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ENGLISH HOME



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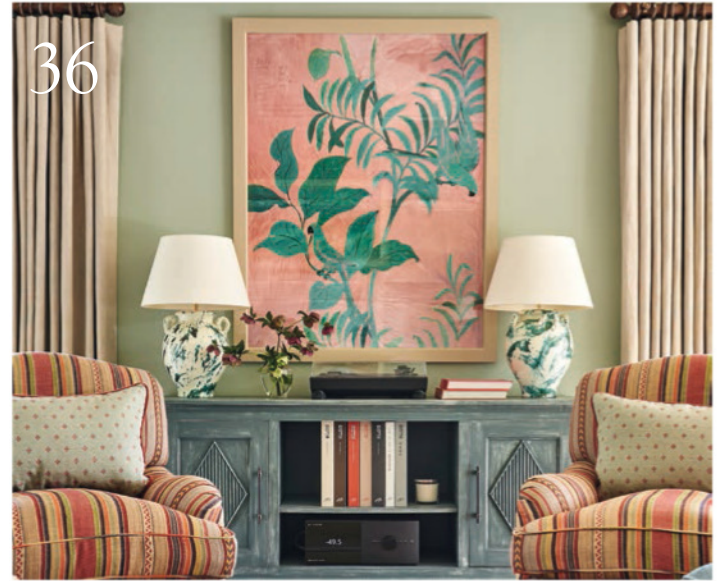
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Unexpected combinations such as these from Temperley London x Romo bring a fresh take on global style this summer. See more on page 72.

A letter from home



Welcome to the July edition of *The English Home* where the mood is light and relaxed. We're craving an easy elegance and interiors layered with global touches that remind us of endless sunny days and exotic destinations. In short, holiday style at home.

Adopting global influences as part of our wider aesthetic is an established element of what makes an English home. The decorating feature on page 72 explores the latest fabric and wallpaper designs adding a touch of escapism in grand safari style with African and tribal prints and unexpected combinations. Elsewhere this issue, you'll find inspiration for eclectic buys and seasonal discoveries to add a touch of summer style to interiors.

Decorating in shades of blue can evoke a sense of calm due to its associations with the sky and sea, as our feature explores on page 88, while those looking for a summer project of any scale will find plenty of inspiration in our feature on bathroom updates (page 98), or desirable kitchens for cooks (page 79). For the ultimate escape, we explore luxurious English places to visit and recharge (page 118), and the transformative benefits of natural swimming pools and ponds (page 124).

We are hugely grateful to the homeowners who have been happy to open their doors and invite us inside this issue. We hope you enjoy all four homes and their treasures and style cues from around the globe. Not only do they feel unique, but they also have an enduring summer feel. Now the season has truly arrived, there is something very appealing about the idea of holding on to it for as long as possible!

Samantha

Samantha Scott-Jeffries, Editor

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'At the Races'

Watercolour & Gouache - 19" x 25" - Signed

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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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NOTEBOOK

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



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Exotic Escapism At Home

Born in the Netherlands and now based in India after living all over the world, Marie-Anne Oudejans brings her infectious wanderlust to her interior design, most famously for Jaipur's Bar Palladio and new Villa Palladio hotel (*pictured*) which inspired her Poppy designs for Schumacher (*seen in our last issue*). This textile and wallpaper collaboration also includes exotic yet soothing Bamboo Trellis, Himalaya, Mughal Garden and Delft motifs to bring home a sense of elevated escapism. She will launch a new home collection in the autumn. schumacher.co.uk ►



Global Inspiration

Sophie Ashby's first fabric collection

For her debut fabric range, The Jocasta collection, interior designer Sophie Ashby drew inspiration from both near and far. Her travels across Africa, Asia and Europe, and global craft, foliage and ancient traditions informed these eclectic and lively fabrics by the founder and creative director of Studio Ashby and Sister By Studio Ashby.

The Ghanaian heritage of her husband, fashion designer Charlie Casely-Hayford, inspired the Afua design, which reimagines Kente cloth motifs. And she named the collection after Jocasta Innes, who was known for her dedication to reclaiming past treasures and trinkets and whose former home in Spitalfields Sophie was living in when she first conceived the collection.

The fabrics were made by London-based Yarn Collective, known for its natural and recycled textiles and climate-positive ethos. Sophie says: "I couldn't be more excited to be unveiling our first fabric collection. The design process has been a truly organic labour of love, piecing together memories and threads of inspiration from over the years to create a capsule of designs."

studioashby.com



Everyday Glamour

Veere Grenney for The Lacquer Company

William Morris would doubly approve – esteemed interior designer Veere Grenney's new collection for The Lacquer Company is both useful and beautiful. Spanning console, coffee, side and bedside tables, plus trays, boxes, bins, mirrors and umbrella stands, each item in the collection fuses Veere's signature classical style with The

Lacquer Company's clean, modern sensibilities. Combined, this elegant simplicity adds a touch of high-gloss glamour to the everyday.

For over three decades, Veere has been at the forefront of the international interior design industry, known for creating timeless beautiful homes which are exquisitely balanced and stylishly comfortable. He trained under Mary Fox Linton and was later a director at Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler before launching his own company in London.

The Lacquer Company was founded by James Lowther in 2008, who bought his first piece of lacquer in 1999 while travelling in Burma. He went on to learn about the lacquer process, appreciating the patience, skill and attention to detail that goes into the finest examples and has since brought this ancient craft from the East to contemporary designs in the West.

thelacquercompany.com; veeregrenney.com ▶

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Artisanal Adventures

The Mughal collection by de Gournay

The magic of de Gournay's hand-painted and hand-embroidered wallcoverings lies in their divine duality. Each one is undeniably a showstopper, executed with a quiet grace, at once embellished with layers of incredible detail yet imbued with a restful stillness that while always surprising and adventurous is at the same time warmly familiar.

The new Mughal Collection is all these things and more. Gaze upon soaring majestic birds, parading elephants, peacocks strutting amid lush foliage, leopards and cheetahs in elegant repose, or be transported inside gleaming palaces and outside into dense forests and manicured gardens with tranquil ponds. A vivid assortment of scenes and compositions plays elegantly across each range.

The collection captures the expressive elegance that typifies the history, symbols, cloths, crafts and vibrant lives of the Mughal Empire. This rich and diverse artistic heritage often defies categorisation as it mixes up so many of the influences across Asia from 1200 to 1850. The exchange of ideas and influences along The Silk Road led to the wonderful Mughal paintings which formed the basis of this collection. The Mewari school of painting in Rajasthan in the 17th and 18th centuries was the main source of inspiration.

Rich tactility abounds within the Mughal Trees design, with lush palm, blossom, cypress and banyan trees painstakingly hand-embroidered using beading, applique and raffia. Mahal Garden features an idyllic scene of a gleaming palace and its soothingly symmetrical gardens bursting with hand-painted blooms and teeming with wildlife. A moonlit forest is the setting for Phuljhari, named for the sparklers lit during Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Light – Empire Blue dyed silk features fireworks illuminating a nocturnal scene of flora and fauna.

Another abundant forest, this time in daylight, adorns the Dandaka Glades design, named for a fabled Kingdom from Hindu mythology referencing 18th-century Mughal artworks. Decorative Jharokha Arches has a repeating motif from classical Indian architecture of ornamental window arches, framing exquisite flowers and plants.

Hand-embroidered golden thread accents the edges of each delicate Indian wildflower on Muraqqa Flowers in homage to the decorative albums of miniature artworks which were compiled with precious devotion by consecutive Maharajas and their courts. Miniature paintings also inspired the Malwa design, named after the region in central India where painting flourished during Mughal times, using its signature bold hues and flat painting style.

degournay.com ▶



ABOVE Mahal Garden, inspired by late 18th-century hand-painted works from the Mughal courts.

LEFT Jharokha Arches echoes the stone windows found in Indian architecture. Interior design by Cathy Kincaid.

BELOW LEFT Muraqqa Flowers is enlivened by hand-embroidered gold thread.

BELOW RIGHT Malwa features birds and beasts amidst layers of lush trees and foliage.





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Fit For A King: Visit Buckingham Palace

New dates just announced for guided tours

Buckingham Palace will open its doors this summer for special guided tours. Visitors will be able to explore the magnificent State Rooms where members of the Royal Family receive and entertain guests on State, ceremonial and official occasions. Furnished with many of the greatest treasures from the Royal Collection, including paintings by Van Dyck and Canaletto, sculptures by Canova, Sèvres porcelain and some of the finest English and French furniture in the world, they truly are a sight to see.

The dramatic deep red Throne Room, the setting for the official Coronation portraits, the breathtakingly opulent gilded White Drawing Room and the elegant pink Picture Gallery, hung with priceless works of art, will all be included in this

summer's opening, which runs from 14 July until 24 September.

Experts will give fascinating insights into the inner workings and history of one of the last working royal palaces, from its beginnings as Buckingham House to the world-famous building we see today. King George IV commissioned architect John Nash to transform Buckingham House into a grand palace in 1825.

Visitors will discover exactly what goes into creating the magic and magnificence of royal occasions, and explore the extraordinary works of art and treasures from the Royal Collection, one of the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. rct.uk

Cutting-edge Heritage

Liberty unveils its newest collaboration

The very first Liberty collection spanning interiors fabrics and home accessories plus apparel, accessories and fashion fabrics, FuturLiberty is a new collaboration with esteemed couturier and interior designer Federico Forquet. This collection of bold, geometric designs was inspired by the experimental work of Liberty designer Bernard Nevill, with the Liberty design team working to translate painterly energetic artworks for interiors. Four distinct colour palettes – Cetona, Sahara, Piccadilly and Vesuvio – for the new interiors fabric collection sit in harmony alongside the FuturLiberty fashion fabrics collection. Each colour story conveys a different atmosphere, using Federico's years of experience in how every colour responds to one another.

An accompanying book *FuturLiberty* (£45, Thames & Hudson) offers a detailed and highly visual account of how the collaboration came into being.

libertylondon.com ■



Diary



Inspirational show gardens, a fragrant festival of roses, spectacular displays in the floral marquee and more make the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival a must-visit. 4–9 July 2023. rhs.org.uk



Reopening on 22 June after a three-year transformation, the National Portrait Gallery will host *Paul McCartney, Photographs 1963–64: Eyes of the Storm* (28 June to 1 October) with never-before-seen photographs of The Beatles taken by Sir Paul McCartney. npg.org.uk



Interior designers, collectors and discerning home shoppers head to Ardingly Antiques Fair in West Sussex, with up to 1,700 stalls spanning a broad spectrum of antiques and vintage finds. From 18–19 July. iacf.co.uk



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DESIGN DISCOVERIES

Dress homes and gardens for summer with fresh colours and bold patterns



CRYSTAL CLEAR

Diversifying from its usual porcelain designs, London Basin Company has added the first crystal basin to its range. Available in jewel-toned blue or green or an elegant clear crystal, it adds a decorative element to bathrooms, capturing and reflecting light around the room. (For more inspiration on how to elevate en-suites, shower rooms and family bathrooms, turn to page 98).

The Lucia Crystal basin, Blue, £1,295, London Basin Company

A TASTE OF ITALY

Taken from the Italian word for pomegranate, a symbol of abundance, the Melograno collection imbues tablescapes with the joy of summer, mixing sunshine yellows and sky blues with seashell motifs and coral details.

Blue Melograno tablecloth, from £112; Fleur yellow placemats, and napkins, each £64 for a set of four; Blue Coral dinner plate, £68; Bamboo cutlery, five-piece set, £92, all Mrs. Alice



FRESH FABRICS

Blithfield's Bancroft collection fuses timeless patterns with a contemporary freshness. Taking inspiration from the brand's extensive archive, the range includes reinvented ikat and striped fabrics (left), alongside botanical and global-inspired designs, all available in joyful colourways.

Headboard in Lambert Stripe, Blue, £120 per metre, and cushion in Ikat Check, Green, £130 per metre, both Blithfield



SWEDISH ROOTS

Cathy Nordström launched her eponymous textile brand in 2020, with the aim of creating characterful collections that felt at home with contemporary and antique textiles from around the world. Each design celebrates her homeland, Sweden, taking inspiration from the country's rich history of colour and pattern. Offerings include fabrics and wallpapers alongside cushions and lampshades, all designed to be mixed and matched for an eclectic yet timeless look. *Lanka wallpaper, Fresh Ginger, £98 a roll, chair upholstered in Spotty fabric, Taupe, £126 a metre; cushions from £123, all Cathy Nordström* ▶



SUMMER STYLING

Adding the same comfortable finishing touches to outdoor spaces as interior rooms is the key to creating a relaxed and welcoming entertaining space for summer. Here, outdoor seating is positioned around a coffee table to encourage conversation while decorative cushions and accessories soften the look.

Boardwalk sofa, £1,099, armchairs, £549 each, and coffee table, £269; Trailing Floral cushion, £15; New Country cushion, £15; Outdoor Plain cushions, £12 each; Scalloped edge tray, £18, all John Lewis

TERRACOTTA TONES

Embrace the warmth of the mediterranean this summer with a touch of terracotta. This dusty pink paint is available in five finishes and can be used on both interior and exterior surfaces.

Courtyard paint, from £29 for 1l, Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler at Fenwick & Tilbrook



PAINTED SHADES

Decorative artist Tess Newall has partnered with renowned homeware brand Matilda Goad & Co on a collection of lampshades. Delicate hand-painted motifs of clovers, cherries and ditsy florals (pictured here) are paired with scalloped edges and pinhole detailing for a truly charming shade.

