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August 2023 | Issue 222 | £5.50 | UK Edition

COUNTRY STYLE

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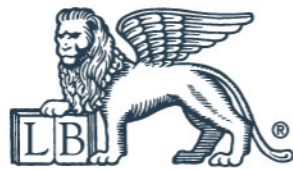
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CONTENTS

AUGUST 2023



Notebook

- 19 NEWS** Our monthly digest of notable people, places and products.
- 26 DESIGN DISCOVERIES** Bringing interest to summer interiors.
- 32 RURAL CRAFTS** Handcrafted pieces by country-based British makers.
- 34 COUNTRY SEAT** Garden chairs for a sunny spot or shaded nook.
- 37 THE EDIT** The latest pieces and new collections catching our attention.
- 57 SUBSCRIBE** Treat a loved one or yourself to a subscription to *The English Home*.

English Homes

- 40 PALLADIAN BEAUTY** A love of entertaining and classic English style characterise this country manor house.
- 50 FRENCH LEAVE** Revamped furniture and soft brocante furnishings bring French charm to this English cottage.
- 54 COLOURFUL HISTORY** The newly transformed interiors of this 15th-century farmhouse effortlessly blend classic and contemporary styles.
- 66 EASTERN INFLUENCE** Furniture maker and art consultant Charles Orchard's family home is a beautifully balanced fusion of English and Asian style.

Style Inspiration

- 73 A BEAUTIFUL VIEW** Elevate entrance halls with a well-considered vignette.
- 74 COMFORT & STYLE** Decorating country sitting rooms, from formal to relaxed.
- 81 ON DISPLAY** 10 ways to curate art and antiques in the home.
- 88 BIDDING TO WIN** Expert advice on the ins and outs of buying at auction.
- 92 CHINTZ – CREATIVE COMBINATIONS** The enduring appeal of florals and how to use them in the home.
- 100 UTILITARIAN BEAUTY** A comprehensive guide to utility, boot and flower rooms. ▶

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81



92



50



74

Living the Season

- 111 CELEBRATING STRAWBERRIES** A variety of ways to enjoy this sweet British fruit.
- 112 WHAT TO DO IN AUGUST** Creative activities to enjoy at home this month, from herby cocktails to pressed flowers.
- 118 HEAD TO THE COUNTRY** Our edit of clubs and hotels to experience inspirational country living at its best.
- 124 TAKING SHAPE** Elevate the garden with outdoor sculptures by acclaimed makers.
- 130 ONE FINAL THING** Take inspiration for creative pastimes from the beauty of the English countryside in summertime.

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Mix stripes and hand-block-printed florals such as this design by Molly Mahon (page 92) to bring a contemporary informality to country interiors.

A letter from home



“Of all the things the English have invented and made part of the credit of the national character,” wrote Henry James, “the most perfect, the most characteristic, the only one they have mastered completely in all of its details, is the well-appointed, well-administered, well-filled country house.”

While we’ve become known the world over for our country house style, there’s a great art and a deceptively huge amount of planning that goes into creating interiors that feel effortlessly timeless, comfortable and relaxed. Rooms where everything works together but nothing ‘matches’ are the opposite of polished, ‘decorated in one go’ schemes.

Fundamentally, it seems that a mix of practicality and nostalgia is at the heart of English country decorating. In this issue, our feature on creating a boot room, utility or flower room (page 100) to help contain messier elements and tasks associated with country life makes a good starting point. Our look at the country sitting room, whether smart or informal (page 74), considers such practicalities as washable loose covers for seating, particularly if used by four-legged friends too, or adding a bar cart to be able to entertain guests at the drop of a hat.

Of course, throughout the issue, you’ll also find abundant decorating advice including mixing old and new, prints and colour palettes to create a home that’s evolved over time. At the heart of this lie our features on displaying art and antiques (page 81) and buying antiques at auction (page 88), and our look at the history of chintz and how to use these florals to embellish interiors today (page 92). What could be more romantic?

Samantha

Samantha Scott-Jeffries, Editor



We are more than just kitchens. Our interior design service extends to any room in the house. From bedrooms to lounges, boot rooms to home office projects.

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Antoine Bouvard Snr. (1870-1956)
'Evening Glow' - Oil on Canvas - 19" x 25" - Signed



Helios (b.1958)
'The Golden Hour' - Oil on Panel - 10" x 10" - Signed



Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956)
'The Canal, Venice' - Oil on Canvas - 25" x 30" - Signed

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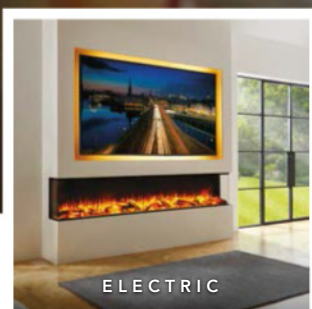


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NOTEBOOK

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SPOTLIGHT ON...

Legacy of Luxury

Celebrating the elegance of the English countryside since 1860, Sanderson is globally revered for its timeless hand-drawn patterns and bold archival reinterpretations. To capture this magic, photographer Damian Foxe made dresses combining iconic Sanderson wallpapers and fabrics. sanderson.sandersondesigngroup.com





Cossetting Charm

Sophie Conran's first bespoke sofas

"Joyful comfiness" is how Sophie Conran describes her range of bespoke sofas. "My sofas are made completely bespoke for you by hand in Derbyshire by a team who used to make sofas for my Dad [the late Sir Terence Conran] many years ago," she says. "They are highly skilled craftspeople who are very dedicated to producing truly exceptional quality. As a result, there is only ever going to be a limited amount of my sofas available every year." Each sofa is handmade entirely from natural materials, with solid European birch hardwood frames, fully sprung steel seats and natural fibres.

"If your sofas are anything like mine," she says, "they get a lot of use from family, friends and lots of dogs too. For that reason, they all come with loose covers that can be removed for cleaning. I wanted them to be really easy to change so I have added a beautiful bow detail at the back."

Starting her eclectic career as an apprentice to milliner Stephen Jones, Sophie worked on her father's restaurant interiors, her brother Jasper's fashion empire, produced gourmet pies and wrote cookbooks before launching her elegant range of homeware. sophieconran.com

Inspired By Nature

First wallpaper from Hare's Tail

Block-printed fabric specialist Hare's Tail has proudly unveiled its first wallpaper collection. The six designs – Seaweed, Acorn, Eastern Leaves, Boat, Cindy's Needle and Lucy's India – are available in four colourways, with one of each design also printed on paper-backed linen.

Founded in 2018 by Speronella Marsh (left), Shropshire-based studio Hare's Tail specialises in nature-inspired designs block-printed by hand on to antique linens and fabrics. To replicate the look and texture of the hand-block-printed fabrics, Speronella and printmaker Mel Lewis, who joined as a business partner last year, explored both traditional and modern production methods before alighting on digital printing in the UK on textured paper. The duo worked closely with the manufacturer to perfect the colour palette, particularly the background colour, to authentically capture the look of antique linen.

"We have worked hard to achieve this look and are very excited with the outcome, as we believe we are offering something very new and original to the interiors world," says Mel. harestail.co.uk ▶





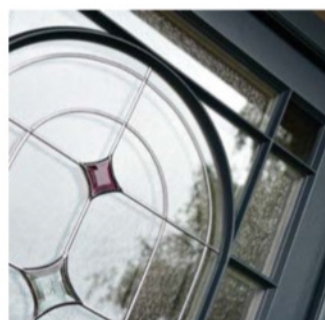
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Archival Revival

Castle Howard x Watts 1874

The epitome of grand English country house style, the sublime collection of fabrics and wallpapers created by heritage interiors brand Watts 1874 in collaboration with Castle Howard is brand new yet feels historic and timeless.

One of the 10 Treasure Houses of England and famously appearing in the ITV adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited* and more recently Netflix's *Bridgerton*, Howard Castle in North Yorkshire has been home to the Howard family for over 300 years. The Hon Nick Howard and his wife, Vicky, run the estate today as their family home and an attraction for visitors, who marvel at its opulent interiors and fine art collection.

Entrusting Fiona Flint, creative director of Watts 1874, to reproduce patterns found in the stately home's archives to redecorate its key rooms sowed the seeds for the Castle Howard Indienne Collection. Carefully stored and protected from light damage, the extraordinary collection of textiles and wallpapers was amassed by Rosalind, 9th Countess of Carlisle during her ambitious project to redecorate the Castle Howard when she came to live there in 1880. Vicky was determined to bring this remarkable archive back to life.

The team at Watts 1874 selected a balanced range of fabrics and wallpapers from the archive to form this timeless collection of seven bold yet delicate designs. Aurea Indienne in Rose Madder is based on one of the original Tree of Life fabrics, with the large, stylised flowers on a meandering branch redrawn to create a continuous, decorative, wide, floral Indienne stripe. Meanwhile, the Goose wallcovering is inspired by the '27 pieces blue stork paper' bought by the 9th Countess of Carlisle from interiors retailer Maple & Co in 1884 and which still covers the walls of the Archbishop's Room in Howard Castle.

Founded almost 150 years ago and with fifth-generation descendant Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay as its company director, Watts 1874 describes the collaboration as "a privilege". watts1874.co.uk ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT

A Knole sofa covered in Aurea Indienne Rose Madder, a wide floral stripe pattern.

Goose wallpaper, based on a 19th-century Japanese design and available in Blue and Mustard.

Howard Indienne Victoria, an exuberant Tree of Life design chosen by interior decorator Remy Renzullo for the Admiral's Room

Cecilia Dormouse Pink, a delicate, feminine design.

Rosalind Indienne Coral and Cecilia Dormouse Pink provide a perfect foil to the grand marble and stone interior of Castle Howard.

Garden House Chintz Carmine exemplifies timeless grand English country house style.

LEFT The magnificent exterior of Castle Howard, set like a jewel within the beautiful landscape in North Yorkshire.







Family Affair

Country chic at Home Barn

Spotting hidden gems while browsing brocantes and antiques markets had long been a shared passion of sisters-in-law Sarah and Sally Wilkie before they turned it into a business.

In 2010 they founded destination interiors shop Home Barn, set in a beautiful historic barn in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, selling unique and unusual homeware pieces with a modern rustic appeal.

“We’ve always loved shopping for antique and vintage finds, collecting items that are steeped in history that will add an unmatched atmosphere to the home,” they say. “The idea of reusing items

and providing them with a new breath of life has always been something we’ve both shared a love of. A hobby that we both enjoyed provided the base of what has now become a successful business and a dream come true.

“Antique pieces add an extra dimension to an interior, providing a sense of heritage and injecting texture that cannot always be achieved with newly manufactured items. Reclaimed materials lie at the heart of our business, from the wood we use for our dining tables to the French armchairs.

“Choosing items that are reclaimed and made from quality materials allows us to supply others with the same joy we both receive daily.”
homebarnshop.co.uk

Bucolic Escape

A taste of the country within reach of London

Wild dining, intimate woodland music and comedy concerts plus wonderful performances by Giffords Circus can be found just outside London.

Returning for a third summer season, At Home Farm hosts events and residencies from June to September on a private piece of Green Belt land at Home Farm in Elstree, Hertfordshire, with a stellar lineup of chefs, musicians and comedians.

In this countryside haven just a stone’s throw from Central London, guests dine under trees amid long grass and wander through fairy-lit woods to a secret



woodland stage. City-dwellers can enjoy a taste of the country and reconnect with nature for the evening, in easy reach of home – with glamping options available. athomefarm.live

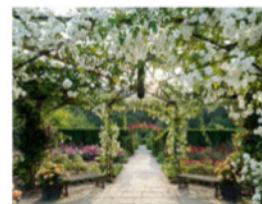
Diary



Eternal Bloom features stunning floral photographs by Harald Altmair that look like 17th-century still-life paintings, with sumptuous colours and abundant composition. Until 31 Aug at Connolly in London.
haraldaltmaier.com



The UK’s biggest quality craft show with over 200 stands in the grounds of Stonor Park Manor House, Henley Country Craft Show from 25 to 28 August promises craftspeople, artisan food and rustic activities.
thecraftshows.co.uk



A plant-lover’s paradise awaits at RHS Garden Rosemoor Flower Show in Devon from 18–20 August, with fragrant floral displays, inspirational demonstrations, live music and the chance to buy from specialist nurseries.
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DESIGN DISCOVERIES

Nature-inspired hues, shapely forms and tactile materials bring interest to summer interiors

CHECK MATE

From offering respite for tired feet to providing an extra surface or seat when entertaining, ottomans are a hardworking essential in many sitting rooms. Currently available in a pink or green check or a plain red linen, with more fabric options launching soon, this elegant design is a fresh take on traditional English country style. *Erin ottoman in Clover Check, £1,275, Alexander Thomas*

BESPOKE BEAUTY

Aller Dorset's curated edit of homeware complements its four exquisitely decorated boutique self-catered shepherd's huts. This bespoke hand-painted trug is part of a collaboration with edit58 and The Charpoy, reflecting the rural charm of the huts while shining a light on small businesses. *The Aller Dorset Trug: edit58 x The Charpoy, £150, Aller Dorset*



LEADING EDGE

An exciting addition to its range of timeless yet playful wallpapers, Swedish brand Längelid/Von Brömssen is launching its first collection of borders. One of six decorative designs, Thessaloniki takes inspiration from the Ancient Greek meander motif and is available in a deep red or midnight blue. *Thessaloniki border in Wine Red, €60 for a 10m roll, Längelid/Von Brömssen at Ulricehamns Tapetfabrik*



SHADES OF SUMMER

Renowned textile house Christopher Farr Cloth has adorned scatter cushions and made-to-order parasols with two iconic patterned outdoor textiles in collaboration with Neptune. Carnival Celeste depicts large-scale flora and foliage in vivid blues and yellows for a riviera-inspired look, while Cremaillere Saggio features a smart small-scale geometric print in blue and green for a subtle retro feel.

Carnival Celeste 3m round parasol, £995, Neptune x Christopher Farr Cloth ▶



SHOPPING

FINELY WOVEN

A rippled lip adds a decorative feel to this charming handmade rattan vase, which is the perfect size for mantelpieces, coffee tables or as the centrepiece of a summer tablescape. A removable recycled PVC water-tight liner ensures no water leaks out and blooms stay fresh. *Wavy edge rattan vase, £85, edit58 x Straw London*



SEASONAL SEATING

Inspired by the relaxed café culture of Florence, these rattan chairs are suitable for all seasons, from al fresco entertaining in the summer months to adding colour and tactility to indoor rooms in winter. Available in three dyed colourways – blue, pink, or green, they are a practical yet stylish addition to any table. *Rattan dining chair, Pink, £375; Santa Croce tablecloth, from £195; Bobbin candlestick, from £30; Shido vases, from £20, all Birdie Fortescue*

PRETTY PLATES

Villa Bologna Pottery, a household name in Malta, opened its first shop in the UK last year. Its latest collection of scalloped crockery nods to the Baroque architecture of its home, the Villa Bologna, considered by many to be one of Malta's most impressive 18th-century country houses. *Scalloped dinner plate, £28; large platter, £76; Chintz tablecloth, Plum, from £270, all Villa Bologna Pottery* ▶

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ON THE TILES

A shared passion for craftsmanship and commitment to creating high-quality, long-lasting products is at the heart of Bert & May and specialist greenhouse company Alitex's new collaboration. Based on the classic greenhouse aesthetic, the collection consists of terracotta, reclaimed, and plain and patterned encaustic tiles in five earthy tones, including Bert & May's newly launched Bay Green.

Plain tiles in Bay Green and Marigold (pictured in Alitex greenhouse), £120 a square metre, Bert & May

TAKE THE FLOOR

Synonymous with classic country design, sisal rugs bring texture and interest to interior schemes. Dyed to mimic the colours of natural jute and sisal grasses, these luxurious, eco-conscious woven rugs are crafted from fibres made of premium recycled water bottles, and are suitable for all areas of the home, even high-moisture zones such as kitchens, bathrooms and gardens.

Provence Antibes rug, Mustard, from £1,381 for 1.5m x 2m, Jennifer Manners



PASTORAL PATTERNS

Since launching at the end of last year, Lowri has created a library of colourful designs that bring joy to interiors. Products include wallpapers, fabrics and cushions, all of which are thoughtfully designed and crafted in-house from natural, sustainable and recycled materials. The British countryside is a great source of inspiration, which can be seen in the myriad nature-inspired motifs and palettes.

