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August 2022 | Issue 210 | £4.99 | UK Edition

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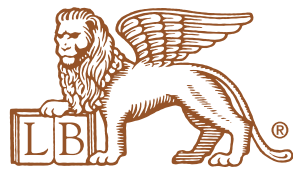
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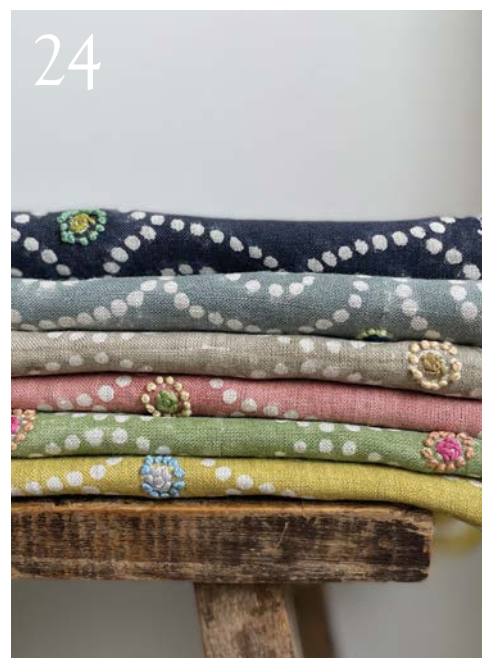
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An indulgent, canopied bed, like this one by Guy Goodfellow is one of the luxuries of the country house, with roots in practicality. Discover more on page 86.

A letter from home



There is something irresistible about the classic English country house aesthetic.

Relaxed, comfortable and evolved over time, English country interiors are admired the world over for their laid-back flair, individuality and charm. The best examples also satisfy that very English desire for characterful imperfection and any glamour to be faded – something that the renowned decorator John Fowler called “humble elegance”.

Fowler said of his own country house, The Hunting Lodge in Odiham (which he bought in the 1940s), “What I wanted was something utterly unpretentious, very comfortable, with a veneer of elegance and informality.” Perhaps it is this – along with the fact that country interiors transport us closer to nature and seemingly out of time to a slower pace of life – that makes them so appealing right now, wherever we live.

In this special country edition, we look at the latest ways to decorate in classic country style (page 78), the design secrets of creating the ultimate bathroom (page 95), and how to tackle common issues associated with renovating rural homes of all shapes and sizes (page 86). We are also hugely grateful to the homeowners who generously share the unique journey of creating their beautiful country homes with us. We hope they’ll inspire you along with the many features this issue designed to provide an escape and ideas, wherever you call home.

Samantha

Samantha Scott-Jeffries, Editor



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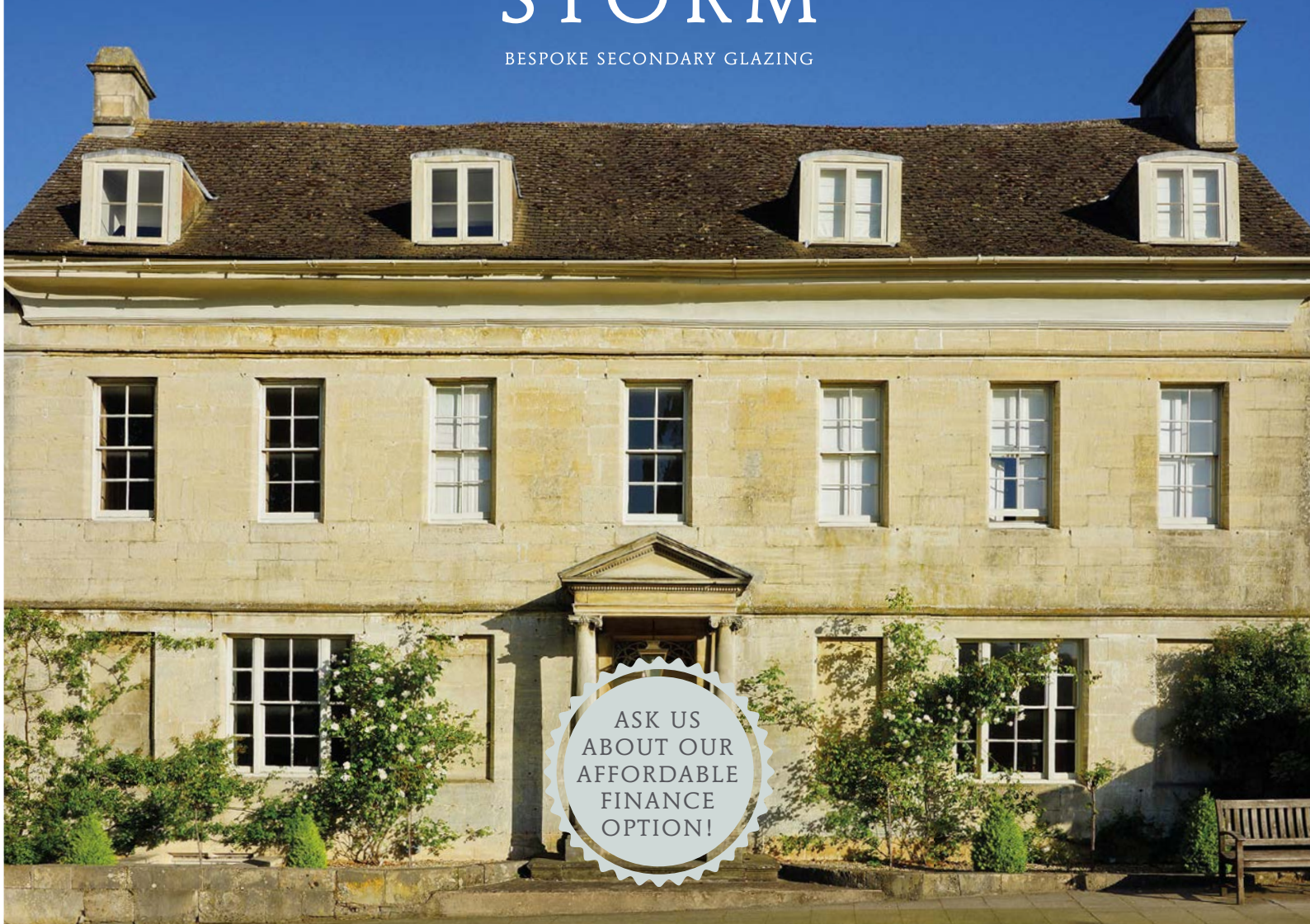
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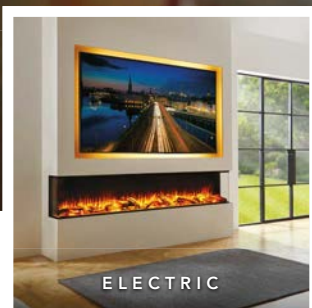
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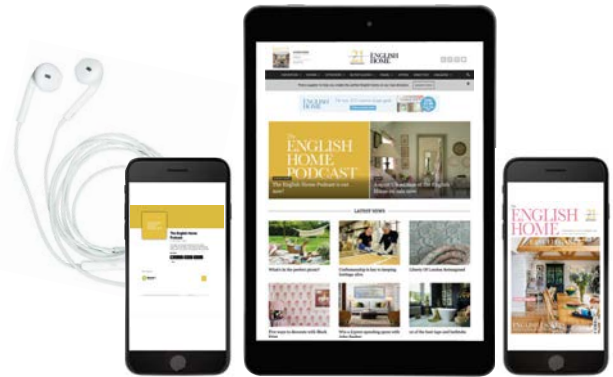
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NOTEBOOK

Our monthly edit of news, shopping inspiration and inside information ►



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Daylesford x Colefax and Fowler

The Quince Garden Collection is the fruit of a new collaboration between Daylesford Organic and Colefax and Fowler.

Daylesford founder Carole Bamford and Colefax and Fowler chairman David Green

share an ethos and a long-standing friendship. Adorned with botanical illustrations inspired by a Colefax archive fabric, the collection includes tablecloths, napkins, plates and serving dishes.

Carole says: "Planning a table, using colour, texture and shapes to create an engaging and inviting setting, is something

I've always loved doing. So it has been such a wonderful opportunity to work alongside Colefax and Fowler, a brand I've admired and brought into my own home for so many years. These pieces are a beautiful rendering of our vision, the craftsmanship, skills, intricate design reflecting the values that permeate our brands." daylesford.com ►



Sketches Brought To Life

Fabric designer's first woven collection

Kate Medlicott's sketches of intertwining patterns in the background of frescoes in Assisi by 14th-century Italian artist Giotto are brought to life in her first woven fabric collection, Basilica.

Woven by a historic family-owned mill dating back to 1720 in Suffolk, the reversible fabrics – suitable for upholstery, cushions and curtains – are initially available in five colourways with yarn colour options.

The natural characteristics of flax and the design's hand-drawn origins, plus a subtle sheen, create a striking yet understated, rustic yet luxurious fabric.

Having grown up on a farm, Kate studied fine art and history of art and worked in the Far East for many years. She returned to England and her first love – fine art – launching her first fabric collection in 2017, and is based in Somerset. katemedlicott.com



Painterly Serenity

Artorial pays homage to Laura Stephens

Passermenterie, vintage florals and hand-painted stripes are key to interior designer Laura Stephens' (left) aesthetic and have inspired a collection of original artworks by new print studio Artorial.

After struggling to find art to suit their individual tastes, despite the overwhelming abundance on offer, interior designer Jo Sampson and fashion designer Jenny Crosbie founded Artorial as an online resource of curated contemporary artworks.

They have designed 22 individual prints as a creative response to Laura's interior design aesthetic, which is elegant, playful and detailed, featuring layers of pattern, texture and light, all drawn together in a palette of serene and feminine colours. artorial.art



Next Generation Rugs

Peter Page's new range with Turner Pocock

For almost two decades since his father established Tim Page Carpets in 2003, Peter Page has been nurturing a passion for the intricate craft of weaving, learning all aspects and deepening his understanding – and now he has stepped out on his own.

Peter recently opened his own showroom in London's Chelsea Wharf showcasing his handmade, hand-woven and machine-made rugs, runners and carpets, working closely with some of the best artisans and weavers around the world.

Bunny Turner and Emma Pocock of London interior design agency Turner Pocock chose to collaborate with Peter on a new collection of bespoke flatware jute rugs, each made to order, enabling the client to choose their colourway and refine the finishing. peterpage.com ▶



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Stately Sleep: Chatsworth & Woolroom

Luxury bedding made of wool sourced from the Chatsworth estate

Sweeping down the long drive towards Derbyshire's majestic Chatsworth House – one of 10 Treasure Houses of England – visitors are surprised and delighted to see free-roaming sheep up close. Dotted all over the grounds, highlighted against the lush green grass on which they graze, they are utterly unfazed by the crowds clamouring to take their photograph.

These charming characters are the stars of a new exclusive partnership between Chatsworth and leading wool-bedding retailer Woolroom. The Chatsworth Collection by Woolroom features luxury wool duvets, pillows, mattress protectors and toppers made using wool exclusively sourced from the Chatsworth Estate.

In a first for the bedding industry, customers can even scan a QR code to trace the wool used in their bedding back to the exact flock it came from on the Chatsworth Estate as part of Woolroom's Wool ID programme.

"As farm manager on the Chatsworth Estate for over eight years," says David Howlett, "I know just how incredible the wool from our 2,500-strong flock of beautiful sheep, who graze openly in parkland across the estate, is. The downs-type fleece is perfect to use in bedding due to the length and thickness of the wool fibres, and we're really

pleased to be working with Chris and the team at Woolroom on this new Chatsworth collection wool bedding."

Woolroom managing director Chris Tattersall says: "We are delighted to be partnering with Chatsworth. I am a great admirer of this beautiful location in Derbyshire and incredibly proud to be using their high-quality wool as part of this new collection."

Naturally hypoallergenic (approved by Allergy UK), temperature regulating, sustainable, chemical-free and machine washable, Woolroom's wool bedding claims 25 per cent deeper and more regenerative sleep than any other fibre type, offering a sleep trial of 60 nights for sets and 30 nights for individual items.

Its luxuriously fleeced sheep are just one of many reasons to visit Chatsworth House, which has breathtaking historic interiors and has been home to 16 generations of the Cavendish family.

The 12th Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, their son William, Earl of Burlington and his wife Laura, Countess of Burlington, share a passion for collecting contemporary art and sculpture, with many works of art displayed around the house and gardens. The estate's grounds host events and chic on-site shops proudly sell fine local produce. thewoolroom.com; chatsworth.org ▶

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A Taste Of Royal Splendour

Hartwell House: luxury countryside stays

Lovingly restored Hartwell House in the Vale of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire is the perfect place to experience country living fit for a king.

King of France Louis XVIII is its most famous former resident. He lived at Hartwell House from 1809 to 1814 with his family while exiled, and when the French Senate invited him to resume the throne, it is where he signed the accession papers.

Now owned by the National Trust and run as a luxurious country hotel, the accommodation includes four Royal Four-Poster Rooms once resided

in by King Louis XVIII and his Queen, Marie Joséphine of Savoy. Fittingly, each has a king-size four-poster bed and is decorated with antiques, fine paintings and awe-inspiring views of the landscaped gardens, parkland and lake. There are also two lavish Royal Suites at Hartwell House for optimum opulence.

Nestled on the edge of the Chilterns in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, amid over 90 acres of gardens and parkland, the main house has Jacobean and Georgian features, with decorative ceilings and panelling, art and antique furniture.

Hartwell House's remarkable history stretches back almost 1,000 years to the reign of Edward The Confessor. hartwell-house.com

Diary



Artist Janine Burrows celebrates the landscape of Yorkshire in *Table To Tide: A Yorkshire Conversation* at Yorkshire Sculpture Park until 23 October. ysp.org.uk



Watch as makers transform discarded objects at London's Somerset House for exhibition *Eternally Yours*, exploring repair, care and healing. Until 25 September. somersethouse.org.uk

Exclusive Seaside Escape

Soho House's first UK venue by the sea

Newly opened by Soho House overlooking the historic Palace Pier with wonderful sea views, Brighton Beach House is as characterful and quirky as the famous seaside resort itself.

Located in a Grade II listed seafront terrace, the interior of this glass-fronted private members' club takes inspiration from the surrounding seaside location and art deco architecture, juxtaposing vintage furniture with specially designed pieces, with local craftsmen and artists contributing.

A banana-shaped pool, esoteric art by artists born, based or trained in Brighton, and sunbed and parasol fabric designed by recent University of Brighton graduate Miranda Forrester featuring abstract figures and foliage combine to set a playfully refined and relaxed mood to suit its creative clientele and idiosyncratic location.

Founded in 1995 by Nick Jones, Soho House now has Houses around the world, as well as restaurants, spas, workspaces and cinemas. sohohouse.com ■





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STYLISH STONEWARE

Whether enjoying an impromptu lunch in the garden or a simple supper in the kitchen, Sophie Conran's fine stoneware collection (right) has an elegant fluted shape to effortlessly elevate the mood of everyday dining. Traditionally crafted, it features a dappled glaze that adds a relaxed finish to each piece.

Dappled White Fluted tableware, from £33; Cornflower Tree of Life duvet cover, from £125, all Sophie Conran

WOVEN WITH FLAIR

These tactile baskets are handmade by women in a small Kenyan craft collective. Perfect for housing potted plants, the sturdy designs are also ideal for kitchen storage. Group several baskets together to maximise the colourful and textural impact.

Kuzua fluoro pink and natural woven storage baskets, available in three sizes, from £16, Ibbi



ARTFUL EMBROIDERY

Classically viewed as a piece of textile artwork, a suzani is traditionally a hand-embroidered panel made in Central Asia. Seen here used as a tablecloth that pairs beautifully with silk ikat cushions, a suzani can be displayed as a wall hanging or used as a luxurious throw in a bedroom or sitting room.

Suzani, from £195; silk ikat cushions, from £95, all Anor Living



RUSTIC FURNISHINGS

For a modern take on bringing natural textures together, look to accessories and furniture with eye-catching silhouettes. Seek out contemporary pendant lights, stools and occasional chairs that will carry impact yet, as in this sitting room, also infuse schemes with a calm quality.

Battersea easy fit pendant shades, from £100; Farrah woven chair, £270; Mayfield stool, £180, all Garden Trading ▶



SHOPPING

A LIGHT TOUCH

Hadeland Glassverk is a Norwegian lighting specialist that recently opened its first UK showroom in the Design Centre at Chelsea Harbour. Established in 1762, the brand offers hand-blown lights, art glass and stemware. Combining contemporary ideas with artisan skills, these crystal spheres come in seven designs, in three sizes and nine colours, allowing the light to be tailored to any style of scheme. *Twelve crystal spheres and canopy* £3,608, Hadeland Glassverk

VIBRANT LINENS

London print designer Nichola Taylorson delights in producing small batches of authentically crafted, luxurious linen textiles. Hand-blocked and hand-embroidered in Jaipur, the dotted pattern of her Anushka design delivers a flavour of traditional Indian prints. The pattern is available in a wide range of 12 shades. *Anushka fabrics*, £165 a metre, Nichola Taylorson



GOLDEN CUTLERY

The soft gold finish of this stainless-steel cutlery creates a subtle-yet-notable point of difference. Exuding a modern sense of glamour, the style is classic enough to be fitting for daily dining and will make guests feel an extra effort has been made for special occasions. *Sintra Matt Champagne 16-piece cutlery set*, £160; *Modern Base wine glasses*, £72 for a set of six; *Friso tableware*, from £14, all Layered Lounge ▶



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RADIATING COLOUR

A bold paint choice skilfully turns this radiator into a decorative feature that picks up on the turquoise shade within the wallpaper above. Stylised details – such as a scalloped topline, soft contours and refined feet – keep the old school radiator from seeming dated. The model comes in an array of polished or antique finishes, or it can be coated in primer ready for a unique colourway.

Emmeline radiator, from £294, The Radiator Centre



SHELF SHOWCASE

From a neat bookshelf to a display shelf for collections to a decorative spice rack, this wall-mounted shelf offers a multitude of possibilities. Influenced by Regency designs, it has a bleached oak surface that ensures each piece has a distinctive character.

Bobbin wall-mounted bookshelf, £1,560, Julian Chichester



VERSATILE PRINTS

Inspired by iconic toile and block-print patterns, interior designer Sarah Vanrenen's fabric and wallpaper collections have evolved to include vibrant modern prints. Originally created for Vanrenen GW Designs' interior design projects, the mix of patterns and vibrant hues work beautifully in both country and smart townhouse settings.

Headboard, Lilac, £215.60 a metre; wallpaper, Violet, Green, £190 a roll, both Sarah Vanrenen Collection at The Fabric Collective ■

Ken Bolan Studio

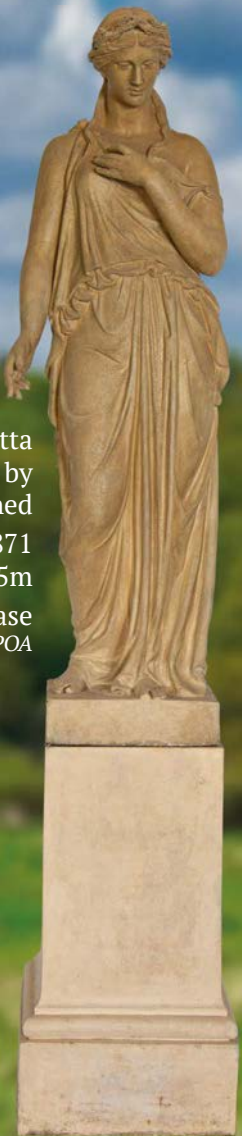
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Woodhouse Check bow, Navy, £48, Tori Murphy



Society of Wanderers Lavender Fizz Full Ruffle cushion cover, £49, Antipodream



The Avery armchair, £6,180 plus fabric, Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler

Pleated Check lampshade, Green, from £67; Lattice Rattan lamp, £175, both Birdie Fortescue



Curtain Fuchsia, Silver/Leaf, £95; Chair Minack Check, Green, £78; Cushion, Jay Check, Green, £83 a metre, all Colefax and Fowler



Josie's Blush Gingham side plate, £8.99, Katie Alice

Cottage Garden quilt, Diamond Velvet, £660, Velvet Linen



Small Dash Dot Blue Pink flower pot, £54, The Mews

CHINTZ & CHECK

Two stalwarts of the English country house, chintzes and checks, are also perfect partners. The rhythmic structure of a pretty gingham harmonises with the loose freedom of florals. Both offer a romantic, feminine feel that can be fully embraced in a palette of pastels and fresh whites and are so classic that the look is not overly dainty; it is soft, pleasing and has come to be expected in a country home. While ruffles, bows and flounces heighten the romance, modernity can be infused by playing with scale - a large check looks rather striking and contemporary, and a ditsy print quite chic.

Sibyl Chintz tablecloth, from £104; Set of four Pistachio Gingham Ruffle linen placemats and napkins, £208, and all tableware, Mrs Alice



Abby Rose 4 collection wallpapers, £38.95 a roll, Galerie Home



Great Check window seat, from £2,560, Salvesen Graham



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Rayon de Miel lamp base, £139, India Jane



Slate grey roll-up dog mat, £89, The Red Dog Company



Gable wallpaper, £114 a roll, Farrow & Ball



Wire kitchen storage baskets, set of three, £24.95, Dibor

RURAL COMPANIONS

Inspired by animals that are at home in the countryside, these designs create a charming connection to rural life. Whether living in pastoral parts or simply drawn to this decorative theme, a subtle approach to animal prints keeps a stylish mood. Look to elegant bird and bucolic patterns, alongside timeless natural motifs – such as hexagon beehive shapes. For practical and decorative buys, simple silhouettes capture a contemporary elegance. Not to forget our beloved pets themselves – with tactile and smart creature comforts to delight.



Dog collars, £29.99, George Barclay



Rousseau Langley cocktail chair by Emma J Shipley, £499, Rockett St George



Dressed To Impress cushion, £154, Chelsea Textiles



Best In Show porcelain pen pot, £27.99, Liberty

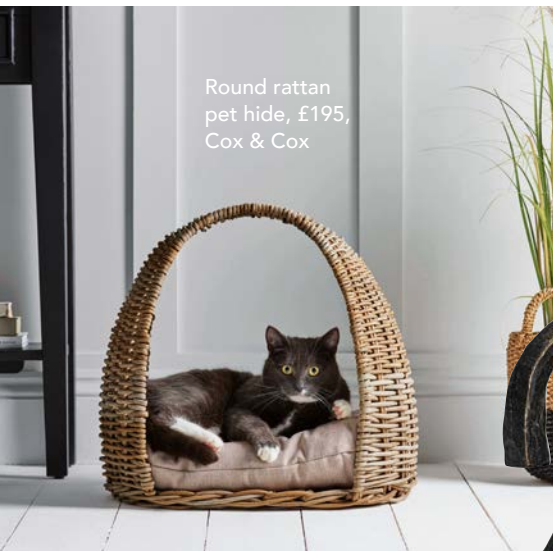


Personalised ceramic dog bowl, from £23.50, The Stylish Dog Company



Bouquet of two pheasant willow sculptures, £764.50, Emma Stothard at Highgrove Shop

FEATURE SUZANNA LE GROVE PHOTOGRAPH (HIGHGROVE SHOP) © JAKE EASTHAM;



Round rattan pet hide, £195, Cox & Cox



Dakota sculpture, £105, Sweetpea & Willow

Bird plates, from £30, Dog & Dome



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BISCA

THE EDIT

Editor-at-Large Kate Freud shares the new products and brand discoveries that have caught her eye this month



LET'S GO TO...

Step inside the beautifully curated interiors store ND on the Green, on London's King's Road, and it will come as no surprise that it is the brainchild of interior designer Natascha Dartnall, hence the name. Offering antiques, paintings, soft furnishings and more from small independent makers and experts, ND On The Green is an Aladdin's cave of beautiful, rare things. So, if seeking a refreshing antidote to the high street, visit this artisan-lover's dream shop to find some characterful pieces to update interiors.
ndstudios.co.uk

WISH LIST

Ever since Emily Stewart and Sarah Serocold joined forces in 2017 to create Hill & May, the company has gone from strength to strength with their eclectic range of lamp bases and shades. The pair choose their own fabrics, colours, trims and materials to make something beautiful and unique which works brilliantly mixed and matched with the company's ceramic and hand-turned wooden lamp bases. New this season is the mustard Pantec lamp, teamed with the mustard Splash shade or alternatively the Ridge lamp in Oxblood paired with the Red Vine shade is equally striking.
hillandmay.com



TIMELESS STYLE

From its Devon workshop, Barnes of Ashburton tirelessly makes beautiful bespoke handmade kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms and freestanding furniture, establishing itself a reputation over the past 40 years for its attention to detail. Add to this, the huge demand the company has seen in the last couple of years for boot rooms, and it has the whole house covered.

Using traditional methods of cabinetmaking blended with a modern approach to design, the company's team of designers and craftsmen work to get a clear grasp of exactly what clients want – from storage to seating and ironmongery and paint finishes – before creating a bespoke design to suit those needs. This is particularly beneficial when dealing with period properties, as homeowners need not worry about awkward corners, wonky walls and sloping ceilings which are all incorporated into the design for added character.

barnesofashburton.com ▶





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NEW COLLECTION

In amongst the range of lighting, chimneypieces and antiques to be found in Pimlico Road interiors store Jamb, is the Crawford sofa – which has just been added to Jamb’s furniture collection. It is in good company, sitting alongside a range of dining and

lounging chairs, both upholstered and wooden, lovingly designed to capture the English country house aesthetic by the pair behind the brand, husband-and-wife team Will and Charlotte Fisher, whose impeccable taste never disappoints. jamb.co.uk



LOOK OUT FOR...

While Chesneys is probably best known for its beautiful fireplaces – antique, contemporary and bespoke – its collection of barbeques and outdoor woodburners is equally impressive. There is no need to let a chilly evening curb garden dinner parties with the Heat & Grill, Chesneys award-winning barbeque which acts as an outdoor fire and heater, too. It uses the same technology as the company’s indoor stoves, whether burning wood or charcoal, producing little smoke while emitting substantial glowing heat, allowing everyone to stay outside just that little bit longer. chesneys.co.uk ■

6 OF THE BEST CONSOLE TABLES



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- 2. Kaishu console table, £1,795, oka.com
- 3. Cortez console, £5,760, sweetpeaandwillow.com
- 4. Cubist console table, £595, coxandcox.co.uk
- 5. Bobbin console, £1,978, julianchichester.com
- 6. Architect table, £495, andrewmartin.co.uk

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Pleasing SYMMETRY

Artist Anna Dixon-Smith has slowly transformed her Elizabethan manor house into a vibrant family home, while sensitively appreciating its history

FEATURE HUGH ST CLAIR & CLAIR WAYMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL

Back in 1992, it was with some trepidation that newlyweds Anna and Adam Dixon-Smith left their flat in Notting Hill for life in the Suffolk countryside. Setting up home in a chilly, 16th-century, timber-framed manor house was quite daunting at first, but the couple set to work breathing new life into the historic building, and as their family grew – they have four sons, now all adult – the house evolved.

“It felt quite bleak when we first arrived – we were rattling around in it but also excited by such an irresistible challenge,” explains Anna. “Coming from a flat, we had very little furniture, so we collected antiques from auction houses and sourced fabric on a budget, and slowly, slowly it came together. It’s been a very long project.”

The couple love pattern and colour and over the years have amassed textiles, rugs, cushions and ornaments from travels to the Far East and South America, and the house is the perfect backdrop for these treasures. “Every time I go away, I like to pick up pieces that will remind me of countries I’ve been to,” Anna explains. “I didn’t want the interiors to be designed in one hit or have a hotel-like feel – I love rooms that are slowly built up over time to create a layered look and show the different phases of life.” ▶

LEFT The newly created gabled left wing of the house is a sympathetic addition which houses the open-plan kitchen and dining room as well as the principal bedroom above.



The characterful back hall, just off the drawing room, was widened when the couple did some building work in 2017 and a limestone tiled floor replaced red pavement tiles for a lighter feel.



‘We respect the history of the house, ensuring what we do is sympathetically in keeping, without feeling like we’re living in an ancient museum’



Originally built in the 1560s, the house has a fascinating history, including links to the Puritan lawyer John Winthrop, who emigrated to America and founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1620s. During Georgian times, when a more pared-back aesthetic became popular, many of the original features were disguised or replaced altogether. Thankfully, in the 1930s, local architect Basil Oliver, who espoused the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement, restored the house to its original splendour. “He removed the Georgian sash windows and reinstated leaded windows and removed plaster from the front of the building to uncover original beams and intricate carvings,” explains Anna.

Anna and Adam have been careful to make sensitive modifications to the Grade II listed property. A priority was to add extra bedrooms for family and friends in the attic, which had no natural light until an architectural historian discovered there had originally ►

ABOVE The drawing room at the front of the house leads into the dining room. The wall is painted India Yellow by Farrow & Ball while the pair of raffia scallop lampshades are from Matilda Goad.

LEFT Anna surrounded by her vibrant paintings in her studio. Visit annadixon-smithart.com to see more of her art.



ABOVE The light and airy kitchen was designed by Anna and made by local cabinetmaker Christian Ward Thomas and is painted in Green Smoke and Rangwali by Farrow & Ball, and Stone V by Paint Library.

RIGHT The snug off the kitchen was a chilly study, then a playroom, but is now fully insulated and has underfloor heating – the perfect spot for Lola, a lurcher, to curl up. The painting of feathers is by Anna.





‘This new addition has really made the house work as a whole and created a lovely flow. It’s wonderful having a space where we can all congregate’

been dormer windows in the roof, so the couple reinstated them and they now look as though they have always been there. “We respect and honour the history of the house, making sure that whatever we do is sympathetically in keeping, without having to feel like we’re living in an ancient museum,” explains Anna. “It’s such an old house, and it seems a bit of a cliché, but we feel like we’re caretakers for this glorious building.”

In 2017, after seven years of planning toing and froing, the couple decided the time had come to create an open-plan kitchen and dining room to replace their existing small, dark kitchen at the opposite end of the house. Their planning consultant found an old map which showed the property as a traditional Elizabethan

U-shaped house with gables at both ends. So, together with architect Neil Jennings, they recreated the missing gabled left end of the house, which now houses their longed-for kitchen and dining area, and a spacious new bedroom for them above.

“This new addition has made the house symmetrical from the front, made it work as a whole and created a lovely flow,” says Anna. “It’s wonderful having a space where we can all congregate without feeling cramped. The previous kitchen was east-facing and by 11am the light had gone. In the new kitchen, there’s light coming in from the south and west all the time, with a skylight above the island, too.”

Double-glazed leaded windows echo the size and shape of the original leaded windows in the opposite

ABOVE The dining room is in the new gabled addition and part of the open-plan kitchen. The vintage cocktail trolley is from local French brocante, The Boule-In and the Luxor lantern is from Pooky.

The principal bedroom is in the new left gable. Curtains and a matching bed valance are in Hodson McKenzie's Indian Iris fabric. The new windows, echoing the original ones, are by Bronze Casements and the walls are in Dove by Edward Bulmer Natural Paint.





'I didn't want the interiors to be designed in one hit. I love rooms that are slowly built up over time and show the different phases of life'



gable but are subtly different. "These new windows are a nod to the old style without being an absolute replica of the original windows, which I think works really well," Anna adds. Bifold doors open out onto a sunny courtyard and the rambling garden, which is Anna's pride and joy. "The garden has also been a very gradual development over the years," she says. "I just love it. We have a vegetable garden, big herbaceous beds and wild areas."

An artist, Anna is constantly inspired by the garden, painting plants and flowers she has grown herself and creating still-life compositions incorporating favourite jugs and vases. "Having recently spent a lot of time at home recovering from Covid, I started drawing views through the house looking into the garden," she says, "which was a new departure for me, and became a narrative reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's book *A Room of One's Own*. Looking out at the bright green lawn with the slightly darker interiors has definitely been an inspiration for my art."

Anna studied sculpture at Central Saint Martins before forging a career in events, and went back to art school when youngest son, Archie, was one. Nowadays she is often found painting in her studio, a converted

ABOVE The valance and curtains in this inviting attic bedroom are in a Hodsoll McKenzie fabric and have been teamed with a quilted kantha throw from Ibbi Direct.

LEFT The Versailles dressing table from Oka in the principal bedroom is surrounded by some of the couple's favourite paintings.



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The starting point for the drawing room was Lewis & Wood's Benaki print, used for the curtains. The bespoke ottoman by Balmain & Balmain is covered in Guy Goodfellow's Fez Weave in Moss. The Lorfords armchairs are covered in Ralph Lauren's Amelot Ticking in Linen Blue. A pair of antique Chinese lamps, with shades in a striped linen by Susan Deliss, sit on a Georgian oak Cabriole leg dresser.



Gothic REVIVAL

An 18th-century Hampshire manor house with whimsical Georgian architectural additions is imbued with a contemporary take on English country house style

FEATURE ARABELLA MEZGER PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER
STYLING CLAIR WAYMAN



‘It was the perfect opportunity to use everything that I adore in one big swoop’

ABOVE The Batik Lapis fabric and cushions on the I & JL Brown sofa are by Susan Deliss, while the art was sourced from The Swan Gallery in Sherborne.

RIGHT Interior designer Nels and cockapoo Otis outside the Georgian Gothic entrance that immediately drew her to the house. To see more of Nels’ work visit eyreinteriors.com

One spring day, interior designer Nels Crosthwaite Eyre and her husband Antony Lamb visited an 18th-century manor in an agricultural hamlet a couple of miles from the market town of Stockbridge in Hampshire. Set in 10 acres, it was flush with wisteria and Nels “just fell in love with the Gothic windows at the front – I thought they were so unusual”. She immediately declared her desire to live there, while Antony was not so sure. “I fell in love with it instantly,” she says. “Antony took some persuading as it was near a road and didn’t have any views.” Stalemate ensued, negotiations followed, and eventually, a truce was brokered.

Having grown up in rural Hampshire and Dorset, the couple knew that when they left London, they wanted to return west to the countryside so their children, Charlie, now four, and Rafe, one, could ▶



Robert Kime's Lampas wallpaper in Tomato is the backdrop to the dining room. Nels commissioned the hand-painted lampshades on the sconce from Alvaro Picardo. A charming 1970s Scandinavian Viking ship candle holder in copper and oak, bought on Vinterior, hangs from the ceiling. Flowers throughout are by The Unwalled Garden.





'People say the house feels really welcoming and for me that's the most important thing'

ABOVE Bespoke cabinetry by Waites Handmade Kitchens is painted in Benjamin Moore's Calypso Green and teamed with blinds in Lisa Fine Textiles's Vita. Menton lanterns by Vaughan add a glamorous touch. Hydrangeas in a vase from Neptune echo the artwork by Flora Roberts above terracotta pots by Rowen & Wren.

RIGHT The south-westerly facade looks out through an avenue of apple trees to the pond.

have a similarly bucolic childhood. "Antony is very much a country boy and was desperate to move out of London," says Nels. "We both love property and are quite nosy, so we used to spend evenings with a glass of red wine, looking at houses online."

It transpires that the house is a perfect fit for both their tastes. "I love really high ceilings and lots of natural light. Antony likes low ceilings and small windows," Nels explains. "The original, early eighteenth-century part of the house at the front has three rooms which are dark and cosy, and then the Georgians came and banged the back on with their grand rooms, so it satisfies both our architectural preferences." The impressive marble-paved entrance hall is an original feature, and the Georgian Gothic facade was added in the late eighteenth century.

The house has a heady history. Not long after it was built, it became a hunting and fishing lodge where, from 1776–1783, George IV as Prince of Wales regularly stayed with Maria Fitzherbert, whom he later secretly, though illegally, married. Sixty years on, ▶





The plaster ceiling and de Gournay's Earlham wallpaper on Blue Grey silk create a sense of grandeur in the entrance hall. The 18th-century Chinese elm horseshoe chair came from Lawrence's Auction House in Somerset. Otis the cockapoo is a natural in front of the camera.



'My style is English country house for the millennial generation. It's less blowy but still with the mix of pieces from different parts of the world'

ABOVE In the guest bedroom, Penny Morrison lampshades, a cushion from Mahala Textiles and a throw by Chelsea Textiles tone with the walls, painted in Farrow & Ball's Setting Plaster. Nels bought the botanical prints at Daylesford. The baskets on the wall are from Hadeda.

William Thackeray is said to have written *Vanity Fair* in the house.

In 2015 the couple bought the house from Lady Fiona Inchyra and began renovation works that took over two years to complete. "Lady Inchyra was an antiques dealer, so when we looked around the house, it was beautiful, with huge paintings and stunning furniture," Nels explains. "When we picked up the keys and saw it without the furniture, our hearts sank as we realised the state of disrepair it was in." The north-east part of the house had burnt down in 1960 and was rebuilt by the Inchyras and never touched again, so there was significant work to do.

"We wanted to maintain the integrity of the house and were very lucky that we didn't have to do any structural work at all," says Nels. "We just removed one superfluous wall in the kitchen. The complicated bit was that it needed full electrics, full plumbing and the

very strange heating system replacing. There were no radiators or overhead light fittings as everything was lit by lamps, and we had to completely gut and redesign the bathrooms and kitchen."

Having worked under Robert Kime for four years, in 2014, Nels left to set up her own studio. You can feel Kime's influence in her varied sourcing and the sense of comfort and ease in her rooms. She describes her style as "English country house for the millennial generation". "It's less blowy and chintzy but still with the mix and match of fabrics and pieces from different parts of the world and with different antique styles," she adds.

Nels' travels have strongly influenced her interiors. "My mum injected a complete wanderlust in me," she says, "and I love revisiting Turkey to source suzannis and find inspiration in its souks and mosques." From travels to India, she picked up Swat Valley marriage ▶



ABOVE A freestanding bath by Catchpole & Rye sets a luxurious tone in the principal en-suite bathroom. The East Hampton Lattice floor tiles are from Fired Earth and the shower is made from a bespoke slab of marble from Artisans of Devises.

BELOW The windows in the guest bedroom are framed by curtains in Soane's Butterflies and Tulips. A mirror from Indigo Oriental Antiques in Wiltshire hangs above an Oka chest of drawers. Nels found the blue silk chair at Crewkerne Antiques Bazaar in Dorset.



ABOVE In the principal bedroom, Matilda Goad shades sit atop lamp bases by Alfred Newall. The headboard is in Dianthus Chintz and the sofa is in

Palampore Blossom, both Soane Britain, with walls in Papers and Paints' SC255. **BELOW** Curtains in Vaughan Designs' Manisa Embroidered Linen echo

the pattern of the rug by Guinevere Antiques. A vintage bamboo chair from Wallis Antiques is covered in a leopard-print velvet from Pierre Frey.



blankets and vintage kantha quilts, which, layered with antiques and intriguing finds, infuse the house with an atmosphere of exoticism and rich history.

Not one to take things too seriously, Nels has brought together an exquisite mix of contemporary and sometimes humorous pieces alongside more classical forms. A whimsical 1970s Scandinavian Viking ship candleholder in copper and oak that Nels bought from Vinterior hangs above the George III antique mahogany table in the dining room.

Unsurprisingly, Nels knew precisely where she wanted to start with the interior design. "There were wallpapers and fabrics that I've always loved, so it was the perfect opportunity to use everything that I adore in one big swoop," she says. "The day I first moved to London, I came across de Gournay's showroom. I loved how ornate and over the top the designs were and I knew I wanted to have one in the house. With it in the hall, we get to see it every day." The other rooms leading from the hall followed, and the drawing room is painted in Farrow & Ball's Pale Powder – a gentle, ephemeral aqua that tones in with the duck egg of the de Gournay wallpaper in the hall. "I wanted a soft but smart wall finish which couldn't be too bold as there is a lot of wall, and a stronger colour would have been overpowering."

Nels was aware of design adaptations needed for their home to stand up to growing children and a steady stream of visitors. "Having children has changed the dynamic of how we use the space," she says. "We've had to make things slightly more sticky-finger proof, with softer edges, tougher fabrics, and more pattern. There are no oatmeal sofas in here!"

Nels invests her rooms with an originality that is simultaneously comfortable and reassuring. Being able to host friends and family is one of the reasons the couple bought the house. "People say, 'the house feels really welcoming', and for me, that's the most important thing," she says. "I didn't want it to feel stuffy or my friends to feel like they have to be on their best behaviour." The house will undoubtedly continue to evolve, taking on various interpretations as it meets the changing needs and discoveries of its owners. ■

ABOVE RIGHT The courtyard off the kitchen provides a sheltered spot to enjoy relaxed dining. Bold geometric floor tiles from Ann Sacks bring a modern feel. The beautiful jug and

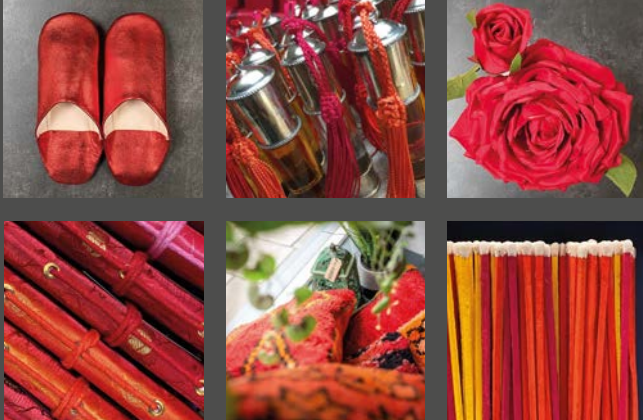
glasses are from Mrs Alice and the Indian block-print parasol was an Etsy find.

RIGHT The crenellated Georgian Gothic facade was added in the late 18th-century.



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Paradise REVEALED

Falling in love with its idyllic location and walled garden, Lindsay Cuthill and Charlie Harman saw the potential in an unassuming 1960s property hidden in the Gloucestershire countryside

FEATURE & STYLING COSMO BROCKWAY
PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MCDONALD

Unable to resist the sleeping beauty of a walled garden, former London dwellers Lindsay Cuthill and husband Charlie Harman found themselves making the move to a sleepy Cotswold valley back in 2009. The head of Savills country house department, Lindsay has seen many an alluring rural home, but when the time came to buy one of their own, the couple made an unexpected choice.

“It is actually a 1960s building and was utterly unprepossessing at first sight,” Lindsay explains. A giant leap from the picturesque miniature manor seen today. Rather than buy a ‘bells and whistles’ period property, the duo “impetuously” snapped up the house after seeing it online. “We booked to see it ▶

TOP LEFT In a sheltered spot in the garden a decorative parasol from Raj Tent Club creates shade over a wicker table and chairs from Oka.

LEFT Flower-filled borders and carefully manicured lawns and topiary line paths leading around the walled garden.

FAR LEFT The light-filled, inviting study has been painted in Celadon Green from Papers and Paints. The Ridge sofa has been upholstered in a lively Jean Monro chintz which has since been discontinued. An oversized, hand-painted lampshade from Twig in Tetbury sits atop a flamboyant 1950s Italian ceramic pineapple lamp base.

RIGHT A dapper Lindsay in the garden with Sybil his beloved Border terrier.

FAR RIGHT Convivial summer lunches take place around the cherry wood table which was a gift from friends. Charming oil paintings of vegetables by Charlie's cousin Victoria Blake-Tyler, flank a painting of Bolton Castle.

BELOW FAR RIGHT The downstairs cloakroom has a jaunty collection of summer hats hanging from stag antlers.

BELOW RIGHT The wall above the Aga in the kitchen is decorated with Bristol Delft plates from Brian Ashbee. The delightful Eric Ravilious print is from Pentreath & Hall.



'The garden walls were covered in brambles and conifers, but we hacked away until their glory returned'

the following weekend and offered on the Monday. We never looked at another house and moved in five months later," recalls Charlie, a garden designer. Nestled on the side of a folding South Gloucestershire valley, the house has far-reaching views, which was another lure. "You can see the storms rolling in, which makes for a stirring sight at the kitchen sink, while the farm opposite has a livery yard and raises sheep, so there is always a pastoral scene," says Lindsay.

Rising around the house are the stately stone walls of a grand walled garden that had belonged to a country seat higher up the hill. "The former owner of the manor had designed and built our house to live in retirement, and we are now great friends with his son who lives in nearby Badminton," explains Lindsay as

he walks through the wide flower-filled borders lining the high buttressed walls. Mellow stone steps lead up to the lawn with topiary shapes flanked by Gothic-style pavilions bedecked with Highgrove roses. The couple open the garden annually for the National Gardens Scheme and enjoy showing the fruits of their labours to visitors, including handsome hedges created to give the impression of two 'rooms.'

Inspired by the gardens at Badminton House, a narrow gap leads into a wild grass meadow joyfully strewn with wild bee orchids and with an orchard beyond. "The walls were covered in brambles and conifers, and God knows what, but we hacked away until their former glory returned," says Lindsay. "The setting gave the house a dignity and poise that inspired ►







LEFT The entrance hall sports an 18th-century sideboard from Bonhams topped with Iznik lamps from Oka. The stair runner is from Roger Oates Design.

BELOW LEFT Looking through the upstairs drawing room door, gilded sconces holding the couple's Chinese Famille Rose porcelain create an ornate focal point in the staircase hall. BELOW RIGHT The house sits nestled in the initially unpromising yet now idyllic gardens created by the couple.



'The setting gave the house a dignity and poise that inspired us to transform the structure into a place we would want to live'





us to transform the structure into a place we would want to live.”

The couple initially attempted to live in the rather tired house as it was, but, recalls Charlie, “it was only when the drainpipes and the hot water tank gave up on the same weekend that we were spurred into action.” Working with architect Mark Watson of Bath-based practice Bertram, Watson & Fell was the perfect choice for the challenge the house posed. “He was used to doing much grander period houses, so this was a very modest job by his standards,” explains Lindsay with a wry smile. “He said we couldn’t afford to knock it down, but very little remained of the original house several weeks into the project. The drawing room was always on the first (or upper garden floor), but we enlarged it. A kitchen was created from the garage and a staircase hall from a bedroom.”

Although Lindsay and Charlie had been happily living in Fulham in South West London, it was a

particularly idyllic weekend with friends in Norfolk that convinced them of the pressing need for what was initially to be a weekend country house. “I was brought up in rural Essex and moved to London when I was 20,” says Lindsay. “Having been in the property world for nearly three decades has spurred on my interest in interior design and kept me stimulated – constantly seeing other people’s ideas keeps me sharp,” he laughs. His Instagram tours of various mouth-watering properties have proved popular, particularly in lockdown, when people were unable to visit other houses. Combining easy humour with an elegant panache and an evident passion for architecture and the arts sets Lindsay’s videos apart from others. Highlights include Cecil Beaton’s former Wiltshire home, Reddish House, whose recent sale Lindsay oversaw.

When it came to the interior decoration of their own house, the couple knew that, despite the lack ▶

ABOVE The upstairs drawing room has been painted in the soft pink SC240 from the Traditional Colours range at Papers & Paints. The camel-back sofa from Lorforde’s Antiques has been upholstered in Claremont’s Cunard fabric while the armchairs and ottoman are from Fulham-based Andrew Morgan.