Ditsy lampshade, £150, Tess Newall x Matilda Goad & Co ▶



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SITTING PRETTY

An inviting seat such as this classic armchair can elevate an unloved alcove or make the most of a forgotten corner. Set in a spot with lots of natural light it provides a quiet place for contemplation or next to a bookcase it creates a cosy reading nook. Deep cushions, winged sides and scrolled arms ensure a comfortable seat to sink into. *Otley chair in stain-resistant broad weave linen, Alabaster, £1,992, Darlings of Chelsea*



STEP OUTSIDE

Crafted from sandstone, these cobbles introduce character and texture to outdoor areas while offering strength and durability. The imperfect appearance, with an uneven surface and subtle markings, evokes a naturalistic feel that would work well in both country and city gardens. *Wensley York sandstone cobble, £117 a square metre, Artisans of Devizes*

AL FRESCO ACCESSORIES

Inspired by the popularity of the original interior cushions, Oka has created outdoor versions of these two bold designs. Marrying form and function, the fabric is shower-resistant and anti-mildew while botanical and zig-zag motifs add a touch of playful pattern. *Areca and Zacke outdoor cushions, available in Mustard, Putting Green and Seafoam, £95 each, Oka*



FEATURE CHARLOTTE DUNFORD PHOTOGRAPHS (MRS.ALICE) © DAN KENNEDY; CATHY NORDSTROM © FANNY RADVIK



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SHOPPING



Osborn Fall wool rug, customisable and bespoke options, 200cm x 200cm approximately £1,884, Roger Oates



Calla pendant light, £89, Green and Brass, Cult Furniture



Floral wall mirror, Pastel Blue, from £1,180 (small), Balineum

Rainbow lacquered ice bucket, £285, Matilda Goad & Co



Brighton fringe cushion, Teal, £175, Jonathan Adler



Bespoke Camelback sofa, £15,350, including upholstery costs but not customer's choice of fabric, Max Rollitt Bespoke



Willow bowl, Coral, 30cm, £24.99, Dobbies

IN FULL COLOUR

Brighten interiors and make the most of summer's crisp light with colourful additions in block tones that will energise schemes



Lucia coffee table, Terracotta, £975, Ceraudo

FEATURE SUZANNA LE GROVE



Hexagon table lamp, Yolke, £280 (without lampshade), Issy Grange



Scalloped drinks trolley, Yellow, £1,898, Sarah Vanrenen



Ardingly cabinet with oak base, from £2,715, Neptune

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Green Glass Fishing Float lamp, £85.50, The Coastal Lifestyle Company



Creek Multi Pebble Mosaic Tiles, £11 a square metre, Porcelain Superstore



Seagrass hanging lanterns, £35 each; Seaford medium rug, £495, and all accessories and bedlinen, The White Company



Sumba Woven Seagrass lampshade, £75, Where Saints Go



Sanibel Shell decorative ornaments, £150, Oka

TOUCH OF THE COAST

Bring a sense of the seaside with coastal textures of sand, pebbles, shells, seaglass, grasses and driftwood



Conch Shell ceramic vase, £24, Bon Bon

Seashell placemat, £24, Truffle Tablescales

Seaweed framed watercolour print, £49, Beach House Art



Lagoon Sea Green vase, £55, LSA



Border in Archipelago, Sand, £126 a roll, Paint & Paper Library



Buko round mirror, £2,785, Paolo Moschino



Mallorca Sand Beige pasta bowl, £17, Rose Grey



Nantucket bowl, £708, Arteriors



White Pearl Herringbone Shell mosaic tiles, £22.96 a sheet (305mm x 285mm), Original Style at Hyperion Tiles

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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

SLEEK KITCHENS

After almost a decade making residential and commercial furniture for clients across London, the team behind British brand Pluck decided to launch their own contemporary kitchen company in 2016. Today the fruits of their labours are clear to see, with the company having garnered a reputation for its collection of cabinetry and freestanding pieces made using FSC-certified wood veneers on plywood, durable high-pressure laminate, and solid wood. Each design is available in a carefully curated palette of colours, which can also be applied to the latest additions to the range, a prep table and step ladder. pluck.co.uk



RITUAL TIME

For those looking to relax, unwind and radiate positivity, the new Ritual of Karma collection from Rituals is designed to help do just that. Not only is there a beautiful body collection, but a blissful range of products for the home too. From scented fragrance sticks to garden candles, and even washing detergent to complete the experience, it is a perfect way to create a calming atmosphere for everyone to enjoy. rituals.com



IN HOT WATER



Quooker's boiling water taps have transformed the lives of homeowners since their invention in 1970, now proving an indispensable part of the kitchen arsenal. Not only are they more environmentally friendly than the kettle, saving electricity, money and water, but they save precious time and space, dispensing boiling and cold water from the same tap. The latest addition to the range is the Quooker Front, a sleek design available in matt black, chrome and stainless steel, ideal for more streamlined kitchens. quooker.co.uk



FLOORS FOR THOUGHT

The award-winning British brand Alternative Flooring has been championing design, craft and manufacturing in the UK for over 25 years, bringing beautiful and innovative designs to floors. With an impressive array of colours and patterns for carpets, rugs or runners. alternativeflooring.com

STRAIGHT TO THE TOP

When the dedicated team of craftsmen at Bisca – the award-winning staircase specialist – come up with a new design for a project, they pride themselves on thinking outside the box. Each creation, built in the company's Yorkshire workshop, is bespoke, and can demonstrate the talent of the team's metalworkers, blacksmiths, joiners and even leatherworkers, alongside precision-engineered designs. Take for example a farmhouse renovation featuring 150-year-old reclaimed timber, originally used as harbour props at Hartlepool Dock, or the staircase in a refurbished derelict building made using reclaimed oak once used for vodka barrels. bisca.co.uk ■



6 OF THE BEST GLASS PITCHERS



- 1 Tall hobnail jug, £99, tallulahfox.co.uk
- 2 Mottled glass jug, £30, monsoon.co.uk
- 3 Sophie Lou Jacobsen Contrast-handle glass pitcher, £195, ln-cc.com
- 4 Waterford Crystal jug, £260, waterford.com
- 5 Cabana glass pitcher, £60, maisonmargaux.com
- 6 Rose glass hobnail jug £94.50, angelareed.co.uk

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In the sitting room, checks, ikats and florals combine for an easy country house feel. The armchairs are covered in Lewis & Wood's Tribal and the sofa is upholstered in Creel Rust by Andrew Martin. The curtains are GP & J Baker's Canyon Parchment with a trimming in Perseus by Colefax and Fowler.

VIBRANT VISION

Having spent several years living abroad, Caroline Echecopar has transformed an English country house into an elegant family home with a South American twist

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR





‘Fabrics, from Peruvian textiles to colourful English designs, have given our home texture, tactility and a sense of scale and dimension’

ABOVE An informal dining room leads off the entrance hall and onto the sitting room. Walls painted in Zoffany’s Prussian act as an anchor for the family’s colourful artwork, while wooden flooring by Charles Lowe & Sons and a leather club fender add a traditional air.

Though Caroline Echeocar describes the Berkshire home she shares with husband Carlos as “an overgrown cottage”, the appraisal is perhaps a modest one. It does indeed have its roots in a simple 17th-century dwelling, but multiple additions, including a significant Victorian extension, have turned this former farmhouse into a rather more imposing residence.

Nonetheless, the house, which is reported to have been in existence since around the time of the English Civil War, had lost many of its period features and was in serious need of reinvention when Caroline and her Chilean husband came across it. “There is evidence that the house, and the pub in the nearby village, witnessed the collisions of the Cavaliers and

Roundheads during the Battle of Newbury, and that sense of history appealed to us,” she says. “But aside from some original beams in the oldest part of the house, there were fewer period features than we would have liked. That meant finding clever ways to imbue it with a sense of mellow character.”

Caroline and Carlos, who work in natural resources and not-for-profit education and healthcare respectively, have long had ties to this area. “Though we spend a fair bit of time in South America, much of my family lives in the neighbouring village,” Caroline explains. “My mother lives in my grandmother’s former house in fact, and, increasingly, we felt drawn to that sense of continuity.” So, along with their grown-up children – Carlos, 26, Lucas, 24, and ▶



ABOVE Vibrant hues, including artwork by Fi Katzler at Cricket Fine Art, enliven the cosy snug. Curtains in Christopher Farr's Rick Rack combine joyously with footstools in Nina Campbell's Claribel La Moulade. The coffee table is from Andrew Martin. **RIGHT** The formal dining room has an antique table surrounded by chairs covered in Colefax and Fowler's Pendeen striped fabric for a relaxed look. A Venetian glass chandelier adds drama.





ABOVE The new extension off the kitchen houses a dining-living area with floor-to-ceiling windows to maximise the garden views. A rug from William Yeoward zones the seating area and ties in with the artwork by Katharine Le Hardy.

LEFT Secluded from the elements, this walled area of the garden provides a pretty spot for impromptu lunches. A palm-laden fabric and a selection of cushions make for a creative tablescape.

Sophia, 22 – the couple decided to put down roots in familiar soil.

Key to the renovation of their new home, which appealed because, according to Caroline, “it sits well in its landscape”, was to resettle its bones before bringing it to life through colour and texture. To assist the couple with this, interior designer and long-term collaborator Pippa Murphy was on hand from the very first viewing. “I met Pippa more than two decades ago, when we were both living in Brazil, so we have a meaningful shared history, underpinned by a passion for global design and the vibrancy that South American interiors are known for,” Caroline explains.

Before that vibrancy could be injected, Caroline and Pippa needed to tame the interior configuration, turning the house from an unwieldy space into a rationalised layout with a good flow. “You could, in a sense, see the seams of those multiple additions over the years,” says Caroline. “Some rooms, such as my daughter’s, had lower ceilings, and others were built with a single brick wall. Meanwhile, the staircase occupied an overly prominent position close to the front door.”

With help from Milton Architects, plans were drawn up to reduce the number of bedrooms, giving each an

This former farmhouse has roots in the 17th century, with various additions, including a Victorian extension. It is surrounded by a cottage garden designed by Angela Collins. BELOW By the pool, woven sunloungers and natural wood and terracotta elements conjure a Provençal air. Water-resistant cushions from Weaver Green are an elegant as well as a practical addition.





‘Throughout the schemes, pattern and art play a key role in the unusual marriage of English heritage designs and South American colour pops’

ABOVE Off-whites and sandy tones characterise the tranquil kitchen. The cabinetry designed by Pippa Murphy in collaboration with Ashford & Brooks is teamed with French limestone flooring by Artisans of Devizes.

FAR RIGHT Walls papered in Sakiori, Steel by Designers Guild add a painterly backdrop to the tall headboard in Rapture & Wright’s Iznic, Cinnamon in son Lucas’s bedroom.

en-suite bathroom instead. An extension housing a kitchen with an adjoining dining and sitting room area and floor-to-ceiling windows was added to the side of the property, allowing for extensive garden views. Last but not least, the staircase was replaced with an elegant wooden curved design to the rear of the hallway. “That was a key decision that really opened up the house to us,” says Pippa, who also suggested introducing a combination of flagstone and herringbone flooring. “We wanted to reinstate a sense of the building’s original features while reworking it for modern family life.”

That juxtaposition between old and new plays out effortlessly: the sitting room and Prussian blue informal dining room are laid out in an enfilade for an uninterrupted through view, while a formal dining room caters to festive family gatherings.

On the north side of the house, the snug is infused with rusts, reds, florals and zigzags to add zest and vibrancy on winter days. “The family wanted to be able to follow the sun around the house, so every space has been decorated accordingly,” explains Pippa. “The idea of evoking the feel of an English country garden also appealed, so we’ve added plenty of classic florals and incorporated lots of ‘pause points’, from cosy reading nooks to informal lounging in the kitchen-diner.”

Throughout these schemes, pattern and art play a key role in an unusual marriage of English heritage designs and South American colour pops via artwork and textiles. “I sometimes play it safe, opting for a pattern and two plains when decorating a scheme,” says Caroline. “But Pippa always encourages us to push the boat out with bolder colour combinations, ▶



ABOVE LEFT Neutral flooring and walls are offset by shades of pink and red, including cushions in Colefax and Fowler's Baptista and lampshades from Nushka. The wallpaper is by Charlotte Gaisford.

ABOVE RIGHT Originally at the front of the hall, the staircase has been replaced with an elegant, curved design at the rear, finished with a runner by Roger Oates.





such as terracotta and red, and by generously scaling up.” As a result, fabrics such as Christopher Farr’s jaunty Rick Rack blend seamlessly with an intricate Nina Campbell jacquard in the snug, while in the main bedroom, walls covered in Ralph Lauren’s Marlowe Floral form the basis of a more muted palette.

The duo also scoured local antiques fairs and stores for traditional furniture. “We picked up plenty of pieces at Dreweatts auction house in Newbury,” says Caroline. “Together with the graphic lines of some of our more contemporary furniture, they imbue the house with a relaxed, eclectic feel.”

Artwork, originally bought to suit the scale of the couple’s previous home, which featured taller ceilings, has found a new context within the more intimate proportions of this home, enlivening the walls with bold colour pops. “Colour is essential for us,” reflects Caroline. “It lends the relaxed atmosphere we always feel comfortable with. This isn’t an ‘upright’ home; instead, it’s a place to relax, restore and revive.” ■

ABOVE A palette of soft neutrals creates a soothing scheme in the main bedroom, whose walls are papered in Ralph Lauren’s Marlowe Floral, with added texture in the form of a throw in Christopher Farr’s Criss Cross in Aqua.

LEFT A mural-like wallpaper, Zoffany’s Wray, acts as a painterly backdrop to a striking vanity unit designed by Pippa Murphy in collaboration with Ashford & Brooks.



PLUCK

MODERN KITCHEN FURNITURE



PARADISE *found*

Discovering a honey-hued stone farmhouse nestling in a Gloucestershire valley has made the dream of living in the country a reality for this London-based family

WORDS JULIET BENNING PHOTOGRAPHY MIKE GARLICK

A once characterless terrace has been transformed with topiary balls and young trees. The wicker sofa and chairs are from Neptune.



ABOVE The former dining room has been transformed into a library space. The joinery designed by Ashton Interiors is painted in Oval Room Blue by Farrow & Ball and made by Zota Construction. The ceiling light is from Porta Romana and the ottoman is from Issy Granger.

RIGHT Except for repainting the window frames, the front of the house has remained unchanged. The landscaping is by Harriet Casey Design. ▶



The existing kitchen cabinetry has been given a new lease of life with Porcelain IV by Paint & Paper Library and De Nimes by Farrow & Ball for the island. Wicker bar stools from Oka complete the relaxed country kitchen mood.



‘We found ourselves passing into the valley where the house stood. The whole setting just blew us away’

It was on a warm night during Easter two years ago that Monica Simpson first broached the idea of a relocation. “Why don’t we move here permanently?” she asked her husband James. Looking at the flickering fire pit, the surrounding valley and the house of Cotswold stone above, James found himself succumbing to the idea. A few minutes later Monica had emailed the school in Kensington their children attended to say they would not be returning for the next term. “It was a shoot-from-the-hip kind of decision, but it’s definitely worked out,” James says of the family’s move to the country.

The family, like many others, had been moving in and out of London since the first lockdown of 2020. James, who works in private equity, and Monica, a property developer, had transplanted themselves from their native United States 17 years previously and had begun raising and educating their three children, Adam, 10, Hannah, 7 and Imogen, 4, in London. ▶

LEFT To the rear of the house a boot, laundry and wine room all add functionality. Harriet designed the bespoke joinery painted in Calke Green by Farrow & Ball.