Cushions (from top), Forest & Hills, Jasmine & Clematis, Violas, Little Leaves, Night Garden, Little Check, from £95, Lowri ■



INCHYRA



SHOPPING



Dodder terracotta plate, £115, Paige Mitchell



Roasting pot set, £395, Alex Pole



Brown oak flour scoop, £45, Selwyn House



Ricasso spindle table lamp, £1,825, Aimee Betts



Mission tiled platter, £285, Piccolpasso

RURAL CRAFTS

Imbue interiors with characterful pieces designed and carefully crafted by skilled makers in the English countryside



Birds on the Bough large harvest jug, £465, Christina Serra Delmar at The Shop Floor Project



Oak Leaf double candle sconce, £450, Jess Wheeler



Medium No 4 shelves, brown oak and rippled ash, £395, Peter Lanyon Furniture



Oriental Poppy paper flowers, £45 a stem, A Petal Unfolds

Green Stripes woven rug, £1,200, Jacqueline James

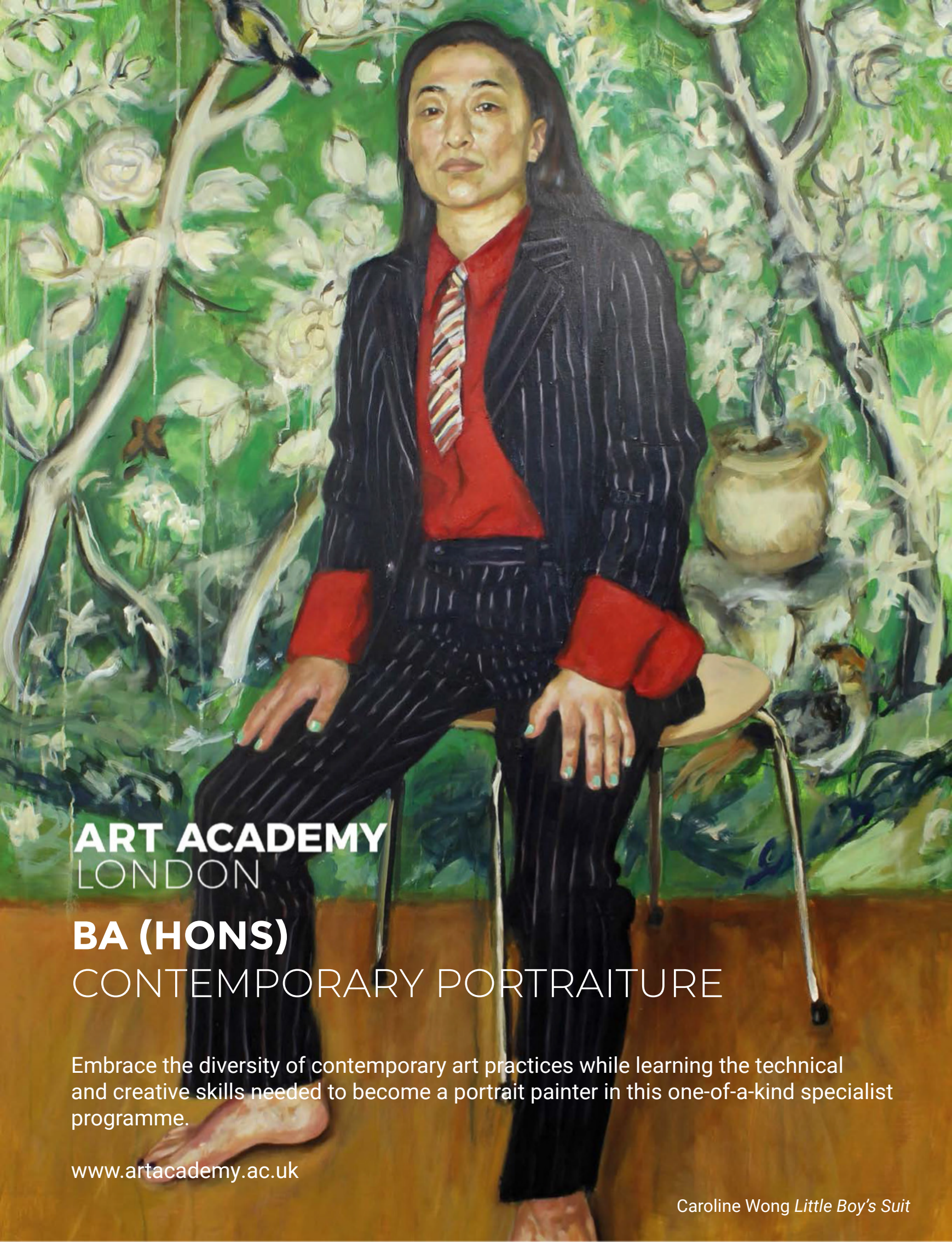


Border, May Tree wallpaper, Pale Celadon, £29 a metre, Rapture & