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ENGLISH HOME

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March 2023 | Issue 217 | £4.99 | UK Edition

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of decorating country houses

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Learn the secrets of shaping country homes for life today in our feature on page 80, with layered, characterful schemes such as this by Alice Leigh Design.

A letter from home



Classic English homes never go out of style, but few were originally designed for how we live today. As our homes have taken on a new significance in recent years, we increasingly look to them to provide a sanctuary for relaxation, rooms for entertaining friends and family, as well as energising

spaces for creativity or work. We crave indulgent bathrooms, decadent en-suites (page 72) and kitchens that function beautifully and are a pleasure to spend time in (page 90). It's perhaps no surprise that we find ourselves seeking ways to add space and light to our homes to achieve all we need to facilitate our new-found lifestyles (page 102).

In this issue of *The English Home*, you'll find small updates that offer big impact, as well as large, transformative ideas that can effectively shape classic homes for contemporary living – none of which compromise on timeless style. In fact, some of the key ideas at the very heart of the English country house look have never felt more relevant – the desire for comfort and layering pieces from different eras over time to create eclectic homes with personality, for example, are perhaps also a result of us spending more time at home today.

We are hugely grateful to the owners of the four creative homes for opening their doors and sharing their unique interiors for this issue. While our feature on the history of country homes and how to decorate them now (page 80) provides plenty more inspiration to mix old and new. At a time when homes need to provide us with so much, we hope this issue sparks creativity, practical ideas or escapism for you.

Samantha

Samantha Scott-Jeffries, Editor



PATRICK MAVROS

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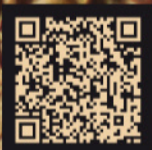
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ONLINE

Group Digital Manager Ben Iskander

Email & Digital Creative Manager Jenny Choo

PRODUCTION

Reprographics Manager Neil Puttnam

Printing William Gibbons Ltd

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 1 MARCH 2023

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

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

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Email theenglishhome@subscription.co.uk
(UK and Rest of World)

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (12 issues)

UK £70
Europe £90; €110
ROW £110; USD \$150; AUD \$215

NEWS DISTRIBUTION

Seymour Distribution Ltd
2 East Poultry Avenue
London EC1A 9PT
Tel 020 7429 3667



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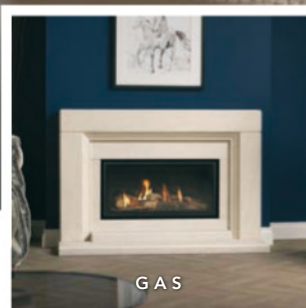
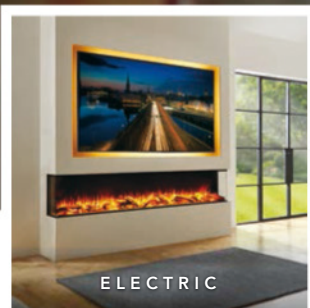
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NOTEBOOK

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SPOTLIGHT ON...

New Ways With Old Masters

Masterpieces by Monet, Michelangelo, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Renoir and Turner have been reimagined as luxury washable rugs in a new collaboration between The National Gallery and Ruggable.

The 10 famous artworks chosen for the rugs include *The Bathers* by Cézanne (pictured above), *The Water-Lily Pond* and *Iris* by Monet, Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* and *The Umbrellas* by Renoir.

Ruggable's patented technology means each rug's cover can be peeled off and washed in a washing machine.

After her dog ruined her new expensive rug, Jeneva Bell wished she could have cleaned it in her washing machine. This spurred her on to create a solution. She invented a two-piece rug system with a removable washable cover. Her bright idea turned into her own business – she launched Ruggable in 2010. ruggable.co.uk ➤



Objects Of Desire

New departure for design house Fromental

Globally known for its lavishly handcrafted wallcoverings, Fromental has unveiled its first solo foray into the world of decorative objects. The all-new Objects collection features cushions, wall hangings and original artworks.

Inspiration came from co-founder Lizzie Deshayes having time to indulge her passion for needlepoint in the Covid-19 lockdowns. “Needlepoint is seen as a very domestic craft,” she says, “but I became obsessed with the idea of elevating it to something very special.”

Designed in London by Lizzie, and handcrafted by Fromental’s studio partners in Calcutta, the cushions and wall hangings are inspired by archive prints, 14th-century tapestries and Japanese-influence European ceramics.

Co-founder Tim Butcher acquired around 400 coloured prints of European birds created from paintings by French ornithological artists in the 1950s. His favourites were interpreted by Fromental’s artists at its studios in China, producing a series of exquisite bird paintings hand-rendered onto silk and presented in gilded bamboo frames.

Husband-and-wife designer-makers Tim and Lizzie (pictured above) founded Fromental in 2005. Both adore historical decorative art but “would rather have a go at inventing the future than rehashing the past”. fromental.co.uk



Sharpening Her Skills

Knife-maker wins Royal funding

The only woman in Britain making hand-forged culinary knives professionally, Holly Loftus has won Royal funding to help her become the UK’s first master bladesmith.

A Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QUEST) bursary will enable her to travel to the US and study knife-making in the American tradition with three master bladesmiths.

Working entirely alone at London’s Cockpit studio, Holly forges blades using carbon steels known for their durability and edge retention, and fits them with handles made from locally sourced native timbers. “My aim is simple,” she says, “to make the very best knives I can. Produced with care and craftsmanship for a lifetime’s use, each one is handcrafted from beginning to end by me.”

After completing a City & Guilds course in Forgework, she spent three years working for Blenheim Forge, developing her own work out of hours. loftusknives.com ▶

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Learn From The Best

Top names will host Firmdale Hotels' creative workshops

Luminaries of paint, block-printing, floristry, embroidery and decorative art will host creative workshops for Kit Kemp's Firmdale Hotels.

Learn from the likes of Annie Sloan, Molly Mahon and Willow Crossley – just some of the experts who will lead the new one-day 'making' workshops, which include lunch, at the Ham Yard and Haymarket Hotels in London.

On 24 February, textile artist **Eppie Thompson** of The Fabled Thread's embroidery workshop will teach guests two core embroidery stitches and help them choose colour palettes, find inspiration, structure designs and capture their composition on fabric.

Annie Sloan's The Art of Colour workshop on 25 February will guide guests through paint and colour choices, discussing different styles and textures to help define personal style and taste, each guest leaving with their own designed and painted wooden box, Annie Sloan Chalk Paints, waxes, brushes, metallic paint and a stencil.

Guests at **Molly Mahon's** block-printing workshop on 10 March will use her own hand-carved wooden blocks to discover the joy of printing and experiment with colour and pattern, printing a cushion to take home.

Decorative artist **Tess Newall** paints murals in private homes, and decorates furniture and lampshades. During her workshop on 17 March, guests will take inspiration from the shapes, patterns and colours found in her collections and Kit Kemp's hotel interiors, and be given their own handmade card lampshade to paint and take home.

At artist **SJ Axelby's** Interior Portraits Painting Club on 31 March, she will teach guests how to mix and blend colours and share her expert advice. Guests will create their own interior portrait from a selection of Firmdale rooms, leaving with paints and brushes.

Willow Crossley will host a floral workshop on 17 April. She will take guests on a tour of the roof gardens at Ham Yard Hotel, identifying seasonal flowers and herbs, and will demonstrate how to make a beautiful arrangement using locally grown spring flowers, with expert tips and tricks galore.

firmdalehotels.com ▶



LEFT FROM TOP
Annie Sloan and
Eppie Thompson
BELOW, CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP LEFT
Molly Mahon,
Tess Newall,
Willow Crossley
and S J Axelby

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FLOATING PALACE wallpaper in TWILL GREY, chair upholstered with HELIGAN LINEN in SLIPPER from the Art Colours collection

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Made By Hand With Heart

Collect fair returns to Somerset House

Bringing together handmade works by more than 400 leading artist-makers from across the globe, involving 40 galleries worldwide, Collect is one of the world's most influential fairs focusing on contemporary art and design made in the last five years by living artists.

Presented by the Crafts Council, and now in its 19th year, this event will return to London's historic and architecturally magnificent Grade I listed Somerset House from 3 to 5 March.

Complementing the physical fair in London, which attracted over 9,100 visitors last year, all works will also be available to view and buy online via artsy.net from 1 to 12 March.

This thoughtful curation encompasses a broad spectrum of disciplines and materials including ceramics, glass, lacquer, furniture, textiles, resin, plastics, jewellery, metalwork, fibre, wood and paper, plus the reused, repurposed and recycled.

collectfair.org.uk; somersethouse.org.uk



Iconic Inspiration

Young design duo's Hornsea collaboration

When friends Nic Graham and Roz Nazerian fell in love with a Hornsea 'Heirloom' coffee pot and fruit bowl at a market back in the 1990s, they bought them even though they were impoverished art students, feeling inspired by the iconic design.

Little did they know that three decades later – having started a design studio together – they would collaborate with Hornsea on a stationery collection.

Founded in 1949, English heritage brand Hornsea's pottery could once be seen in almost every home in the country. Nic and Roz were given access to its patterns library to create an exclusive new stationery collection.

The Storigraphic x Hornsea Originals/Moderns Collection has launched with wrapping paper, gift tags and notebooks adorned with favourite Hornsea patterns including Heirloom, Saffron and Brontë. storigraphic.com

Diary



Showcasing new collections from 600 global brands, over 100 events including expert talks, and pop-ups, head to London Design Week at Design Centre Chelsea Harbour from 13–17 March. dcch.co.uk



David Hockney narrates his vast new immersive art experience *Bigger & Closer (Not Smaller & Further Away)* at Lightroom in London, taking us through 60 years of his art. From 22 February to 4 June. lightroom.uk



Donatello: Sculpting The Renaissance at the V&A is the first major UK show exploring his work, with artworks never seen before in the UK. From 11 February to 11 June. vam.ac.uk ■

FEATURE SARAH FEELY PHOTOGRAPHS P13 © RUGGABLE P14 (TOP) © CHRIS EVERARD; (BOTTOM) PORTRAIT © ROBERT LOGAN, LEFT © DIDI HU, P16 (ANNIE SLOAN) © JESSE WILD, (EPPIE THOMPSON) © TOM GRIFFITHS, P18 (TOP) PHOTO © SYLVAIN DELEU OF GLASS BY TIM RAWLINSON AT LONDON GLASSBLOWING GALLERY, (MAIN) PHOTO © BETH EVANS OF LEFT) TEXTILE BY DALIA JAMES AT CAVALLERO FINN GALLERY & RIGHT) BISILA NOHA AT THROWN GALLERY. (BOTTOM LEFT) © STORIGRAPHIC; DIARY (MIDDLE) INSTALLATION OF DAVID HOCKNEY'S GREGORY SWIMMING LOS ANGELES MARCH 31ST 1982 COMPOSITE POLAROID, 27 3/4 X 51 1/4", © DAVID HOCKNEY; (BOTTOM) DONATELLO, CHELLINI MADONNA, BRONZE WITH GILDED DETAILS © VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

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DESIGN DISCOVERIES

Draw attention to inspiring colours, prints and textures

SPRING COMPOSITION

Seasonal blooms can be effortlessly placed in this two-tier flower holder for a natural style of arrangement. More striking ideas include displaying flowers in gently changing colours for an ombré effect around the two tiers.

Compton two-tier flower holder, £504, Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler; Pimlico Green paint, from £29 for 11 Pure Matt, Fenwick & Tilbrook

STRIPE IT RIGHT

Part of Osborne & Little's new launches, this block stripe's subtle sheen brings a new dimension to layering print. Suitable for curtains, blinds and cushions, incorporate the fabric into existing schemes for instant energy.

Pisa Stretto fabric, £54 a metre, Osborne & Little



CURTAIN CALL

For full length drapes to look truly pleasing, the material needs to hang in beautiful folds. This hand-woven silk-and-linen-mix fabric has a balance of weight and texture particularly suited to longline curtains. The pattern is one of several new releases from Richard Smith's best-selling prints, which are reimagined in new colours.

Audrey Silk fabric, lichen, £172 a metre, Madeaux





KITCHEN PALETTE

Adding distinction to a kitchen design can be as simple as choosing paint shades that stand out. These cabinets are painted in an eye-catching contrasting tone compared to the surrounding walls and architecture. This differentiation elevates the aesthetic with a stylised pop of colour. For more clever ideas to refresh kitchens see our feature on page 90.

Classic kitchen, from £30,000, deVOL ▶

SHOPPING

FRESHLY ORDERED

Taking up a relatively small footprint, a freestanding laundry cupboard is an orderly asset on busy days. Beyond its functionality, this piece can also be a colourful feature when painted in a prominent shade.

Evesham laundry cupboard, £985, can be customised in different colours and hardware, The Dormy House



BRINGING CHARACTER

Update garden rooms with decor in a mix of tones and textures. Here, to instil a modern style, cushions in earthy greens are juxtaposed with a sleek black side table, a natural seagrass rug and a durable faux-rattan bench.

Aldsworth bench, £395; Alderton side table, £129; Lyra stripe cushion, £29; Harvey stripe cushion, £39; Mila cushion green, £30; Ravello indoor planter, small, £6, all Cotswold Company

INDULGENT SLEEP

For those seeking a luxurious bed, Savoir crafted this design to meet the demand from some of the world's best hotels. Each bed is handcrafted to client specifications with a soft cotton-and-thick-wool mattress completing this 'masterpiece of longevity and comfort'.

Harlech, No 4, super king, £21,843, Savoir ▶





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MARKED APPEAL

For admirers of Ercol's soft silhouettes, this neat cabinet retains the heritage brand's signature details, while the sunburst carving on its solid ash doors offers a bold style statement. Due to variations in wood grain each piece is unique, and available in all the company's ash finishes, including a new vintage stain (seen here).

Ibstone universal cabinet, £1,799, Ercol

PERFECT BEDFELLOWS

Inspired by Indian hand-block printing the Malabar 100 per cent sustainably-sourced slubbed cotton fabric collection by Iliv takes traditional patterns and infuses them with a modern palette. The wildrose and sage colourways, as below, make for an easy partnership to refresh bedroom schemes with a lighter look.