'We wanted an easy country house style in the traditional sense and one where we could entertain in a relaxed and comfortable way'

ABOVE In Lindsay's bedroom a pair of Barley Twist candlestick table lamps from Vaughan sit on top of a chest of drawers found while foraging for antiques in Tetbury. ABOVE RIGHT In this guest bedroom the headboards and valances are in a Bruntschwig & Fils fabric.

of a large-scale footprint in the structure, they wanted "a house rather than a cottage" and turned to their friend Erik Karlsen of the London-based eponymous design company. Having worked with important country houses such as Renishaw Hall, home of the Sitwell family, Karlsen understood the brief perfectly and sourced fabrics as well as arranging curtains and blinds to establish a feeling of, in Lindsay's words, "an easy country house style in the traditional sense and one where we could entertain in a relaxed and comfortable way".

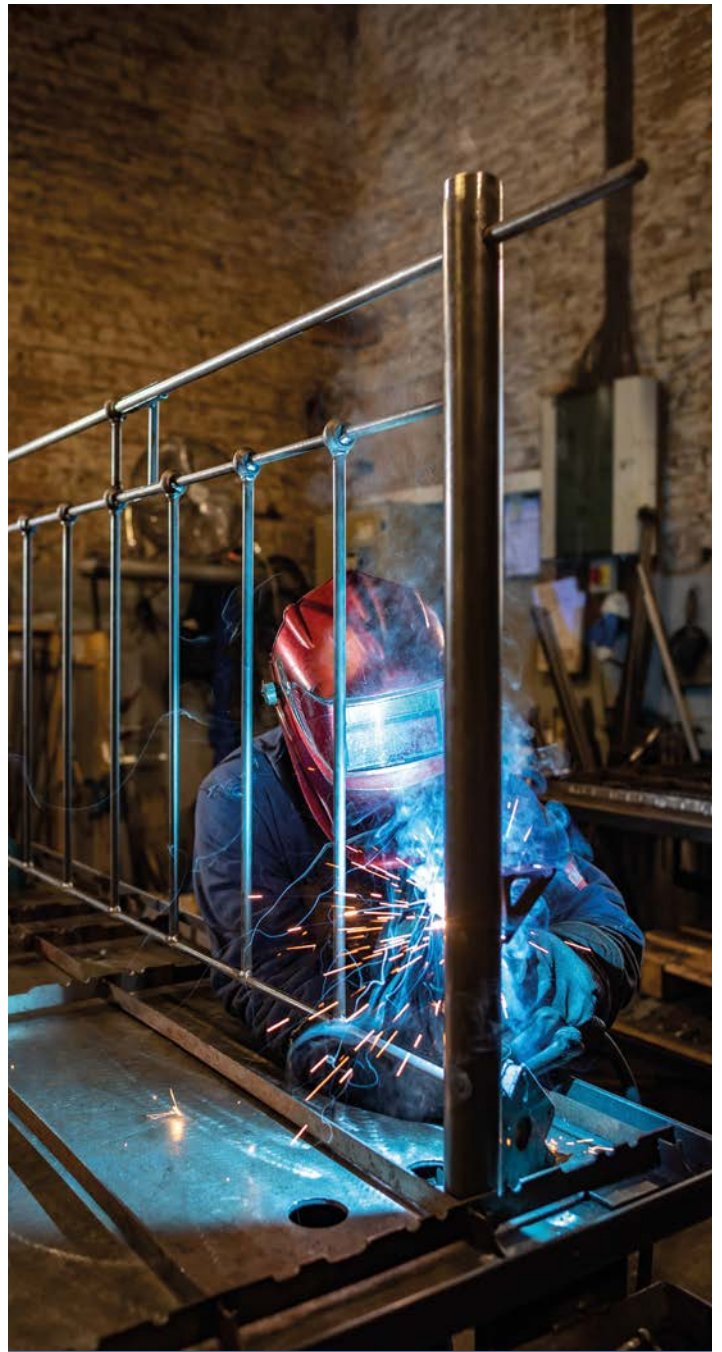
While many of the furnishings were inherited from Charlie's family, the couple enjoy foraging for antique finds at local gems such as Lorfords and Brownrigg Antiques in nearby Tetbury. Lindsay, a fount of amusing anecdotes, tells the story of buying the striking Flemish tapestry in his bedroom from

Sotheby's "over a very good lunch as it happens" before pointing out the handsome gilded sconces throughout the house. "A friend found them at TK Maxx, of all places, and they are great visual trickery, especially holding our collection of Chinese Famille Rose porcelain over the staircase."

Understated in a relaxed English manner, with touches of playfulness in the homages to the pursuits of country life, the house's interiors reflect Lindsay and Charlie perfectly. "Inevitably, after 13 years in this current set-up, we do now want to make some changes, probably making a simpler scheme," muses Lindsay. "We are lucky to have lots of friends in the interiors world and so are inevitably influenced by them, but otherwise, I'm a magpie and take ideas from everyone!" Time will tell what the next chapter holds for this magical house perched on its secret hillside. ■



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PASSION PROJECT

Falling for its old-fashioned charm, interior designer Katharine Paravicini has coaxed this Wiltshire cottage back to life with colour, pattern and collected treasures

FEATURE KERRYN HARPER-CUSS
PHOTOGRAPHY JONATHAN BOND



Katharine painted the Bloomsbury-style border around the open hearth in the kitchen. The framed domino papers are from Antoinette Poisson and the pendant light was made to a bespoke design by Hasthilp.



'This house had a lovely old-fashioned feel to it, which I'm keen to retain'

ABOVE The brick and flint house was built around 1750 and is located in a Wiltshire village near the North Wessex Downs. It was once a terrace of three cottages.

LEFT The kitchen units are painted in Babouche by Farrow & Ball and the unlacquered brass kitchen tap is from Aston Matthews. The enamel splatter ceiling lights are from Dyke & Dean and the rush floor mats are from Edit58.

With her magpie eye and impeccable antennae for sourcing beautiful, unusual things, Katharine Paravicini's cottage in Wiltshire is a trove of interior treasure. Cabinets burst with vintage ceramics and artisan glassware, walls display plates and collections of art, and antique furniture adds depth and character. In every room, Katharine has thoughtfully used colour, pattern and detail to add charm and a sense of calm for a modern take on country style.

Walking around the interiors, it is hard to reconcile the way they look now with the photographs she has from when she and her husband Jack first bought the house in December 2019. The rooms remain modest in size but are otherwise utterly transformed. Gone are the pine-clad walls, the dark stained beams, the makeshift carpeted 1950s kitchen and the exposed pipework throughout.

"The house hadn't been lived in for more than a year and was very run down," Katharine explains. "It didn't have central heating or hot water. We bought ▶



Katharine needed more storage for her collection of glassware and ceramics and this dresser was a serendipitous find on the Selling Antiques website.





ABOVE The sofa in the sitting room is covered in Lost and Found by Kit Kemp at Christopher Farr Cloth and finished with a Samuel & Sons bullion fringe. A vintage suzani and Claremont's Matelas de Laine are used for the bespoke ottoman, while the blinds are in Sanobar by Namay Samay from Tissus d'Hélène. The subtle plaster leaves above the fireplace are from Viola Lanari.

it knowing we couldn't live in it straight away and that we would have to rewire, replumb, rip down all the ceilings and redo them and do a lot of work on the floors. Thankfully, during the works, we didn't discover any further problems with the house, and so at that stage, our priority was all about making the house liveable and cosy."

The pretty brick and flint house was originally a terrace of three cottages, built around 1750. The previous owners had lived there since the 1950s. Many buyers would have been deterred from taking on such a project, but Katharine and Jack were keen to relocate from London to connect their children, Violet, aged nine and Fred, aged six, to the joys of rural life.

The village, located in the rolling landscapes of the North Wessex Downs, promised the community and local schooling they sought and Jack, who spent part of his childhood in Wiltshire, still has family nearby. But it was the house's pretty wisteria-covered facade

and nostalgic atmosphere that captured Katharine's heart. "We didn't have a huge budget to buy somewhere, but it was so important that whatever we bought had the right feel and the potential to make it our own," she says. "This house had a lovely old-fashioned feel to it which I was keen to retain, and although it needed gutting, there was something so simple about the way the previous owners had lived here that gave it an atmosphere I loved."

It must be said that as a professional interior designer, Katharine has a plethora of skills and resources to call upon. Years of experience – including working at Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler – were invaluable to her ability to oversee the transformation of the house in just over six months, including the first lockdown of 2020. She directed works remotely from London and her mother's home in Devon.

Replastering all the walls allowed some of the original window beams to be exposed and restored,

‘Whatever we bought had to have the potential for us to make it our own’



ABOVE Interior designer, Katharine Paravicini sits in the sunshine on the front step of her pretty cottage.



and the higgledly-piggledy floors had to be levelled, too. “They were a hotchpotch of funny tiles alongside concrete that was less than an inch deep above the soil in some places, so we had to lay new screed throughout,” Katharine reveals. She had the kitchen floor tiled but opted to paint the floors in the entrance hall and the passage between the kitchen and sitting room and layer these with rush matting. “We have always been mindful that the cottage has great future potential to extend, so we’ve been careful to avoid large expenses on improvements that would be a waste of money in the longer term,” she explains. “The simple idea of just painting the new floors at this stage meant we didn’t have to buy stone flooring, which is what I’d eventually like but would only have to be ripped up later down the line.”

Katharine appointed a local father-and-son team to complete the building works; they were able to work in a ‘bubble’ through the first lockdown. Through them,

she found a team of local tradespeople, including the electrician, plumber and painter. A local joiner also made the kitchen units, the hall bookcases and bedroom wardrobes.

The family were able to move in July 2020 and reuse many pieces they already had from their former London home, including seating and the dining table and chairs. “It was really lucky that it all fitted in,” Katharine smiles. She had several chairs reupholstered, a bespoke ottoman made for the sitting room, and new curtains and blinds made throughout.

Her talent for finding one-off pieces and antiques came into play when sourcing other furniture and decorative details. Katharine freely admits, “I’m always annoying my husband by dashing into little antique shops or markets wherever I go. I often find it difficult to leave anything pretty I spot behind! Whenever I travel, I always manage to come home with a suitcase full of textiles, baskets or ceramics.” She scoured ▶

ABOVE Katharine had a seat cushion made for the antique bobbin chair in the hall in a Mallorcan fabric – Bujosa – from The Mews Fabrics & Furnishings. The bookcases were made by a local joiner and are painted in Mizzle by Farrow & Ball. The bookcase lights and shades are by Pooky.



THIS PAGE & RIGHT
Folies Bergère wallpaper and fabric from Howe at 36 Bourne Street is used for the blind, bed and walls in the single guest bedroom. The white opaline lamp by Vaughan, discontinued, is topped with an Alice Palmer & Co lampshade. The antique console table on the landing is painted in Annie Sloan's Aubusson Blue.





‘There was something so simple about the way the previous owners had lived here that gave it an atmosphere I loved’

antique shops, markets and auction houses, including online site The Saleroom. The unusual antique bobbin chair in the hall, for example, was a find from The Saleroom, while the large brass shell candle sconces in the dining area came from Shiny Things London. Other pieces, such as the painted headboard in the principal bedroom, have come from family members and Etsy.

The cottage has undergone an incredible metamorphosis into the light, colour-filled home it ►

ABOVE LEFT A classic Jean Monro chintz, Hydrangea & Rose, from Turnell & Gigon, is used for the cushion on the bed in the principal bedroom and the bedspread is from Sarah K x Katharine Paravicini.

ABOVE RIGHT A bench from John Cornell Antiques in the passage between the kitchen and sitting room has cushions from Birdie Fortescue and Raj Tent Club. Shades from Matilda Goad adorn the vintage wall sconce from The Hoarde.



ABOVE LEFT The yellow bedstead from Feather & Black in daughter Violet's bedroom is enlivened with a headboard cushion in Tulips of Belgravia by Ottoline Devries and cushions from Molly Mahon.

'I'm always dashing into little antique shops or markets and find it difficult to leave anything pretty I spot behind'

was longing to be, and although both Katharine and Jack do still have relatively easy commutes to London for work, rural life is living up to their dreams.

"We feel very lucky to have got the cottage just before lockdown. I love working on the garden, which

has become a passion in my spare time, and we are so lucky to live in such a friendly village with a wonderful community, the school just four minutes away and lots going on," Katharine says. "We haven't looked back." ■

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STYLE INSPIRATION

Our special section dedicated to interior design and decorating begins here ➤

SITTING PRETTY

A tiled floor is a practical choice for a country kitchen dining area, particularly one with four-legged, muddy-pawed occupants. It can be a decorative feature too, bringing flair underfoot. This smart application of patterned tiles and a border, inset rather than to the edge of the room, cleverly designates the area for the dining table, giving it a sense of identity within a large space. Set the scene for a charming breakfast with a classic oak dining table and rattan-back chairs, padded for comfort; pour a fresh coffee and serve toast fresh from the Aga.

Elkstone Mellow Oak chair £195; Elkstone Mellow Oak round pedestal dining table, £599, The Cotswold Company. For similar tiles, try Floors of Stone





Bucolic VISION

Achieve the layered charm of a classic English country home with a quintessentially English mix of fabrics, wallpapers and accessories





The English country house aesthetic blends practicality and refinement in a relaxed but considered manner. Here old and new can sit together companionably: exposed beams full of character can be juxtaposed with the latest wallpapers; tumbled stone floors, so practical for rural life, can be softened with an antique rug; and plaster walls can provide a simple backdrop to curtains in the latest embroideries and exuberant floral prints.

The mood should exude relaxed confidence with layers of colour, pattern and textures, creating a rich tapestry. Country houses suit natural patterns – botanicals and florals abound – combined with eclectic prints and woven plains for weight and texture. Consider diverse patterns on walls, floors and soft furnishings as well as accessories for harmonious clashing to create an informal, lived-in appeal that is attractive to the eye and promises comfort.

Well-upholstered seating filled with cushions, beds made with crisp white sheets, topped with quilts and blankets, and interlined curtains to stop any possibility of a draught entering – an English country home, above all, should have a relaxed, welcoming ambience, making all within content to sit back and revel in its charming style. ▶

ABOVE LEFT The relaxed charm of natural flooring is offset with a sweet ruffled flounce.

Chair, Foss, Natural, £79 a metre, Colefax and Fowler

ABOVE A large-scale floral print exudes country character.

Summer Peony, Aqua, £98 a metre, GP & J Baker

LEFT Wallpaper inspired by a 17th-century Indian wallhanging adds eclectic character.

Citadel, £73.93 a metre, Lewis & Wood

OPPOSITE A dresser backed with a pretty wallpaper and laden with china is almost a prerequisite in a country kitchen.

Diamond Flower, Soft Blue, £95 a roll, Charlotte Gaisford



STYLE NOTES:

- Embrace a combination of patterns
- Florals, whether bloom-filled chintzes, painterly chinoiseries or ditsy prints, will harmonise within a country house
- Mix in globally inspired patterns and accessories for an eclectic flavour

ABOVE LEFT The rich colours of an antique rug chime with the pinks, reds and blues in a new design based on an antique French document. See p80 for a closer detail. *Floriana, Tranquila, £990 a roll, Schuyler Samperton Textiles at Tissus d'Hélène*

LEFT Layer crisp bedlinen with a comforting quilt. *Pink scalloped edge pillowcases from £22; Piqué quilt, from £295, Sarah K*
ABOVE This immersive trailing design is perfect for a country dining room. *Peony Garden, £528 a roll, Flora Roberts at Hamilton Weston*



The new Cotswold Manor collection by Zoffany features designs that epitomise the country house look with an eclectic blend of glamour, opulence and quietly reserved designs. *Storks & Thrushes, Tuscan Pink/Cobalt*, £199 a wide-width panel, Zoffany ▶



Amplify the grandeur of an impressive entrance and staircase with a large-scale floral paper.
Floral Rococo, Red/Plum, £135 a roll, Icons collection, Mulberry Home



STYLE NOTES:

- In grander properties, make the most of generous proportions with large-scale designs on wallpapers
- Give a nod to the history of a home with antiques and period-inspired pieces

ABOVE Combine classic antiques with more contemporary pieces – this ottoman adds a shapely touch and the deep fringe is both traditional and of the moment. *The Trefoil Ottoman in Moss velvet, £2,300, Anbôise*

ABOVE RIGHT A pared-back watercolour of poppies in inky indigo is a perfect

choice for a modern country kitchen. *Lo wallpaper, Indigo Blue, £79.68 a roll, Sandberg*

RIGHT A Victorian-style bed gives a period note to this charming bedroom styled in a quintessential fashion by Cutter Brooks. *Rebecca cast-iron bed, from £1,240, The Cornish Bed Company* ▶





LEFT Celebrate native flora and fauna in country-inspired designs. Cushions (from left), *Hidcote, Natural/Gold*, £75 a metre; *Beauchamp velvet, Ochre*, £90 a metre, both James Hare

RIGHT This hallway by Vanrenen GW Designs is an uplifting display of classic country style with a modern twist.