OPPOSITE ABOVE LEFT James and Monica with Sachi (left), a Shikoku and Skylark, a Copper Lab.

OPPOSITE ABOVE RIGHT A large pendant lantern by Original BTC places a strong focal point around the table. The loose chair covers in Launceston Stripe by Blithfield lend a summery twist.



"On a lazy Saturday we often light the fire and watch a movie here," James says of this relaxed family space alongside the kitchen. The curtains are made from Oxus fabric in Ocean Blue by Lewis & Wood. The artwork to the left of the fireplace was commissioned for the space and is by Romy Elliott.



‘When I come home from London on Thursday evenings, it’s celebration time. We have a drink and go out to look at the moon and the stars’

“We had always loved getting out to the country and took on holiday rentals longer term so we could have our belongings somewhere,” James explains. “But during the lockdown, we’d been bouncing from one place to another when Monica said, ‘Why don’t we just buy a second home?’”

Setting their geographical parameters in a quiet area of countryside outside Cirencester, about an hour and a half from London, the couple began their search. “It was a sought-after location with not much on the market. We visited a couple of other properties but one was too close to a busy road and the other needed too much work doing,” James remembers. Then, one hot and sunny day in July, the couple found their way to the 18th-century cottage that was to become their future home. “It was down a long road and the drive itself went on for at least a third of a mile. We then found ourselves passing into the valley where the house stood, backed into the side of a hill. The whole setting just blew us away.” Despite such an auspicious beginning, Monica had to convince James the house

would be a worthwhile investment. “Monica has a lot more vision than me. I just saw a money pit! I’d envisioned something staterier, like a manor house, but she was keen on a farmhouse or cottage,” he adds.

The couple failed to make an offer but the house stayed on the market for several months longer, and remained in Monica and James’s thoughts. “We took the brochure with us when we went to Greece for the summer and it was there that we asked a close friend what she thought. She encouraged us to go for it, which was a real turning point. We started negotiating while we were still abroad,” James explains.

By November, the house was theirs and the whole family were eager to experience their first Christmas at the new home. “Functioning chimneys and fireplaces had always been a deal-breaker, so we had a local builder, Nick Moffatt check them for us,” says James. “He became our contractor and he recommended Harriet Ashton for interior design.”

Harriet’s brief was to create an authentic Cotswolds home with a contemporary twist and, being busy with ▶

ABOVE A bespoke bar gives the sitting room an especially social focus. The custom-made sofas are covered in fabric by Linwood, while the panelling is painted in Sobek by Paint & Paper Library.

OPPOSITE The contemporary framed French print of birds from Etalage, provides a strong focal point in the sitting room. The armchairs are upholstered in Art Stripe Multi by Mulberry Home while the ottoman is covered in a Colefax and Fowler fabric.



The family are board game enthusiasts who rarely watch television, so Harriet designed this area especially for playing. The table is from Scumble Goosie, and the stools were made bespoke and covered in Fermoie fabric.





‘Most of the colours Harriet has used are not ones I would have chosen, but they are one of the things I love most about this home’

their children and careers, Monica and James were happy to give her autonomy in the design journey. “I would say 90 per cent of the colours Harriet has used are not ones I would have chosen,” James admits. “But they are one of the things I love most about this home. Virtually everything she put forward, we approved of.” Spending time with the family and each of the three children was another way in which Harriet was able to creatively respond to their identities. “She’s incredible with sourcing. On one occasion, she sent me on a wild goose chase to a barn in the little village of Calmsden and upstairs there was this incredible collection of artworks. I ended up leaving with about 25 pieces,” says James.

Upstairs little of the five-bedroom layout was changed, other than the bathrooms, which were enlarged and modernised. Downstairs a leaky conservatory was knocked down and replaced with

a large single-storey extension with a glass roof lantern which is now the new formal dining room.

The couple also engaged a landscape designer, Harriet Casey, who told them the house was too close to the hill and needed “room to breathe”. This led to the removal of 2,000 tonnes of earth. “It was as if someone had taken a stick of dynamite, blown a hole into the side of a hill and stuck a house there,” James laughs. “So, effectively, we pushed the hill back. At one point there was a minor landslide, luckily it didn’t hit the house but it was definitely the most intense improvement we did,” he says.

Returning from his working week in London, when James reunites with his family, he is awestruck at his surroundings. “When I come home on Thursday evening, it’s celebration time. We have a drink and go out to look at the moon and the stars. There are absolutely no regrets.” ■

ABOVE Farrow & Ball’s Off White provides a mellow and calming backdrop against which accents of blue and raspberry sing. The curtains and blinds are in Rebecca fabric by Teyssier. The custom-made headboard is upholstered in Poulton Stripe by Fermoie.



The dining room, set for a summer dinner with Bee's treasured collection of Bristol blue glassware arranged on a heavy linen tablecloth and surrounded by flowers cut from the garden. The Gothic-style cabinet is by Nicky Haslam for Oka.

TREASURE CHEST

Seeking a change from city life, Bee van Zuylen happened upon a deceptively spacious country home in which to put down roots, entertain friends and house the many treasures found on her travels

FEATURE COSMO BROCKWAY
PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MACDONALD





ABOVE In the conservatory, the laughing Buddha sculpture on the antique Swedish commode is by a favourite artist of Bee's, Stroud-based Andrew Wood. **RIGHT** Bee and Ziggy, her Shiba Inu, enjoying the tranquillity of the garden.



*'It felt so peaceful,
so enveloping.
I could see myself
moving in and
perhaps never
leaving'*



Hidden behind a high stone wall in a sleepy Cotswold village is a house the owner, Bee van Zuylen, calls an “enigma”. She describes it thus because its unassuming setting – tucked away and low down – and its nondescript facade give no clue to the delights that await within.

Bee herself, surely one of the most colourful characters in this most traditional of villages, exudes all the warmth and charm that comes from a life very well lived. Born in Paris to Anglo-American parents, her first taste of the English countryside that she now loves so much was, in fact, distinctly dismal: “I was packed off to Heathfield – a girl’s school I hated.” She later laughingly admits that

she ran away from home aged 15 and ended up at school in Switzerland – a scene much more to her taste. A passion for horses and great skill for dressage and showjumping brought her back to the fields of England and kindled an affection for the “timeless, unchanging nature of it all”.

Fast forward two marriages and two children later, and it is clear, standing in Bee’s wider-than-expected flag-stoned hallway, that the years have brought not only much travel but much acquisition too. Marriage to a Dutch baron and becoming the chatelaine of his glorious ancestral pile, the largest castle in the Netherlands, was a more recent chapter in Bee’s life. A full-size portrait of the celebrated Madame de Pompadour reigns supreme on the wall in ▶

ABOVE Interior designer Gavin Houghton suggested London Stone by Farrow & Ball for the walls in the drawing room. The swan-handled bronze urns on the mantelpiece came from Christophe Gollut, a favourite source of Bee’s.

Bee describes the traditional and light-filled kitchen as "the heart of my house. I love to entertain, and guests congregate here with much laughter after dinner". A diamanté crown and a collection of ostrich eggs below add a typically light-hearted touch.



the entrance hall, looking unperturbed by her ever-so-reduced circumstances. The enormous painting was found in an attic there and brought over in a horsebox, alongside her horses – an adventure one feels the Versailles courtesan would have rather enjoyed. Pointing out the pair of elegant inherited Queen Anne armchairs set against the sky-blue walls, Bee laments that her beloved Japanese dog, a Shiba Inu called Ziggy, had “a penchant for walnut in his younger days and chewed away happily on them”. Chew marks notwithstanding, the chairs make for a distinguished scene flanking a Siena marble-topped console table, found in “the good old days of tramping up and down the Pimlico and King’s Roads looking for furniture with my rather richer sister”. Bee found the table at a favourite haunt, the now-closed Ross Hamilton Antiques. “I felt the scale was exactly right for the hall,” she says. “I’m afraid I’m not very good at the country cottage look!” With typical elan, she has teamed it with a richly hued painting of a boy and his dog found at Christie’s South Kensington above, and a pair of cobalt-blue lamps from Vaughan Lighting. “I knew they would look fabulous with the turmeric-coloured vintage sari shades,” Bee remarks.

The end of her marriage led Bee and her daughter, Allegra, to consider living full-time in the English countryside for the first time, a move she approached with some apprehension. “I had a serendipitous



‘I felt the scale was exactly right for the hall – I’m afraid I’m not very good at the country cottage look!’

moment, as so often happens in life,” she recalls with a smile, settling down barefoot on some lichen-covered garden steps with a glass of wine. “An old friend said he had a house available on his estate, where his mother had been living – a small version of a dower house.” Going to visit it was a moment of revelation for the self-confessed urban dweller. “It felt so peaceful, so enveloping. I could see myself moving in and perhaps never leaving,” she says with a laugh.

It was a great bonus that there was very little structural work to be done. The landlord had worked with a noted local architect and the place was filled with light and space, with rooms cleverly leading off the central hall to allow a flow that attracted Bee immediately. “Julian Hunt, the architect, is a genius for bringing out the best from even the most challenging of layouts,” she says. “It was very evident he had ▶

ABOVE An inherited Queen Anne walnut chair in the entrance hall. The handsome console table is from Ross Hamilton Antiques and sits below a favourite portrait, restored for Bee by Carlyn Hunter, an artist and friend.

RIGHT Summers are spent in the tree-filled garden sitting at the large table, usually covered in a block-print tablecloth which Bee collects on her Indian travels.





thought through the experience of living here on both a practical and visual level.” This considered approach is evident in the pleasingly spacious kitchen and dining area, with French windows leading to the garden and another set of doors onto a conservatory area Bee also uses as a study, where she plans her intrepid travels and deals with numerous correspondence from friends all over the world.

The drawing room chatters with stories told through beautiful possessions. At one end, an 18th-century gilded console table, which originally stood in the private apartments at Versailles, holds a convivial collection of drinks. “I love Nina Campbell’s quote where she says she always wants her guests to see the drinks tray as soon as they walk in then they know it will be a good party,” laughs Bee. On the opposite end, as a balancing act, a French trumeau mirror, gilt-swags dancing, stretches, like an elegant yawn, above a red lacquered chest, acquired from Nicky Haslam, “and which I beat Ringo Starr to,” Bee adds. Facing each other across the scagliola marble and ebony coffee table, a find from Geoffrey Bennison, are deep damask-covered sofas brought from Ashdown House, which was built for the tragic ‘Winter Queen’ Elizabeth of Bohemia. “They were made in the 1950s, and are still, by far, the most comfortable sofas I have known,” says Bee.

A period spent living in a desert fort and breeding Marwari horses in Rajasthan explains the distinctly



‘The art and textiles I collect as I travel to different places are a way of remembering a place I have visited and loved’

ABOVE An attic bedroom has been christened the ‘Princess Room’ by Bee. The antique bed, found at a French antiques market, is a pretty touch alongside a needlepoint rug.

RIGHT The wrought-iron four-poster bed in this bedroom is topped with a luxurious velvet tablecloth from a royal wedding Bee attended.

eastern touches found through the rooms. Bee has upcycled floral Kashmiri paper lampshades to top the bedside lamps and complement the four-poster bed in one of the guest bedrooms.

Above all, Bee is more of a butterfly than her name might imply, and her home reflects this fluttering quality – nomadic but also rooted in a love for the beautiful and cultured. Surrounded by objects that tell the story of her rich and varied life, she has created a setting that tingles with a sense of adventure. “The art and textiles I collect as I travel to different places are a way of remembering a place I have visited and loved,” she explains. “There is an eclectic mishmash of tastes going on here.” With that, she walks through the garden gate into the orchard as the dusk shimmers around her. ■



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The walls in the Monks' Room are in a specialist paint finish by Cornelia Faulkner. Being hand-coloured gives them movement and the glaze a slight reflection, a perfect backdrop for the painting above the fireplace, *The Rowers* by Richard Allen. Kelling Designs reupholstered the chairs in Colefax and Fowler's Malabar fabric.



DIVINE REVIVAL

Set alongside the atmospheric ruins of a 13th-century church, Grade I listed Creake Abbey in Norfolk has been transformed into a vibrant, characterful family home

FEATURE KATE FREUD PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH





Despite considerable challenges along the way, Diana Bell and her husband Edward have managed to turn the Grade I listed Creake Abbey in Norfolk into a charming family home and thriving business, surrounded by beautiful water meadows just a few miles south of Burnham Market and the coast. It is while sitting in the sun-drenched new kitchen extension of her home, overlooking the walled garden – once a monastic cloister – that Diana says she has her “pinch me” moments.

Many less determined types might have walked away years ago from what proved to be the interminable obstacles that followed the purchase of the house and its 240-acre farm in North Norfolk, but for Diana and Edward, it has all been worth it. For this is no ordinary house. Built on the original part of a monastery alongside the ancient ruins of a 13th-century Augustin church, the house has a fascinating history.

It is thought Creake Abbey originated in 1206 when Sir Robert and Lady Alice de Nerford established the

ABOVE Cream linen curtains with a red velvet trim give the illusion of height and lead the eye upwards in the Monks’ Room. The trim also neatly ties into the red of the bookcases painted in Farrow & Ball’s Rectory Red. **RIGHT** The Grade I listed property used to house a refectory and dormitory for the monks of the abbey.



‘Most people ran a mile, but in our optimistic youth, we saw our forever home’

ABOVE A printed chinoiserie mural from The Mural Source provides an apt backdrop to the framed antique Chinese robe in the dining room. The carpet is from Unnatural Flooring. RIGHT Diana worked with Kelling Designs to update her home and is delighted with the results. To find more, visit creakeabbey.co.uk

small chapel of St Mary of the Meadows next to the River Burn, which still flows through the farm and past the abbey today. Later, under the rule of St Augustine, the chapel became a priory and extensions were made, and in 1225 it was given abbey status by Henry III. Though fire ravaged the church in around 1484, the ruins remain, and alongside them the home where the Bells have lived since 2003 with their three children, their Labrador Millie, and Boots, their wayward cockapoo.

Diana and Edward had been house-hunting unsuccessfully for two years, but once they saw the ruins and rundown house – a dormitory, refectory and even animal stables before becoming a domestic dwelling in the 17th century – they knew it was somewhere special. “A lot of sensible people saw it ▶





ABOVE The Shaker-style kitchen in the new extension is by Naked Kitchens. The blue of the cabinetry is picked out in the vibrant Roman blind in Carnival by Christopher Farr Fabrics. Cup handles by Armac Martin and a tap by Perrin & Rowe by the window add classic finishing touches. LEFT Adjacent to the house are the atmospheric ruins of the abbey's 13th-century church, most of which was destroyed by a fire in the 15th century.

and ran a mile because not only is it Grade I listed, but there were also complicated covenants attached to the building. But in our optimistic youth all we saw was our forever home," Diana explains.