Curtain, Maala, Sage; pillow, Pushkar, Wildrose; cushions, Indo, Sage and Indo, Wildrose, all Malabar collection, from £30 a metre, Iliv



EASTERN PRINTS

To mark Soane Britain's 25th anniversary, Lulu Lytle is celebrating her passion for the ancient Middle East. These two fabrics from the Egyptomania range suit a classic interior. Papyrus stripe (on the sofa) has a deliberately faded finish and uneven texture, while Leopard Palm's striking damask-like lattice (on the ottoman) can be used on upholstery, curtains or paper-backed fabric walling, and works with other iconic patterns. *Papyrus stripe and Leopard Palm, both £300 a metre, Soane Britain* ■

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Border in Folk Flower wallpaper, Yellow/Terracotta, £144 a roll, Tess Newall



Woodstock pendant, from £362, Mind The Gap



Flower Fields ceramic breakfast plate, £24.95, Anna + Nina at Liberty



Oblique mugs, set of four, £54, Anthropologie

Scalloped serving platter, £110, Wicklewood



Butter dish, £95, Wicklewood



Jimena occasional chair, £1,298, Anthropologie



Strawberry lampshade, £490; Red Meadow lamp base, £370, Natasha Hulse



Bespoke headboard by Natasha Hulse for Firmdale Hotels/Kit Kemp Design



Castelo jug, £95, Soho Home



Jaipur Acorn cushion, Coral, £55, Weaver Green

FOLK TALES

Introduce an artisan feel to interiors with folk-inspired designs featuring hand-painted details, block-print patterns and intricate embroidery



Sheki upholstered ottoman, £1,750, Oka

FEATURE CHARLOTTE DUNFORD PHOTOGRAPHS (NATASHA HULSE/FIRMDALE HOTELS); SIMON BROWN

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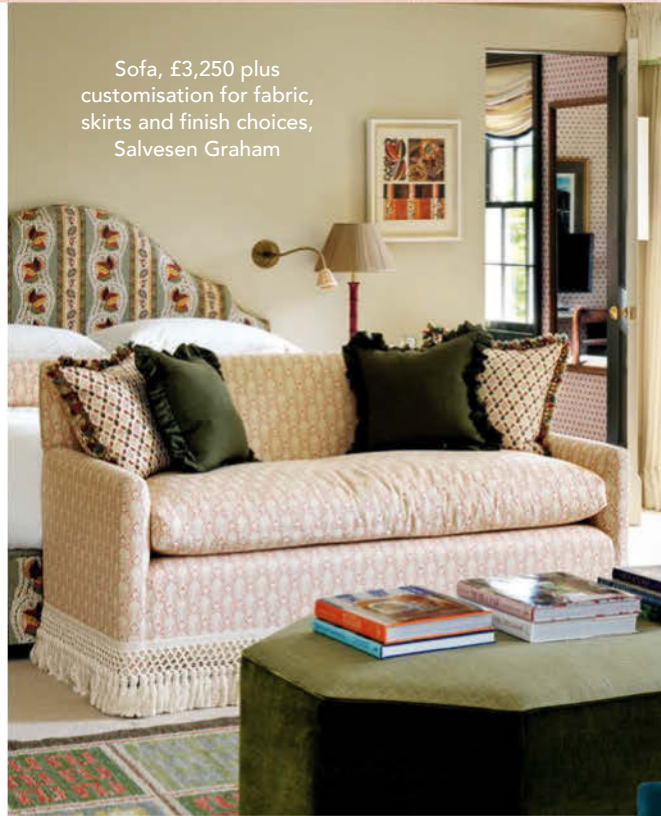
Regal armchair, Andean, £2,095, Andrew Martin



CH24 Wishbone chair, Soft Red, £510, Heal's



Etienne chaise, Persia Sky, £1,976, Parker Knoll



Sofa, £3,250 plus customisation for fabric, skirts and finish choices, Salvesen Graham



Wandsworth chair, Raspberry, £896, Darlings of Chelsea



Duran chair, £4,795, Arteriors x Jay Jeffers

PULL UP A PEW

Whether somewhere to cosy up with a book, a perch to enjoy a drink at a kitchen island or a sumptuous sofa on which to spend the evening, take a seat in comfort and style



Rider dining bench in Rialto Peacock velvet, £1,895, Jonathan Adler



Louis Deconstructed chair, Woodstock Linen, £1,345, Mind The Gap



Josephine sofa in Capri silk velvet, Emerald, £18,708, Beaumont & Fletcher



Bloomsbury chair, £1,680, Julian Chichester



Little Cheese footstool, £195, Loaf



Bar stool upholstered in Loom Weave Green by Kit Kemp, £1,050, Gabriella James Chairmakers

FEATURE KATY MCLEAN PHOTOGRAPH (SALVESEN GRAHAM) SIMON BROWN BACKGROUND LITTLE CHEESE FOOTSTOOL, LOAF

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THE EDIT

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

HERE COMES THE SUN

Having established a reputation for 'transforming ordinary houses into extraordinary homes', Westbury Garden Rooms creates bespoke conservatories, orangeries, garden rooms and kitchen extensions that seamlessly blend into the original features of a home. From designing and planning right through to the final coat of paint, every step is made as painless as possible. Now, for those seeking a pool house, either to cover a pool or as a space in which to change or entertain, Westbury Garden Rooms will create a design tailored to suit.

westburygardenrooms.com



LOOK OUT FOR...



Ever since artist-designer couple Lucy and Michael Vaughan launched eponymous decorative lighting, furniture and textiles business Vaughan in 1983, it has gone from strength to strength with showrooms in London and New York. The extensive collection of products covers everything from 17th-century styles to contemporary designs. Its latest launches include the Edwardian-inspired brass-and-glass Netherton and the Fyfield lanterns (*left and above*), as well as the modernist, hand-carved alabaster Hinton table lamp. vaughandesigns.com



ON THE GO

Italian company SMEG is known for adding a sense of fun to the functional with its colourful range of home appliances. The company was founded in 1948 and continues to be run by the third generation of the Bertazzoni family to this day. Adding to its collection of fridges, kettles, blenders, ovens and toasters, this spring SMEG launches its new personal blender. Suitable for making fruit or vegetable-based smoothies or milkshakes, it comes with two bottles with spouts to drink from at home or elsewhere. smeguk.com ▶





NATURAL HUES

Eco paint company Earthborn are celebrating their beautiful rich, jewel-toned burgundy Lady Bug shade as their Colour of the Year 2023. It is strikingly elegant, creating opulent spaces but with added warmth for an extra relaxing feel. For those looking for a more muted look, the company has an extensive array of other shades on offer, all of which are odour-free, safe for babies and children and need one coat less for coverage than conventional paints.

earthbornpaints.co.uk

PASSION PROJECTS



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An artist's CANVAS

With flair and imagination, a building previously used to store flowers has been transformed into a home full of character by designer Lyn Le Grice

FEATURE AMANDA HARLING
PHOTOGRAPHER ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL



In the book room, shelves are laden with books on art and design. A vibrant portrait of Lyn by her friend Romi Behrens hangs on the reclaimed panels, while the model of a clipper was originally made to be placed in the front window of The Stencilled House in Penzance.



A striking work by Jeremy Le Grice hangs on the panelled wall above a chest given to Lyn by her father, which was the first piece she painted. The ikat lampshades on vintage lamps are from Oka. The timber floorboards stenciled with a bold chequerboard design subtly define the space into different areas.



‘Although the building hadn’t been used for anything other than storage for decades, we realised its potential as an interesting home’



The Flower Loft that forms part of the stable block adjoining Trereife, an 18th-century country house near Penzance, has been home for designer and decorative artist Lyn Le Grice for the past 25 years. Lyn and her late husband, artist Jeremy Le Grice, first met in Cornwall and the county was the backdrop for many happy and creative years together. “We did settle in the Cotswolds for several years but having grown up in Cornwall, Jeremy was always happiest living near the sea which was the focus of much of his work, so back we came.” The paintings, ingrained with the emotional pull he felt for Cornwall’s varied landscapes and dramatic coast, hang in every room along with works by Cornish friends and contemporaries such as Peter Lanyon along with numerous pieces by local Cornish potters. “Peter Lanyon was a mentor in the early days and helped Jeremy with his entry to The Slade.”

The Flower Loft, so-called because daffodils that used to be grown on the Trereife estate were packed in the loft prior to being transported on the night train ▶

ABOVE Flanking the door to the bookroom, a series of glazed cupboards, designed by Lyn and painted in teal with gilded highlights, provide storage at one end of the dining area. A classic brass Dutch chandelier hangs over the dining table.

LEFT Lyn has worked on many interior design projects for clients including Anoushka Hempel, Schumacher, and Crabtree & Evelyn.



ABOVE The sizeable barkcloth on the wall in the kitchen was given to Lyn's brother when he was governor of the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) in the South Pacific. A red ceramic lamp base from Red Mud in Somerset sits on a wooden chest of drawers sourced from an antique shop in Stow-on-the-Wold. RIGHT The sheltered walled garden inspires memories of southern climes planted with lavender and clipped olive trees.





‘My father’s skill and vision unearthing pieces in bric-a-brac shops spurred me on’

from Penzance to London and the market at Covent Garden. “After our children had left home we felt it was time for a move and Jeremy’s cousin Tim suggested the Flower Loft. Tereife, which has been in the Le Grice family for some 200 years, now belongs to him,” Lyn explains. “Although the loft hadn’t been used for anything other than storage for decades, we realised its potential as an interesting home with plenty of room for hosting friends and family both inside and out.”

A doorway from the loft leads through to three rooms on the first floor of the main house; these became the couple’s main bedroom, bathroom and drawing room. “They are fine south-facing rooms with high ceilings, fireplaces and original 18th-century plasterwork – a complete contrast to the rustic style of the loft. We made two additional bedrooms and a shower room at the far end of the loft, with the bookroom and main living area in between.”

Having studied at Hornsey College of Art, Lyn built a successful career based on her innate talent for creating lovely interiors for clients, both commercial and private, becoming renowned for her skills as a ▶

ABOVE On the wall next to the kitchen is a self-portrait by Jeremy painted during his Eton schooldays. Much encouraged by his art master he continued his studies at The Slade.

RIGHT The utility room is painted in an earthy terracotta colour, a paler version of the quarry-tiled floor.





‘The lavender sitting room walls resulted from being given a set of plates by a cousin’

stencil artist. “During the late 1980s, I created the Stencilled House in Penzance, which became a popular visitor attraction and the subject of a book. I stencilled every room in the five-storey 18th-century building in a different design and furnished it in-keeping with the period. It was a labour of love that kept me very busy. Since then I’ve worked for clients all over the world – New York, Boston, Singapore, the Caribbean, and most recently a large house in Holland Park in London, but Cornwall always draws me back.”

Lyn’s creative skills were put to good use when designing the interior of her new home at Trereife. “There were few constrictions planning the space as there were no internal walls to speak of. Rather than build walls, we sourced panelling from various reclamation yards and worked out how we were going to use it to organise the space into rooms.”

Forming a double-layered division between the book room and the dining area are sections of bookshelves filled with an impressive library of books on art and design, while a row of glazed cupboards designed by Lyn provides floor-to-ceiling storage space for glasses ▶

ABOVE The walls in the sitting room, which is situated on the first floor of the main house, are painted in a luminous shade of lavender. The paintings above the sofa were painted by Jeremy Le Grice. **RIGHT** A wooden desk transformed by Lyn into her unique version of Jacobean-style chinoiserie stands in a corner of the red gingham guest bedroom.



A striking red gingham canopy and red-painted woodwork forms a cosy nook for the bed in this guest bedroom.





‘Upcycling is simply another way of describing what people have always done when it comes to repurposing antiques and family furniture’

ABOVE The principal bedroom with its refined plasterwork ceiling and panelling is one of the rooms dating from when Trereife was updated during the 18th century. The cushion on the wing chair was a present from the late businessman and philanthropist Sir David Tang, who Lyn worked for on several design projects.

and tableware on the dining room side. “When we moved in, we already had a fair amount of furniture from our previous homes, but it was fun sourcing what we needed locally. My father had skill and vision when it came to unearthing bits and pieces in bric-a-brac shops and that spurred me on.”

Stencilling the floor in a bold chequerboard design of black on natural wood was a master stroke, establishing a domestic scale in a living area the size of a small warehouse. Much of the panelling and the adjacent wall areas are painted in a moody dark teal colour contrasted on the ceilings and walls in the kitchen and other areas by roughly applied pink paint resembling the look of freshly plastered walls.

Lyn chose a similar but paler shade for the light and airy principal bedroom with its outlook across the lawn and fields beyond. The three rooms on that side, with their classic proportions and architectural details, needed little in the way of decoration apart from luminous colour to accentuate the feeling of light and space. “The shade of lavender for the sitting room was the result of being given a set of plates by a cousin. They were much too pretty to hide in a cupboard so

we painted the walls to highlight a detail in the design. It’s an excellent backdrop for Jeremy’s paintings too.”

Lyn has found several ingenious ways to upcycle, such as making a quilt into curtains for the sitting room “Recycling or upcycling is simply another way of describing what people have always done when it comes to repurposing antiques and family furniture to suit current style or individual taste. The wing chair in the book room is a piece that belonged to my mother that I re-covered by cutting up a vintage paisley quilt I found in L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue in Provence. The blinds in the book room were made using narrow-width fabric I bought in the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad and bands of plain fabric added on either side making them wide enough to fit the windows. The beautiful pattern is a constant reminder of the inspirational design to be found all over India.”

Over the years Lyn has been inspired by travels abroad, but Cornwall will always hold a special place in her heart. “Both Jeremy and I found that the quality of light in Cornwall was unlike anywhere else. The Cornish coast is a place that provides endless inspiration and will always be home.” ■

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Alice eschewed Crittall doors in favour of elegant sash and French windows. The plates above the door are from Malaika and Gavin Houghton. The cushions on the kitchen table chairs are made with fabric from The Cloth Shop.



BOLD MOVES

Homeware designer Alice Palmer's richly layered home conjures up memories of travels abroad and provides a joyful backdrop for her distinctive lampshades and cushions

FEATURE ARABELLA MEZGER PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER





'I'd never thought of one of these 1930s houses. Every room has so much light'

ABOVE Alice designed the ruffled cushions and the sofa, which is covered in Ian Mankin's Grain Stripe. Cushions by Susan Deliss add colour and pattern. The painting of Nicholas and son Arnold is by Scottish artist Leonie Gibbs. LEFT A landscape by Russell Scott and a painting of Mevagissey Harbour by Margaret Marks hang above tiles made by Alice on a pottery course. Alice's Tangier Stripe lampshade tops a Chinese lamp.

The soft-hued patina of Alice Palmer's kitchen is reminiscent of warmer climes, where the sun soaks into plastered walls and the eye is drawn beyond to dusky evenings on the terrace outside. Drawing on childhoods spent in the Caribbean and travels through Morocco and India, the designer has transformed this terraced house into an inspirational haven.

Alice and her husband Nicholas bought their North West London home six years ago, upsizing from their first flat together, and ready to take on another project for their family (they have three children) to grow into. Alice surprised herself: "I had never thought of being in one of these 1930s houses, but I saw this one and thought 'this is insane'. Every single room has so much light. It is quite square and without the long corridors and dark, poky rooms you associate with Victorian terraces. I loved it."

The couple bought the property as a building site, with three existing bedrooms and planning permission ►

The kitchen units were designed by Alice and built by Joinery T&D. They are painted in Farrow & Ball 'Vert de Terre'. The Moroccan splashback tiles are from Habibi Interiors in nearby Kensal Rise. The collection of Lebrillos, traditional Andalusian ceramic bowls, are from El Pepito.



The walls were painted by decorative painter Hughie Turner in a linen-look finish with Little Greene's Aged Ivory. Alice painted the ceiling and is a huge advocate of coloured ceilings to make rooms feel cosier. A rug from Francesca Gentilli echoes the stripes throughout the room.





for a loft and a kitchen extension. From designing an extension without an architect, to dreaming up a successful homewares business and creating her own bathroom tiles, Alice's creativity knows no bounds. "I'm quite a doer and I'm quite impatient. If I want something done, I just do it," she says. This attitude goes some way to explaining how Alice started her eponymous label.

Struggling to find distinctive lampshades, and inspired by the "lacy, frilly ones in my husband's granny's house", Alice taught herself to sew and began making the lampshades for which she is now known. "I'd kind of done it when I was 17 and was making really short ra-ra skirts," she laughs. "I drew up the design for the lampshades, made a few and a friend bought the first one. I wasn't really expecting anything, and it's been very organic." Now the whimsical fabric shades adorn striking ceramic bases – which are also sourced and sold by Alice – all over the house.

Finding inspiration from holidays in the Caribbean, Alice has deftly merged the divisions between the interior and exterior in her home, designing a vista from the front door to the kitchen and the garden beyond. She has recreated the beautiful outdoor living terraces found in West Indian villas inside, with bamboo chairs, terracotta tones and plants filling the kitchen windowsills. Meanwhile, in the garden, a Moroccan mosaic table – a birthday present ►

ABOVE LEFT Alice in her sitting room. To see Alice's collection of lamps and cushions, plus other products, visit alicepalmer.co

ABOVE RIGHT The stone bench in the garden was painted by Alice to reflect the coral colours found in many Moroccan gardens. Alice's vivid Tangier striped cushions with their informal frills soften the space.

RIGHT A BFGF tapestry framed by Harry Eagle takes pride of place among art inherited from parents or sourced through Tat London and the Hollywood Road Gallery. The lampshades are Alice's Triple Navy Ric Rac.





The house is a delight to be in – simultaneously peaceful and full of invigorating colour: ‘It’s very calming and it’s got such good energy’

ABOVE LEFT Original tiles were uncovered during the build project. The vibrant hallway is painted in Farrow & Ball’s Slipper Satin and Turmeric by Francesca’s Paints. ABOVE RIGHT The two-toned family bathroom is painted in Breakfast Room Green and an archive colour, Folly Green, both by Farrow & Ball. The delicate Scrunchie shades are by Alice.

to Alice from Nicholas – creates the centrepiece for all fresco dining. The romanticism of the kitchen, with its bare plaster walls, skirted lampshades, embroidered textiles and fretwork tables is evocative of the architect and set designer Oliver Messel’s approach. The theatricality and easy grandeur of his Caribbean work have been adapted by Alice throughout her home: splashes of colour akin to his distinctive ‘Messel’s Green’; glass ceiling pendants; and ingeniously placed mirrors to manipulate perspective and reflect light. Alice spent many evenings decorating while the children were asleep. “When we moved in, I did it slowly. We lived in it and painted it bit by bit. My husband works in the evening, so I’d sit and do the painting with a glass of wine.” The sitting room is the exception. Here the walls have been painted by decorative painter Hughie Turner to create a finish

that is akin to linen, lending depth and texture to the rich, densely layered interior. The bookshelves, painted in an oxblood red, echo the striped fire surround and a Moroccan rug on the floor, which, says Alice, “We thought might be a bit too much but works really well.” Her signature Tangier ruffled cushions jostle with a selection by Emma Hanbury on a sofa upholstered in Alice’s blue Callaloo print. Every room in this house is a delight to be in – simultaneously peaceful and full of invigorating colour. “It’s very calming,” she adds, “and it’s got such a good energy.” The two older children’s bedroom is a happy amalgam of Indian and Moroccan influences. “I thought I’d go all out,” says Alice, who stencilled the flags around the top of the walls and created the “wonky” star in the centre of the ceiling that gives the room a cosy, tented feel. She also designed the stable-style French windows which open onto a ▶

Alice's children Margarita and Arnold share a room painted in Farrow & Ball's Slipper Satin and archive colour Ointment Pink. The kantha quilts are from Sourced by Holly and bed valances by Alice Palmer. The window-style mirror from Oka reflects light into the room.





terrace overlooking the garden, and even tea-stained the cane wardrobes herself.