BELOW A detail of Schuyler Samperton's *Floriana* wallpaper (see also p76) showing the craquelure giving an aged patina. Just add leopard print for contemporary twist. *Floriana, Oro*, £990 a roll, Schuyler Samperton Textiles at Tissus d'Hélène



FEATURE KATY MCLEAN PHOTOGRAPHS P76 (SARAH K) ELLIE WALPOLE P81 ANDY GORE

STYLE NOTES:

- Seek out designs that reference the country location – think meadow flowers, oak leaves and garden birds
- Combine old and new, rustic and refined, classic and modern for a layered, gradually evolved look
- Balance the practical with the indulgent for a country abode that is suited to rural life yet feels comfortable, relaxed and luxurious for homeowners and guests alike



A fine chinoiserie-style fabric adds glamour against a rustic finish on the walls and floors. Chinoiserie Hall, Bamboo & Rose, £129 a metre, Sanderson



The Considered COUNTRY HOME

Leading designers and experts share their advice on how to work with the period features and incorporate practical elements in rural abodes great and small

Heart of the matter



HENRIETTE VON STOCKHAUSEN – VSP INTERIORS

A core part of the country house is the kitchen. In my opinion, the first thing to consider when decorating a country kitchen is how you can make

it feel like a room and not just a practical space. Treat it like a drawing room or principal bedroom; pay attention to fabrics, lighting and comfort as well as practicality and suitability to lifestyle. By doing this, the kitchen will feel more inviting. I adore incorporating antiques like dressers along with picture lights, fine art and furnishings that one wouldn't expect to see in a kitchen so that it feels more like a room. Add antique rugs to soften the space and help with unwanted echoes in larger spaces, unless you have young children or dogs, in which case, stay away!



A sense of proportion



FLORA SOAMES

This lovely, lofty sitting room with great proportions and plenty of light is in an 18th-century country house, which had last been decorated 20 years prior. The clients were keen to make it work

for entertaining first and foremost so circulation around the room was key.

Large-scale furniture (and not too much of it), with accents of colour and pattern, make this otherwise quite neutral palette feel airy and sophisticated. The central ottoman, sofas and slipper chairs make the mantelpiece the main focal point, but with many opportunities to pull up other occasional chairs. Behind the sofa is a console which acts as a table but also houses a mechanised pop-up television for comfortable film nights. The clients had lovely artwork and *objets*, so my job was relatively straightforward in making the room flow and their collection breathe and not feel too overcrowded or formal. ▶



Period features



JESSICA BUCKLEY

Often a country house has distinctive period features to work with and be sympathetic to. In this charming early 20th-century country house, we were invited by the clients to transform a large, unused and rather formal drawing room into one which was colourful, comfortable and inviting.

With oak-panelled rooms it can be very tempting to follow a more traditional and formal approach to

‘Often a country house has distinctive period features to be sympathetic to’

decor, but we wanted to make sure that the room was used on a more everyday basis, so the trick was to create a cosy and informal feel through the introduction of layers of bolder colours and patterns: Swedish blues, raspberry reds and a vibrant multi-coloured print on the armchairs provide a striking counterbalance to the walls.

A smaller scale



CARLOS GARCIA

Smaller country homes might not have the luxury of space for a dedicated boot room, but a small hall, a window seat or an alcove under the stairs can all be suitable areas to create a versatile space to accommodate the needs of a boot room, the perfect spot to enjoy a cup of tea after your walk or to read a favourite book.

Here, an antique Hungarian bench offers seating space to comfortably take your boots off after a walk along with storage to place your dog's lead and towels to dry your canine walking companion. The hard lines of the bench have been softened with a feather French mattress made with a suzani, and several floral cushions. This may be a practical space, but it certainly need not be dull.

Reclaimed pavement or terracotta tiles are a most suitable flooring for high-traffic and muddy areas and instantly add age and patina to the space.

I am also a big fan of curtain doors with casual headings and heavily interlined. Make sure the fabric is suitably robust. I tend to wrap the bottom part of it with leather to avoid fraying and getting dirty with mud. A thermometer by the door makes sure you'll be suitably clothed before leaving for your morning walk.



Practical flooring



SUSIE ATKINSON

It is so important to get flooring right in the country – being practical is key. I never use dark grey/black slate on floors in boot rooms, kitchens or laundry rooms. I really like the look of it but the problem is that when mud or water dries, it leaves obvious marks.

I love a brick floor for a boot room, perhaps in a herringbone pattern – mud simply dries and can be brushed away. I love oak timber floors and tiles, too, if the house is old. It's always fun to try and find flooring from a reclamation yard – old terracotta sets, or tumbled marble or stone. I often use a combination of brick and timber forming a pattern in hallways as it can look really interesting.

I have a thing about striped or patterned runners on staircases – especially if the walls are painted in a plain colour. I have used antique kilim runners and joined them together, which looks great. I also like using sisals as they are strong and wear well. Traditional rush woven mats look fabulous in country houses – especially over stone or timber floors – they add a textured cosiness which is welcoming. ▶



An indulgent bed



GUY GOODFELLOW

The four-poster bed was invented to insulate the occupant from the freezing cold country house bedroom of the medieval period. Insulation in the form of panelling to walls, lined and interlined curtains, and eventually central heating, enabled country house owners to escape from the mass of curtaining. At their peak, in the 18th century, the 'State Bed' was the greatest status symbol in more important stately homes. This was the grandest interpretation of the four poster and was installed in case the king or a member of the royal family announced they were coming to stay while travelling the country.

Today, the four-poster bed remains the ultimate luxury and can be a very expensive investment. The antique mahogany frame (*below right*) is hung with fabrics and metallic trimmings. Hiding the tracks (if the curtains are required to function) is always tricky – try utilising a second internal pelmet, behind which the curtains run. Here, though, the curtains are on short, fixed tracks, eliminating the need for the second internal valance.

The pink and grey bed (*right*) in a Bennison printed linen, is a much simpler construction, a design made popular by David Hicks, where a lightweight wooden frame is suspended from the ceiling and fabric is stretched over it (known as the 'tester roof'). From this, hangs the simple plain valance to the three exposed sides, and the curtains are hung from fixed tracks around each corner and also across the headboard wall. This means there are no posts at all. My own bed is the same and I cannot tell you how nice it is to wake up in each morning.



Awkward angles



SAMANTHA TODHUNTER

Embracing quirky features – in the eaves of this country house (*opposite*) for example – is a charming way to maximise otherwise lost space and create pockets of interest brimming with charm and character.

Putting the bath underneath the eaves in the principal bathroom allowed us to enhance the sense of space and volume in the room and has the lovely bonus of great views from the bath. Dressing the windows with soft floral blinds take that sense of the utilitarian out of the room and make it feel more like a cocooning haven. ▶





A breath of air



EDWARD BULMER

A country house might have genuine problems, or it might just be a project. Mostly it is the latter, but we're at risk of ignoring the former because it doesn't seem so fun.

The biggest single problem I meet is lack of breathability. This is visible when it manifests in mould or damp, but invisible when it is in the form of poor air quality or long-term deterioration. Building products are dynamic and need to work as a system, and the top layer is paint, so we are always solving or mitigating a problem by using our highly breathable emulsion. Happily, this solution also addresses the fun part – your project.

The allocation and tonality of paint colour plays a huge role in the success of a project. It can literally consolidate the architectural and design intent of the building, and bring a sense of balance and harmony as the room appears 'right'. The right colour can redraw the outlines before infill details like curtains, soft furnishings, furniture, and artwork are added.

Getting the tonality right helps unite hard finishes and furnishings with a common tonality – one which we achieve with earth pigments to ground our colours.

'It is important to keep original features as intact as possible'

Interesting nooks & crannies



PANDORA TAYLOR

Often in old country houses, you get these wonderful quirks, whether it is asymmetric-shaped rooms or surprising cosy nooks.

In this room (*opposite*), we had a pair of shallow niches with original architraves around. The client really wanted more hanging space, so in order to make use of these, we built out the niches slightly and added doors, keeping the original architraves around the edge. The result is unobtrusive and adds an interesting layer to the room.

I always think it is important to keep original features as intact as possible. If someone wanted to take this room back to its original state, they could easily remove the new joinery and you would never know it had been there. ■



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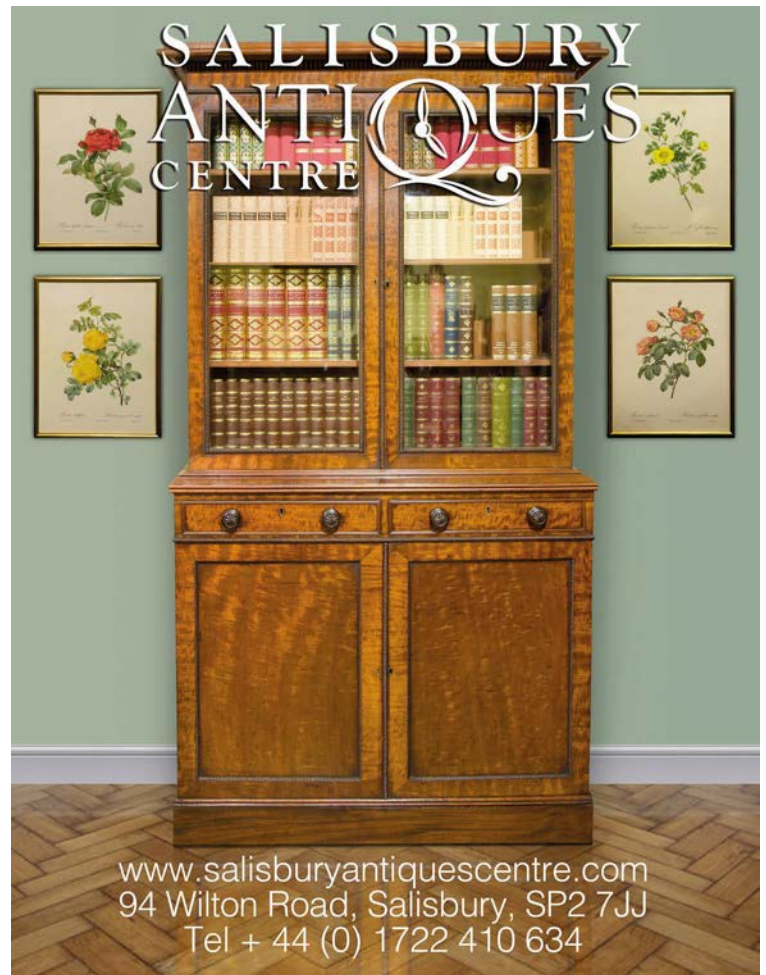
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CREATING THE *Ultimate* COUNTRY BATHROOM

Whether for a charming cottage or a grand manor house, we look at the key elements that contribute to the successful design of a beautiful, relaxing and functional bathroom that reflects its rural location

Country bathrooms may be large or small, traditional or contemporary, but one thing they all have in common is a strong connection with the natural world. Making the most of scenery will often be the starting point for the design of the room, perhaps by placing a bath near the window so that the view may be quietly enjoyed. Another factor is the relationship to the architecture of the house, with characterful features such as a fireplace or a beamed ceiling becoming an intrinsic part of a thoughtful scheme. Tradition may be emphasised with the use of period-style fixtures and fittings, but modern elements, whether subtle or bold, can also enhance the space. A well-planned country bathroom will also include pleasing textures and plentiful storage, so that a sense of uncluttered calm and luxurious relaxation prevails. ▶

Draw inspiration from this bathroom in the Mansion House Premium Suite at Coworth Park hotel, Ascot.

Storage

A clutter-free bathroom is the key to creating a feeling of ultimate luxury and relaxation – and that requires careful attention to storage, whether it be bespoke, fitted pieces that can follow the uneven walls, floors and ceilings of an old home, or freestanding pieces such as antique armoires, chests or cupboards, which offer in-keeping character and patina to suit a country property.

“If you are lucky enough to have a fireplace in a bathroom, a statement piece can go in the alcove on one side, with a chunky washstand on the other,” suggests George Miller, home designer at Neptune. “Washstands offer the option for open or closed storage – things that are easily accessible versus things that you want to hide. For cleaning products, cupboards or tall drawers are a good option. The less you can see the better in order to create a calm, tidy space, with surfaces clear and nice things displayed in glass-fronted cabinets, storage jars and baskets.”

RIGHT With the bath in a separate space and next to a window for quiet contemplation, Jeffreys Interiors commissioned a wall-to-wall double vanity from Sculleries, with plenty of drawers for storage.

BELOW In Neptune’s Chichester double drawer washstand, £2,893.50, two faux drawers neatly conceal the undermounted ceramic basins for a seamless worktop, with six further drawers below for storage.



ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

On storage



“The starting point for a bathroom is to think about who is going to be using it. For a guest bathroom, there is more of a need for things to be visibly to hand, whereas in a private bathroom you don’t need everything to be on display, so the less you can see the better for creating a calm, tidy space. Coat pegs are a wonderful form of storage in a bathroom. They’re great for hanging dressing gowns and towels, and for coat hangers if you’re getting changed in the bathroom.”

George Miller, home designer, Neptune



Symmetry

Our eyes are inherently drawn to symmetry and balance, and this applies to the design of a country bathroom just as much as to that of any other room. Symmetrical floorplans look especially good in a spacious room, and elegantly complement the classical features of a period house, often making the most sense when designed around a central window or fireplace. “Symmetry is pleasing, and really does help in terms of keeping things neat and tidy,” says Henriette von Stockhausen, creative director of VSP Interiors. “I like to design his and hers basins, with matching mirrors and wall lights above. Where there isn’t enough wall space to place them next to each other, the basins may sit either side of a large window.”

With a symmetrical bathroom scheme, it is best to keep the elements quite restrained, Von Stockhausen points out. “Because everything is

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

On symmetry



“Symmetry does lend itself well to a country bathroom, where one is often not limited for space. It’s not quite as nice if you see the main pieces from the side, so consider which wall to work on and what you first see when you walk into the room. If possible, try to place the key pieces so as to get that symmetrical view from the front.”
Henriette von Stockhausen, creative director, VSP Interiors

ABOVE In the Juniper bathroom at Foxhill Manor, a country house hotel in the Cotswolds, perfect symmetry combined with muted, natural colours creates a sense of calm relaxation. Together with the roll-top bath and generously sized basins, a cushioned window seat adds to the feeling of comfort.

doubled, it could mean overwhelming pattern and colour. Instead, concentrate on making the most of the architectural details.” ▶



Grandeur

Employing sumptuous materials, whether marble or brass, Venetian glass or a heavy curtain fabric, will always enhance a sense of grandeur in a bathroom. In a spacious country home, use of scale will also be a key factor. As James Lentaigne, creative director of Drummonds, points out: “High ceilings gives the opportunity to use the volume to grand effect. This could mean choosing a high-sided bath and tall towel radiators, a high-level cistern, big feature mirrors above the basin(s) and decorative pendant lights.”