Having left the high-pressure world of hedge funds in London behind to move to Norfolk, Diana needed to make Creak Abbey a financially viable business as well as a family home. Her new career as a rural entrepreneur began and today both home and business are thriving. As well as hosting an award-winning farmers' market with over 50 stalls on the first Saturday of each month, there is a charming holiday cottage available to rent (also designed by Kelling Designs), and the Courtyard shopping area houses locally owned businesses in repurposed farm buildings, selling everything from antiques and homeware to vintage clothes. The farm itself grows sugar beets, winter wheats and spring barley, and has pastures for sheep and cows.

When Diana and Edward first moved in, raising their young family and running the business took



priority, so they lived in what Diana describes as “crumbling splendour”. Then in 2015 they applied for planning consent, unaware that it would be four years before it was approved. They engaged Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects, which specialises in historic buildings and churches, to help with the somewhat complicated process. “As it is a Grade I listed house, the conservation officers had to approve the plans, but we had to work with English Heritage too,” Diana explains.

An 18-month restoration and build ensued, with an archaeologist on site paid a daily rate for every day of digging. During this time, several extraordinary treasures were discovered, from monastic bricks to ancient coins, as well as mussel and oyster shells – local fare the monks would have enjoyed. It was only once the building work began that Diana and Edward realised the fragility of the house. “As soon as the old plaster was removed, walls literally crumbled away. They were built from flint and chalk and not meant to withstand modern domestic life,” she explains.

The house has been designed in an L-shape, so rooms can be closed off to keep it from feeling too big despite its seven bedrooms and six bathrooms, with a kitchen extension being the main addition.

Once the building work was completed, Diana could start on the interiors, collaborating with Emma Deterding from Kelling Designs, who had helped with the couple’s London flat eight years previously. “Emma has colour in her veins so was fantastic at pushing me to be bold in the house,” Diana explains. “I would describe the interiors as English country house style on steroids!” she laughs.

Emma was incredibly resourceful and repurposed pre-existing curtains as well as reupholstering furniture that had been in Diana’s family for years. There were some wonderful pieces found in storage, such as the wingback armchairs in the drawing room, known as the Monks’ Room as it was once the refectory for the abbey. This, along with the two rooms above, which would have been the monks’ dormitory, makes up the oldest part of the house. ▶

ABOVE LEFT Oka chairs in the kitchen’s dining area are in Plush Velvet by Warwick Fabrics, backed with Belge in Green by Christopher Farr. The Dedron Chandelier is by Julian Chichester.

ABOVE The vestibule, where walls papered in Cole & Son’s colourful Savuti contrast with a neutral blind in Hodson McKenzie’s Bingham Linen trimmed with Sloane Velvet in Apricot by Samuel & Son.



‘Emma has colour in her veins so was fantastic at pushing me to be bold – I would describe the interiors as English country house on steroids!’

Emma was fortunate to have her pick of over 140 artworks and pieces from the couple’s overseas travels or inherited from family. “My parents had excellent taste,” Diana explains. “I gave Emma free rein to place paintings where she saw fit, and I haven’t moved a single one.”

The new light and airy kitchen extension was particularly important to Diana and features elegant Shaker-style cabinetry by Norfolk-based Naked Kitchens. This is the room where the family spend most time, gathering around the large island and enjoying meals around the table in the adjoining informal dining room.

Upstairs the colour schemes are more muted with soft pinks, blues and greens providing a relaxing atmosphere in the bedrooms. Florals abound in the principal bedroom, while the light-filled guest bedroom uses floral accents against an inviting shade of pink, Farrow & Ball’s Pink Ground.

“The only thing I would have done differently is employed a lighting designer from the start as it’s more expensive to change things down the line,” Diana explains. “But considering how, with so many unexpected costs along the way and being on a tight budget, I couldn’t be more delighted with the house now. It really is our forever home.” ■

ABOVE LEFT A lampbase from Pooky is topped with a boldly hued suzani embroidered Sophia lampshade from Kelling Home.

ABOVE RIGHT An inviting corner of the spare room boasts a comfortable chair and stool covered in GP & J Baker’s Oriental Bird Blush next to a table from Oka.

RIGHT The twin beds – which sit either side of a Kelling Designs chest – have been reupholstered in a blue Romo fabric, a charming contrast to the walls painted in Farrow & Ball’s vibrant Babouche.



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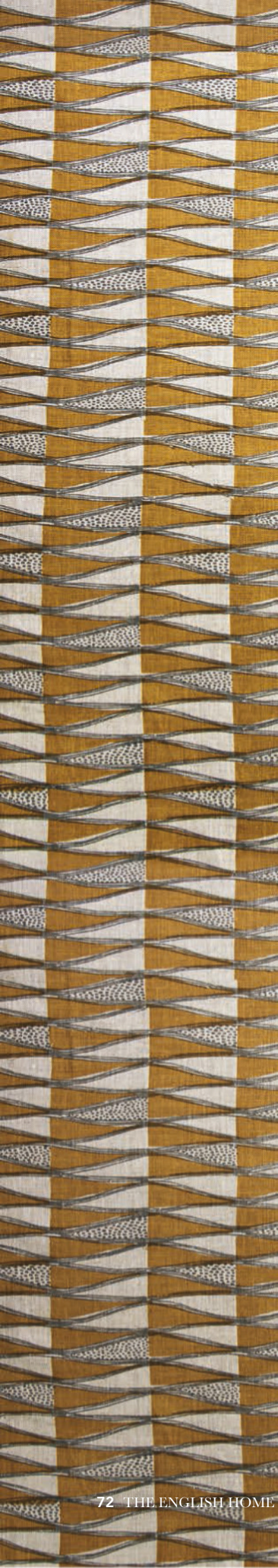
Our special section dedicated to interior design and decorating begins here ►



HISTORY REPEATING

Zoffany's new collection, Arcadian Thames, celebrates this idyllic stretch of the river famed for ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows and grand historic houses. There are archival pieces from over 300 years inspiring the fabrics and papers. Lead designer, Peter Gomez explains this delicate chinoiserie "is based on an 18th-century block-printed wallpaper. After rediscovering the original document, we've retraced its origins, faithfully interpreting The Emperor's Musician into this beautiful 100% linen."

Emperor's Musician, Charcoal, £169 a metre, Zoffany



CALL *of the* WILD

Bring chic safari inspired patterns, tones, and textures to a country home for a smart look that combines African designs, animal prints and a touch of wild eclecticism

The English are no strangers to adopting styles seen around the world. Often our homes have a comfortable synergy with anglicised Asian motifs – from delicate chinoiserie to decorative paisleys and charming hand-blocked prints. African-inspired designs, however, are seeing a surge in popularity too, with several designers turning to the continent for inspiration.

At Design Centre Chelsea Harbour's Wow!House, interior designer Christian Bense has collaborated with de Le Cuona to create a bedroom which has the concept of "grand safari meets London town, with touches of Africa in a traditional English backdrop". Kate Guinness has collaborated with The Safari Canvas Company to create a chic take on safari-style-under-canvas to be used as alternative luxury accommodation at smart country hotels. Alice Temperly's new designs for Romo combine playful leopard

prints with grand floral designs in schemes that exude glamour.

Leopard and other animal prints continue to be popular for pairing subtle pattern with other, more exuberant motifs. Tribal-inspired prints are also coming through in some collections, such as Lewis & Wood's Travel Trunk, which draws on global influences, including Nigerian resist-prints and nomadic designs. Exciting, unexpected patterns such as these can be used to add a touch of character to rooms.

Avoid creating a pastiche of an *Out of Africa* look by pairing animal prints with stripes or African patterns with florals to maintain the charming, eclectic look we are famed for. Offset antique furniture with authentic woven baskets, leather or rattan for added texture, and play with a palette of browns. This look obviously has great harmony with earthy tones, but can be pretty with touches of blush and green. ▶

ABOVE Use a striking zebra print for pattern underfoot. *Quirky Zebo Moss Carpet*, £124.85 a square metre, Alternative Flooring **SWATCH** Bring a taste of Moroccan sunshine to interiors. *Tangier, Saffron*, £197.40 a metre, Walter G at The Fabric Collective

DECORATING

This celebration of the animal kingdom makes a talking point as a backdrop in a dining room for glamorous dinner parties. Afrika Kingdom wallpaper, £285 a roll, Cole & Son





OPPOSITE Lewis & Wood's Travel Trunk collection features a range of different influences from Africa, Indonesia, and this eye-catching design which is revisiting a piece from artist Su Daybell, celebrating its 10th anniversary. *Womad, Henna, £86.32 a metre, Lewis & Wood*

LEFT A woven stripe with added detailing is a perfect foil to more decorative or exuberant designs. *Alfie Stripe, Brown, (reversible), £231.01 a metre, Sarah Vanrenen for Penny Morrison*

ABOVE RIGHT The rosettes of this leopard print appear like pretty florals, adding a quirky look in a relaxed country scheme. *Florence, Sage, £126 a metre, Cathy Nordström*

RIGHT Using archival artwork of wild animals from the Natural History Museum, Divine Savages has created a wallpaper that would sit perfectly in a grand country home. *The Fierce & The Fabulous eco wallpaper, Archive Green, £150 a roll, Divine Savages x Natural History Museum* ▶



DECORATING



TOP LEFT Inspired by animal tracks and African spears, these sumptuous fabrics offer a luxurious take on safari style. These designs are used by Christian Bense in his bedroom scheme for Wow!House.

Stampede, Tigers Eye, £222 a metre; Assegai, Gold and Bronze, both £234 a metre, all de Le Cuona

BOTTOM LEFT Alice Temperley's collaboration with Romo combines country house glamour with playful leopard print. In a light blush, this exemplifies how animal print can be a sophisticated, subtle choice while still making a statement, *Kitty, Powder Room, £135 a roll; Leopard Braid, Tan, £27.50 a metre, Temperley London x Romo*

RIGHT Add some lightness to earthy tones with a delicate honey yellow.. *Caldecote, Honey, £128 a metre, Cloth & Clover at The Fabric Collective* ■



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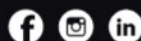
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THE COOK'S KITCHEN

Expert designers and professional chefs offer a range of advice on clever kitchen design, storage ideas and specialist features to enhance the pleasure of cooking at home



Launched recently, the Henley kitchen is designed around deep drawers that provide ample storage for keen cooks.
Henley kitchen, £POA, Neptune



ABOVE A barn-conversion kitchen by Christopher Peters incorporates a pantry cupboard and a wine fridge within the dining space.

RIGHT This larder by Unfitted has a range of shallow shelves, plus a door-hung spice rack.

BELOW Top off a coffee for guests with professional-looking frothy milk. *MFF11 Milk Frother, £179.95, Smeg*

DESIGN INGREDIENTS

“Kitchen design is about knowing your kitchen and how you use it,” says Kim Whinnett of Barnes of Ashburton. “It’s always a case of making the ‘triangle’ between the cooker, sink and fridge work efficiently, with everything important within arm’s reach. Creating plenty of worktop space is also a priority. I like to mix materials to make the kitchen more inviting, but always include granite, as it’s perfect for making pastry.”

Serious chefs will want to think carefully about their cooker type, size and style: anything from an eye-level electric oven (with a nearby set-down space) stacked with a steam oven and warming drawer, to a Lacanche ‘build your own’ cooker, to a traditional range with a companion cooker and separate induction hob. Whinnett points out, however, that the somewhat less glamorous issue of extraction is equally important. “A decent extractor, such as one by Westin, with a six-inch duct and a short, straight run to the outside, is vital.” Tierney O’Grady of The White Kitchen Company adds that some hobs (such as those by Bora) have integrated extractors – a relatively recent innovation that saves space and suits awkward room layouts. Another recent trend, very useful for a busy household, is to install two dishwashers but, says Whinnett, a hard-working sink is still a must, perhaps



BUYER'S GUIDE

With a bank of Wolf ovens and warming drawers, this kitchen by Tom Howley includes a concealed, walk-in pantry with drawers and shelves, plus an over-sized island for both cooking and entertaining, fitted with a self-extracting hob by Bora.



with the addition of a smaller, 'prep' sink, too.

Marina Jonas of Artichoke points out that a boiling-water tap – indispensable for time-saving cooking and heavy-duty cleaning up – need not necessarily be installed next to a sink. “Fit it exactly where you need it, with a small drip tray on the worktop beneath,” she says. For an island unit, Artichoke has designed drawers that open both ways for easy table-laying and dishwasher-emptying, and Jonas has a solution to the thorny problem of water damage to the wooden worktop around a heavily used sink – a separate frame which can be easily replaced when necessary. ▶



ABOVE Classic Nordic Square boiling water tap in Polished Chrome, £1,150, Quooker

BELOW LEFT & RIGHT Invest in equipment and tools to make home cooking easier. Mauviel M'Elite Casserole with lid, £449; Kai Shun knives, from £169 for a classic chef's knife, both from Borough Kitchen



Space permitting, consider having a dedicated area for food preparation away from the sink. Classic English kitchen, from £30,000, deVOL

SUITABLE STORAGE

A freestanding pantry cupboard, or a walk-in pantry, is an excellent solution if seeking capacious kitchen storage. Will Lyne of Christopher Peters advises that shallow pantry shelving is ideal. "It means that everything is very visible so, with a shelf depth of 200mm to 250mm, there might be three items front to back, and you can see them all, rather than only using 25 per cent of things in the cupboard because everything else is hidden."

For Lyne, maximising drawer space is also key. "Drawers are so much more practical than cupboards because you can see everything inside them," he says. "If you are using lots of different utensils and gadgets, the ability to quickly find that one thing you haven't used for a month is very important." Drawers can be hidden behind cupboard doors, or a pair of shallow drawers can be concealed by a single deep front, so their use need not upset the overall look of the room, and inside every drawer should be specific inserts to suit its contents, from spices to a set of knives.

Another way to increase storage space (though not for items used every day) is with an extra cupboard stacked above a traditional wall unit, reached by a ladder on a rail or perhaps a step-up that can be hidden in a drawer. "It's quite a traditional look but, along with open shelving, it is becoming more popular," says O'Grady.