The principal bedroom is one of Alice's favourite rooms and she sleeps surrounded by beautiful textiles. "Everyone said we should do a Juliet balcony, but the large window gives the space a 'lofty' vibe. The canopied bed makes such a difference, too. It's so cosy and layered." She designed it, and with a friend, attached fabric from Pukka Print and The Cloth Shop to a wooden frame. "It makes the bed feel really grand," she adds.

This unique home is made more remarkable by the fact that Alice has done much of it herself, and with three children in tow. Almost everything in it has been designed, sewn, painted or thrown by her. Her distinctive aesthetic playfully reimagines the bright colours and motifs of the tropics for the English landscape. "I love the English take on Indian textiles, and tailoring things for the London light; I think muted colours work so well with the grey skies." The earthy tones of terracotta, saffron and sage, and the soft spring light streaming through the windows are certainly transportive. ■

ABOVE The light and airy principal bedroom has a gentle palette. The mother of pearl inlay chest of drawers is from Sitara Interiors, with a clever jalousie window and mirror seen in the reflection.

RIGHT The bed in the principal bedroom feels fresh and cosy with a canopy designed by Alice. An Oka quilt is layered with Beata Heuman's Palm Drop cushions in sea green and chalk.





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SHARED VISION

Mother and daughter Rebecca and Maddy Minerva's mutual love of interior design and like-minded collaboration have resulted in a comfortable, relaxed home for all the family to enjoy

FEATURE CLAIR WAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER



Colour-matched to Little Greene's Obsidian Green, the Classic English kitchen from deVOL blends well with the Tumbled Antiqued Ash Limestone flooring by Floors of Stone. The aged brass taps are made for deVOL by Perrin & Rowe, while the trio of delicate Fin bone china pendants are from Original BTC.



ABOVE A runner from Farnham Antique Carpets adds instant colour and texture to the kitchen. The rustic wall tiles around the Esse cooker and in the alcoves were handmade by local Surrey company Froyle Tiles. The Bum bar stools are by deVOL.

Finding a house that would comfortably accommodate visits from their four adult children and yet still feel cosy when it was just the two of them was key for Rebecca and Ross Minerva. In 2015, when Rebecca spotted a rambling Victorian country house for sale near the market town of Haslemere in the Surrey Hills, she knew it was the one but Ross took some persuading. “Even though it’s a big house, it felt instantly comfortable to me,” she says. “However, Ross is a property developer and didn’t think it was a good investment as he could see it was in a poor state. Six months later, when our previous home sold, we needed to move quickly. Luckily this house was still on the market and the owner dropped the price so it became a more appealing proposition. I think a lot of

people were scared off because there were so many problems, but because we had renovated previous properties we had a trusted team of tradespeople to rely on to deal with such a large job.” The couple had initially enlisted the help of an architect to draw up plans for an extension to house a new kitchen, but Rebecca realised the kitchen would work much better in a beautiful but forgotten space at the back of the house. It was at the initial meeting with kitchen company deVOL that the couple’s daughter Maddy, an interior designer, got involved in the project. Having worked at the Rita König and Rosanna Bossom studios in London, she now has her own design studio, Maddalena Minerva, and was able to guide her mother and introduce her to a wealth of beautiful textiles, furniture and wallpapers. “I talked



The collaborative, creative process was an enjoyable one thanks to mother and daughter sharing a like-minded attitude

to Mum about ideas all the time and would send her samples through the post,” Maddy says. “We would then get the swatches out on the table and start pulling schemes together. It was an organic process. There’s often one piece that will pull a look together – the drawing room was tricky to lay out and furnish, but once we put the antique rug down and stepped back, we could see it completely made the space. I didn’t want the interiors to look too perfect. I prefer rooms to have a relaxed, uncontrived feel, with an eclectic mix of traditional and contemporary styles.”

The collaborative, creative process was an enjoyable one thanks to mother and daughter sharing a like-minded attitude. “The reason it worked so well is that we share a similar taste. Mum’s style is very unfussy, and she’s quite happy to go for bold patterns and colours,” says Maddy. Certain aspects of the house have an Arts and Crafts feel, including the original beams in the kitchen with their stylised, cut-out leaf motifs, and Rebecca and Maddy have embraced this by hanging William Morris wallpaper in the hall and including antiques from the same era. ▶

ABOVE In the drawing room, a Cloverleaf pouffe from George Smith is flanked by a Bluebell sofa from Sofa.com and a pair of antique armchairs sourced by Maddy from TallBoy Interiors. The convex mirror from Looking Glass of Bath brings a contemporary touch.



ABOVE Maddy designed the boot room with deVOL and the paneled wall with built-in seating is painted in the brand's Clerkenwell Blue paint. The rustic Terracotta tiles are from Floors of Stone. **ABOVE RIGHT** The house is surrounded by centuries-old woodlands that lead into the Devil's Punch Bowl, a National Trust site with far-reaching views of the Surrey Hills. The new kitchen is located at the back of the house with doors out on to the garden.

By the time lockdown came in early 2020 all the joinery was in and the main work was done. "Then we realised we had to fill the spaces. This turned out to be a lovely period when we hunkered down as a family and had fun trawling online auction sites for art, furniture and accessories. It was a little lockdown hobby that turned into quite an obsession for Mum," laughs Maddy. "One of our favourite online auction purchases was the landscape painting now hanging above the Esse cooker in the kitchen. We had no idea how big it was and didn't have a clue where it was going to go, but when we got it home it worked perfectly up there. I don't like to have completely fixed ideas when I'm designing. Giving yourself room for movement, being flexible and open, often allows for surprisingly pleasing results."

Moving the kitchen into the once-neglected light-filled space at the back of the house was a master stroke and it is now the central hub for everyone to converge on. Maddy and Rebecca settled on a deep green for the deVOL cabinetry. "This dark tone really

grounds the space," Maddy says. "It's such a big open room, it can handle a bold colour. The cool blue undertones change in different lights and blend well with the tumbled limestone flooring." Practical, space-saving banquette seating with hidden storage and the handmade wall tiles are in keeping with the artisan ethos of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Maddy has chosen a mix of rich, inviting colours throughout the house. "There's a flow of complementary colours linking the rooms for continuity. Overall, I wanted the interiors to be easy on the eye and comfortable, so that there's enough interest but nothing jarring or overpowering. It was never meant to be a show home; it's meant for family life and relaxed country living."

The house can now comfortably accommodate all the children when they visit yet feels cosy when it is just Rebecca and Ross at home. Maddy has achieved this by designing the spaces to feel full and inviting, and by avoiding the open-plan look. "Often on a Sunday all the children come over, and sometimes the ▶

The snug has an inviting feel with walls painted in Downpipe by Farrow & Ball setting off the Loaf Cuddlemuffin modular sofa in Bobbing Buoy and red Avebury table lamp from Vaughan. A bespoke storage ottoman is covered in sumptuous California fabric by GP & J Baker, with matching curtains and cushions to tie the look together.





Maddy has cleverly brought together an eclectic mix of textiles in this bedroom, including cushions in Lewis & Wood's Nantes and curtains in Pierre Frey's Mauresque Rayure 5 Chemins. A brass table lamp, with a gathered shade from Pooky, sits on top of the circa 1910 Moorish-style walnut table from Ropeworks Antiques in Marlborough.



grandparents come too, so it's a busy place at the weekends," says Rebecca. "But then Monday comes and it's just Ross and me, plus our two Labradors and four cats. We can close parts of the upstairs when we're here by ourselves. The house doesn't feel too big, it just feels comfortable and relaxed, so it works both ways."

"We're so proud of how we've made the house come together as a whole, with a functional laundry, boot room and pantry, which are ideal for a big family," Maddy says. "There are four of us grown-up children, with partners, and hopefully our own children in the future, so it's got to be a practical, working house, which I think we've achieved." ■

LEFT Tying in with the Arts and Crafts feel of the house, Maddy chose Marigold in Brick – a Morris & Co wallpaper originally designed in 1875 by William Morris – for the hall. The curtains feature a border made using Fez Weave in Walnut from Guy Goodfellow Collection. The plant stand was sourced online from Selling Antiques. The sisal rug is from Crucial Trading. To see Maddy's full digital portfolio of interior design work visit maddalenaminerva.com

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Natural BEAUTY

Interior designer Sean Symington drew on botanical inspiration to help owners Jennie and Andrew Tyler put their stamp on this handsome Georgian villa

FEATURE RACHEL LEEDHAM
PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS WAKEFIELD



RIGHT A grasscloth from Phillip Jeffries lines the bookshelves and serves as a vibrant foil to confit pots sourced from Lorforde's Antiques.

The Montferrat Leaf chandelier and brass Exton mirror, both from Vaughan, bring a contemporary edge to classic fabrics including Schumacher's Elton cotton check in Sage on the armchairs – which are from Kingcome – and cushions in Colefax and Fowler's Honeysuckle Garden. The Nureyev drinks trolley is by Soane Britain.







'We wanted to bring that impression of nature indoors'

With its beguiling floral prints and fresh colour palettes, this Georgian villa in Somerset feels as joyous and uplifting as its bucolic surroundings. "The house really lent itself to botanicals," explains Jennie Tyler, who bought the villa two years ago with her husband, Andrew. "You arrive at the property through an arch of foliage and leafy trees and the surrounding gardens are wonderful, too; we wanted to bring that impression of nature indoors."

The house, which is Grade II listed, is one of a near-identical pair. "It was built in 1820 for two sisters, which explains why the walled garden surrounds both properties," recounts Jennie. "In 1890, the two houses became a small boarding school for boys, but some years later, they were turned back into residences." Jennie had known the house long before she met Andrew: "I brought up my two children in the same village but I sold my cottage when I moved into Andrew's house in Bradford-upon-Avon. When we decided to look for a home together, I mentioned to a friend that this house would be perfect, although I didn't think it would ever come up for sale. I couldn't believe it when I saw it online that same evening."

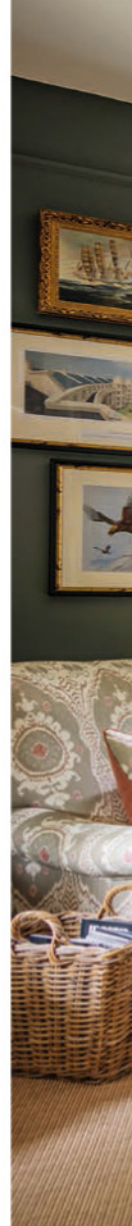
The previous owners had undertaken considerable works, including replacing the roof and adding an orangery at the back of the house, which today serves as the dining room. "We wanted to make two changes of our own to the layout, the first being to turn the formal dining room into a study for Andrew. It meant we were able to block off a door between this room and the kitchen, which gave us the opportunity to tweak the kitchen layout," says Jennie. "The second alteration was to transform one of the four bedrooms upstairs into a dressing room for our master suite."

The couple enlisted the help of interior designer Sean Symington, who they first met over a Zoom call during the pandemic. "As I began explaining some of my ideas, Sean was pulling up images that I had already earmarked. He seemed to intuitively understand what I wanted," Jennie says. Born in Canada, Sean cut his teeth with a well-known Toronto-based designer before moving to London and then Bath, where he worked for studios such as Samantha Todhunter and Sims Hilditch. "I'm a product of everywhere I have ever worked," laughs Sean, who ▶



TOP LEFT Plates from Penny Morrison lend decorative touches to the walls. The Padworth Vase table lamp is from Vaughan; the yellow lacquer tray is from De Rosee Sa.

LEFT Blocking up the door to the former dining room enabled a full length of cabinetry on the back wall. It is painted in James White, while the island units are in Vert de Terre, both by Farrow & Ball. The Shaftesbury pendant lights are from Neptune.





ABOVE Andrew's study is painted a rich hue, Green Smoke by Farrow & Ball. The armchair, footstool and back of the Emma desk chair by The Dining Chair Company are covered in Bukhara by Lewis & Wood. The antique desk is from Timothy Langston Fine Art & Antiques.

RIGHT A faded rug and antique bird prints found at Sunbury Antiques Market bring a decorative feel to the utility room, where bespoke cabinetry in Farrow & Ball's Lichen creates a calming feel. The Kubu storage baskets are from Wovenhill.





'We like tradition but we wanted an element of modernity'

brings a fresh eye to classic English country style. "I think that when you use quite traditional designs it is important to 'hip' things up a little."

Jennie and Andrew approved of this approach. "We love florals but we didn't want the interiors to be too chintzy; we like tradition but we wanted an element of modernity," Jennie says. "Every time Sean suggested something I wouldn't have ever considered, such as the fun contemporary mirrors and lighting, I told myself that was the whole point of getting help with the interiors. I haven't regretted any of the braver choices."

At the start of the project, Andrew showed Sean a book of beautiful botanical paintings by his great-great-aunt, Caroline May. "She lived in Surrey and Cornwall and painted in the mid-1800s," Andrew explains. "My uncle, who curates the originals, had a hundred or so of the paintings published in a book that included the story of her life, with a foreword by the naturalist Richard Mabey." Sean suggested framing around 70 of the bookplates in order to display them throughout the house. "It was wonderful to include something so personal to Andrew's family, and there was so much choice, I was able to select prints in colours that worked with the different room schemes," he explains.

A case in point is the drawing room, where the framed botanicals share the same green and yellow hues as the fabrics. "The starting point for this scheme was a classic honeysuckle embroidery by Colefax and Fowler," explains Sean, who countered this traditional design with pieces such as a sculptural white metal chandelier and a leaf green grasscloth, which lines the backs of a pair of bespoke bookcases.

In the kitchen, Sean redesigned much of the joinery, painting it in tones of fresh green that beautifully offset a blind in a hand-printed trellis pattern. The same fabric and tonal green paint colours flow through to the adjoining utility room, where more bespoke joinery maximises the available space. "I added open shelves with wicker baskets to give the room more warmth and character," Sean says. ▶



TOP LEFT An Acerra ceramic vase lamp with a Fearn Tribal lampshade, both from Vaughan, sits on the custom-built breakfast buffet by Arcadia Antiques.

LEFT Botanical prints by Andrew's great-great-aunt, Caroline May, are hung in a grid formation for an impactful display. "I suggested simple wooden frames painted a greyish-taupe, Shadow White by Farrow & Ball, for a more modern feel," says Sean. The Zurich lantern is by Vaughan.

RIGHT A pleasing sense of symmetry is created in the dressing room with a pair of Genevieve chests of drawers from Sweetpea & Willow. The curtain fabric, seen here reflected in the mirror, is the same Indienne print by Lewis & Wood as the wallpaper in the adjoining bedroom.





ABOVE A shapely headboard in Nereid Sage by Sophie Coryndon at Soane Britain creates a focal point against the backdrop of pretty Indienne wallpaper by Lewis & Wood in the principal bedroom. The ottoman at the foot of the bed conceals a television. The scalloped bedside tables are from Sarah Vanrenen.

RIGHT The 18th-century bird prints were found at Lorfor's Antiques while the chair from Vinterior has been reupholstered in a gingham fabric from Chelsea Textiles.





ABOVE LEFT & ABOVE RIGHT

A punchy print for the headboard and blind, Haveli Pink, teamed with a chair in Ashok Pink – both by Penny Morrison – lends a playful feel to this bedroom in the converted coach house. The Kareli Check rug is from Birdie Fortescue.

