terence Conran, with whom I had a conversation which changed my life. I was working in landscaping and got chatting to him at RHS Chelsea Flower Show and he asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I told him I really wanted to be at RHS



Chelsea creating show gardens and designing gardens for clients. He told me that there is no point in looking back and thinking 'I wish I'd done it'. He said I should just set my mind on doing it and get on with it! I took that advice and Mrs Frost and I cobbled together enough of our own money for me to be able to create our first garden at RHS Chelsea and it took off from there. I've really carried that attitude with me ever since.

You are known for incorporating memories into your designs. How have you done this in your garden?

I carry the memories of Scruffy Nan and Tidy Nan by growing many of the plants that they both loved. I also look ahead, with a view to creating new memories with my family. I want to bring their personality into the garden, and I do that with clients too. A garden has to be for the people who use it.

Finally, what should no English garden be without?

For me it's that sense of place, it should belong in its landscape and sit comfortably in its location. I think it should have that feeling that it'll last forever – for whoever owns it. I like to think the English garden is evolving to be much more diverse and less controlled. ■

Adam Frost's new book, *RHS The Creative Gardener*, is published by DK, priced at £20

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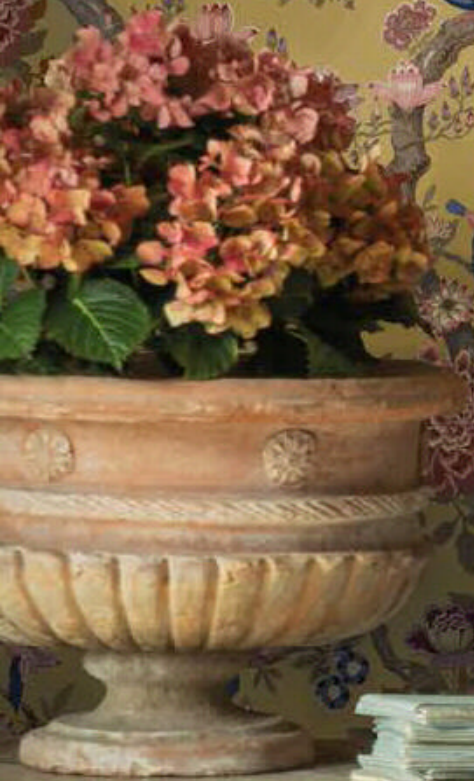
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