It is harder to achieve the same feeling in a small bathroom – but not impossible, says Lentaigne. “Cottage bathrooms with lower ceilings need to constrain the verticals. Choose lower-level sanitaryware, keep ceiling lighting flush and definitely consider built-in storage to eliminate clutter. Create some open shelves for displaying beautiful accessories, and the effect will be every bit as impactful as in a grander room.”

Fittings

To ensure the highest quality, it is important to invest in the moving parts of a bathroom – in other words, the taps, bath filler and shower controls. An important tactile element, the brassware should always feel comfortable in the hand, and it can often be the finishing touch to a scheme. As Slane Lefroy Brooks, chief creative officer of Lefroy Brooks, says: “It is the jewellery of the bathroom.”

Traditional pillar taps, either wall or deck-mounted, with cross or lever handles, tend to have the look of a traditional country bathroom, although mixing things up with lever handles and wall mounting can introduce a nicely contemporary touch. “A brass finish is popular at present, and is very traditional and warm,” says Lefroy Brooks. “A natural brass finish means that there is no lacquer to peel off, and either the patina can be allowed to develop naturally, or the shine can be brought back with metal polish. The most traditional is the nickel finish, which has a lovely warm feeling, and goes very nicely with a country bathroom.”

ABOVE LEFT
A bathroom at The Newt Hotel in Somerset with Samuel Heath’s Style Moderne bath/shower mixer, from £4,255.20.

ABOVE RIGHT
A wall-mounted basin set with country spout and crosstop handles in nickel, from £634.08, Perrin & Rowe.

BELOW LEFT
1900 Classic polished brass bath/shower mixer with white levers, £2,592, Lefroy Brooks.



Marble and brass combine for magnificence in Drummonds’ Double Ladybower Vanity, from £9,360, designed by Martin Brudnizki.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

On fittings



“The bath/shower mixer is a very classic, traditional English product. It works very well with standpipes, which free you from having to plumb a bath into a wall. If you have the high ceilings of a large country house, installing a towel warmer that reaches all the way up a wall gives a feeling of plenty. It can really be a statement piece.”

Slane Lefroy Brooks, chief creative officer, Lefroy Brooks

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

On choosing new designs



“Traditional craftsmen were highly skilled, and they used to love adding detail that made pieces stand out. Look for goods handmade in the best possible materials, with attention to detail and made to last.”

James Lentaigne, creative director, Drummonds





Drummonds' statement Ashburn bath with a polished exterior, from £3,390, stands out against a neutral backdrop and echoes the grey veining in the elegant marble flooring.



Placed under the window, the roll-top bath in this bathroom at Coworth Park hotel, Ascot, enjoys lovely views without being overlooked. A pair of towel radiators makes the most of the space to the sides.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

On layout



“Incorporating a seating area, be it an armchair or chaise longue in a large room, or simply a stool and side table in a more compact space, can make a bathroom feel more like a living space, adding softness and warmth, inviting the user to spend more relaxation time in their own sanctuary.”
Yousef Mansuri, director of design, CP Hart

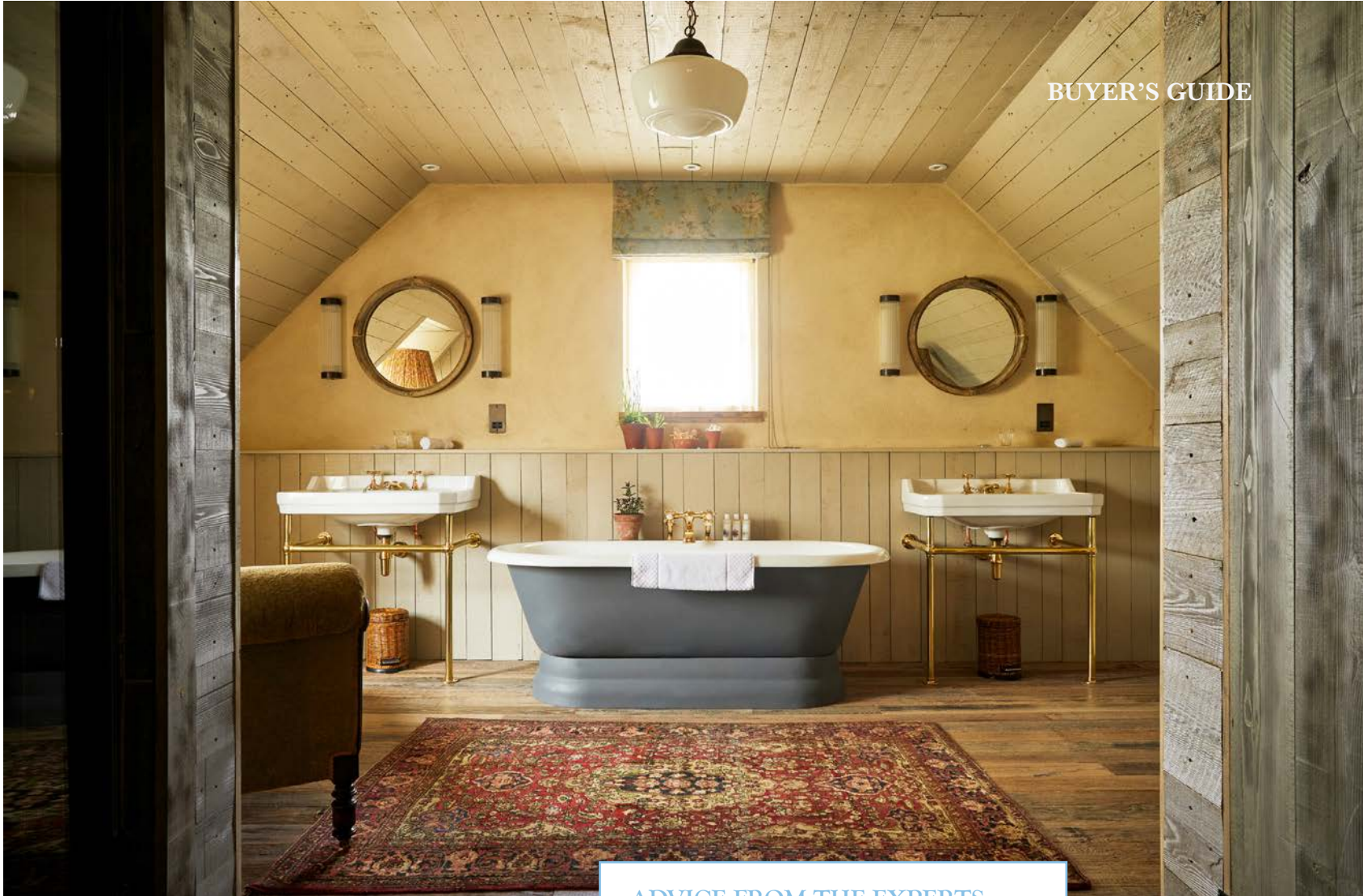
Layout

Since many country bathroom windows are not overlooked, soaking in a bath by the window while enjoying the view can be the ultimate luxury. When drawing up a floorplan, this is not a bad start – though it is always important to consider the positioning of the WC, doors and other architectural features, too. Where possible, locating a freestanding bath under the window makes great sense, says Yousef Mansuri, director of design at CP Hart. “Some properties may have extra architectural details which are crying out to be put in the spotlight, such as archways, niches, or blocked windows,” he adds. “Utilising what is already there can really make the room unique.”

Mirrors always make a space feel larger, and bounce light around. “For a country or classical bathroom, adding decorative wall lights either side of a mirror helps to dress up a vanity area,” says Mansuri. “Placing lights either side of a mirror also makes an even wash of light across the face, as opposed to ceiling lights, which create shadows.”

RIGHT Shelves with books and plants make this washstand niche feel cosy and more like a living space. The Cielo freestanding Catino Ovale basin, £3,270 with Samuel Heath Landmark Pure basin mixer in Urban Brass, £1,824, both from CP Hart, add to the relaxed mood.





Proportions

Having often been converted from former bedrooms, country bathrooms tend to be either grand and spacious or, conversely, tucked into a roof space with sloping ceilings. "It is important to match the size of the fittings to the size of the room," says Phil Etherden, managing director of Albion Bath Company. "In a small bathroom a short bath can be the perfect solution. You can bathe in a 1,200mm-long bath in complete comfort if it's deep enough. If there is an area where the ceiling is low, this is the best place to put the bath." Smaller fittings in general are a good idea but, says Etherden, a shower less than 800mm by 800mm is not advisable.

With the luxury of a large bathroom and higher ceilings, scaling up the fittings will better suit the proportions of the space. A grand bath on a pedestal and either a wider basin or a pair of basins will work beautifully. "If a large room has nothing above about three feet high it can look a little empty and open," says Etherden. "Consider adding a grand towel rail and a high-level cistern."

ABOVE Converted agricultural buildings can offer plenty of space but require grand fittings to suit their proportions. This is the Barn bathroom at The Pig at Bridge Place hotel near Canterbury.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

On scale



Phil Etherden, managing director, Albion Bath Company

"In a small bathroom choose a bath on feet and either wall mount the basin or use a basin stand. When you can see a little more floor it makes the room feel larger."

BELOW A small bath, such as Albion's Tubby Torre bath, from £2,541, if deep enough, is comfortable to bathe in and perfect for compact spaces.





Texture

In a room which can be full of hard, white surfaces it is important to include a range of different materials and textures. On the floor, for example, using old timber boards or an Oriental rug can create a lovely softness underfoot, or the more adventurous may opt for pebble tiles in a small area, while polished plaster – which can be highly polished or more rugged – adds wonderful richness.

Features such as wicker storage baskets, tiled splashbacks and upholstered seating all contribute to the textural range, while a bath or basin made from an alternative material can be a dramatic focal point. “For country houses and converted agricultural buildings, using materials such as copper and tin introduces historical integrity but brought right up to the 21st century,” says Joanna Wakelin, head of PR and marketing for William Holland. “It’s taking industrial style but adding a luxurious modern edge. Copper, for example, is so vibrant and aesthetically warm, but it also holds heat well, reflects light around the room and is very, very glamorous.”

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

On materials



“We love to incorporate texture in our country bathroom designs through subtle details in the window treatment. Drawn-thread linen with a hem-stitch row, for example, will enhance the textural palette and, as a bonus, when light passes through the hemstitch it casts beautiful shadows into the room. Similarly, using a cotton sheer provides a beautiful layer of texture to a scheme.”

Katie Glaister, co-founder, K&H Design

ABOVE A polished metal bath, such as William Holland’s handmade Bateau bath in nickel, £6,889.20, makes a dramatic focal point, and creates lovely reflections.

BELOW LEFT In this country bathroom by Pippa Paton Design, bronze plaster has been used for both walls and ceiling to give a seamless transition, complemented by dark bronze fittings.

RIGHT Exposed timber brings warmth and texture to a bathroom, here combined with marble and wicker in Neptune’s Edinburgh undermount open washstand, £1,865.





Modernity

A determinedly modern scheme can work extremely well in a country bathroom, with a pleasing combination of simple, striking sanitaryware, traditional architecture and glorious views of the natural world outside. “Sleek, contemporary fittings create an uncluttered look that adds to the feeling of serenity and luxury, while also providing the latest technologies and excellent storage space,” says designer Pippa Paton.

“In an older country property, we would expose and enhance the materials of the building itself, perhaps an old stone wall or beautiful beams,” she adds. “Alternatively, simply using natural materials such as a timber floor or a linen-covered stool will soften contemporary shapes.” To create a seamless look, Paton recommends finishes such as resin, polished plaster and very large-scale porcelain or marble tiles, rather than typical bathroom tiling which creates a background of grout lines. ■



ABOVE In this new-build bathroom by Pippa Paton Design, sleek, modern fittings are combined with interesting textures for a feeling of comfort and luxury. The bath has been placed to maximise views of the woodland, and the shape of the vanity shelf and surround reflects the unusual architecture of the window.

LEFT Natascha Dartnall of ND Studios included contemporary and traditional elements in this refreshing bathroom, which focuses on a dramatic free-standing bath, finished in black, which prevents the room feeling sterile. The pea green chair adds a further dash of colour.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

On contemporary style



“To let the individual pieces in a modern country bathroom shine, try to keep the floor and wall finishes in the background, with relatively few materials that are as seamless as possible.”

Pippa Paton, founder, Pippa Paton Design

CALLAGHANS OF SHREWSBURY

IN FULL BLOOM

How still life floral paintings have always captured the imagination of painters and patrons alike



ABOVE Marcel Dyf (1899–1985), *Roses and Irises*, oil on canvas, 56cm x 45.7cm, signed. Here, Dyf perfectly demonstrates his soft use of pastel shades and impressionist, painterly brushstrokes.

RIGHT Pierre Ambrogiani (1907–1985), *Vase de Fleurs*, oil on canvas, 84cm x 61cm, signed. The vivid palette Ambrogiani uses draws the viewer's eyes to the calculated chaos of his brushwork.



Throughout the history of art, there has remained an enduring appeal in the painting of floral compositions since those first representations of lotus flowers by the Ancient Egyptians thousands of years ago. Over the centuries, and throughout all the major periods in art, flowers have been represented by everyone from Botticelli and Klimt, Monet and Van Gogh and artists like Georgia O'Keefe, who established a career with florals as her primary subject matter.

Also partial to a bloom or two in their extensive collection of 20th-century paintings are Daniel and Stella Callaghan, owners of the prestigious art gallery Callaghans of Shrewsbury. During the 35-year history of Callaghans, they have seen the enduring appeal of florals as a subject matter, buying and selling pieces across the world and garnering a reputation for their extensive knowledge of European art and artists in the process. "Everyone loves flowers and what better way to enjoy them than by seeing them captured on canvas? These pieces add a permanent elegance and natural beauty to a room," Stella says.

Perhaps the pick of the bunch from Callaghans is the beautifully refined *Roses and Irises* by Marcel Dyf (1899–1985). Dyf's sensitivity in depicting light and delicate texture using a soft palette is perfectly demonstrated here. Even as he grew older, his work refused to age, keeping a playfulness and a sense of timelessness while maintaining a deep respect toward tradition. Dyf often stood up to paint, allowing his work to develop a sense of vitality and energy, and his subject matter was deeply personal to him. The flowers were arranged by his wife, Claudine, who picked the blooms from their garden and chose the vases in which to place them for his compositions.

In contrast, Claude Venard (1913–1999), renowned for his lively, animated and occasionally apocalyptic depictions of metropolitan life, painted *Bouquet de Fleurs* in a markedly different style. Venard's simplistic depiction places emphasis on colour to capture the viewers' attention, using thick slashes of oil paint ▶

OPPOSITE Bernard Buffet (1928–1999), *Still Life with Butterfly*, oil on canvas, 63.5cm x 48cm, signed and dated 1998. French expressionist artist Buffet uses angular lines and a cubist style to depict his delicate subject matter.



PARTNER FEATURE

centre stage on the canvas to create a work which is hard not to engage with. Venard's use of primary colours also lends the work a sense of simplicity, adding to its rustic charm.

The French expressionist artist Bernard Buffet (1928–1999) too enjoyed using primary colours in his oil on canvas painting *Still Life with Butterfly*, which is a departure from his usual subject matter of post-war Europe. Despite the use of angular lines and cubist style he is known for, his floral still life possesses a sense of sensitivity and grace.

Chaise dans un Jardin Fleuri by Victor Charreton (1864–1936) depicts a garden in bloom bathed in the warm glow of the French sun in his trademark riot of reds, pinks, blues, yellows and greens. The use of light in the painting is what makes it so special, infusing it with a rich, balmy summer atmosphere. The sense of quiet stillness almost invites viewers to step into this secret garden filled with flowers and ornamentation to feel the sun on their faces and smell the roses growing.