RIGHT Wallpaper and fabric in Leaf Trellis in Sage on White by Paolo Moschino works beautifully with the grey-green vanity unit and panelling. The flooring is from Mandarin Stone. To see more of Sean Symington's interior design work, visit seansymington.com

The handsome staircase features two walls with botanicals by Andrew's ancestor which set the tone for pretty florals in the bedrooms. The principal bedroom, which is hung with a beautiful chintz-inspired wallpaper, gives Jennie the impression of waking up in a luxury boutique hotel. "Having the adjoining dressing room means that the bedroom is completely free of clutter; it's so incredibly peaceful," she says.

Between them, Jennie and Andrew have six grown-up children, so the second phase of the works entailed converting the coach house. Sean designed a layout to incorporate a gym on the entrance level and two bedrooms, a bathroom and a tiny kitchenette on the floor above. "I tried to balance the 'newness' of these spaces by adding character such as tongue-and-groove and shiplap board, which I used for the ceilings in the bedrooms," he says.

Jennie and Andrew now have a home that responds to their needs, and is decorated in a manner that respects the heritage of the house without being pastiche. "It has been an amazing process," reflects Jennie, adding, "I feel that we have made this place really ours." ■



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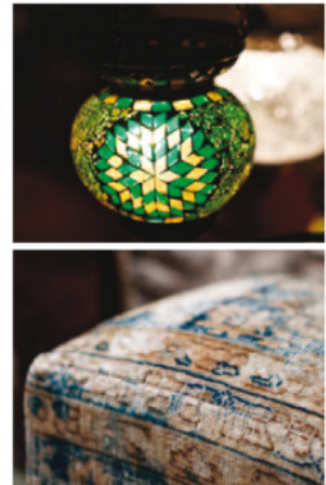
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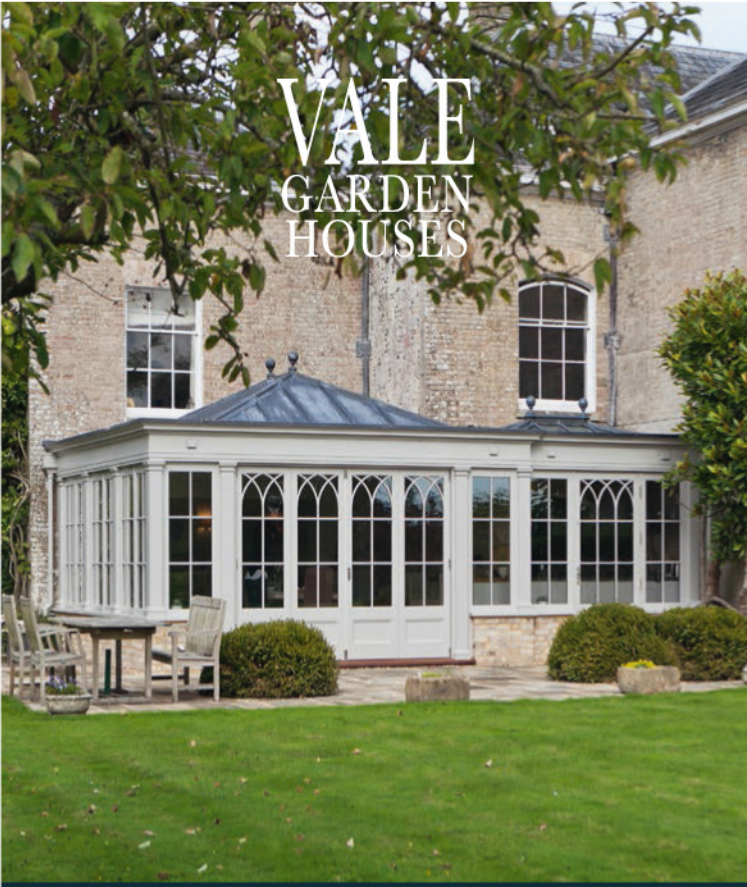
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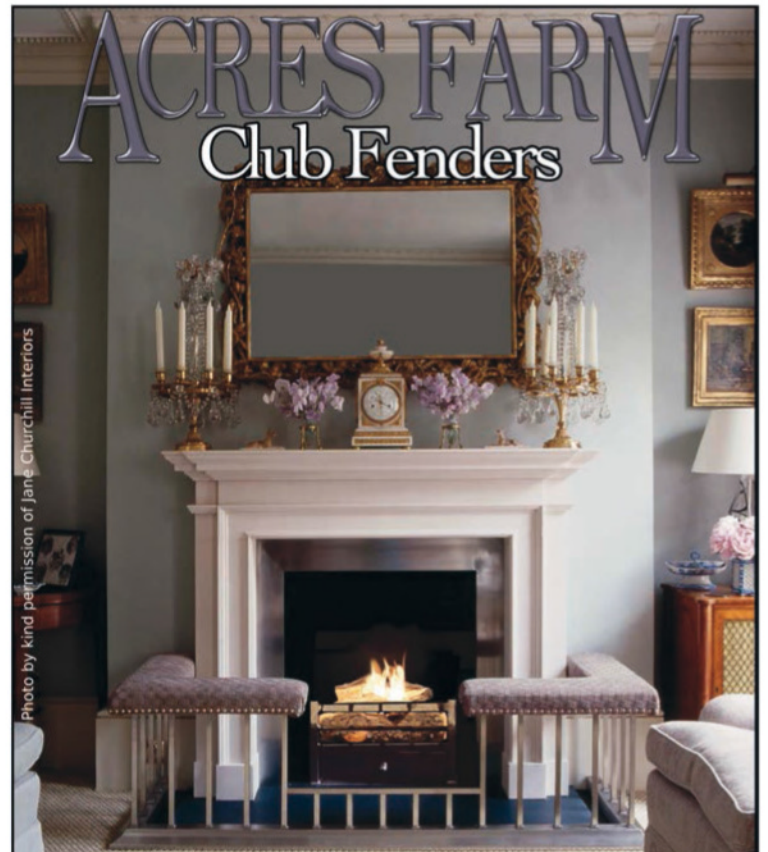


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STYLE INSPIRATION

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

SEEING RED

We often extol the virtues of adding red to give a final accent to a room. Here we see the power of taking this further with a vibrant red-on-red ensemble. This beautiful wallpaper could have been given contrasting detail with blue or green but accentuating the touch of cherry with lacquered red enlivens and brings together Asian influences to create a coherent, punchy vignette where all the other colours sing in harmony.

Trellis Fretwork console, £1,060; Trellis mirror, £620, both Charles Orchard; Eversley wallpaper, Parker & Jules; Stars & Stripe rug, Amy Kent



BATHED *in* STYLE

Consider the bathroom as a place to express character through colour and pattern as well as layer levels of comfort for a truly immersive and special place in which to spend time



Often considered primarily for its practical function as a room in which to carry out ablutions, the bathroom is underestimated as a place for high decoration and expression of character. While we love clean, spa-like spaces, we have also noted a move towards a more maximalist approach in bathrooms. We noted in our February issue that higher levels of decoration in this space would be a growing trend for the coming year and certainly this is evident in the use of bolder colours, creative tiling and even wallpapers and soft furnishings in bathrooms and cloakrooms. Motifs and colour choices can be as bold, personal, and expressive as other rooms in the house – indeed some bathrooms are very private spaces and can allow for an indulgence in a favourite colour to enjoy whilst soaking away the day. For spaces which guests may also use, or in family spaces, there is an opportunity to be a little fun and whimsical in wallpaper choices to make a talking point. Though there are of course practical considerations in a room that more often or not is rather wet, there is no reason not to treat the bathroom like other rooms in terms of decoration, even extending to soft furnishings such as a comfortable chair or luxurious curtains. ▶

TOP LEFT Make a statement with an unexpected rich and enveloping dark colour. *Wall and tiles, Mchanga, £39 for 750ml Architects' Gloss, Paint & Paper Library*

LEFT Tiles are a practical way to add both colour and pattern. *Santona porcelain tiles in Pink, £79.75 a square metre, Bert & May at Fired Earth*

A large mural-style design makes a luxurious backdrop to a freestanding bath, for a soak in style. V&A Kyoto Blossom wallpaper mural in Sandstone, £224 a panel (2.06m x 3m), 1838 Wallcoverings



A dark teal paint teamed with a striking wallpaper in similar hues imbues this cloakroom with strong character. Wallpaper, Electric Lagoon Blue, £135 a roll, The Curious Department

STYLE NOTES

- Use colour to set the mood
- Pinks and greens can feel fresh yet gentle and calm
- Energetic yellows will enliven first thing in the morning
- Blues still have a natural synergy with bathrooms, but avoid obvious nautical or coastal style if aiming for impact
- Dark colours and statement wallpaper can add drama to cloakrooms



Awash with colour

Typically, we think of light, bright, often white, elements as core to a bathroom. Colours can tend to naturally go towards the coastal or nautical but really, there is little reason to stick to blues and whites – anything goes. Consider whether a softer, romantic feel is desired – perhaps looking to pinks, greens or even browns for a natural connection. A more invigorating space in which to awaken the senses might benefit from sunny yellows, for example. Introduce colour through tiles, wallpaper or paint. Ruth Mottershead, creative director at Little Greene, recommends opting for “durable and wipeable paint finishes, such as our Intelligent Eggshell or Intelligent Satinwood on panelling to ensure a beautiful and robust finish.” Colour can also be added on a statement bath – or even via coloured sanitaryware. Be bold with brassware choices too – accenting in a gold for warmer palettes or even opting for coloured or chic black options to make a design statement. Every element should be as considered as it would be in a sitting room or kitchen. ▶

ABOVE LEFT A bold wallpaper combined with statement basins makes a colourful, chic impact. *Felix double vanity unit, £1,515; Carmel and Agnes basins, £899 each, all London Basin Company*

ABOVE RIGHT Green is a calming but not predictable

choice for a bathroom. *Vintage Olive Green Metro wall tiles, £44.46 a square metre, The London Tile Co*

LEFT A sunny yellow will energise morning showers. *Hoppers Hat, £49.50 for 2.5l Matt Emulsion; Palazzo Valentini tiles, £592.99 a square metre, Fired Earth*



Enriching character

“Wallpaper is a wonderful way to add texture and character to a bathroom. Consider a mural design to add a sumptuous and enchanting feel, creating a space in which to relax and unwind and deliver a sense of escapism,” enthuses Mottershead. We could not agree more. Embracing wallpapers and large-scale murals in bathrooms creates an enveloping, dramatic and unexpected scheme. It can be a real way to express personality and add depth of character.

Fabric and wallpaper designer Molly Mahon acknowledges, “The bathroom is so often overlooked when it comes to colour, pattern and print and yet it’s one of the best spaces to easily embrace exciting design. A lot of people are nervous of using wallpaper in a bathroom, but a properly ventilated bathroom will happily accommodate wallpaper and it makes the room such a lovely space to be in.” She notes an economic benefit, too. “It’s also often one of the smaller rooms in your home so it is the perfect opportunity to have fun, and you’ll find you probably only need a few rolls of paper, so it’s cost-effective too.”

Wallpaper can allow for all manner of choices from chinoiserie to florals to something quirky and unexpected. Jamie Watkins, co-founder of Divine Savages advises, “If you’re worried about the durability and practicality of wallpaper in the bathroom, we have a top design secret up our sleeve to abolish this anxiety... make decorator’s varnish your new best friend. It provides a highly durable, clear finish that protects against finger marks, water, stains, scuffing and colour fading. You simply apply it over the wallpaper using a brush or roller to ensure your bathroom wallpaper stays fresh, fabulous and in perfect condition for years to come.”

STYLE NOTES

- Embrace wallpaper designs that will delight or make a statement
- Large-scale murals make a great backdrop to a statement bath
- Tile splashback areas or add panelling for period detailing and practicality
- Ensure there is sufficient ventilation or use decorator’s varnish for durability



TOP LEFT A well-ventilated room allows for opulent use of wallpaper to create an enriching and calming space. Rather than aquatic themes, look to leafy botanicals for a look that is at one with nature. *Wallpaper, Vine, Verde, £109 a roll; bath exterior, Rolling Fog Dark, £75.50 for 2.5l Intelligent Eggshell;*

and all other paints, Little Greene.

LEFT Jamie Watkins at Divine Savages advises panelling the lower half of a wall for period charm and practicality. A character wallpaper above adds a playful element in a cloakroom. *Bye Bye Birdie, French Blue, £140 a roll, Divine Savages*



Layers of comfort

Considering how the bathroom will be used will dictate how else it is furnished. “The bathroom is one of my favourite rooms in the house,” Mahon says. “It’s a place for bathing, reading and slowing down. I like to treat it just like my other rooms, with layers and textures and plenty of soft details. Bathrooms can traditionally be sterile and echoey. I like mine to feel mellow, gentle and comfortable.”

Adding curtains or blinds will immediately soften and add warmth and tactile texture. Man-made fibres will be more resilient to the damp environment, but a lightweight linen or cotton that can be washed regularly will also be a good choice. A pretty voile can add a romantic note as well as privacy.

Mahon notes softness can be added underfoot with a rug, and she has also lined cupboards with a cotton print. She adds: “If you have the space, soft furnishings are everything in a bathroom for the ultimate in peace and luxury. I covered a sweet little vintage chair in our joyful Berry print for an extra touch of freshness and modernity.” Consider other furnishings such as a handy table or repurposing an antique chest of drawers as a vanity. Interesting details rather than smooth clean lines will enrich the room and make it feel like a true part of the home. ▶

ABOVE LEFT Layer eclectic detail, colour, pattern and textures for an inviting look. *Wallpaper, Bronte Bird Tree, Light Green, £69 a roll, Bobbi Beck*

ABOVE RIGHT A bold tile can be as effective as a wallpaper to introduce pattern. *SoAdmiral Scallop, £2.90 a tile, Soho Home x Marlborough Tiles*

RIGHT Make a splash in a small space with interesting details. *Leawood Lever Chrome three-hole basin mixer, from £1,536, Drummonds*





STYLE NOTES

- Add decorative details that feature in other rooms of the house
- Soft furnishings such as curtains, rugs and upholstered chairs add comfort and warmth
- Utilise antique furniture for an unusual vanity or extra storage
- Lighting can be practical but also a decorative feature, too

ABOVE LEFT
Decorative lighting lends an enveloping mood to a bathroom. *Tamara Polished Chrome Ribbed Glass bathroom wall light* £82.80, *Dar Lighting*

ABOVE RIGHT
Sumptuous curtains can soften a bathroom scheme. *Curtains*, *Agatha*,

£105 a metre, *Kate Forman*
LEFT Layer soft furnishings such as an upholstered chair and a pretty flatweave rug to create an indulgent bathroom. *Wallpaper*, *Coral, Blue*, £188 a roll; *chair*, *Berry*, *Grass Sky*, £148 a metre, both *Molly Mahon* ■

This bathroom feels akin to a sitting room with a feature fireplace, hand-painted de Gournay chinoiserie wallpaper and an ethereal rug underfoot. School I hand-tufted rug, £8,785, Tides Collection at Tai Ping





ABOVE Cotswold stone and an English country garden define this simple, rural worker's cottage.

BELOW Interior designer Max Rollitt's 18th-century farmhouse features outer walls in a patchwork of Caen stone, Purbeck stone and local flint.

The classic English country home knows few bounds when it comes to architectural styles. This is in large part because of a rich history of design that dates back centuries, seen in a variety of contrasting buildings, from wattle-and-daub Tudor cottages and stone Georgian homes to brick-and-flint dwellings and distinctive Kentish oast houses. Typically, what unites each is a harmony with the landscape and a reliance on local, often natural, materials. Unlike townhouses, which are more likely to follow a specific template due to space



THE Country HOME

Concluding our series on familiar British housing styles, we explore the many different types of rural homes, from simple cottages to rambling farmhouses, each with their own unique characteristics

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE

constraints, country homes tend to be designed with a looser hand. "They are more organic in footprint as they respond to their immediate landscape," says architect Melissa White. "Despite recognisable styles, such as barns, cottages or farmhouses, there's little repetition and many have an appealing sense of honesty, with the structure of the building exposed or the simplicity of form very evident."

Many country homes will typically have been through rounds of additions and reconfiguration. "Every iteration reflects the status of the incumbent and the fashion of the time," reflects interior designer Max Rollitt. "In that sense, the classic English country house is a story of evolution, regardless of when it was built."

PAST PERFECT

Despite a frequent lack of uniformity, in terms of footprint and configuration, country homes – whether old or new – often carry nostalgic appeal. "They are very tethered to the landscape, an idea that has been reinforced through the ages via classic English paintings, such as those by Turner, and in literature too, including the novels of Thomas Hardy," says White. "They also relate architecturally to our idea of the English garden: organic, wild, colourful, earthy, untamed. Many features such as mouldings, beams, and timber and flagstone floors, are details that lend warmth and character. Salvaging, reusing or repurposing them are all ways of honouring the history of the building while shepherding it into its next chapter."