In addition to pantries, shelves, drawers and cupboards, fridge-freezers do a lot of the storage work in every kitchen. The American-style, side-by-side, full-height fridge/freezer has now been joined by the French-door freezer, which features a pair of fridge doors at the top and a freezer drawer below, and the integrated, under-counter fridge and freezer drawer: a great supplement to conventional cooling appliances. ▶



ABOVE This separate pantry by Naked Kitchens is a hidden but highly useful storage solution.

FAR RIGHT In a bespoke kitchen, drawers of any depth can be fitted with an array of versatile inserts, as shown in this elegant solution by Roundhouse.

LEFT A pull-down system by Blum is perfect for storage within high-reach cabinets, as shown in this kitchen design by Barnes of Ashburton.

CENTRE Opt for a neat coffee machine to fit into modest larders and on small worktops. Silence coffee machine in Gold, £1,179, Miele

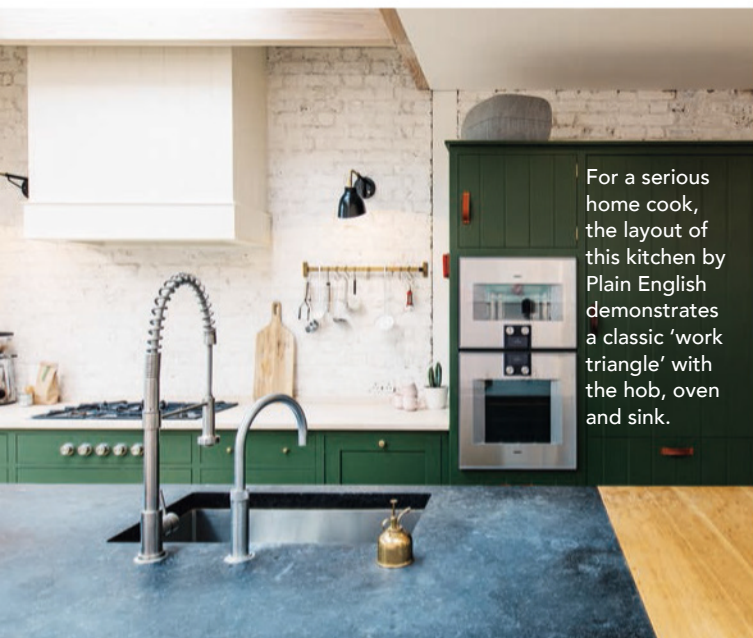




The Suffolk Larder Kitchen Cabinet (shown here in Old Rose) by Neptune includes drawers in a variety of sizes, adjustable shelves and shallow, door-hung racks.

PROFESSIONAL ESSENTIALS

When chefs are asked to name their essentials for home cooking, their first answer is, almost invariably, a set of good knives. Nisha Katona, restaurateur, TV chef and author of *Meat Free Mowgli*, says: “A good sharp knife – it can be as small as your gran’s or as big as a butcher’s – makes light work of prepping ingredients. It doesn’t need to be cheffy and huge; it needs to feel like an extension of your fingers.” Craig Johnston, Michelin-starred head chef at Marcus at the Berkeley (Marcus Wareing’s restaurant) and co-author of *Marcus’ Kitchen* says that a great non-stick pan and a large spice rack make a world of difference to him, while Prue Leith, whose book *Bliss on Toast* is out now, adds that another essential for her is “a decent, big, stable chopping board”. Food writer Skye McAlpine, author of *A Table Full of Love*, adores her Lacanche oven, KitchenAid mixer and collection of old copper pans. “Not only do they look beautiful, but the copper conducts the heat very quickly and evenly, so they’re a dream too cook with.” ▶



SIX OF THE BEST RANGE COOKERS

- 1 ER3 Series 100 Electric, from £10,490, Duck Egg Blue, Aga
- 2 1600 T electric, Pepper, £16,965, Esse
- 3 CornuFé 110 Étoilé, Morning Dew, from £9,039, La Cornue
- 4 Classic FX 90 induction, £3,799, Rangemaster
- 5 Victoria dual-fuel, Cream, £2,489, Smeg
- 6 110i with induction hob in Lavender, £11,500, Everhot





Burnished brass knobs and handles complement the copper pieces on display in this kitchen by The White Kitchen Company. Its Period English Style cabinets are painted in Farrow & Ball's Joa's White.

OUR PANEL OF CHEFS AND FOOD WRITERS



FROM LEFT Craig Johnston, head chef at Michelin-starred restaurant Marcus Belgravia; Nisha Katona MBE, chef, cookbook author and founder of Mowgli Street Food restaurants and the Mowgli Trust charity; Dame Prue Leith, chef, restaurateur, cookbook author, novelist and *Great British Bake Off* judge; Skye McAlpine, cookery writer





Professionals have a unique insight into how to design a kitchen so that it functions in the most streamlined and efficient way possible. Both Leith and Katona named waste bins as a vital ingredient. Katona says she always includes a built-in scraps bin below the counter, so that mess can be quickly swiped away, while Leith's top tips are simply "a clear work surface, no clutter and easily accessible rubbish bins."

Johnston states that it is important to choose the right appliances. "Steam ovens offer greater flexibility, including the chance to cook a little healthier at home," he points out. "Induction hobs tend to give you more power, making for a quicker cook."

For McAlpine, it is important to keep the space flexible. "We have an old, tall table that we've converted into a freestanding kitchen island on wheels," she says. "I love open storage because I can easily see what I have. We also put two dishwashers into our new kitchen which, for someone who does as much cooking and entertaining as me, is an absolute dream come true." ■

ABOVE In this classic kitchen by Artichoke, the timber-topped island includes a sacrificial frame around the sink, which can be replaced if the wood becomes damaged over time.

TOP RIGHT A Blake & Bull reconditioned Aga that looks good as new and is ready for another passionate cook to make full use of it.



RECONDITIONED AGAS

Matthew Bates founder of Blake & Bull, which refurbishes, re-enamels and converts Agas, explains the reconditioning options

- Cast-iron ranges can be completely restored, re-enamelled and converted to electricity, or have a mid-life refresh with deep cleaning, new insulation and other smaller parts replaced. This is currently only applicable to cast-iron range cookers such as Agas. This does not apply to conventional range cookers, which can only be professionally cleaned.
- Converting a range cooker may make a big energy saving. Depending on what fuel it was to start with (oil, gas or coal), and how you choose to use the converted cooker, you could save hundreds or thousands of pounds a year in running costs. By converting your existing cooker to multi-element electric, or installing one that has been reimagined, over a full year you will be running on 40 per cent renewable energy.
- When buying a reconditioned range, think about aftercare. If you need parts, maintenance or repair, make sure these will be available.
- A properly re-enamelled and converted range should last as long again as the cooker already has, certainly decades, and vastly longer than the average 13-year life span of a conventional cooker.

For reconditioned Agas try Blake & Bull, and West Country Cookers. Aga itself offers trade-in deals to buy newer models.

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BLUE

Creative Combinations

Continuing our series focusing on colour and pattern, we explore how trends and historical influences have shaped British interiors, this time exploring the enduring appeal of blue

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE

Associated for centuries with art, architecture and interiors, blue is prized for a sense of rarity and prestige as well as its calming properties. Deeply intertwined with our perception of sky and sea, it is believed to be the first human-made pigment, dating back to the Egyptians, who are known to have used azurite decoratively.

Blue has long been associated with wealth and grandeur, having been a difficult colour to produce, as

well as transcendence, given its historical association with the colour of the Madonna's robe. The Middle Ages saw blue as a highly prized colour for clothing, while in the 18th century blue-and-white curtains, bed hangings and upholstery became de rigueur. Popular in Victorian interiors, it was often paired with red and gold to create an opulent look. In current interior schemes, blue can be both grounding or uplifting, fresh or cocooning, depending on its tone. ▶



THIS PAGE Pale blue joinery makes for a natural pairing with deep pink accents in this classic library scheme by Kate Guinness. OPPOSITE In this apartment renovation by Studio Beleta, original floor-to-ceiling doors have been picked out in striking powder blue.



LEFT Shaker-style cabinetry painted in Little Greene's Bone China Blue is contemporised by industrial-style bar stools and an over-scaled pendant light in this Roundhouse Studio Classic kitchen.

BELOW LEFT In this pretty bathroom scheme by interior designer Laura Stephens, classic pale blue panelling is contrasted with a softly modern floral wallpaper, incorporating yellow and pink accents.

BELOW RIGHT A country house sitting room by Kelling Designs features a deep blue sofa delineated by crisp white piping, for a smart, graphic look.

Calming and classic

With its sense of timelessness, blue is a failsafe option, whether as a painted backdrop or via wallpaper, furnishings or accessories. "Blue has an incredible spectrum of shades, making it one of the most versatile colours to use in design," says Liz Beal of Goddard Littlefair. "Lighter tones such as baby and powder blue create a feeling of calmness and relaxation, while deeper shades such as navy and royal blue add depth and sophistication."

Over the centuries, blue has transitioned from being symbolic to being a deeply adaptable colour within our homes, from kitchens and bathrooms to sitting rooms and studies. Once considered a formal colour, used for police and military uniforms as a means of conveying trust, deep blue has latterly shaken off its conservative reputation. "There is an extensive range of tones on offer, from rich, sultry blue, such as Farrow & Ball's Hague Blue, to the playful blue associated with Renaissance sculptor Luca della Robbia," says interior designer Kate Guinness. "It's an emotive colour that can prompt self-reflection and stillness. Its association with water means it is also used to great effect in bathrooms and kitchens." ▶



'Lighter tones such as baby and powder blue create a feeling of calmness and relaxation, while deeper shades such as navy and royal blue add depth and sophistication'

Liz Beal, Goddard Littlefair

This drawing room by VSP Interiors uses pale blue as an anchoring backdrop to large-scale artworks, including Pippa Ridley's *A Day at the Beach*. It is offset by colour and pattern including a carpet by Robert Stephenson and lampshades by Susan Deliss.



ABOVE LEFT
Glastonbury Stripe wallpaper in Pale Cerulean by Cole & Son provides a playful and fresh canvas in this elegant bedroom scheme by Studio Raymond.

ABOVE RIGHT
Against a brilliant white backdrop, graphic blue-and-white stripes and patterns evoke a Mediterranean feel in John Lewis & Partners' three-seater Anyday collection Metal Garden Lounging Set.

LEFT
In an understated sitting room scheme by Marina Byers for Dargie Lewis, walls and alcove joinery are given the same finish, Farrow & Ball's De Nimes, for a smart, cohesive feel.

Inspired by nature, blue can be an effective colour on walls and ceilings. “It’s a good choice for larger furniture and window dressings too – especially darker tones like navy or smoky blue,” says interior designer Pia Pelkonen. “For walls, I’m drawn to the softer, paler shades, especially when contrasted with deeper hues.”

This is a tone that classically pairs with white too, especially on an architectural level. The cities of Jodhpur in India, Chefchaouen in Morocco and the island of Santorini are all prized for their striking blue facades. “For brighter, sunnier days or climates, ultramarines imitate shadow on brilliant white walls and make great colour features for outdoor walls or modern, eclectic spaces,” says colour consultant Fiona de Lys. “Other prominent blues throughout interiors are the cobalt blue of Chinese porcelain, the Portland blue of Wedgwood, Delft blue and International Klein Blue, prized for its vivid qualities.”

‘If using a darker blue in a smaller library or study space, paint the architectural features in the same tone. It delivers a punchier effect’

Carina Raymond, Studio Raymond

Moody blues

The classic blue-and-white combination works just as well inside as out, especially when expressed through patterned fabrics including toiles de Jouy, stripes and botanicals. “I’m a fan of wallpaper and fabrics by Pomily,” says Emma Deterding of Kelling Designs. “They bring effective accents of the colour, from zig-zags and checks to gentle floral repeats.”

Deep blue for library and snug areas lends a cloak-like feeling of containment and security. Key is to consider a room’s orientation and its architectural features – north or east-facing rooms that do not receive much natural light benefit from blues with warm undertones, while cooler notes can be used in south or west-facing schemes. Ceiling height, mouldings and the placement of windows will all impact how blue appears in a room. Higher ceilings will be able to handle darker shades without feeling too heavy. “I enjoy using moodier blues punctuated with bright artwork in cosy TV areas as they can make the space feel very intimate and relaxing,” says interior designer Alice Leigh. “Dark blue grasscloth wallpaper can be light reflecting, especially at night, and gives a scheme a little more life.”

Blue complements unexpected colours, such as green and burgundy, as well as more natural bedfellows including pink. “Pair it with darker or muted reds, greens – in much the same way as the English landscape harmonises with the sky – and yellows too,” says de Lys. “These colours pop against each other.”

Grey blues work well on cabinetry in south or west-facing kitchens. Mid-shade chalky blues complement antiques and terracotta flooring for boot rooms, ▶

RIGHT In this London utility room by Kate Guinness Design, joinery and a ladder painted in Blue Verditer by Papers and Paints are complemented by a pretty small-print under-counter curtain, and floor tiles in Honey/Ivory by Marrakech Design.

BELOW Jewel-blue walls give a new dimension to abstract artwork in this drawing room by Laura Stephens.



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pantries and downstairs loos, while paler blues that imitate a warm grey or sea colour can work for hallways and transitional spaces.

Consider woodwork too – using blue at the rear of bookshelves mimics depth and shadow. Trims such as architraves, skirting, windows and doors often benefit from a muted colour, such as an off-white, as a gentle contrast. This helps create a softer transition on the eye from wall to wood, particularly in vertical areas. “But if you’re using a darker blue in a smaller library or study space, then try painting the architectural features in the same tone,” says interior designer Carina Raymond. “It delivers a punchier effect.”

Fresh approach

To give this classic colour a bit of an edge, think inventively when it comes to application. “In a hallway, half-height panelling in blue tones paired with warm neutral hues above creates an atmospheric and sophisticated feel,” advises Marina Byers of Dargie Lewis Designs. “In sitting rooms, add surprise pops of colour as a treat to the eye, such as painting a door architrave a contrasting colour. Bring in raspberry pinks or yellows to lift a moody blue.”

Consider texture, too, to create a sense of movement. “I love blues on geometric fabrics, such as Christopher Farr’s Travelling Light, which is a fresh and modern pattern,” says interior designer Alice Leigh. Velvets, wool and chunky knits will also help soften moodiness by adding visual interest and tactile appeal.