Similarly to Charreton, Pierre Ambrogiani (1907–1985) ignites the senses using a high-voltage colour palette in *Vase de Fleurs*. He captures the vibrant nature of his bouquet with animated gashes and thick layers of oil paint, giving the work a sense of texture and life. Ambrogiani also skilfully yet succinctly captures how the light dapples the wall in the background and reflects on to the vase and flowers, adding to the sense of vitality. He captures the idea of a floral still life in a bold rather than delicate way, making it a perfect centrepiece for any wall.

“Still life floral paintings have for decades been favourites of interior designers as they bring the outside in and brighten any room with beauty and colour,” Daniel explains. Their enduring appeal as a subject matter is bound to remain for centuries more to come, irrespective of the style in which they are painted.

callaghan-finepaintings.com ■

ABOVE Claude Venard (1930–1999), *Bouquet de Fleurs*, oil on canvas, 91.5cm x 73.5cm, signed. Venard uses colour to capture the viewer's attention in this departure from his more usual depictions of metropolitan life.

RIGHT Victor Charreton (1864–1936), *Chaise dans un Jardin Fleuri*, oil on canvas, 58cm x 71cm, signed. There is a 'through the keyhole' feel to the garden scene in this work by Charreton, enticing the viewer to step inside.



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FOREVER FLOWERS

Encapsulate the memories of favourite summer blooms with bespoke floral art. Pressed flowers create beautiful pictures and note cards. Once confident with the technique, use them to decorate home-made candles, paperweights and placemats. For the best results, pick flowers in the morning after the dew has evaporated. Look for petals that are flat - in August, cosmos, zinnias and asters work well. Larger multi-layered August flowers, such as dahlias, roses and lilies, can be pressed but take a bit more teasing to spread the petals and will not retain their original shape.

Wood flower press, medium, £65, Blue Brontide



SET THE SCENE FOR: *a formal party*

Delight guests by creating the ultimate table setting for a summer gathering with a clever mix of classic elegance and seasonal touches

There has never been a better time to throw a celebratory party and enjoy getting together with groups of family, friends and relatives. Large gatherings are long overdue following the events of the past couple of years and summer is traditionally the season for weddings, balls and other occasions that call for sophisticated table settings.

Whether celebrating indoors or out and setting one long table or several smaller ones, embrace the etiquette associated with such occasions and opt for a certain degree of formality. Dress each table to impress with crisp linens, beautifully arranged seasonal flowers, elegant glassware and china, and table stationery in complementary colours and as pretty as the table itself.

Take inspiration from seasonal colours and choose textiles in dainty patterns for a refreshing alternative to classic white. Invest in extra plates, glasses and serveware to bring a touch of luxury to the mix. Silver-plated platters and tureens, cut-crystal glasses, heritage-patterned china and elaborate place settings of antique cutlery are ideal for adding some decadence as well as introducing a special touch. Alternatively, consider renting additional china and linen to complement existing pieces, ensuring the table is laid to perfection and guaranteed to please even the most discerning guests. ▶

LEFT Create a beautiful ambience for a formal affair with a decadently dressed table, complete with aromatic and impressive floral centrepieces, elegant candlesticks and gold-rimmed glasses for raising a toast.



Place-setting etiquette

“Always work with the ‘rule of three’ to bring a real sense of occasion to your table – start with a beautiful placemat or charger plate, add a dinner plate, and finally a pudding (or salad) plate. Have the setting already stacked as guests arrive so the table looks beautifully laid. Then add three glasses – two wine and a water. Vintage glasses mixed in with more contemporary ones make a fun talking point; each piece of glassware will have its own story. We are big believers in sustainability and being a part of the rental community makes us proud. We also believe you should invest in forever pieces for your home, and mix and match to make each event different by hiring additional top plates, accessories, linens and cutlery to make it extra special.”

LOUISA PRESKETT MOBBS,
CREATIVE DIRECTOR, MAISON MARGAUX



SOMETHING BORROWED

Sometimes planning a party for a formal occasion and serving a feast for a crowd requires a creative approach. Renting rather than buying additional plates, cutlery and accessories makes so much sense if it also allows the opportunity to add some fashionable flair to a special day. For bespoke events such as weddings, where the numbers may be significantly larger, source items from companies that provide curated ‘looks’ for a co-ordinated tablescape full of style.

La Rose place setting, from £12 (for dinner plate, dessert plate and napkin), Maison Margaux

INITIAL IDEA

Attention to detail is the order of the day. For very special occasions, a monogrammed napkin is the ultimate in sophistication when inviting guests to take their seats. They are a great memento too of a special event that will want to be remembered long into the future. Choose a style depicting pretty foliage and flowers for a summery feel, and finish with a luxurious velvet ribbon.

Monogrammed linen scallop napkin, £27; monogrammed velvet ribbon bow from £12, both The Embroidered Napkin Company



HANDMADE

Add a personal touch to the table with hand-designed stationery in colours and patterns to co-ordinate with the style of the table. Take inspiration from flowers, foliage or a pretty tablecloth to make a set of place setting cards and menus. Designer Isla Simpson has created an online course with a digital app to enable any creative skill level to artistically produce a bespoke set of illustrated stationery.

Menu and Place Card Illustration Experience with Procreate X5, £79 for 19 lessons, Isla Simpson

A GOOD VINTAGE

Antique pieces are perfect for adding a sense of occasion to any gathering. Use family heirlooms or source originals from online specialist collectors and antique markets. Silver-plated canteens of cutlery, carving sets and lovely old ladles and tureens are all reminiscent of country houses in times gone by. Also worth collecting are antique damask monogrammed table linens with pretty cutwork detailing, delicate embroidery and perhaps a lacy edge.

French sterling silver knife and server 30-piece set, £700, from a selection, Maison Fête et Cie ▶



Finishing touches

Continue the tone set by the invitation with complementary tableware and accessories



Bibi wedding invitation, from £30 for 10, Papier

Pulcinella small wine glasses, £80 for a set of four, Oka



Silver-plated cake server, £30, Fortnum & Mason

Royal Albert Old Country Roses sandwich tray, £58, Wedgwood



Ditsy Scallop Ivory/Blue placemat and napkin set, £58, Rebecca Udall x Isla Simpson



Ivory Ruffle Irish Linen tablecloth, from £189, Rebecca Udall



Nickel-plated champagne bath, £199.95, Annabel James

Floral arrangement etiquette

“Seasonality, height and scent are key when it comes to dressing the table for a formal event. It’s important to be able to see your guests across the table, so opt for a low arrangement, a series of bud vases or a low flower tube – less is more. By choosing seasonal flowers, you will be able to showcase the flowers at their best and are more likely to find special and scented flowers. Consider layering herbs into your arrangements for additional fragrance and interest.”

ROSEBIE MORTON, FLOWER FARMER AND FOUNDER OF THE REAL FLOWER COMPANY

MOOD LIGHTING

Candles always complete a table and are a great way of adding pools of atmospheric light. Tall silver-plated candelabra or glass candlesticks are ideal for adding classic formality to a celebration table. Add alternative candleholders, too for extra colour and interest. Pastel-hued glass-sided pagoda lanterns or bamboo-encased hurricane lanterns will bring a touch of elegant Oriental style to a table in a conservatory or garden.

Powder Pink Pagoda lantern, £98, Mrs Alice



BE BOLD

Update classic tableware with designer pieces for a look that is beautifully flamboyant and full of style. Invest in plates and accessories of the utmost luxury by iconic fashion and interior designers to add flair and glamour to any table, and as keepsakes or future family heirlooms. Highly decorated botanical and floral patterns in elaborate Limoges porcelain are ideal for adding a dash of refined summer elegance to an otherwise classically laid celebratory table.

Mirasol placemats, £260 for a set of four; Schubert charger plate in Pale Lilac, £200; Histoires d'Orchidées dinner plates, £1,300 for a set of six; glasses and cutlery from a selection, all Bonadea

**Invitation etiquette**

“In this digital age, where electronic messages proliferate in our lives, receiving beautiful, printed invitations for weddings or gatherings has more value than ever. Invitations set the tone for your event and are a great way to give your guests a sneak peek into your plans for the day. When choosing a design, think about the style you want to convey – traditional or modern, town or country – and the key colours or flowers you plan to use. Weaving cohesion through invitations to the on-the-day stationery and styling is an effective way to tell your tale from start to finish. On a practical note, I would always recommend ordering samples before sending out invitations. Having them in your hands gives you a much better sense of the look and feel of the paper, but also allows you to check if the font is easy to read, and whether you’ve made any typos.”

MOLLY PARK,
DESIGN DIRECTOR, PAPIER

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

The right flowers for a formal occasion really are all about individual choice, particularly for weddings and special birthday celebrations. A floral centrepiece can be as grand or understated as desired, and a selection of vases and containers can be used to great effect. Slender single stem vases, antique rose bowls and jugs and even tiny bud vases can look enchanting, particularly when grouped en masse. For a more flamboyant creative floral design, arrange a few stems of select flowers and foliage in florist’s moss hidden within an eye-catching ceramic vessel or urn. Or display quintessential English roses in a pretty hatbox. *David Austin’s Florist’s Choice Hatbox Arrangement, £80, The Real Flower Company* ■





Regal Retreats

Spending time in the country has been precious and pivotal to the Royal Family for hundreds of years. Here, we look at four of its best-loved rural homes

Generations of royals have enjoyed rural life and pursuits through the ages, and today's Royal Family is no different. Her Majesty The Queen, whose passions include riding and walking, has said she is happiest in the acres surrounding Balmoral Castle where, as she put it in a BBC documentary in 1992: "One could go for miles and not see anybody. It has endless possibilities and we love picnics and open air." Away from the public gaze, The Queen, her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren regularly gather to relax, enjoy family fun and everything that spending time in the great outdoors has to offer.



Balmoral

Balmoral Castle has been adored by successive generations of royalty since Prince Albert bought it in 1852 for Queen Victoria, who described it as “My dear paradise in the Highlands”. It is believed to be Her Majesty The Queen’s favourite home, too. She has spent her summers here since childhood, and it is where she spent her honeymoon 75 years ago.

Here, the Royal Family can enjoy an outdoor lifestyle among the idyllic surrounding mountains, lochs and forests. They can picnic, trek, ride (according to Princess Anne, Balmoral has the most fun riding), hike, drive, shoot, fish, swim, boat and paint, and can even go incognito. A former Royal Protection Officer recalled that a group of American tourists once bumped into Her Majesty as she strolled around the estate but did not realise it was her – and even asked if she had met The Queen.

In the 2016 ITV documentary *Our Queen At Ninety*, Princess Eugenie described Balmoral as “the most beautiful place in the world” and said: “I think Granny is the most happy there. I think she really, really loves the Highlands. Walks, picnics, dogs – a lot of dogs, there’s always dogs – and people coming in and out all the time... you just have room to breathe and run.” Her cousin, Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, declared his own love for Balmoral in a speech in May of last year: “I’ve been coming to Scotland since I was a small boy. As I grew up, I saw how my grandmother relishes every minute she spends here. And my father is never happier than when walking among the hills. My childhood was full of holidays having fun in the fresh air and swimming in lochs, family barbecues with my grandfather in command, and yes – the odd midgie.”

Balmoral Estates, Ballater, Aberdeenshire AB35 5TB

Tel 013397 42534; balmoralcastle.com

Balmoral’s grounds, gardens, exhibitions, gift shops and coffee shop are open daily until 2 August. The Balmoral Expedition includes a two-hour Land Rover tour of the Estate and is also available daily until 2 August. ►

ABOVE (From left): King George VI, Princess Elizabeth, Prince Philip, Prince Charles, Princess Margaret and Queen Elizabeth enjoying family time at Balmoral in 1951.

LEFT Balmoral Castle was built out of granite quarried on the Balmoral Estate and is Scottish baronial in style.



Sandringham

ABOVE King George VI, Queen Elizabeth, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret inspect the crops on the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk during the Second World War. They used a pony and trap and bicycles to avoid using petrol, which was rationed.

Since being bought in 1862 by Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), as a place to enjoy the benefits of a healthy country life, Sandringham has long been a favourite with the Royal Family. “Dear old Sandringham,” wrote King George V, “the place I love better than anywhere else in the world,” while King George VI wrote, “I have always been happy here and I love the place.” Their affection for Sandringham is echoed by The Queen, who spoke of “the peace and tranquility of the Norfolk countryside” in her Christmas broadcast of 1992. She added: “I first came here for Christmas as a grandchild. Nowadays, my grandchildren come here for the same family festival. To me, this continuity is a great source of comfort.”

Sandringham House, once described as “the most comfortable house in England”, and its 8,000-hectare estate is The Queen’s private “escape” (as she has

described it) and the place where the various generations of the Royal Family gather to celebrate Christmas and New Year. In relative privacy, they can go for walks, cycle, and ride – a key feature of royal holidays and Sandringham is no different. In her 1991 book, *Riding Through My Life*, Her Royal Highness Princess Anne The Princess Royal affectionately recalls catching ponies, brushing them and riding through the Sandringham estate, usually with her mother and older brother, around “miles of stubble fields”.

Sandringham, Norfolk PE35 6EN

Tel: 01485 544112; sandringhamestate.co.uk

Sandringham House, Gardens and St Mary Magdalene Church are open daily until 13 October (closed Fridays).

The 243-hectare Royal Park and the Courtyard (with a cafe, restaurant and the Sandringham Shop) are open all year. ▶



Including images and objects relating to The Queen's love of horses and the great outdoors, special Platinum Jubilee exhibition *Her Majesty The Queen at Sandringham: An Exemplary Reign And A Unique Country House* runs until 13 October at Sandringham.



Highgrove

ABOVE His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales at Highgrove House, where he has been able to indulge his passion for gardening.

The country retreat of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, Highgrove House is a neo-classical manor in the Cotswolds bought by Prince Charles in 1980. The Prince – a pioneer in sustainable farming and horticulture – has spent more than four decades creating what gardener and television presenter Alan Titchmarsh described in a 2010 BBC documentary as “one of England’s most important contemporary gardens”. Open to the public by appointment, it is managed, like the wider Highgrove estate, organically and sustainably.

Their Royal Highnesses Prince William and Prince Harry were largely brought up at Highgrove, playing in the gardens, hiding in their treehouse (which visitors can still see today) and learning to ride on small ponies. Now it seems the youngest Cambridges are enjoying spending time with their grandfather in his gorgeous

Cotswolds hideaway. Last summer, Prince Charles told the BBC how his grandson Prince George and granddaughter Princess Charlotte love measuring themselves against a fast-growing balsam tree.

Prince Charles is a hands-on gardener at Highgrove: “I do evening patrols at the weekends and potter about. That’s when I notice things, weed, prune and saw off bits. I love all that – getting involved and doing it is what I enjoy. Another thing I really love is laying hedges in the winter. It’s something that keeps you relatively sane.” Spending time in his garden is hugely meaningful to the future King. He told Alan Titchmarsh: “Everything I’ve done here, it’s almost like your children – every tree, everything, has a meaning and belonging.”

Highgrove House, Doughton, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8TN, highgrovegardens.com. The Gardens are open on selected days until late September for pre-booked guided tours. ►



ABOVE Highgrove House's south front seen through the reclaimed wrought-iron gates topped with The Prince of Wales's feathers.

LEFT His Royal Highness Prince William as child, leading a pony near Highgrove Estate in Gloucestershire.



TOP Windsor Castle's iconic Round Tower surrounded by The Moat Garden.

ABOVE A happy picture of the Royal Family on the East Terrace looking towards the Home Park at Windsor Castle.

Windsor Castle

Windsor Castle is the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and has been the family home of British kings and queens for almost 1,000 years. It is an official residence of Her Majesty The Queen and is still very much a working Royal palace today, used regularly for ceremonial and state occasions including state visits from overseas monarchs and presidents.

The castle is at the centre of the Royal estate at Windsor, which comprises parkland, woodland and farms. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were devoted

to their Berkshire residence, where they spent most of their time, and The Queen largely grew up here, having been evacuated to Windsor Castle during the Second World War. She was encouraged to 'dig for victory' by keeping an allotment in the grounds and, with her late sister Princess Margaret, friends and local children, she took part in a series of charity pantomimes at the castle.

For most of her reign, The Queen has lived at Buckingham Palace in London during the week and enjoyed weekends at Windsor Castle, which is less than an hour away and now has many Royal Family members living nearby such as The Earl and Countess of Wessex and Princess Eugenie. The castle is open to visitors throughout the year but, for off-duty royals, Windsor is also the scene of typical outdoor activities: long horse rides in the private 260-hectare Home Park, pony rides for the children, walking the dogs and simply relaxing in the exquisite gardens.

At the start of the pandemic, The Queen relocated to Windsor, and she has remained there since, deciding to make it her permanent home. According to Hugo Vickers, a royal author and Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire: "Windsor is the place she loves. She has her memories with Prince Philip there, she has her ponies there and family nearby. It makes sense."

Windsor Castle, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1NJ
 Tel 0303 123 7304; rct.uk/visit/windsor-castle.
 Windsor Castle is open Thursdays to Mondays all year, except 24–26 December. ■

FEATURE KATHERINE SORRELL PHOTOGRAPHS P116 © BALMORAL ESTATES, P117 ALAMY / KEYSTONE PICTURES USA / ZUMAPRESS, P118 TRINITY MIRROR / ALAMY, P119 © SANDRINGHAM ESTATE, P120 © MARIANNE MAJEURUS GARDEN IMAGES, P121 (TOP) HIGH GROVE ENTERPRISES; (BELOW) PA IMAGES / ALAMY, P122 (TOP) PETER PACKER, ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST © HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II 2022; (BELOW) KEYSTONE PICTURES USA / ZUMAPRESS / ALAMY

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PHOTOGRAPH (TOP RIGHT) © BOZ GAGOVSKI



The Lamb Inn, Shipton-under-Wychwood, where the menu focuses on hearty yet fine food using seasonal ingredients.

Eat, sleep & be merry

Discover our hand-picked selection of country pubs offering fine food and well-appointed bedrooms to make a few days away a delight

Rolling hills, verdant pastures and flower-filled meadows all form part of the English countryside's many charms – as do its historic pubs and inns, along with traditional dishes created from the land's seasonal delights. Today's gastropubs showcase menus with a deep appreciation of sense and place from some of the country's finest culinary talents, who proudly uphold provenance and sustainability as key values. For those seeking a transformative break away, an overnight pub stay allows for true revelling in the joys of the countryside – here's our selection of notable addresses for the best of eating and sleeping in bucolic splendour



The Lamb Inn

This Cotswolds delight from the team behind much-loved pub The Bell in Langford (and its sister restaurant Little Bell at nearby members' club Soho Farmhouse) serves hearty pub food in keeping with a nose-to-tail ethos. Expect dishes such as meltingly soft bone marrow bread, devilled kidneys and venison pie. The 16th-century building, with its exposed stone and wooden beams, also houses 10 stylishly renovated bedrooms – try room 10 to enjoy the roll-top bath and views out over the terrace.

DOUBLES FROM £89 A NIGHT

High Street, Shipton-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire, OX7 6DQ Tel 01993 832116; thelambshipton.com

The Hand & Flowers

As the only pub in the UK with two Michelin stars, chef Tom Kerridge's warm and welcoming spot sits at the foot of the Chiltern Hills in an 18th-century building in the pretty Georgian market town of Marlow. Food here is beautifully straightforward, both in the brilliant execution of traditional pub dishes such as fish and chips, steaks and pies, and in its delivery by friendly, professional front of house staff. The pub's 15 rooms include breakfast at the pub, and though all are a short walk away, a drop-off and pick-up service is included. Note that while Kerridge's two other Marlow pubs, The Coach (one Michelin star, thecoachmarlow.co.uk) and The Butcher's Tap & Grill (thebutcherstapandgrill.co.uk) have no rooms, both operate a no-bookings policy should their sibling's tables be fully booked.

DOUBLES FROM £240 A NIGHT

126 West St, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 2BP
Tel 01628 482277; thehandandflowers.co.uk ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE RIGHT

The welcoming interior of Tom Kerridge's two-Michelin-starred pub, The Hand & Flowers in Marlow; perhaps the most elegantly served fish and chips in the country; one of the 15 off-site bedrooms; The Hand & Flowers' 18th-century unassuming exterior belies the gastronomic delights to be had within.



Freemasons at Wiswell

Lancashire offers a plethora of gastropubs, of which Freemasons at Wiswell is renowned for its innovative approach to food preparation, using locally sourced ingredients in classic dishes that bring in world flavours, such as Nidderdale lamb with barbecued gem lettuce, miso aubergine, mint and yoghurt. Four guest rooms were added recently in response to customer demand for those eating at the pub, at the chef's table, or settling in for one of the many regular events such as the 'chippy tea' evenings or guest chef dinners. Note, too, that the forest in the Trough of Bowland is home to foodie stalwart The Inn at Whitewell (innatwhitewell.com).

DOUBLES FROM £220 A NIGHT

8 Vicarage Fold, Wiswell, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 9DF
Tel 01254 822218; freemasonsatwiswell.com

Sculthorpe Mill

This glorious three-storey Norfolk pub in an 18th-century former watermill sits on the River Wensum, and was recently refurbished by sisters Siobhan and Caitriona Peyton who run Sculthorpe Mill. The ground floor houses the bar, while the next floor is home to the restaurant, serving dishes created from the county's famed ingredients such as Brancaster oysters and St Swithin's soft cheese. The top floor houses six bedrooms, all of which have river or garden views, and none of which (refreshingly) have televisions.

DOUBLES FROM £110 A NIGHT

Lynn Rd, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 9QG
Tel 01328 633001; sculthorpemill.uk

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

Freemasons at Wiswell, which was once three cottages; suckling pig at Freemasons at Wiswell; Sculthorpe Mill is set in an 18th-century watermill in Norfolk; a fish dish from the seasonal menu at Sculthorpe Mill; Freemasons at Wiswell sits in the medieval village of Wiswell in the Ribble Valley.





The Bear Inn

Food is firmly the focus of attention at this 16th-century coaching inn in the Tudor village of Hodnet in rural Shropshire, with fruit and vegetables grown in the 200-year old walled garden of Hodnet Hall key to the locally sourced menu. Outdoors, beyond the main bar and restaurant, are five stable-style dining booths adjacent to the larger garden dining area. The interiors by Octavia Dickinson include the seven bedrooms in the main building and five in the coach house.

DOUBLES FROM £120 A NIGHT

Drayton Rd, Hodnet, Market Drayton, Shropshire
TF9 3NH Tel 01630 685214; thebearinnhodnet.com ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT

The Bear Inn's cosy fireside area; one of the bedrooms; the kitchen garden; dishes at The Bear Inn change with the seasons.



The Angel at Hetton

The holder of a Michelin star, this pub in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales saw chef patron Michael Wignall crowned 2022 Chef of the Year at the renowned Estrella Damm gastropub awards in recognition of his tasting menus and à la carte creations. The team here aims to create an informal approach to fine dining, focusing on a relaxed experience within sleek stylish interiors to best savour seasonal ingredients such as lemon sole, Yorkshire rhubarb and fallow deer. Its 15 bedrooms are available on a dining package basis only.

DINING PACKAGES FROM £460 A NIGHT FOR TWO (INCLUDES B&B AND EIGHT-COURSE TASTING MENU)

Back Lane, Hetton, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 6LT
Tel 01756 730263; angelhetton.co.uk



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT

The dining area at The Angel at Hetton; the pub's origins date back to the 15th century; a dish by chef patron Michael Wignall, crowned 2022 Chef of the Year in the Estrella Damm National Restaurant Awards.

The Riverside at Aymestrey

The fringes of the Mortimer Forest between Ludlow and Hereford house this gem of a 16th-century black and white building on the banks of the protected River Lugg. Head chef Andy Link's menu features ingredients in keeping with The Riverside's sustainable and ethical ethos, whether from the pub's kitchen garden, heritage orchard and smallholding, foraged from the Lugg Valley, or sourced from local producers (including Herefordshire snails from Heston Blumenthal's supplier amongst others). Four bedrooms in the main building, two external suites and three garden lodges make up the accommodation options, all of which come with a guaranteed dinner reservation slot as standard.

DOUBLES FROM £85 A NIGHT

Aymestrey, Herefordshire, HR6 9ST

Tel 01568 708440; riversideaymestrey.co.uk



The Loch & The Tyne

From the hand of Scottish-born Adam Handling - a BBC *Masterchef: The Professionals* finalist - The Loch & The Tyne is a pub with two rooms set in beautiful countryside near Windsor and its famous Royal residence. Here a menu with classic pub food and a zero-waste approach at its heart uses the best British seasonal ingredients. These include produce from the on-site vegetable gardens designed to provide for a constantly-changing, sustainable menu. Be sure to sample a glass of sparkling wine from Handling's own Kent vineyard for perfectly paired enjoyment.

DOUBLES FROM £147 A NIGHT

10 Crimp Hill, Old Windsor, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 2QY

Tel 01753 851470; lochandyne.com

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT

Trout with a modern twist at The Riverside at Aymestrey in Herefordshire; The Loch & The Tyne, set in the countryside in Old Windsor; one of the two rooms at The Loch & The Tyne where an overnight stay includes breakfast; the menu at The Loch & The Tyne features seasonal ingredients from its vegetable garden.

How did you find your home?

My partner had seen the property on the market online a couple of years before we decided to move to the area. We had been unsuccessfully searching in Cornwall for about a year, but the day we decided to set our sights on South Devon (where my partner grew up), this property came back on the market. It's a very old, semi-detached, one-bedroom house which made up two of six 'hovels' in a row backing onto burgage plots. We viewed it once in the winter, made an offer, then everything was put on hold because of Covid. We moved the following summer.

What made you choose your home and garden?

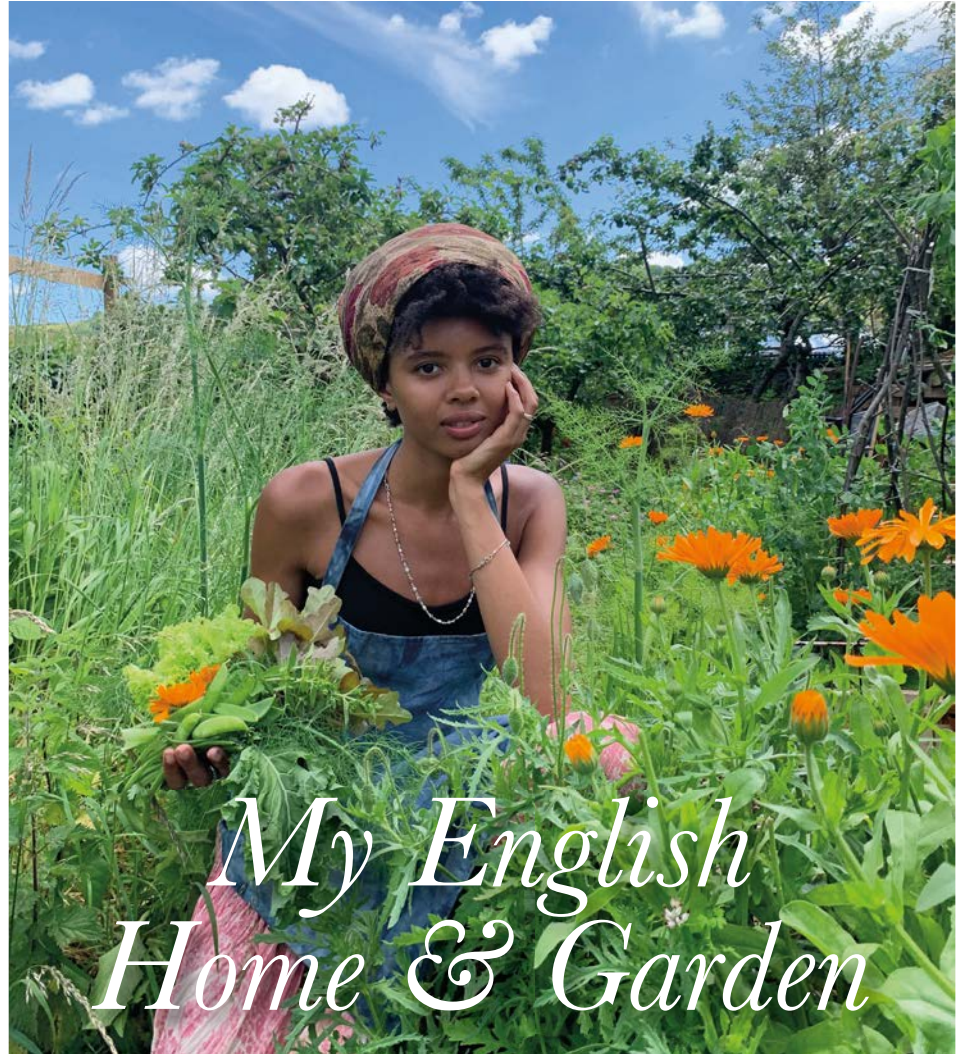
The view! We are tucked in between back gardens with big views of the valley. The garden really sold the place. It's magical, and an example of how you can squeeze a productive, ecological garden into an average-sized plot. The house had great potential, too. The internal walls are made from wattle and daub, but all the original features had been stripped out. We wanted to return a feeling of age, craft and character into the space.

What is your interior design inspiration?

I would say it's an ode to craftsmanship, sustainability and simplicity, and for my partner, who's an architect, a love of wood. There's something really alive about items that have been made by a person who loves their craft, items with a human story behind them. It connects us to the creation and value of all these things we think we need. The kitchen countertop is made from reclaimed scaffold boards, and rather than buying new floorboards, we had them flipped and sanded; they are beautiful and we hope they'll live out a good many more years in this house now.

How does the interior connect to the garden?

The ground floor is below the garden level, so we painted the walls a greenish grey tone (Gregory's Den by Earthborn paints) to give it a cosy rabbit warren feel, with a great big bookcase along one wall... it's a place to look inwards, be quiet and learn. The first floor (the living room and kitchen) is connected to the outside by



My English Home & Garden

Horticulturist and television presenter Poppy Okotcha shares the joy of making the move from London to a house with magical views over the Devonshire countryside

what we have come to call the "sky bridge" – a grand name for a concrete slab that crosses the gap between the house and garden. I'm growing honeysuckle, wild clematis and jasmine on the bridge's battered railings and I have visions of the scent from the flowers wafting in through the living room door, which we only ever really close in a storm. We've hung a big mirror in the living room looking out of the window, to reflect the hilly views. It's like a painting that changes with the seasons.

Where does your passion for ecological gardening originate?

Simply put, I think it started with my Mum and Grandma (also known as 'Grandma With The Nice Garden' when I was little) and ended with me searching for more meaning in life in my early 20s. Having worked as a model for a few years, I was lost and tired; I was looking for a career that would be good for myself, others, and the Earth. Working in the food-growing space ticked all those boxes.

Finally, what are your tips for combining elements of ecological gardening into a quintessentially English garden?

Ecological gardening marries so well with English cottage gardens, which are a huge inspiration to me. For a garden to be sustainable, it needs to be rooted in place. For example, a Mediterranean garden isn't suited to this rather damp part of the world. Like ecological gardens, traditional cottage gardens were originally spaces that were both beautiful and productive, featuring wild, native flowers as well as chickens and bees. They would have been organic, too, before the widespread use of herbicides and pesticides following the Second World War. But, excitingly, the principles of ecological gardening can be woven into any gardening style. Cottage gardens are just particularly dear to me.

Poppy is currently building an online course about ecological gardening and speaking at events and festivals this summer. For more information, visit poppyokotcha.com ■

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