Country homes of course vary greatly in scale. "Many larger homes were intended for wealthy families who wanted an escape from the noise and heat of ▶

Soft hues, antique finds, a pine table and a jute rug complement original beams and wood flooring in this scheme designed by Laura Stephens.



the city, so the focus is on generous reception rooms full of light, leading off a grand hall,” says Kitesgrove’s Katie Lion. “On the other hand, traditional farmhouses were conceived as hard-working buildings with a warm kitchen and focus on functionality rather than ornamentation. Texture and imperfections from natural materials give all these buildings an endearing sense of comfort and familiarity.”

Every rural home has its own story, and a good design process starts by listening to the house. “First and foremost, it is the architectural context that informs the schemes,” says interior designer Sarah Peake. “Many have been extended over the years and will have a very old part and a more modern section. I like to work with those elements and enjoy the combination of contemporary schemes in the newer parts and a cosy, more traditional aesthetic in older areas.”

LAYER BY LAYER

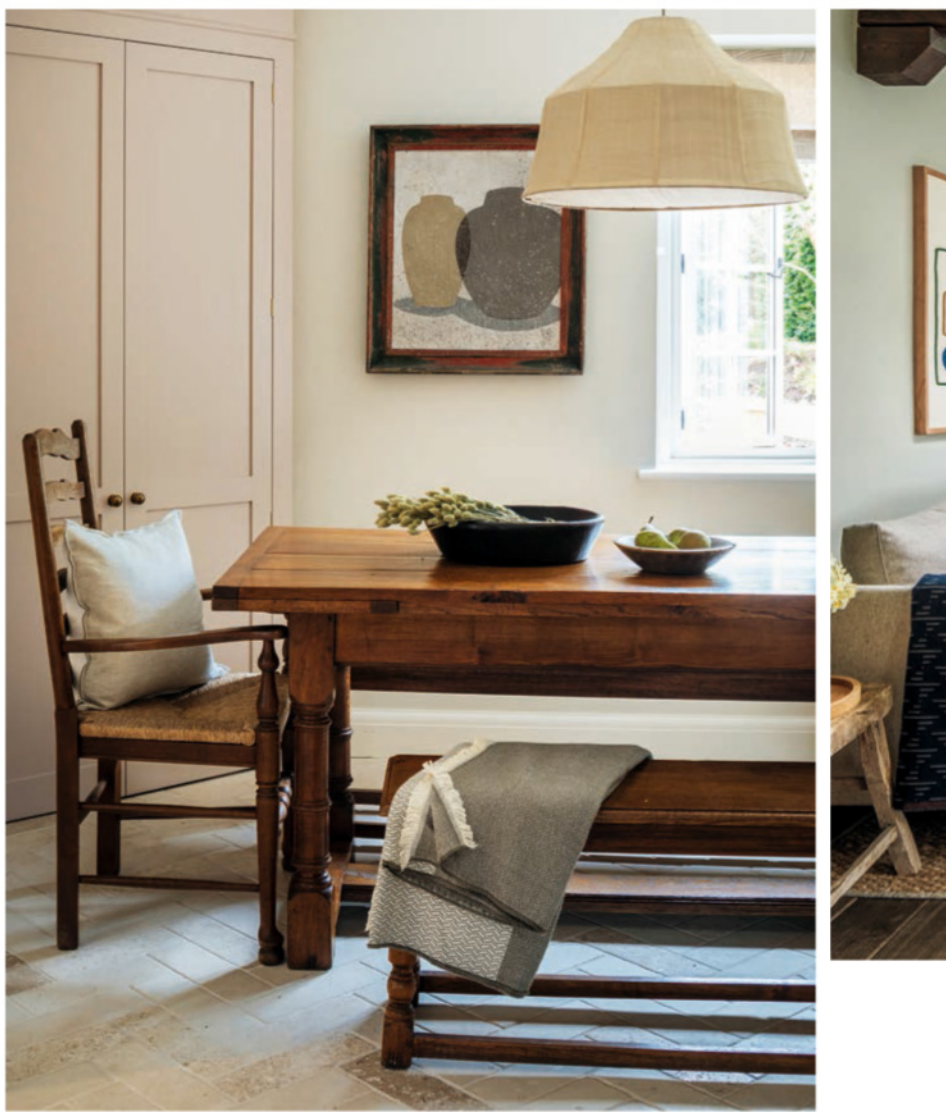
The key to reworking or updating a country house is to go back to basics. Begin by considering how this type of property will be used and by whom. “Striking the right balance between creating a home that functions for its current custodians and respecting its heritage is essential,” says Fentiman Design’s Ciara Ephson. “Approach a project with creativity and an open mind, asking what elements can be preserved and how they can be highlighted.”

Depending on a property’s age and condition, a renovation will likely take in an assessment of its structure and integrity, including electrics and plumbing. “Repairing the roof, addressing rotten timbers, adding insulation and replacing windows are all fundamental, even if the rewards are not visible,” says interior designer Emily Rennie. “But these are the building blocks towards creating a comfortable home for the future. Depending on the status of the property, you may also need planning consent, and there will be added restrictions if the house is listed.”

Bear in mind that reconfiguring a rural home to suit modern living sometimes involves considered refinement rather than a full restructure. “Many feature servants’ corridors at the rear, whose spaces can be rationalised to create practical utility and boot rooms,” says VSP Interiors’ Henriette von Stockhausen. “Don’t hold back from reconfiguring, even if that means moving the kitchen from rear to front for better light.” ▶

TOP RIGHT The simple shape of Willow & Hall’s Gastard sofa in blends with the lofty proportions of this Georgian home.

RIGHT An antique chair and a rustic dining table and bench create a pastoral feel in this understated scheme by Kitesgrove.



RIGHT In this extension, deVOL's Haberdasher's kitchen, finished in an earthy green, references the rural setting beyond, while deep veined marble adds a contemporary twist. **BELOW** Oak-topped alcove joinery, natural materials and a renovated fireplace add warmth and elegance to this scheme, created by Alice Leigh Design. **BELOW RIGHT** A built-in dresser featuring a modified antique sliding door is finished in a punchy blue-green for a modern take on country style in this kitchen designed by Sarah Peake.



Though the temptation may be to open up rooms, country homes often better suit a balance between open-plan living and more intimate spaces. “I believe there’s a place for low ceilings and small rooms,” White says. “Areas of retreat, compact spaces to contemplate, work and read, are beneficial. These don’t need to take up a big footprint when renovating. Consider leaving a small front room alone and not absorbing it into the main open-plan living. Or make space for a specially designed window seat with a curated view. I like to enhance these areas with elements of the existing building, designing in response to how the timber rafters work or repurposing an old piece of wood for the top of a window bench.”

ORGANIC APPROACH

Most country houses incorporate several layers of architectural work, resulting in a rich materiality, from exposed brickwork and beams to limewashed walls. These elements tend to have developed a patina over time and bring their warmth and tactility. “Natural materials and organic forms are very much in keeping with our current desire for slow living or wabi-sabi, which embraces the beauty of imperfection,” says White.

Finishes that complement these architectural features can be both appealing and practical. Warm touches such as wool rugs and thick curtains can soften existing hard-wearing flagstone floors for example. “Soft furnishings such as richly coloured, thick rugs, patterned cushions and plush sofas help to bring tactility,” says Lion. “These touches complement original elements seen in exposed beams, doors and window frames, panelling and staircases.”

Louise Wicksteed at Sims Hilditch suggests making the most of timber. “Boards look great on the floor, ceiling and even the walls of a country home,” she says. “A 50/50 wash of a neutral paint and water on a timber ceiling looks wonderful in a country interior, giving the wood a slightly aged feel that matures over time. The rustic qualities of sisal flooring also work well. A tight weave is best for a household with pets, meaning it will age slowly and charmingly with wear.”

Organic or natural materials, such as Bauwerk’s limewash and Graphenstone’s eco-friendly paint, are a good, sustainable option and so too is incorporating wool upholstery and toxin-free mattresses. “Country houses make an easy backdrop to antique and repurposed pieces, which also has a positive impact on our carbon footprint,” says Rennie. ▶

RIGHT Traditional panelling and built-in joinery make the most of the proportions of this rural dining room by K&H Design.

FAR RIGHT An antique bureau and a button back armchair strike an elegant note in this renovation by Susie Atkinson.

RIGHT A mid-century Swedish rug from Robert Stephenson sets the tone in this softly modern country scheme by Alice Leigh Design.

BELOW Rattan wall plates, an overscaled olive pot from Original House and generous oak double doors create the look of a Mediterranean finca in this entrance hall by Alice Leigh Design.

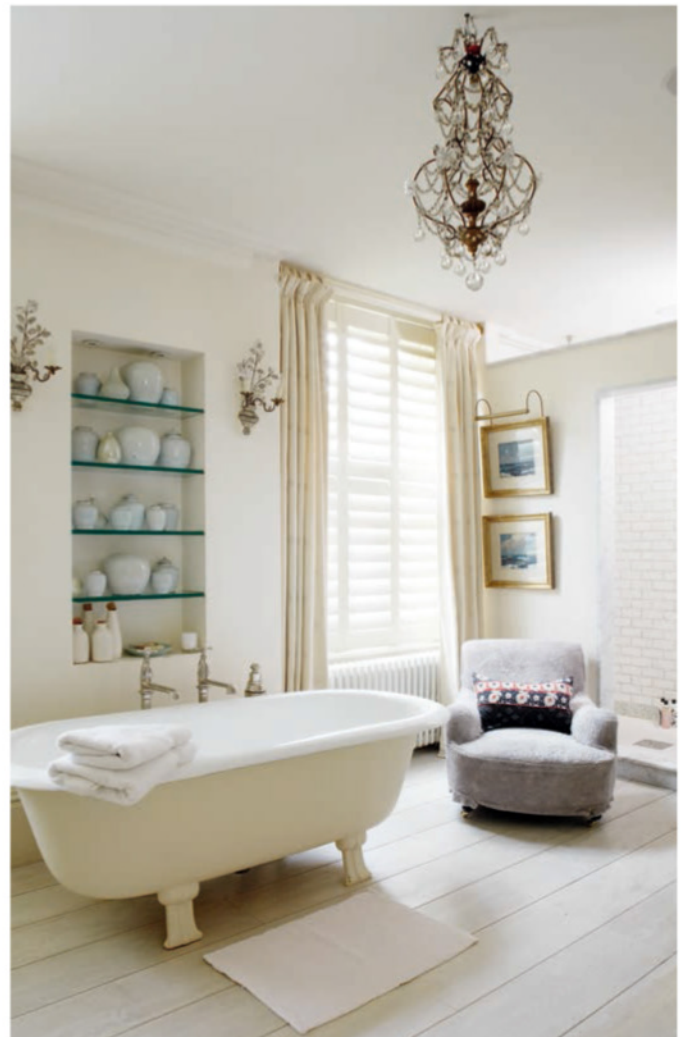




ABOVE Natural flooring and a sturdy wooden bed complement the original beams in this scheme by Max Rollitt.

LEFT An original staircase has been given a gently contemporary treatment by designer Susie Atkinson with a blue-and-white striped runner.

RIGHT Reworking the layout means that a well-proportioned bedroom can be turned over to a new bathroom. In this scheme by Susie Atkinson, a freestanding tub fits gracefully between two windows.



Ciara Ephson of Fentiman Design created a deep, padded window seat at one end of a Cotswolds kitchen so that the view could be enjoyed over morning coffee.



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OLD HOUSE, NEW STYLE

Many country houses can carry off deeply contemporary additions, such as minimalist, clean-lined extensions, because a well-considered architectural juxtaposition can be pleasing to the eye. “I enjoy the way that old and new dovetail,” says White. “An old building is like a palimpsest, a story that needs to be uncovered before the next chapter can be added. It can be interesting to repurpose elements such as roof beams and mouldings, either using them elsewhere in a fresh context or bringing them back to their original form.”

When it comes to a decorative approach, a combination of old and new can breathe fresh life into a rural home. “Mixing styles is key to creating a contemporary country interior that is both beautiful and functional,” says Wicksteed. “For example, the sharp lines of a metal coffee table paired with soft woollen or linen fabrics create a modern aesthetic while remaining comfortable and inviting. Likewise, a marble worktop on a kitchen

island looks very smart in a country-style kitchen painted in a natural shade.”

Buying from makers to gather heirloom pieces of the future is a good way of nodding to the past while embracing the present. “I look to modern craftspeople to punctuate existing furniture,” says interior designer Alice Leigh. “Makers such as Galvin Brothers and Alfred Newall produce pieces that work well next to vintage brown furniture. Blending modern art with traditional always works well too. For me, layers, texture, colour, materials and the mix of modern and old really make a country house come alive: above all, it’s about a sense of comfort.” ■

TOP RIGHT The classic lines of the Hampton hand-cast bed by the Cornish Bed Company complement original wooden beams and a door surround in a traditional cottage.

ABOVE RIGHT In this guest bedroom by Fentiman Design, Common Room’s delicate floral wallpaper creates a dynamic backdrop for an antique bureau and prints.





LEFT A home office by Alice Leigh Design is given an informal twist with wallpaper by Robert Kime, a Murano glass pendant and a Gubi Beetle chair paired with an antique desk.

RIGHT Botanical prints paired with autumnal tones reference the natural world in this scheme by Kitesgrove.

BELOW LEFT A window seat allows for the enjoyment of garden views as well as copious practical storage in this hard-working space by Alice Leigh Design.

BELOW RIGHT In a renovation by Sims Hilditch, off-whites and gentle neutrals combine to create a cosy reading corner.





COUNTRY HOME
Decorating
UPDATES

Intersperse antique pieces with fresh design ideas. Look for sprightly prints, artisan features and tactile surfaces for a sophisticated country aesthetic



1 Edmund footstool, large, Abstract Stripe, £474; Remy three-seater sofa, Natural Linen, £2,598, both Rowen & Wren 2 Wavy Edge terracotta lampshade, from £75, Straw London 3 Framed pressed flowers, from £195, JamJar Edit 4 Fez wallpaper, Lichen, £90 a metre, Guy Goodfellow Collection 5 Peta fabric, Comfrey, £40 a metre, Ian Sanderson 6 Arsenic paint, £54.50 for 2.5l Estate Emulsion, Farrow & Ball 7 Chichester full-height bookcase, as seen here with exterior Shingle and interior Shell colourways, £2,195, Neptune 8 Santa Croce tablecloth, from £195; Pentola cotton maché vase, from £25; Wensum dining chair, £395; Limited Edition Suzani throw, £295, all Birdie Fortescue 9 Egg Cup terracotta plant pots, set of three, £3.25, Scaramanga 10 Textured glass table lamp, £250, Cox & Cox 11 Grace cushion, Orla Saffron, £58, Neptune 12 Ginori 1735 Luke Edward Hall Amphora scented candle, £670, Amara 13 Antique two-over-three drawer mahogany chest of drawers, £795, similar available from ijlbrown 14 Issey velvet fringed cushion cover, £28, Oliver Bonas ■

FEATURE SUZANNA LE GROVE
PHOTOGRAPH (7) ROBERT SMITH

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The island is the centrepiece of this kitchen designed by Lolita Colenso Design with Spitalfields cabinetry by Plain English.



KITCHEN EVOLUTION

Whether looking for a complete redesign or a few clever updates, both functionality and style are key ingredients when creating a dream kitchen



Often the heart and the hardest working space of the home, a kitchen needs to work practically and be a pleasure to use aesthetically. Commissioning a replacement can solve functional problems and introduce flair, and kitchen designers can help analyse what works and what requires altering for specific

needs, from transforming functionality by changing the layout, lighting and technology to streamlining the design to enhance the feel of the space. Alternatively, a smaller transformation that makes a big difference may be possible simply with changes to areas such as surfaces, hardware and storage. Here we consider a range of different options, as our experts explain. ►



LEFT Bold colour and an integrated dog bed make for a characterful kitchen. *Haddon kitchen in English Red, from £15,000, Burbidge Kitchen Makers*

Green, from £16,000, Neptune
BELOW This Barnes of Ashburton kitchen feels glamorous yet practical with different storage styles, integrated appliances and opulent bar stools.