Finish is key. Powder blue looks exceptionally striking on lacquered joinery, especially library or study bookshelves. “Add an extra level of detailing by lacquering the cornices and ceiling in the same colour,” says Carina Raymond of Studio Raymond. “It feels modern yet classic, luxurious and cocooning.” To lift the look, pay attention to fixtures and door furniture. Interior designer Laura Stephens favours gold and brass as brightening and softening foils.

Reds and browns offer a softly modern edge. “Pale blues with anything from crimson to burgundy look good because the warmer tones of the red balance out the coolness of the blue, creating an uplifting combination,” says interior designer Tiffany Duggan. “I would love to design a lacquered dark chocolate dining room with pale blue linen slip-covered chairs and plaster lighting.”

Nothing beats atmospheric light to add drama, one reason why midnight blue walls are engagingly accentuated by the mystery and glamour of candlelight. “For inspiration, two books, *The Anatomy of Colour* by Patrick Baty and Edward Bulmer’s *The Colourful Past*, are my go-tos,” says designer Henriette von Stockhausen. “There’s a reason why versatile blue was very prevalent in historic interiors such as those found in grand houses, and why it remains a beloved tone that is still used to great effect today.” ■



‘Add surprise pops of colour as a treat to the eye. Bring in raspberry pinks or yellows to lift a moody blue’

Marina Byers, Dargie Lewis

ABOVE Understated joinery is given fresh appeal in a traditional bespoke mid-blue tone in deVOL’s The Classic English Kitchen.

LEFT Blue walls in Fired Earth’s Jeane act as the perfect foil to an art collection in this sitting room by Marina Byers for Dargie Lewis. They are given a playful edge with a door architrave painted in Madder Red by Fired Earth.



SHOPPING



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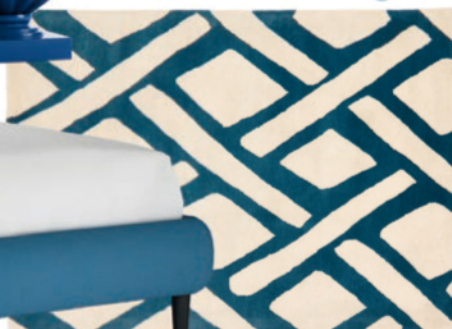
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6

BLUE

Natural depth

Employ different shades of blue to achieve a light and airy mood, a calming spirit or a dark sophistication

1 James bar stool upholstered in Portia by Korla, £1,225, Gabriella James 2 Walls in French Blue, £55 for 2.5l Emulsion, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint; rug and cushions, Oka 3 Cornflower matchstriker, £465, Nina Campbell 4 & 5 Azurite and Fair Blue, both £55 for 2.5l Emulsion, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint 6 Bespoke Lossie bedroom chair in Charlotte Gaisford Picadilly Blue, £699, The Footstool Workshop 7 Rander Ceramic stool, Sapphire, £225, Oka 8 Crossed Path rug, Peacock, 1.8m x 2.4m, £4,168, Jennifer Manners 9 Holborn 5 in Miami Blue, BOLD edit, from £1,509.30, Aradal 10 Botany table lamp in Amalfi Blue Gloss, £246; bespoke 40cm gathered pleat shade in Ian Mankin Avon Check fabric in Indigo, from £177, both David Hunt Lighting 11 Audrey double bed in Heather Blue smart cotton, £1,410, Sofa.com 12 Blue scalloped super-king pillowcase, £44, matching bedlinen available, Sophie Conran 13 Inky Blue round mirror, £135, Bertola Home Studio at Glassette

FEATURE SUZANNA LE GROVE AND KATY MCLEAN

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BATHROOMS *made* BEAUTIFUL

From the ever so simple to a little more complex, these bathroom updates will refresh even the most tired of spaces





THIS IMAGE Jodhpur Aqua tiles, £79.75 a square metre, Nina Campbell for Fired Earth; Canterbury bath in Malm, £1,800; Wall (surrounding the window) in Weald Green, £49.50 for 2.5 litres matt emulsion, all Fired Earth
ABOVE RIGHT Nador Mint and Pink gloss tiles, £69.99 a square metre; Varadero Mint hexagon tiles, £64.99 a square metre, all CTD Tiles



A bathroom is more than just a space for washing and bathing. It is most likely to be the room of the house that is visited first in the morning, and last in the evening, so it needs to have the ability to refresh and relax, as well as deliver on style and practicality. If the family bathroom, en-suite or shower room is in need of a new look, why not use a clever update or two and transform it into a thing of beauty? A new bath or tile design will work wonders, as will a stylish fabric or wallpaper or perhaps a new window treatment or different lighting. Even small changes, such as decluttering, adding storage or a new set of towels can be uplifting.

Transform with tiles

Tiles are always a good solution for a bathroom or shower room, offering a high degree of practicality, and with so many shapes, designs and colourways available, they also offer enormous potential to be creative and make a bathroom feel special.

Use tiles to create all sorts of different looks: a matching design for the floor and walls will add a feeling of decadence and grandeur. Colour-zoning or blocking using complementary hues will create huge visual impact, while using a geometric design on the floor will instantly make the room feel larger. Always ensure floor tiles are specifically designed to be fit for purpose, and if possible, opt for ones with maximum anti-slip qualities.

Even a small retiling project can be transformational. Create a striking basin or bath splashback by adding an injection of colour and interest with a classic mosaic design, or even a bold floral motif. ▶

Be confident with colour

If budget allows, why not invest in a new bath and create a design statement with colour and style? Whether the preference is for contemporary or classic period style, many are available in all sorts of bright and bold hues, from red, orange and yellow to heritage green and even pink.

Traditionally, freestanding baths were made from cast iron, but modern-day enamel formulations are widely available and hugely advantageous. They keep

the water hotter for longer, and are much lighter too, so it may mean no extra strengthening of the floor surface would be needed. Bear in mind however that it may be necessary to update existing wall and floor decoration too, particularly if replacing a built-in panelled bath with a freestanding option. Alternatively, if an existing cast-iron freestanding bath is in good order, it might be possible to give it a simple update with a fresh coat of paint in a cheery shade.



Apollo classic freestanding bath £3,995, The Albion Bath Company



Tap into statement brassware

Chrome is often the go-to option for showers, taps and other bathroom fixtures because of its durability and easy-to-clean credentials. However, many companies now offer brassware ranges in various finishes so it may be more affordable to opt for the same style but in a different metal, thus avoiding any unnecessary replumbing or tiling.

Depending on what is already in place, it may be possible to update brassware without any major disturbance to surrounding tiles – remember the shower arm and head can be replaced from the front, but the plumbing from the faucet and the elbow would need to be done from the wall behind. If in doubt, check with a local plumber.

To add a dash of industrial chic or period-style sophistication, seek out metallic finishes such as copper, brass, nickel, platinum and gold, either polished, aged or brushed.

TOP LEFT *Classic polished brass finish basin mixer with white levers, £825.60; Charterhouse basin with ball-jointed stand in polished brass finish, £1,628.40; Classic concealed dual-control thermostatic shower in polished brass finish, £2,451.60, all Lefroy Brookes*

Add style with shutters

Using shutters as a window treatment in a bathroom can be more practical than a fabric blind or pair of curtains. Made-to-measure options also allow for any shape and size to be manufactured, so for small windows, shutters are ideal, as they also deliver a tidy and space-saving aesthetic too. Cafe-style shutters that are split into independent top and bottom layers and that are also louvred offer the maximum bathroom appeal, delivering varying amounts of privacy without necessarily blocking out all the light. Shutters need a frame around the window from which to hang, so opt for companies that can provide a full fitting service for best results. Colour-wise, classic white or wood-effect finishes will always give a welcome seaside feel; alternatively, select a shade that complements those in the surrounding bathroom tiling or wallpaper.

RIGHT Shutters from £272 a square metre for Pure Hardwood and from £315 a square metre for Faux Wood, California Shutter Company



Set the mood with lighting

Lighting is key to how a bathroom works as a functional space, and of course, decoratively, too. Consider key factors such as the amount of natural light available via any existing windows or skylights, the positioning of mirrors and vanity units as well as the style of fixtures and fittings. Before purchasing, always ensure that lights are specifically designed to be used in a bathroom and built to withstand the high-moisture environment.

Combine functional lights with a mix of soft and ambient lighting to transform the space into a relaxing sanctuary. Perhaps add LED uplighters integrated into the floor combined with sufficient illumination symmetrically positioned on either side of a mirror for general grooming and applying make-up, and for adding interest. Why not also use lighting as a focal point with a specially designed chandelier for an element of opulence, or classic marine-style ship lanterns for a dash of maritime flavour. ▶

LEFT Well Glass wall lights DP-7679, £439 each, Davey Lighting at Original BTC



Replace a radiator

Radiators have the ability to transform a space with models that range from traditional column styles to contemporary panel, coil, spring or tubular designs. Choose small or large, freestanding or wall-mounted and in a wealth of finishes and colours, from metal and cast iron to monochrome or vivid hues. Remember to position any radiator away from key splash areas such as the bath, shower or basin to eliminate the risks associated with electrical appliances and water.

If space allows, double up with a towel radiator with bars or a handy shelf for bathroom linens. These either work off electrical elements or are dual fuel, meaning they can work independently of the central heating system so it is still possible to have a ready supply of warm, dry towels, even in the summer when the heating is off in the rest of the house.

LEFT Brenton Etna 1200mm x 500mm Brushed Brass heated towel rail, £249.99, Only Radiators

Choose wondrous wallpaper

One of the easiest ways to give the bathroom a decadent update is with wallpaper, and it does not necessarily have to be costly. Bathrooms are often small in size and a combination of splash-proof tiled or wood-panelled surfaces on sections of the walls means a few rolls of wallpaper in a dramatic, colourful pattern can quickly transform the mood of what might otherwise be a plain room.

Source wallpapers that are specifically made to withstand the moisture and excess steam content of a bathroom, and play with designs that can cleverly give an illusion of space. Large, ornate patterns can make even the most diminutive of spaces feel big. Alternatively, why not use a floral design that nicely connects the room with a view out over the garden perhaps, or as a celebration of a property's Arts and Crafts or Victorian heritage, or even to add a flavour of rural charm to an urban home?

RIGHT Wallpaper, Macaw, Vivid Yellow £124, V&A Decorative Wallpapers collection, 1838 Wallcoverings



Clear out the clutter

Often the simplest measures can be the most effective, and a bathroom should always be more than just a functional room for washing. Why not transform the space into one that has the vibe of a boutique hotel-style spa with a sophisticated and uncluttered minimal aesthetic? Remove any unnecessary items and restyle with a few select accessories that are conducive to mindfulness and that will enliven the senses. Textures, colours, scents and visuals that connect with the wilderness and nature are ideal, and slubby linens, woven matting, rustic wooden stools, scented candles and framed botanical prints or fern leaves will all work wonders in creating a sanctuary-style environment to retreat to and relax in at the end of a busy day. ▶

Antique rustic stool, £195; Antique framed fern print, £120, both Home Barn



DECORATING

Sort the storage

Bathroom storage need not be complicated or cost a great deal. Depending on the size of the space, there are several clever options that are designed to keep all sorts of essential but not necessarily attractive everyday items out of sight. Think creatively to use storage solutions that will add character. Scour vintage and antique shops and markets for all sorts of cabinets, old-school lockers and metal trunks for reusing as quirky storage. Even antique grain sacks can be repurposed into laundry bags to hang from a hook or peg rail.

Woven rush, rattan and coir baskets are invaluable in a bathroom, introducing textural interest too. A whole range of types, both in rustic and structured styles, will add charm and practicality in an instant. Small baskets are ideal for keeping toiletries neat and tidy on a bathroom shelf, or by the side of the bath. Alternatively, for a sophisticated feel use a pair of symmetrically placed lidded rattan baskets or boxes for storing laundry and bathroom linens.

RIGHT Tisser rattan lidded baskets, £325 each, Oka



Add the finishing touches

A new set of towels, a new bath mat or even a new shower curtain can create a sense of renewal very simply and quickly indeed, whether the only update, or the final flourish for an entirely new room scheme. From fluffy towelling to lighter and more absorbent waffle-textured linen, there are plenty of choices available to add style to a bathroom, and for all seasons too.

Choose towels and bath mats whose designs have pretty detailing or decorative edging for added interest, in hues that co-ordinate with the colour scheme of the room. Source a new shower curtain in luxurious linen with a ruffle trim or an eye-catching pattern printed onto cotton such as a utilitarian ticking stripe, a retro polka dot or a fabulous floral design to add a dash of playful pattern to the bath or shower room. Ensure the curtain is machine washable and with a protective splashproof inner lining for easy cleaning and maximum longevity. ■

LEFT Organic ticking stripe shower curtain, £65, Toast

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CALLAGHANS OF SHREWSBURY

ARTISTIC HAVEN

How the brains behind prestigious art gallery Callaghans of Shrewsbury have added to their portfolio with a place for art lovers to stay in the heart of the historic town of Shrewsbury



Callaghans of Shrewsbury founders Daniel and Stella Callaghan know a thing or two about 19th to 21st-century British and European art and artists, having garnered an international reputation over their 35 years in the business. Specialising in fine paintings, watercolours and works of art including

bronze sculpture, they attract clients from all over the world to their prestigious art gallery in the historic town of Shrewsbury.

With this in mind, it seemed like a fitting time to invest in somewhere for these patrons to stay when they visited. So, when the opportunity arose to renovate their historic property a short walk away from the gallery, the couple jumped at

ABOVE The sitting room in Callaghans Artists Residence provides the perfect backdrop for a selection of artworks from Callaghans of Shrewsbury.

the prospect. The place in question, Henry Tudor House, is one of the oldest timber-framed buildings in Shrewsbury, dating back to the 14th century, and no doubt has seen some sights over the years.

Now home to the Callaghans Artists Residence, it is named Henry Tudor House after its namesake who became Henry VII, and stayed in the building on his way to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. This battle, it turned out, was to be the last one of the Wars of the Roses and is historically significant because it established the Tudor dynasty for the English Throne.

“Henry Tudor House is a great asset to the gallery, boasting many tales from the past,” Daniel explains. “Over the centuries the building has been used for numerous purposes – everything from a butcher to a brothel was once housed here! And on a personal level, it is particularly significant because it is where we opened the first Callaghans of Shrewsbury gallery over 35 years ago.”

Callaghans Artists Residence can be found on a street named Wyle Cop, which is home to countless timber-framed buildings and remarkable centuries-old architecture. Inside, the beautifully renovated two-bedroom apartment proves the perfect backdrop for displaying Callaghans pieces of art, from beautiful paintings and sculptures to fine furniture. “As international art dealers, we have clients from across the globe, so it is a real pleasure to be able to offer them somewhere special to stay in Shrewsbury,” Stella says. What better way to set the scene for a cultural stay in a town steeped in so much history?