OPPOSITE A concealed walk-in pantry to the right of the integrated ovens keeps clutter to a minimum in this convivial kitchen. *Hartford kitchen in Avocado, from £25,000, Tom Howley*



A COMPLETE OVERHAUL

Take the step of redesigning and replacing a kitchen and the reward can be a dramatically improved layout and an appealing new look. With a new design it is possible to take the best of what is already in place and eliminate the worst – perhaps altering the floorplan to provide a better flow of movement, increase natural light, or enhance architectural features. At this point, it is much easier to revise the lighting scheme and replace or add appliances, too. “Our clients tell us that a redesigned new kitchen is literally life-changing,” says Nicolle Whyte, senior designer at Olive & Barr.

A redesign could include adding or extending an island or breakfast bar, repositioning key elements such as the sink or cooker, or partitioning off a small area to act as a pantry, prep room or similar. “Those back-up spaces are so popular,” says Louisa Eggleston, creative

director of Humphrey Munson. “They provide additional storage and take the pressure off the main room where everyone congregates.” She points out that older kitchens can sometimes be rather fussy, with numerous cupboards and drawers, and that a replacement provides the ideal opportunity to streamline the space. “Big storage in the form of one big cupboard with the drawers inside works well, and countertop cupboards are another good option.”

A new kitchen can also offer the opportunity to update appliances and technology. Whyte recommends boiling-water taps and built-in microwaves as a way to release countertop space, while Eggleston says that many clients are opting for a drawer that has a built-in charging point for electronics, and a second dishwasher, either placed in the main kitchen or a utility area. ▶



'Older kitchens can sometimes be rather fussy, a replacement can streamline the space'

LOUISA EGGLESTON, Humphrey Munson



TOP Pentabulous chandelier, £330, plus shades, Pooky
ABOVE Lotte wine storage sideboard, £1,825, Cox & Cox
LEFT Tre Mercati Little Venice Mono mixer tap in Old Copper, £169.99, Tap Warehouse



New England kitchen in Atlantic Green, from £9,711, Symphony Group



ABOVE A deep green paint offsets the marble surfaces and copper highlights in this kitchen by Devol.

RIGHT Create a mural-style tiled area. *Living Arbour Wisteria* wall tiles, £19.60 each, *Original Style*



ABOVE Update handles for a simple, impactful change. *Matt black lacquered Digbeth T-bar with backplate*, £169.20, *Armac Martin*

LEFT *South Cliff* tiles in *Cotton and Teal*, £97.68 a square metre, *Fired Earth*

SURFACE CHANGES

Changing wall finishes, whether paint, wallpaper or tiling, can be an easy way to breathe new life into a tired kitchen. “If you’re looking to experiment with bold colours and patterns, a kitchen splashback is the perfect space to make a distinctive design statement,” says Diane Hyde, marketing manager at tile company Craven Dunnill & Co. “What’s more, introducing texture onto the walls through tiles adds tactility and allows light to reflect off the glazes and bring vitality to a space.”

With an infinite number of paint colours available, decision-making can be difficult. Personal preference is important, but also consider how they will complement the room in general – a view through the window, for example – and provide continuity with the rest of the house, advises Louisa Eggleston of Humphrey Munson. “We typically use a minimum of three colours, and the age-old trick is to use a darker colour on the island to anchor it within the room. Always look at wall colours together with cabinetry colours, flooring and other elements – you can’t choose a colour in isolation.

“Finish is important, too: an emulsion paint will absorb the light while an eggshell will reflect it, so when you put a brass

'Introducing texture onto the walls through tiles adds tactility and allows light to reflect off the glazes and bring vitality to a space'

DIANE HYDE, Craven Dunnill & Co



LEFT A mirrored-glass splashback provides a softly reflective surface in this kitchen by Unfitted.

BELOW Sage Green square tiles, £33 each, Emma Collection, Marlborough Tiles

RIGHT FROM TOP
A new paint colour makes a big impact. Sapling, Toy Soldier and Delilah, £52 for 2.5l Lifestyle, Earthborn



handle on an eggshell-painted door it really pops. In a big room, a textured wallpaper or blind helps soften the harshness of the large expanse, but wallpaper can be challenging for obvious reasons, so it's best to choose a practical vinyl."

Worktops are another surface that can be changed relatively easily, creating a new look and feel in any kitchen, says Josie Medved, design manager at Symphony Group. "You can go from dark to light and vice versa, or matt to polished, or patterned to plain. You can have subtle worktops with a zing of colour for the splashback, or match the splashback to the worktop. The options are endless." When planning to replace a worktop, bear in mind that a plumber and an electrician will be required to disconnect and then reconnect the sink, taps and hob, which will have to be removed while the new worktops are fitted. While it is often possible to take out the worktop without disturbing the splashback, it is best to be prepared for accidents - replastering and retiling may be required. Finally, bear in mind that replacing a deep worktop with a thinner one would leave a gap below the existing splashback and therefore require replacing the splashback, too. ▶





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STORAGE UPDATES

“There are two key things to focus on when incorporating extra storage without a complete overhaul: creating more space, and making what’s existing more efficient,” explains Alice Hood, senior design consultant at Roundhouse. One way to create additional storage space is to commission built-in cupboards that either replicate or complement the existing kitchen; another is to add new or antique freestanding pieces such as dressers, cupboards, chests of drawers, butcher’s blocks, larders, trolleys or plate racks. Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors is an advocate of adding an island, or even two. “Whether it’s a chef’s table with deep drawers for cutlery and napkins and open shelves underneath for bowls and other pretty items, or a full island with dishwasher and fridges, it can be customised to a person’s specific needs. Adding an island not only creates more storage space but also something visually interesting, especially if it looks like an antique.”

If removing and replacing wall cabinets is an option, or if there is a gap into which they can be fitted, Both Whyte and Hood recommend cabinets that stretch right to the ceiling, with higher spaces used for long-term storage, perhaps accessed via a ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Utensil rail kit, £36.35, Rothley; Natural Elements eco-friendly canister, £7.99, Kitchen Craft; Arbroath jute basket, from £22, Neptune; Fitted larder cupboard, £2,315, The White Kitchen Company



ABOVE Every bit of space was needed for storage in this kitchen, so Roundhouse Design developed an existing spice-rack design to create a tall, shallow rack that serves the nearby hob and is also a feature in the room.

LEFT In this scheme by Pippa Paton, a vintage butcher’s block has been raised on steel legs and used to extend the length of worktop and add character.



‘Adding an island not only creates more storage but also something visually interesting, especially if it looks like an antique’

HENRIETTE VON STOCKHAUSEN, VSP Interiors

ladder rail. “Replacing shallow wall cabinets for a slightly deeper version to gain extra volume can also make a real difference,” adds Hood. Alternatively, rarely used items could be moved out of the kitchen entirely. “A dresser in the dining room, particularly where it is open-plan to the kitchen, provides a lot of kitchen storage,” says Whyte.

In terms of making existing storage more efficient, options include extra shelves, racks, caddies and a range of manufacturers’ devices for awkward corners. Whyte is a big fan of seeking out space for small details. “Spice racks stop small things being lost at the back of a cupboard and can be used for so many types of container,” she says. “A good place to add them is inside the door of the under-sink cupboard. Cutlery inserts are the same – they hold all kinds of things and can be a huge help with organisation.” ■

ABOVE In this kitchen by Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors and bespoke specialist Artichoke, a professional stove with induction hobs is set into an arched alcove, and a pair of hefty wooden preparation tables sit below four-arm chandeliers from Circa Lighting.

RIGHT A Shaker-style kitchen by Naked Kitchens includes dramatic wall lights and a boiling water tap in antique brass.

SMALL CHANGE, BIG DIFFERENCE



Altering just a few key elements of a kitchen can make a dramatic impact, says Kim Whinnett, director at Barnes of Ashburton.

Lighting

“It is relatively hassle-free to change kitchen lighting, though redecorating will be necessary if you move fixtures around or add new fixtures where there weren’t any before. Have the right electrician and finisher in place, and you will never know the alterations have happened. Spotlights in particular tend to age, so updating them will make a big difference, while adding low-hanging pendants over a breakfast bar is another way of breathing new life into the scheme.”

Cabinet Furniture

“The easiest way to change cabinet furniture is to choose like-for-like examples; if you swap knobs for handles, or vice versa, the holes will be in the wrong place. In this case, choosing a replacement with a backplate can be helpful, but it is better to bite the bullet and fill the holes in the doors or drawers, sand them, and touch in with matching paint – providing a blank canvas to start over. A brass finish is very popular at present and looks marvellous against deep colours, while chrome has a more modern look.”

Taps

“Changing an old tap is straightforward, even if you want to swap a single-hole mixer tap for a two-hole bridge. All stone masons and carpenters have the tools to drill another hole in the worktop, while if you have a spare tap hole you can use it for a soap dispenser, boiling-water tap or other companion. In terms of finishes, I feel a pewter tap works really well with aged-brass cabinet handles.”

Switches

“Bulky white plastic switch covers give away a kitchen’s age, and changing them is simple for an electrician. While it is possible to match new metal switch plates with other elements within the room, consider where you are buying from and whether, for example, that company’s ‘aged brass’ will match the same finish from another company – they can vary dramatically.”

FEATURE: KATHERINE SORRELL; PHOTOGRAPHS: P90-P91 ALEX MAGUIRE; P92 BURRIDGE; © JON DAY; (BARNES OF ASHBURTON) © PAUL RYAN-GOFF; P94 (FIRE EARTH) © JONATHAN WARNER; P94-P95 (UNFITTED) © GEORGIA DE LOTZ; PHOTOGRAPHY: P96 (PIPPA FATON) © PAUL CRAIG; P97 (VSP) © PAUL MASSEY; (ROUNDHOUSE) © MARY WADSWORTH





CALLAGHANS OF SHREWSBURY

THE FRENCH AFFAIR

How paintings by the 20th-century French artist Claude Venard have maintained their enduring appeal, on both sides of the Atlantic



ABOVE *Nature Morte*, oil on canvas, 46cm x 56cm, signed

As the celebrated artist Salvador Dali once said, “a true artist is not one who is inspired but one who inspires others.” This, of course, is the great joy of art, as Stella Callaghan, (who along with her husband Daniel owns the Fine Art gallery Callaghans of Shrewsbury) can attest. “We always recommend our clients choose works they fall in love with and feel inspired by,” she says. And for the Callaghans – who know a thing or two about art having garnered themselves a reputation across the world during their gallery’s 35-year history – there is one artist in

particular whose pieces stand the test of time, and that is Claude Venard.

“We purchased our first painting by Claude Venard about 30 years ago for £125, and today his pieces are selling for between £8,000 and £80,000,” Daniel explains. Over the years their popularity has grown, and now his pieces attract buyers from all over the world. As Dan says, “We have sold Venard’s works to everyone from private collectors buying for their beach cottage in Nantucket, to large corporate financial institutions in London. His allure really is universal.” In fact, the French artist has gone on to prove a

particular favourite of Stella and Daniel's, with the gallery now specialising in his works.

The artist was born in 1913 and worked until his death in 1999, by which time he had become highly celebrated, with numerous exhibitions around the world. At the age of 17, he began to take evening classes in painting at the Ecole des Arts Appliqués. However, after six years of study, his finances ran out, so he had to spend most of 1936 working as a restorer at the Louvre Museum. But, it turns out, this experience was to prove invaluable, as it enabled the young artist to fill in the gaps still left in his artistic education. He later joined the army and by the end of World War II, was finally able to focus all his energies on his work. He remained faithful to his post-Cubist style, and as his career progressed, so did his technique as he continued to experiment with thick impasto and vibrant colours.

This can be seen in his painting *Spring Bouquet* (below right), where he used his signature style of applying paint using a palette knife, adding a sense of passion and emotion to the painting. "One can almost imagine Venard standing at his easel applying the oil to the canvas with such vigour and energy, moving the impasto with, not only his brush, but also his palette knife and mixing in cinders and sawdust from his studio floor to enhance the depth of texture," Stella explains. "His unique style is often enhanced by his technique of tipping his brush upside down to scrape the paint back to emphasise the outlines of the petals and leaves."

It was not only the style in which he painted that caught people's attention, but the colours he chose, as seen in *Nature Morte* (opposite), where he used the crudest of colours to maximum effect. The green and red make for such a striking contrast, particularly against the hard black lines and shading, adding to the sombre feel of the work. This use of bold colour can also be seen in *Abstract Nude* (above right), where blue, green, pink and red are found in stark contrast, exaggerating further the strong cubist influence in the piece.

With Venard's works found everywhere from Tate Modern, London to the Whitney Museum, New York and the Centre Pompidou, Paris, as well as other galleries across the globe, it is a style that clearly captures the imagination of collectors everywhere. "Art is an investment not just in the emotional sense but in monetary terms as well," Stella explains. "A work by an artist like Venard is far more enjoyable and attractive than a stocks and shares certificate filed away in a filing cabinet." ■

ABOVE RIGHT *Abstract Nude*, oil on canvas, 99cm x 99cm, signed
RIGHT *Spring Bouquet*, oil on canvas, 66cm x 53cm, signed



In the home of interior designer Georgina Cave, a simple box-framed extension with a pergola contrasts with original Victorian architecture while complementing the surrounding garden.

A NEW VIEW

Whether a contemporary design or a more traditional structure, a well-planned garden room has the potential to add light, space and a sense of connection to the home





This double-height rural extension features an exposed timber pitched roof and traditional panelled glass panes, complemented by a classic Shaker-style dining furniture from Neptune.



Glass-fronted cabinetry by deVOL and an island inspired by an English haberdashery fit seamlessly into this classic orangery extension. Prices from £50,000, deVOL

From traditional conservatories and orangeries to standalone outdoor structures and contemporary extensions, there are myriad options when it comes to bringing nature and light to the home. All of them involve considered use of glass to optimise views, whether steel-framed wall panels, floor-to-ceiling doors, classic roof lanterns or minimalist frameless designs. The key is to choose an addition that complements existing architecture while being perfectly suited to its intended use. Kitchen-diners, home offices, playrooms and living areas all sit well in spaces like these, often becoming a vital additional part of the home as well as integrating the garden in creative ways.

STYLES TO SUIT

It is worthwhile understanding the subtle differences between garden room styles when considering a new space and its intended use.

CONSERVATORIES Typically, a conservatory is designed to allow for maximum light. As a result, around 80 per cent of the structure tends to be glazed. A standout feature is a fully glazed roof, designed and pitched to channel light.

ORANGERIES Orangeries usually feature less glass, combining solid and glazed wall sections. Their design often incorporates vertical pilasters supporting an entablature – a horizontal structure that lies above. A glazed roof lantern is built into a flat roof which adds both height and space and allows natural light to flood the room below.

“Orangeries that are truest to their traditional form tend to be created from a combination of bricks, timber, stone and masonry,” says Mervyn Montgomery of Hampton Conservatories. “In contrast, the pinnacle of Victorian conservatory production was Crystal Palace. It was the location of the great exhibition of 1851 and its success fuelled the country’s love of conservatories, because homeowners looked to replicate its space and light. Even today, a conservatory is viewed as more of an ‘addition’ than ‘extension’, with its high-pitched roof and Victorian features.”

Classic garden rooms, including orangeries, work well as separate structures too, often used for a specific purpose such as a home office or an additional, non-essential living space and a place for wintering delicate plants and shrubs.

GLASS EXTENSIONS Contemporary glass extensions usually feature one or more walls made entirely of glass, often incorporating roof lights. These can work well in both a modern or period setting. “Often a very simple glass box proves to be the planners



preferred choice for a listed or period property as the original fabric of the building can be seen and left largely undisturbed,” advises interior designer Georgina Cave. “A glass box extension can work well if the design is kept clean and minimal with the approach being sympathetic to the original structure.”

GARDEN ROOMS Many garden rooms fall under permitted development as long as they meet the relevant limits and conditions – aligning with the sides of a house and not extending beyond its width. The footprint shouldn’t be larger than 50 per cent of the land area around the existing property, nor the height be taller than its roof. However, always check with the local planning department before making changes. ▶

ABOVE In this design by Hám Interiors, a flat-roofed brick and steel frame extension blends effortlessly with the garden terrace, thanks to an olive-grey finish and aged, mellow brickwork.



FORWARD THINKING

Like any new addition, garden rooms carry their own set of challenges. Conservatories with fully glazed sides often have a reputation for being too draughty in winter and overly warm in summer. “In fact, with improvements in glazing technology, that no longer needs to be the case,” says Montgomery. “Solar reflective glass, triple glazing, automated ventilation and underfloor heating are popular choices to help a conservatory regulate its temperature year-round.” The geography of a home will also make a difference. “If the extension is to be added onto a south-facing facade, an orangery gives the opportunity to create some additional shade,” he continues. “This is because it tends to feature a lantern set atop a flat roof. In a bespoke extension, the width of this border can be altered. Compared to a fully glazed roof, this can create a cosier space.”

It is also the case that urban and rural homes demand different approaches. “Older country houses often carry more timber within them, making full oak roofing internally a viable option,” says Oakwrights’ George Allen. “An oak-framed extension can add wow factor – a focal point within the home that can be the centre point for relaxing or a natural hub. By contrast, city homes often give off a more modern approach to building, perhaps with more masonry and plasterboard on show.” Bear in mind too that while country homes tend to be less overlooked, urban homes sit in close proximity to one another, making sight lines and privacy retention an essential consideration.

Quality is key. “Thankfully the uPVC conservatories of the 1980s, which yellowed with age, have largely been replaced with high-quality timber which stands the test of time,” says interior designer Sidika Owen. “I enjoy garden rooms that are quite simple and industrial in style, with Crittal glazing in either off-black or bronze.”



ABOVE LEFT A simple steel-framed extension sits crisply against historic Bath stone in this pared-back rustic-style kitchen designed by Sebastian Cox for deVOL.

LEFT Exposed brickwork and generous steel-framed windows add a softly industrial touch to this extension by Cave Interiors, which also includes a light well.

‘These rooms lend themselves to indoor plants and foliage to enhance a feeling of calm’

KATE COX, HÁM INTERIORS



TIMELESS APPEAL

Making the most of a garden room depends on year-round functionality. It will need to incorporate adequate ventilation in the form of opening side windows and roof vents for the summer months. In the winter, underfloor and trench heating are both efficient and space-saving options, allowing maximum use of wall space. “They make beautiful plant rooms too, but adequate air movement must be achieved to prolong the life of double-glazed units and eliminate build-up of moisture fungus,” advises Vale Garden Houses’ Lisa Morton.

As an added layer of cosiness, consider window treatments. “For a contemporary glass extension, automated roller blinds recessed into the ceiling add background and depth in the darker months, while protecting against the sun’s rays in the summer,” says

interior designer Claudia Ludwig. “For a traditional glass conservatory project, I recently installed linen Roman blinds around the three glazed sides to make the space, which serves as a play and TV room for the children, feel cosier and less overlooked.”

Rooms like these are suited to multiple use. “Their benefit is natural light,” says Neptune’s Becky Smith. “So as well as housing the ubiquitous kitchen-diner, they are ideal for painting, crafting or designing.” They also provide a good opportunity to reconnect with nature. “These rooms lend themselves to indoor plants and foliage to enhance a feeling of calm,” says Hám Interiors’ Kate Cox. “Comfortable seating to facilitate getting lost in a book, an occasional table in a sunny spot to read the Sunday papers, or even a rattan bar cart for an evening cocktail.” ▶

ABOVE LEFT Chic marble chequerboard flooring, elegant ceramic lighting and clever fitted joinery by Bird & Bone Interiors make for a classic kitchen in this extension by Good Bones London.

ABOVE RIGHT In this pretty garden room decorated by Pia Design, a mural features cascading foliage and a tonal blue-green colour palette.

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NATURAL TOUCH

“While floor-to-ceiling doors or windows allow for an easy flow between inside and out, they do restrict where you can place furniture,” says Claudia Ludwig. “If you need wall space to hang art, or extra room for kitchen cupboards or a window seat, consider limiting full glazing to one or two walls rather than a wraparound glass extension.”

In terms of colour choices, nature provides plenty of inspiration. “Earthy tones are perfect for subtly tinting whites elsewhere, while greens work to anchor the space,” says Benjamin Moore’s Helen Shaw. “Keen horticulturalists may want to take their cue from the planted garden, using subtle hints of colour from flowering blooms.”

While these spaces tend to be light-filled in the daytime, it is important to consider how to light them

at night and in the winter months to avoid them becoming dark and unwelcoming. “Floor lighting can be helpful for atmospheric light, while a combination of table and wall lamps are also straightforward solutions,” says interior designer Pia Pelkonen. “Consider adding LEDs within the joinery for ambience. Overhead lighting is also important but can be tricky to install – in some cases it’s possible to suspend pendant lights over a glazed or vaulted roof using metal rods to conceal the cables and support the light hanging.”

Correctly balanced in both style and proportion, garden rooms add impact and functionality to the home. Planned carefully, their upward dimensions, space and light enhance a sense of well-being and connected living – a valuable component in every home. ▶

ABOVE LEFT Eau de Nil colour treatment throughout, furniture by Neptune and a rustic tiled floor add pastoral appeal to this pretty garden room extension.

ABOVE RIGHT In this kitchen extension by K Space Interiors, a frameless picture window is complemented by a concealed storage window seat for a marriage of form and function.

GARDEN ROOMS

Find the right garden room in which to enjoy working, relaxing, and growing plants, too



HARTLEY BOTANIC The Victorian Grand Lodge is reminiscent of grand glasshouses of a bygone era. Its size makes it perfect for palms and tropical plants as well as functioning as an additional living room. £POA, hartley-botanic.co.uk



OAKWRIGHTS This garden annexe features braced oak posts and beams containing a contemporary indoor-outdoor living space. Similar oak frame garden building, £43,000, oakwrights.co.uk



ALITEX
A greenhouse such as this elegant deeply pitched design by Alitex is a perfect spot for wintering plants as well as for working or relaxing in during temperate weather. From £18,028, alitex.co.uk



VALE GARDEN HOUSES A faceted garden room with Tuscan pilasters and deep entablature by Vale Garden Houses brings a classical touch to a garden setting. Starting from £45,000, plus VAT. valegardenhouses.co.uk



DAVID SALISBURY A bespoke orangery can frame a period home in a new way, such as this design which connects an old mill house to the garden. From £40,000 excluding building works, davidsalisbury.com



HAMPTON CONSERVATORIES
This orangery connects two wings of a period home and features bi-folding doors which open the space up to the terrace and outside pool. From £60,000, hamptonconservatories.co.uk

FEATURE: EMMA J. PAGE; PHOTOGRAPHS (CAVE INTERIORS): HELEN CATHCART; (K SPACE INTERIORS): KASIA FISZER; (HARTLEY BOTANIC): MARK SPENCER; (OAKWRIGHTS): ALICE DEVEREUX; (HAMPTON CONSERVATORIES): LAWRENSON & GREBBY PHOTOGRAPHY LLP



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QUINTESSENTIALLY

Inspiration for seasonal pastimes and making the most of life at home starts here ►

FLORAL SETTING

Lilies of the valley are traditionally viewed as one of nature's harbingers of spring and so make an elegant, uplifting tableware motif for seasonal gatherings. Each piece of dinnerware in Dior's Lily of the Valley range is crafted from Limoges porcelain, investing it with a classic quality. The collection encompasses varying surface designs, from busy floral details to simple sprigs and decorative borders, and an accompanying raffia range, all of which can be mixed and matched to suit relaxed gatherings as well as more formal settings.

Lily of the Valley collection side plate £70; dinner plate £100; decorative plate £140, all Dior





What to do in MARCH

Welcome in the first signs of spring with a flourish of fresh flavours, delicate blooms, and pretty seasonal updates



UPDATE... *the kitchen with a new paint colour*

As the working heart of the home, a kitchen is subject to a lot of wear and tear throughout the year with knocks, scuffs, greasy marks and stains that often come into sharp view as the spring light shines in. A simple refresh of the wall colour can provide a new lease of life in a matter of hours. Green has appeal in all its guises and works well with a variety of finishes including wood, copper and stainless steel.

Opting for green with a grey tone introduces elegant sophistication, heritage charm and a freshness reminiscent of spring greens growing in a vegetable patch. Take inspiration from a view over a garden, the earthy and leafy elements of the English countryside, or even the verdant hues in a favourite still life painting of fruit or vegetables.

Wall, Dartmouth Green, £49.50 for 2.5l
Matt Emulsion, Fired Earth ▶

EAT... *tropical fruits*

March is a good time to enjoy the sweet taste combination of pineapple, coconut and mango. While not in season in this country, they make exceptional ingredients to use for a treat at the end of winter and before the fresh produce of spring is available.

Be inspired by warm, faraway places and create dishes with an exotic twist. Roast a pineapple to bring out the sweetness in the fruit and combine with mango and coconut for a dessert that is elaborate in flavour and a refreshingly healthier and lighter alternative to the steamed puddings and crumbles of winter. Indulge guests with this simple but sensational recipe (*opposite*) from *The Shortcut Cook All in One: One-Dish Recipes and Ingenious Hacks to Make Faster and Tastier Food* by Rosie Reynolds.



Sticky Roast Pineapple with Coconut Mango Soft Serve

Serves 4–6
Prep 15 minutes
Cook 15 minutes

THE SHORTCUT

I often use frozen cubes of pineapple or tinned pineapple in juice, drained. Roasting intensifies the natural sweetness of the fruit and using tinned or frozen means you do not have to prep the pineapple.

25g butter
500g frozen pineapple

chunks, defrosted, or a small pineapple, peeled and chopped
6 tablespoons light soft brown sugar
pinch of ground cinnamon
pinch cayenne pepper
grated zest and juice of 2 limes
2 tablespoons water

For the soft serve ice cream:
500g frozen mango
350g plain coconut yoghurt
2 tablespoons maple syrup
toasted coconut flakes, to serve (optional)

I love the combination of hot and cold. This sticky roasted pineapple and super-fast soft-serve ice cream is so easy to whip up but still manages to feel considered. Aside from the taste the best thing about it is its universal appeal. Young babies, children and adults love this one and I have been known to add a little drop or two of dark rum into the syrupy juices for the grown-ups.

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan /gas 4. Heat the butter in a 30cm x 20cm x 5cm baking tin in the oven for 3 minutes until melted. Add the pineapple chunks, sugar, spices, lime juice and water. Stir, then cook in the oven for 15 minutes, stirring halfway through and spooning the juices over the pineapple.

Meanwhile, to make the soft-serve ice cream, tip the mango into a food processor and pulse a couple of times to chop. Add the yoghurt and maple syrup and whizz until it is smooth, thick and creamy.

Divide the pineapple among plates, top with a scoop of soft-serve and scatter over the lime zest and toasted coconut flakes, if using. Drizzle over any sticky juices from the pineapple and serve.

TIP: You can make soft-serve ice cream with any frozen fruit and yoghurt so play around and find your favourites. You can also make it with Greek-style yoghurt or your favourite vegan yoghurt if you are not into the coconut variety. Freezes well for up to a month.



FURTHER READING
The Shortcut Cook All in One by Rosie Reynolds (Hardie Grant, £16.99), photography by Clare Winfield



GROW... *salad and herbs*

Salad leaves and herbs are ready for picking in late spring all the way through to summer. Start to sow seeds indoors if there is any risk of frost and plant them out later, continuing with further sowing at regular intervals over the coming weeks, and reap the results with a continuous bounty all the way through to when the warmer weather calls for light al fresco lunches made using leaves picked fresh from the garden. Favourite lettuce varieties such as iceberg, lollo bionda, rocket, endive, as well as radishes, sorrel, chives and parsley, are all worth filling patio pots and vegetable beds with. Remember to label each row carefully as the sowing continues, to avoid any mixing up of varieties.

Slate plant markers, £12 for a set of six, Garden Trading ▶

GATHER... *spring flowers*

Arrange favourite blooms in small glass vessels, bud vases, vintage-style medicine bottles and even jam jars. Cheery yellow daffodils, scented paper white narcissi and pussy willow branches are all easy to source in spring and ideal for adding a joyful and uplifting feel in an instant. Alternatively, hunt out some delicate fritillaria with elegant bell-shaped flowers in soft purple. Create a charming display to place on a window sill where the light can shine through, on a table as a centrepiece, or to add a fresh look to a bedroom. Why not finish with a length of ribbon and gift tag and give as presents too?

Aqua glass bottles, £30 (for three), Jam Jar Edit



MAKE... *uplifting table linen*

For a tablescape with a playful twist on formal sophistication, use a traditional ticking stripe in assorted colourways enhanced with scalloped edging or gathered frill. Alternatively, ditsy florals and gingham checks in sorbet shades and pretty pastels will add a dash of new season style in an instant. Co-ordinate a tablecloth with placemats, napkins and perhaps even coasters. All it takes is a metre or two of fabric, some simple sewing skills and a little creative ingenuity to make springtime suppers that little bit more special. ■

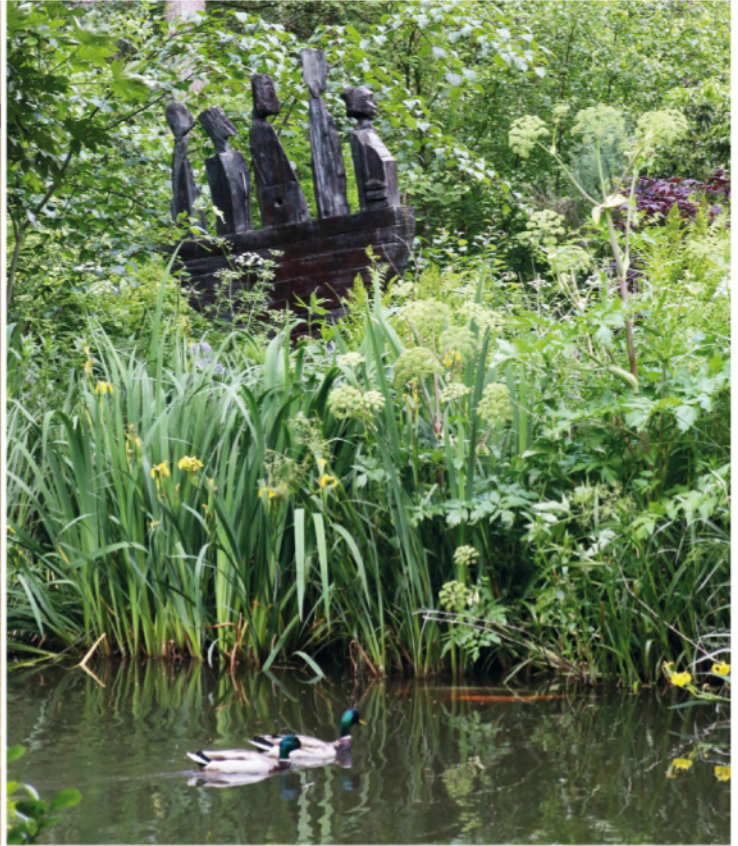
Ticking Stripe 1 fabric in Cobalt, Oatmeal, Coast, and Mixed, £32.50 a metre, Ian Mankin

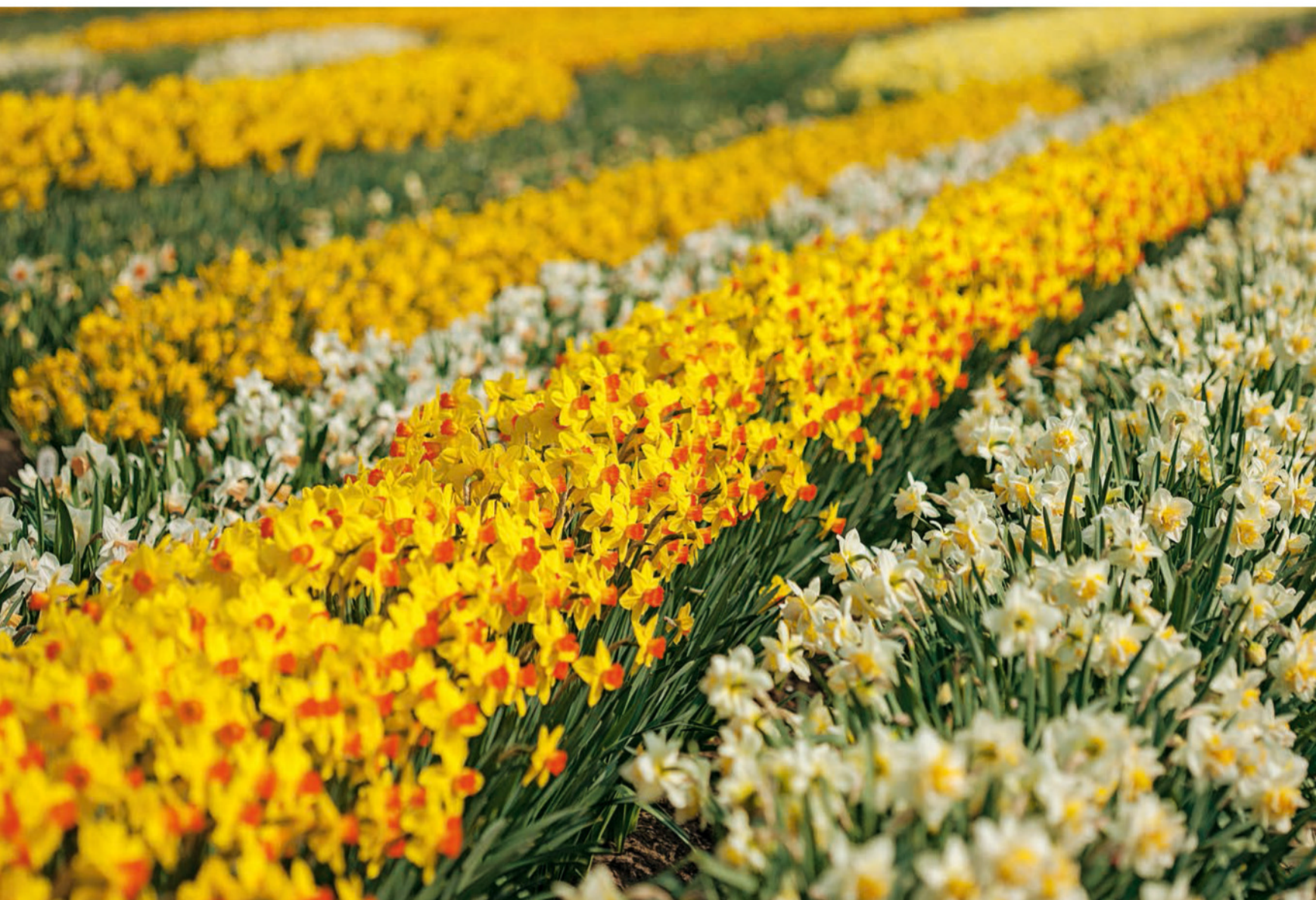
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Rays of sunshine

Bursting forth as the days start to grow longer, narcissi herald spring with their trumpet fanfare from winter's end to glorious May

Guaranteed to lift the spirits of all who gaze upon them, daffodils – or narcissi, to give them their botanical name – are a rare jewel of colour and optimism when they first appear in the dank, dark days of early February. An early floral burst when most garden plants are still firmly asleep, they have been captivating gardeners, artists, writers and of course, poets for centuries.

With over 26,000 cultivated varieties available, and regular new discoveries, it is easy to see why these blooms are so dearly cherished. Simply put, there is a variety for everyone, ranging from a delicate

multi-headed narcissus and solo, stately golden trumpets to charming dwarf varieties perfect for pots and enthralling blowsy double-petalled forms in several shades. Blooming proudly from early February to the end of May, they come in a range of sizes and demand very little nurturing.

“Daffodils can be grown anywhere,” says Charlotte Daubney of Taylors Bulbs. “They are excellent naturalisers, so are perfect for meadows or paddocks, but also a fantastic option for small spaces and container gardens. Daffodils don’t just give you beautiful displays for the year after planting. They ▶

ABOVE Bringing much-needed colour and cheer to the slumbering early spring garden, narcissi put on a spectacular show and boast a surprising diversity beyond the famous yellow trumpets.



'It's that first promise of spring as nature reminds us of all its glory from these tiny, dainty drops of pure joy'

ABOVE A spectacular potted display at Cliveden in Buckinghamshire.

nationaltrust.org.uk

OPPOSITE TOP Wild daffodil meadows Gwen and Vera's Fields can be found in Gloucestershire's 'Golden Triangle'.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM Graceful and early flowering, the delicate *Narcissus cyclamineus* blooms from March to April. *Narcissus cyclamineus*, £9.99 for 9cm pot, *Crocus*

continue to grow year on year and multiply, some varieties more than others, so they really are worth their investment."

GOLDEN HERITAGE

As a long-lived flower bulb, the narcissus possesses a rich history. Sharing the name of the beautiful youth in Greek mythology who was besotted by his reflection, the downfacing bloom is said to echo Narcissus bending over to admire his image in a still pool.

Native to Spain and Portugal, the flower bulbs were brought over to England by the Romans, to plant in memory of loved ones or fallen comrades. Today, established drifts of wild narcissi can be found brightening verges, hedgerows and wooded glades. Found most frequently to the west of the country, concentrations worth seeking out include the

Gloucestershire 'Golden Triangle' between Newent, Kempley and Dymock.

Cornwall is another region renowned for its wild narcissus displays. Here the arrival of the railways in the 19th century in addition to the mild climate saw a boom in cut-flower farming, a profitable sideline for many farmers who could send their produce to the London markets for a tidy sum. The industry declined in World War II, when the fields were required for food crops, but clumps of discarded narcissi can still be glimpsed among hedgerows.

FLOWERS FOR ALL

All gardens, even those of novice gardeners, can enjoy the welcome sight of cheery narcissi, so these floral gems are a wonderful choice. "There's a daffodil for flowering each month from December to May," says Jane Hughes, horticultural advisor at Suttons. "All ▶



*Six species of easy-to-grow,
low-maintenance narcissi*



BOLD CLASSIC

Narcissus 'Dutch Master' has gold blooms with open trumpets and overlapping perianth petals. Ideal for pots and borders, it grows to 45cm tall and flowers in March. *Narcissus* 'Dutch Master', £7.90 for 10 bulbs, Bloms Bulbs

INTRICATE DOUBLE

Flamboyant and showy, *Narcissus* 'Tahiti' has a double layer of golden petals interspersed with smaller orange-red ruffles. It grows to 40cm tall, prefers sun or semi-shade and flowers in April. *Narcissus* 'Tahiti', £4.99 for 15 bulbs, J Parker's



STARRY MINIATURE

The bright yellow ribbon-like petals make this dwarf variety perfect for pots, rockeries and as a cut flower. While just 20cm tall, it radiates cheer throughout March and April. *Narcissus* 'Rip Van Winkle', £12.99 for 25 bulbs, Thompson & Morgan

SIMPLE ELEGANCE

A heritage variety that shows off a dark orange rimmed cup against pure white petals. Tall and delicate, these fragrant blooms are ideal planted under trees or in a lawn. Late flowering from April and May. *Narcissus* 'Pheasant's Eye', £3.99 for 10 bulbs, Webbs Direct



ALTERNATIVE COLOUR

Distinctly different, these glamorous trumpet daffodils have a soft apricot-pink cup set against white petals. Flowering March to April, their 40cm long straight stems make them ideal for cutting. *Narcissus* 'Pink Pride', £9.99 for 10 bulbs, Suttons

ELEGANT NEWCOMER

This *Narcissus cyclamineus* has a distinctive long trumpet and swept-back soft lemon petals. Flowering in March, it grows to 35cm high and forms neat upright clumps. *Narcissus* 'Lemon Silk', £7.50 for 3 bulbs, Scamp's Daffodils





‘There is so much variety within the family. Besides the 20 or so wild species, there are several hundred hybrids and selected forms’

ABOVE LEFT The unspoilt island of St Agnes in the Isles of Scilly has a patchwork of flower fields ripe for picking.

ABOVE RIGHT The reflexed petals and orange trumpet of *Narcissus* ‘Jetfire’ give this dwarf spring gem a distinctive charm.

narcissi are highly scented and classified according to the size and shape of the flower trumpets and petal cups. The principal colours are white, yellow, red, orange and salmon-pink, with stem height varying from 10cm-high dwarf cultivars to 50cm-tall varieties.”

Plan and plant flower bulbs carefully to enjoy continual colour for months on end, as Dan Dunbar, bulb expert at Hillier suggests. “I love to choose a range of bulbs to create a successive display throughout the whole season. These bulbs are often happy to pop up in unlikely locations around the garden, such as in clumps in rockeries, containers, around the borders and even in the lawn.”

Currently, alternatives to the well-known large trumpet-style blooms are captivating specialist growers and bulb triallists alike. “We particularly like the smaller and less blowsy forms such as ‘Elka’ and

‘Snipe’,” says Chris Ireland-Jones, owner of Avon Bulbs. “These are paler and much smaller, with a nice distinction between trumpet and perianth (the petals). In keeping with the smaller gardens of today, they are better able to withstand a lot of wind, and when they go over, there is not a lot of foliage to distract the eye for weeks afterward.”

Christine Skelmersdale, lecturer and director of Broadleigh Bulbs, has a similar preference. “Some of the newer multi-headed varieties are my choice for containers. Not only do they pack a powerful floral punch, they are well-balanced with a perfect proportion of leaves to flowers. *Narcissus* ‘Golden Sailboat’ will fill a pot with colour for weeks. Another excellent one for containers is the white *Narcissus* ‘Toto’ which combines so well with grape hyacinths and tulips.” ▶

Scented narcissi are the traditional flower crop of the Isles of Scilly and are available by post from Scilly Flowers, from October to April, at £22 for 50 stems.





ABOVE LEFT Mixing different varieties and sizes of narcissus is the perfect way to appreciate the diversity on offer. These blooms were grown by florist and flower grower Carole Patilla of Tuckshop Flowers.

ABOVE RIGHT Indulgently ruffled in glorious shades of white and coral, there is nothing understated about these double narcissus. Standing proud at 90cm they also have a delightful perfume. *Narcissus 'My Story'*, £11.95 for 10 bulbs, Sarah Raven

ENDURING GARDEN GEMS

Narcissus bulbs need little attention, but experts have a few tips to encourage them to thrive. “September is the peak time for planting daffodils,” says Kris Collins, head of horticulture at Thompson & Morgan. “When you only have a handful of bulbs to set out, a tubular bulb planter makes quick work of creating small holes for single bulbs. But if you’re planting in larger groups, it’s more efficient to dig out a wide planting hole or trench to around 20cm deep. Place the bulbs 8-12cm apart and then backfill the hole with soil to cover them. On heavy soil, add a layer of grit before placing bulbs.”

A swathe of nodding narcissi growing amidst long grass is an enchanting sight, and can easily be achieved, says Abigail Willis at Ashridge Nurseries. “For a naturalistic effect, throw a handful of bulbs in the air and plant where they fall, allowing a bulb’s width between each bulb. Creamy-yellow ‘Ice Follies’ is deer proof: perfect for rustic verges and semi-shaded woodland. For more manicured lawns, we love ‘Thalia’ and ‘Canaliculatus’.”

Tempting as it is, experts advise against tidying up the leaves once blooms have faded. Hillier bulb expert Dan Dunbar says: “If possible, after flowering leave the leaves to die back naturally, as this will allow nutrients to go back into the bulb. This will give the bulb energy towards next year’s flowers.”

CUT AND CHERISH

Little beats a vase of bright narcissi for bringing life and cheer into a room – and displaying home-grown blooms is extra special. Celebrated grower and bulb triallist Sarah Raven keeps a close eye on new and unusual varieties, and says: “I’m rather falling for some of the absolutely mad powderpuff varieties, such as ‘My Story’. With its pretty pink colouring and roused layered skirt, this variety makes a spectacular cut flower which looks great in a contrasting vase on the kitchen table.”

There is a definite art to making cut blooms last longer. Florist and grower Carole Patilla of Tuckshop Flowers suggests to “cut the stems with a sharp knife when the colour is starting to show, leaving a few leaves behind to feed the bulb. Place them in a bucket of cold water and leave them to ooze their rather slimy sap for a few hours or overnight. After this, they’ll be fine to mix with other flowers as long as you don’t re-cut their stems.”

Once arranged in the chosen vase, there are still ways to prolong the show. Zoe Julian of Scilly Flowers says: “It is a good idea to change the water regularly, as this stops the build-up of bacteria that will reduce vase life. If you are just using water, then changing the water every day is great. If you have flower food, then every four days will be fine.” ■

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You moved home a few years ago, what drew you to the new house?

My husband Paul and I moved to Henley as we wanted a smaller house and garden that was more manageable, but still with plenty of room to welcome friends and family. It's near to the town, too.

Tell us about your kitchen

It is a lovely big kitchen where I could choose all the things I wanted. There is a large island unit, an area for dining, and an Aga of course, but also a Miele oven for testing recipes. I worked with Nick Anderson [of Guild Anderson] and he was absolutely brilliant – I could not recommend anyone more. We worked together and it took a long time, but it was done beautifully. I wanted shallow cupboards for my glass and china. And recycling is important to me, so I have four units for kitchen waste and composting.

Does your husband get any say in the kitchen?

Definitely not! He leaves that, quite sensibly, to me.

Other than the Aga, is there anything else essential in your kitchen?

Oh yes! I would not be without my Magimix. Anything to save time and is efficient. Sharp knives are important, too.

You have several homeware ranges – do you use them at home?

Yes, I have all of my first collection, The Signature Collection, and I am very proud of it. I wanted china that was smart, excellent quality and didn't detract from the food you put on it. The design is not busy – it has simple dots around the edge and a pale grey line, and food looks brilliant on it. I use it every day.

Your newest range, Mary Berry At Home, is designed to help home bakers. Was performance important in the design?

Yes, all the tins and pans are non-stick. I write a lot of cookery books, so I have ensured it is a range people will use, with tins for Victoria sponges and loaves, not funny shapes. I use the tins all the time and they are excellent.

Do you have any top tips for bakers?

I always say for baking you need digital scales and the right size tin. Often people



My English Home

Doyenne of baking, Dame Mary Berry reveals her essentials in designing her new kitchen, and her style at home

bake and put the quantity for a 20cm tin into something larger, then they wonder why it comes out flat. So I always tell people to check the tin size.

How would you describe your style?

I am quite traditional. I would say the kitchen is more modern and has practical wipe-clean surfaces. The floor is tiled in a pattern that doesn't show the muddy paws of our dogs, Darcey and Freddie. I do love a bit of wallpaper – I have some in the kitchen and the bathroom, I think it gives a bit of a lift.

Can you tell us more about the wallpapers you chose?

I had some help from interior designer Leonie Boshier. There is a design by Lewis & Wood called Doves, in Aquamarine, in the kitchen. I put it behind the Aga with glass on top of it so it is easy to clean. In the bathroom, I have a rather fun design from Sanderson – Pineapple Royale.

Did you have any treasured pieces you had to find a place for in your new home?

Everything fitted pretty well. We were very

lucky and didn't have to get rid of too many things. We bought all new sofas, and Leonie was excellent at suggesting who should make them and getting the right size. I have a harp which I inherited, which we made sure to find a place for.

As a keen gardener have you had to do much work in the garden?

We decided we would have six brick raised beds, which are at a height you can sit on. It makes it easier, and I can sit and plant seeds or pull carrots. I grow a lot of herbs, raspberries, strawberries, and salad as it's easy to go out and pick. I also have a picking area for flowers and try to have something I can pick year-round.

Finally, what should no English Home be without?

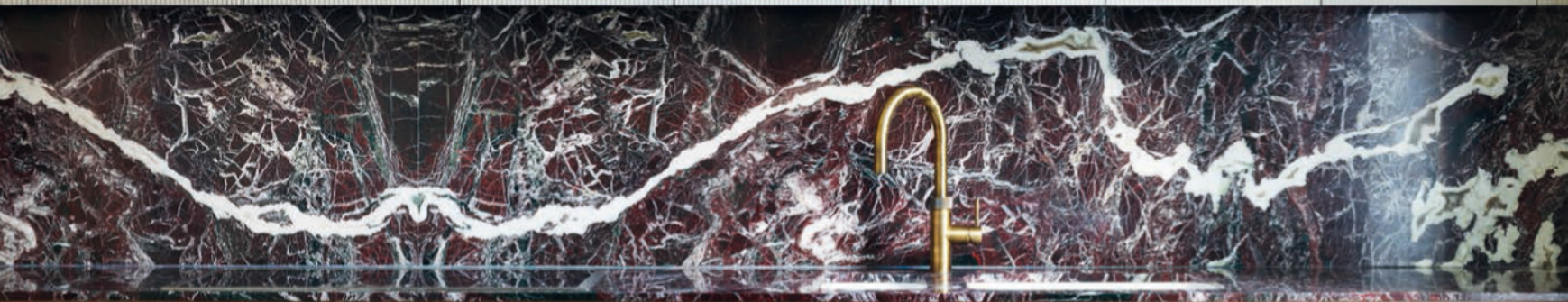
I think I would really miss my dogs. It is just my husband and myself at home now and we are so lucky to have Darcey and Freddie.

The Mary Berry Signature, Country and At Home Collections can be found at hartsofstur.com. For recipes, baking advice and more, visit maryberry.co.uk ■



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