For further information or to book the apartment, email art@callaghan-finepaintings.com or telephone 01743 343452. Visit callaghan-finepaintings.com ■



ABOVE Callaghans Artists Residence is in Grade I listed Henry Tudor House, one of the oldest buildings in Shrewsbury, dating back to the 14th century. ABOVE One of the two well-appointed bedrooms in Callaghans Artists Residence.



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QUINTESSENTIALLY

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FLOURISHING DISPLAY

Cut flowers bring a fresh sense of seasonality and enhance a collection of vintage tableware. To attract the eye, opt for tall flowers in a single colour, such as these summer gladioli – try the Sweet Blue variety – and contrast with a vessel of smaller, more blowsy blooms, which could be peonies (late peonies are out at the beginning of July). To have seasonal flowers on rotation, plant a small patch or pots (to avoid depleting flowers in garden borders) with cut-and-come-again blooms. See Sarah Raven's selection of cutting-garden seeds for an easy starting point.

sarahraven.com

What to do in JULY

Enjoy the halcyon days of summer with picnics in the park, candlelit suppers under the stars and sweet pastry treats bursting with berries



GATHER... *for an al fresco party*

Invite a group of friends and family to enjoy a summer gathering under the bough of a tree or the canopy of a scented climber. If there is a birthday or celebration on the horizon it could be the perfect opportunity to be elaborate with smart, comfortable dining chairs and a table dressed to

perfection. Consider floral touches in pastel shades to add style and elegance befitting the occasion as well as celebrating the best of the English summer garden. For an extra special seasonal touch, serve canapes, drinks and cakes decorated with edible flowers or herbs picked fresh from the garden. ▶

Candle holders £14, small bud vase £7, large bud vase £11.25, table runner £12, food flags £4.50, vintage floral paper plates £4.75, scalloped napkin £4.50, cup with handles and saucer set £7, serving platters £7, all Talking Tables





RASPBERRY & ROSE TARTLETS

Makes 12

PASTRY

60g butter, chilled and diced
140g plain flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting
A pinch of salt

TO ASSEMBLE

50g chopped dark chocolate, melted
250g raspberries
Chopped pistachios
3tbsp apricot glaze

CRÈME PÂTISSIÈRE

1 tablespoon cornflour
1 tablespoon rosewater
60g caster sugar
1 egg and 1 egg yolk
100ml whole milk
150ml double cream

EQUIPMENT

12-hole fluted muffin pan, greased
9cm round cookie cutter
Baking parchment
Piping bag fitted with large star nozzle

METHOD

- For the pastry, rub the butter into the flour and salt using your fingertips. Add 1 tablespoon of cold water and mix in with a round-bladed knife, adding a little more water if the mixture is too dry. Wrap the pastry in cling film and chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour.
- On a flour-dusted surface, roll out the pastry dough thinly and cut out 12 circles using the cutter. Press each circle into each of the holes of the muffin pan. Prick the base on the inside of each pastry case and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
- Preheat the oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6.
- Line the pastry cases with baking parchment, fill with baking beans and bake blind for about 10–15 minutes in the centre of the oven, until the pastry is golden brown. Let it cool and remove the baking beans and parchment, then brush the insides of the pastry cases with a thin layer of melted chocolate and let it cool.
- To prepare the crème pâtissière, whisk together the cornflour, rosewater, sugar, egg and egg yolk until creamy. Put the milk and cream in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Pour it over the egg mixture immediately, whisking all the time. Return to the pan and cook for a few minutes, until thick. Pass through a sieve to remove any lumps and let it cool.
- To assemble, spoon the rose crème pâtissière into a piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle and pipe into the cases. Top with the raspberries and the chopped pistachios.
- To glaze, heat the apricot glaze in a saucepan until just melted, cool slightly and then brush over the raspberries using a pastry brush.

EAT... raspberries

At their best now, summer fruits provide a tart alternative to strawberries to enjoy with lashings of cream. For a refined way to serve them, these dainty pastries are perfect for a summer afternoon tea. The pastry cases are lined with a thin layer of dark chocolate, which offers the perfect foil to the sharpness of the fruit.



FURTHER READING

Summer Fruit Pastries published by Ryland Peters & Small (£14.99), with photography by Steve Painter

DISPLAY... *dahlias*

Though abundant in autumn months, the first dazzling show of dahlias can appear in July. Cut new season flowers from the garden and bring indoors to enjoy in jugs and vases around the house and as inspiration for craft projects, or even a new room scheme. The graphic shape of the flower head works well as a design for fabric or wallpaper, so why not use a floral block-print fabric to upholster a chair or dress a window to add a lively note to a guest bedroom, or a window seat that enjoys views out over the garden. Remember to add a freshly picked bunch of dahlias displayed in a charming vintage vase – after all, the more these glorious flowers are cut, the more the plant produces, continuing to bring joy through to October. ▶



Chair and curtain in Dahlia block-printed fabric in Crimson / Indigo, £228 a metre, Molly Mahon



MAKE... *the perfect picnic*

Summer would not be the same without some delicious morsels packed in a basket and enjoyed with friends in a park or by the water's edge. Find a suitable spot in an area of dappled sunshine and enjoy the moment. Take inspiration from the best of the English garden with throws and cushions that

are resplendent with floral motifs in soft pinks and fresh greens to increase the romantic, pretty look and offer comfort. Fill a hamper with savoury tarts, crusty bread, cheese and fresh fruit, and perhaps a bottle or two of English sparkling rosé. Remember to pack a hat or portable parasol for protection from the sun.

Paisley Pink vintage kantha throw, £195; Bouquet De Fleurs outdoor cushions, from £60; Bordered hand-painted bowls, £40 for four, and plates, £60 for a set of four, all Birdie Fortescue

UPDATE... *garden furniture with a lick of paint*

All it takes is a little preparation and a couple of coats of paint to refresh a set of garden furniture. Consider the space and environment for which the furniture is intended before choosing which colour paint to use. A bold, bright yellow or red will add personality to a small patio in an instant, while a timeless green will work harmoniously near planting without drawing the eye from the glory of the garden. Remember to sand all surfaces prior to painting to remove any existing flaking paint. Use a weather-resistant eggshell or oil-based gloss for best results, and leave sufficient time between coats to ensure a long-lasting finish. ■

Chairs painted in Garden 86, £81 for 2.5l Intelligent Exterior Eggshell, Little Greene





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Whether dreaming of escaping off-grid, looking for the perfect house to gather with friends and family or seeking an indulgent short break, our inspiring selection of destinations offers tailored holidays in elevated surroundings





... for a special gathering

If looking to invite friends and family to sojourn together, hiring a large property provides room for everyone to stay in the same place and gather for celebratory meals. Sleeping up to 12 guests, The Palladian is a grand Georgian-style abode near Cirencester in the Cotswolds that includes desirable home comforts and refined touches for guests' entertainment. Highlights include 15 acres of grounds to explore, a heated outdoor swimming pool, a tennis court and an al fresco dining space beneath a leaf-covered pergola. To make any occasion extra special, beauty and massage treatments and a private chef can be requested.

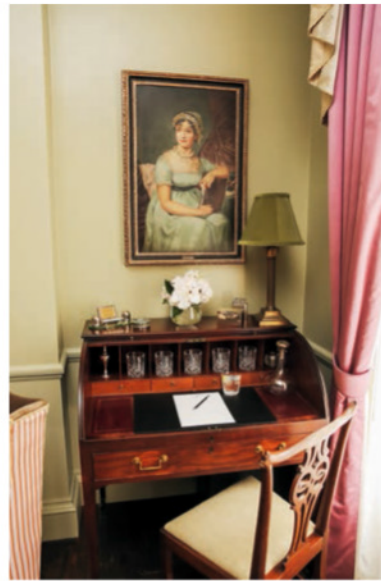
Sleeps 12, from £4,550 a week, £3,295 for a short break. Day-hire available. Parties cannot be held without permission from the owner. The Palladian, Gloucestershire, Tel 01637 881183; uniquehomestays.com

... for an indulgent foodie break

Go on a culinary adventure and visit some of the country's top restaurants, then retire to splendid surroundings. With more Michelin Star restaurants than any other county outside of London, Cumbria is the beautiful setting for Zuri, a property on the Edenhall Estate. Nestled in rural Penrith, this four-bedroom home sleeps eight. The main bedroom features a large balcony with an outside bath as well as outdoor seating to make the most of the tranquil setting. When ready to explore the area's culinary delights, nearby Allium, at Askham Hall, has a Michelin star, while L'Enclume, one of only eight three-Michelin star restaurants in Britain, is about an hour's drive away.

Sleeps eight, from £1,522 for a long weekend or mid-week break. Zuri, Cumbria, Tel 01872 553491; boutique-retreats.co.uk ▶

OPPOSITE PAGE Ideal for a special gathering with family and friends, The Palladian is a Cotswold haven with plenty of outdoor activities for long summer evenings. **ABOVE** Zuri is a rural retreat on the Edenhall Estate in Cumbria. As well as being a relaxing escape, it is perfect for gourmets, with a number of Michelin star restaurants in the vicinity.



... for period glamour in the city

Elevate the charm of a visit to London by staying in a boutique hotel with period decor that offers a historical atmosphere. For an overnight stay with a difference, Hazlitt's hotel in Soho provides the chance to enjoy a trip to London ensconced in similar interiors to those experienced by 18th-century aristocrats and society figures. The hotel takes its name from English essayist and literary critic William Hazlitt. Each quirky bedroom is individually designed and sumptuously appointed with antique furniture and fittings appropriate to the period and history of the property, but with the addition of luxurious modern bathrooms. The literary connection to the hotel's original owner is celebrated in the cosy sitting room where a glass-fronted bookcase houses a range of first edition books. Many of these are signed by renowned authors who have spent time at the hotel, including Ted Hughes, JK Rowling and Seamus Heaney among others.

Rooms from £325 a night, breakfast £13.95 a person.
Hazlitt's, London, Tel 207 434 1771; hazlittshotel.com

After a day in town sight-seeing, shopping or post-theatre performance, walk into the type of ornately decorated interiors that would have been seen in Regency London society. Situated in Marylebone, Henry's Townhouse is an 'ultra' boutique hotel that is the Grade II listed former home of Jane Austen's brother, Henry. The historic house has been renovated with so each of its six bedrooms celebrate the original period elegance of the property and to bring to life the stories of its past Austen family owners and visitors. Reception rooms for guests to enjoy include a lavish carriage-style cocktail snug and Jane Austen's literary room, which are decorated with antiques and purposefully chosen details to transport guests to back in time. To take a little of the hotel's evocative spirit home, there is a limited-edition candle collection available to buy with each one having a scent evocative of Regency Britain.

Rooms from £545 a night. The hotel is also available for exclusive hire. Henry's Townhouse, London, Tel 0330 133 4959; henrystownhouse.co.uk

TOP LEFT & ABOVE FAR LEFT Away from the main streets yet within a stone's throw of London main tourist attractions, Hazlitt's is an elegant 18th-century-style cocooning abode.

ABOVE CENTRE & ABOVE RIGHT In Marylebone, Henry's Townhouse hotel pays homage to Henry's famous sister, Jane Austen, with an ornate reading room for guests to relax in.

... for a restorative off-grid haven

Escape from daily routines and feel connected to nature in a lavish woodland retreat. Situated on the Farncombe Estate in Worcestershire, The Fish Hotel's three treehouses offer a unique and alluring way to relax. Elevated both in height and in décor, the treehouses include underfloor heating, ensuite bathrooms and two heated outdoor baths on an outdoor deck. For complete decadence, the baths are fitted with an intercom system for room service. *Treehouses from £550 a night, on a B&B basis, sleeping two adults and two children. One of the treehouses is dog-friendly, The Fish Hotel, Worcestershire, Tel 01386 858000; thefishhotel.co.uk*



... for romantic retreats with character

Enhance the romance of going away as a couple with a quaint haven designed especially for two. Tucked away near the coast, Rose Lodge, made of Cornish stone, is replete with charming details such as a cosy sitting room and a king-size four-poster bed. Outside, to encourage maximum relaxation, there is a sun-soaked courtyard with a table and chairs for al fresco dining and a coffee table area for relaxing in the morning. The property is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is dog friendly, so the surroundings can be explored with four-legged friends in tow. *Sleeps two (plus cot), £609 for a long weekend or mid-week break. Rose Lodge, Cornwall, Tel 01872 553491; boutique-retreats.co.uk*



Staying in sumptuous surroundings will make a holiday for two memorable for years to come. Set in the town of Lancaster and featuring remarkable architecture, The Music Room is a garden pavilion, dating from around 1730, with an exquisite Baroque interior restored by the Landmark Trust. The one-bedroom property features a four-poster bed and a baby-grand piano in the bedroom ready for serenades. A small roof terrace provides an intimate private space for having drinks tête-à-tête with a sweeping vista across to Lancaster Castle.

Sleeps two, four nights from £320, The Music Room, Lancaster, Tel 01628 825925; landmarktrust.org.uk ▶

TOP TO BOTTOM The Fish Hotel's 'grown up' treehouse is on the Farncombe Estate in Worcestershire, a 400-acre landscape of forests and fields to explore on foot or bike. This neat Cornish cottage has a decadent bathroom suite for two with a roll-top bath and a walk-in shower. The Music Room is a one-bedroom period gem in Lancaster, a city with many cultural attractions to enjoy including local museums, a theatre and a pretty waterway.





...for exploring beautiful coastlines

Come rain or shine, a stroll along the Dorset coast is a refreshing experience. After a day exploring the British shoreline, take things out of the ordinary by staying in one of Aller Dorset's bespoke shepherd's huts, which are decorated with an eye for elevated interior design. At the site's scenic setting, available extra little luxuries include reflexology sessions, which are provided in the comfort of each hut, yoga classes at the site's lake and pre-prepared fire-pit supper and breakfast hampers. *Shepherd's huts from £185 a night, suitable for two adults and a babe in arms, Aller Dorset, Dorset, Tel 01258 880696; alldorset.com*



If passionate about sailing, the Devon coastline is a yacht haven. After a day out on the sea, feel effortlessly relaxed in a home-from-home setting. Dusky Cottage is an idyllic thatched property situated between Kingsbridge and Salcombe harbours on the south coast of Devon. This inviting dwelling offers four bedrooms suitable for eight guests and has a characterful interior with an Aga, four-poster beds and far-reaching views across the hills. To add to the sense of luxury, guests can be put in touch with a local concierge company to arrange private chefs, yacht hire and other experiences such as champagne cruises and beach yoga. *Sleeps eight, from £1,029 for two nights, Dusky Cottage, Devon, Tel 01548 706706; fineststays.co.uk*



TOP & ABOVE LEFT This quaint Devon thatched cottage is just a short drive from the sandy bay of Hope Cove. **LEFT & BELOW** The decor in Aller Dorset's huts is so popular with guests that an edit of products – in-keeping with the hut's decor styles – can be bought to take home.





... for discovering inspiring interiors emporiums

Whether looking to source specific pieces or simply enjoy browsing, a weekend of antiques can unearth a treasure trove of ideas. The Pig in the South Downs is just a 20-minute drive from the West Sussex town of Petworth, renowned for its antique shops, including the Petworth Antiques Market which hosts numerous antiques dealers and a broad range of antiques. The hotel is found in the hamlet of Madehurst, the perfect spot to relax after a day of shopping. With an informal spirit, the rooms are individually decorated, each with an eclectic mix of furnishings. Guests can take a tour of the hotel's kitchen garden with one of the gardeners, and during September and October the grapes in the hotel's vineyards are harvested, with the cellar doubling up as a tasting room.

Rooms from £225 a night, *The Pig in the South Downs*, West Sussex. Tel 0345 225 9494; thepighotel.com

... for staying ensconced in sumptuous surroundings

For those hoping to enjoy a variety of different types of activities, a luxury country house hotel can provide everything all in one venue. Marrying modern-day opulence with interiors that nod to the grandeur of its past, Beaverbrook country hotel is the late-Victorian former home of Lord Beaverbrook. Outside the large mansion, there are 400 acres of grounds to walk or cycle around, and lawn games and tennis courts are also available. To indulge in self-care, the hotel's spa offers specialist tailored treatments and experiences from visiting wellness masters. For a slower pace, a private in-house cinema has three complimentary showings a day, or there are a range of masterclasses on offer such as cocktail masterclasses and wine or sake tasting.

Rooms from £505 a night, *Beaverbrook Hotel*, Surrey, Tel 01372 571300; beaverbrook.co.uk ■

TOP LEFT & BELOW LEFT

The Pig in the South Downs serves dishes made with produce from the garden and local area. After supper, retire to one of the hotel's rooms.

TOP RIGHT & BELOW RIGHT

At Beaverbrook hotel in Surrey, guests can dress up for drinks in Sir Frank's bar or go for a walk in the peace and quiet in the vast grounds.



Immersed in **NATURE**

Discover the magical qualities and multiple benefits of enhancing a garden with a natural swimming pond or pool from homeowners who have taken the plunge

The ultimate garden addition, a natural swimming pond or pool provides an idyllic place to take year-round daily exercise or to dive into to cool down on a hot summer's day with family and friends. Dating back centuries and especially revered in Austria for their health-giving benefits, their appeal as a home enhancement is much more recent, and their popularity continues to soar, with the concept capturing homeowners' imaginations up and down the country. Hugo and Fran Warner are firm converts since Gartenart Swimming Ponds installed one in their Kent garden. "It's fantastic having a swimming pond," say the couple. "We think

it's the best thing we've ever done. It's really changed life for us and we use it every single day."

Pond or pool?

Large manmade bodies of water, these bathing spots are designed to enhance their surroundings as well as the lives of their owners. Referred to as either natural swimming pools and natural swimming ponds, these terms are often used interchangeably, although some experts claim there are fundamental differences, largely down to the water filtration techniques used.

Natural swimming pools rely on a biological filtration method where beneficial bacteria break ►

ABOVE An oak deck and a jetty with steps enable easy and safe access to this design by The Swimming Pond Company (theswimmingpondcompany.co.uk)

OPPOSITE Locating the natural swimming pond next to their house allows Simon and Nicki Chandler to appreciate its beauty every day.





ABOVE This large, sweeping pond by Gartenart (gartenart.co.uk) has transformed the garden of this picturesque Kentish farmhouse. Taking advantage of the high water table on Romney Marsh allowed Gartenart to make the pond two metres deep, and Hugo and Fran Warner and their children use it every day of the year.

down any organic material in the water. This enables a freedom of design where plants are optional and helpful features such as air source heat pumps and floating solar, manual and automated retractable covers can be discreetly incorporated.

A natural swimming pond is designed as a carefully balanced ecosystem without any filtration technology. To retain water clarity, around half of the pond is usually planted with oxygenating plants. Separated from the main bathing area, these plants are often used alongside shingle to filter and clean the water. Unlike a pool, natural ponds cannot be covered or heated, as this will shade plants and upset the carefully balanced ecosystem.

Tina Lambert has become a strong advocate of swimming in a natural swimming pond ever since The Swimming Pond Company installed one in her Suffolk garden. “The quality of the water is amazing,” she says. “You emerge after swimming with soft, invigorated skin – so different to bathing in a chlorine-filled pool.”

Built alongside their Grade II listed farmhouse, Tina and Ian Lambert’s swimming pond is a real attraction for family, friends and wildlife. “We knew we wanted some form of swimming area and felt that a natural

pond was more in keeping with the house and the surrounding landscape,” she says. “We were hoping to convert one of the existing ponds to swim in, but the location wasn’t ideal due to overhanging trees, whose leaves can upset the chemical balance of the water. Company owner Paul Mercer suggested a spot closer to the house, and now the pond is a lovely feature to look out on. The children and dog all enjoy using the pool. We’ve even added a ramp so our dog can continue to swim and exercise now he’s older. This area and the adjacent oak deck have been the backdrop to two memorable 21st-birthday parties.”

Personal design

Whether homeowners choose a natural pond or pool, each design can be tailored to suit the individual site, setting and bathers’ needs. Simon Chandler called in The Swimming Pond Company to add a pond to his Norfolk garden. “I grew up on a farm and enjoyed swimming in a pond there,” he says, “and it was something I’d always wanted. My father sadly passed away, and I inherited some money, making the project possible. It’s the best thing we’ve done and has transformed the whole garden.”

Simon now swims daily, year-round. “The water is

A large, curved oak deck sits out over the water and is an idyllic spot for diving, dining and lounging. BELOW Supremely sympathetic to their Grade II Suffolk farmhouse, Ian and Tina Lambert's swimming pond spans 185 square metres and is a couple of metres deep.

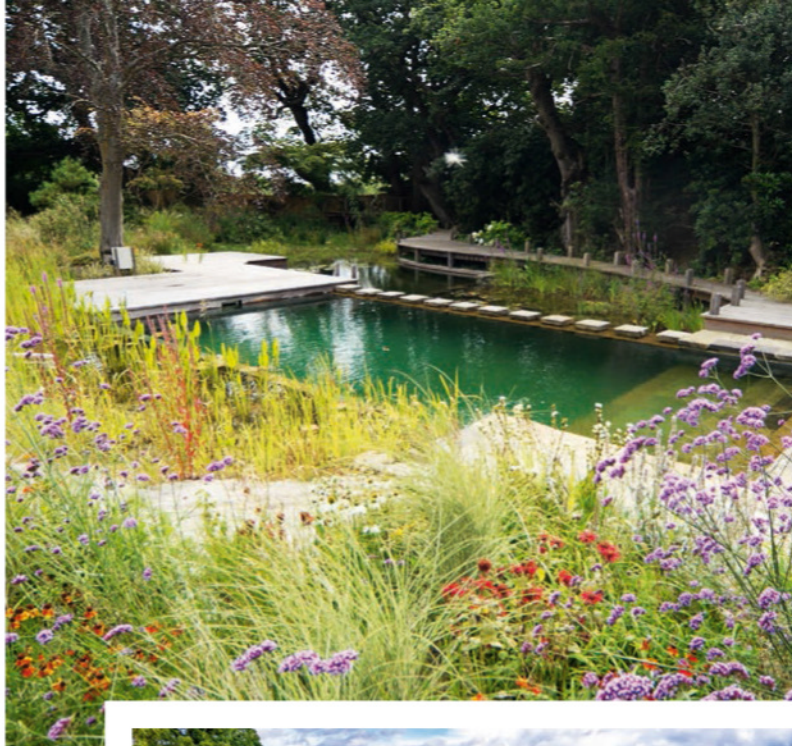


supremely soft after being continually filtered by the plants," he says. "It's also a magnet for wildlife. We can see the tracks of numerous deer who come down to the pond to drink early each morning. There are also a pair of kingfishers who love the clear water and are drawn to the newts. It's a truly beautiful feature and we've named it Alan's Pond in my father's memory."

Boost biodiversity

Any large area of water will attract a broad range of visitors, and Hugo and Fran Warner's natural swimming pond is a delightful example. "Since adding the pond, the change in the environment is incredible," Fran explains. "Beautiful insects, dragonflies, butterflies and frogs have really added to the garden." Hugo says: "When we bought the house, we were considering installing a traditional Californian-style pool, but it didn't fit in with the house and grounds. I grew up swimming in the River Thames which was a much more natural experience." Replicating this childhood pleasure led to the graceful kidney-shaped design by Gartenart. "This is more than just a swimming pool," says Hugo. "It's a beautiful thing to have – every season looks different. Visually it's very impactful." ▶





Achieve the Dream

The design and installation of a natural swimming pool is a professional and specialist task. Kate Miller, managing director of Natural Swimming Pools, shares some of its inspirational projects and outlines the process



How large a garden do you need? There is no minimum size. We can build small plunge pools, and a swim jet can be added if required.

How do you ensure the scale is right between the pool and the house? This is a matter of balancing what the client is after along with our instinctive reaction to the site and setting. With our landscaping background you have a natural sense of proportion and a strong feel for how the pool will sit within the site.

How long does it take to build? On average a project can take anywhere from three to six months to get from initial design stage to completion. The build usually takes around eight weeks, but this depends on the company's availability and lead times.

What does it cost? Our average pool costs around £102,000 (£85,000 + VAT) which covers the design process, from site visits through to installation. Any additional features such as decking, stone coping, covers etc are at an additional cost.

Is planning permission required? In the UK, it is not usually required for a natural swimming pool, unless the proposed site is in a conservation area, National

Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), but this is always established prior to any work taking place. Planning permission will also be required if the site falls within the curtilage of a listed property. We have never had a project refused on planning grounds, and planted pools are particularly favoured as they boost the local biodiversity. Occasionally it may be necessary to have an archaeological survey carried out during the dig.

Can the design be tailored? We build truly bespoke pools – with and without plants – and can combine areas of oxygenating planting with a living biological filter for flexible designs.

For planted pools, a rectangular swimming chamber sits within the pool structure, supported by an adjacent area of oxygenating plants. This section containing the growing medium is separated by a submerged wall, allowing for easy cleaning and maintenance.

With a non-planted pool, we rely on a two-circuit system where a skimmer removes surface debris and a biological filter cleans the water along with a filter to remove the nutrient. Once clean, the water is returned to the main pool and the cycle continues. ■

TOP This natural swimming pool with plants has a stepping stone walkway with a waterfall edge that separates the swimming area from a planted area.

ABOVE LEFT A non-planted natural swimming pool which is purified naturally by micro-organisms in the biological filter. A nutrient absorber material extracts phosphorous to stop the pool going green with algae.

ABOVE Billowing mixed perennials and grasses blend effortlessly with the pool's regeneration zone and oxygenating plants. For more information, visit naturalswimmingpools.com

Featured artist: Amy Hiles

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Can you tell us about your home?

We are in the Evenlode valley in the heart of the Cotswolds. Our home is an old farmhouse built of honey-coloured stone, with a split-stone roof covered in moss and rambling clematis. The original farm buildings, now converted into neighbours' homes, surround our own, which feels very cosy and comforting. It's a very quiet village, where church bells and horses' hooves are daily sounds I really enjoy.

What first attracted you to it?

It was love at first sight! It was the garden for me and the fireplaces for my husband. It has a quintessentially cottage-style garden with old-fashioned planting that surrounds the house. My father's family go a long way back in gardening, running Chilvers lavender farms in Norfolk, and my grandparents spent morning to night tending their garden. I remember well my grandfather's hands were always rough and black from hours of work in his garden. I was brought up gardening.

What did you feel about the original design and layout of the house?

I knew I wanted an old house that hadn't been knocked around too much. We bought this house from a family who loved it, we could feel that love and I have tried to respect our previous owner's advice and knowledge of how a space works as a home. My mother's suggestion was to buy some furniture from the previous owners, all of which we have kept to this day. We haven't done any major work to the house. I like its authenticity. We were so lucky to find original features, like the elm bannisters and staircases, untouched.

What have you done to make the house your own?

During lockdown we painted the entire house. I mixed the colours and made the glazes and we colourwashed the drawing room in cloudy shell pink, whitewashed all the wobbly walls and then glazed them in greens and pinks. The English garden was always the inspiration for colour for me. This year we have put central heating in the loft and transformed the bedrooms with iron beds from Feather & Black, and wallpapered the eaves in a beautiful design which dates back to the 1800s, from Common Room and called Old Oak. I chose it because the powder blue in the design can still be found in the distempred eaves in the loft.



Penelope wears a pair of velvet slippers from her Commemorative Slippers collection

My English Home

Best-known for her tasselled riding boots, inspired by living in Spain and worn by HRH The Princess of Wales, footwear designer Penelope Chilvers tells us about her eclectic home

How would you describe your interiors style?

Authentic to its origins. I'm probably quite eclectic in my style and prefer to make do than be extravagant - I'm much more attached to a cushion made from a vintage fabric sample picked up in Portobello market than a new one. Aside from our beds, all our furniture is second-hand. I lived in Barcelona for 10 years and love to travel. I've bought souvenirs from all over. In fact, we have an area of the business, called Penelope's Souvenirs, with beautiful crafts that we sell in our stores to bring the shoe collections to life.

Does your home inspire your work?

My desk sits in front of a large window with a view down the garden which is wonderful for bird watching. My studio is full of old

shoes, old fabrics, leather swatches. It makes the perfect place for a design retreat.

Does your love of craftsmanship in your work translate to your home?

I love supporting artisans and local industries in Spain and England. I came across Tinsmiths in Herefordshire and commissioned them to make all our curtains. I gave them left-over suedes from production to add a generous hem to the curtains over the doors to keep out drafts.

Finally, what should no English home be without?

A boot room, or a dedicated place keep rags and leather care, to polish your boots. I find it a very therapeutic and calming pass time to clean up a muddy pair of boots. penelopechilvers.com ■



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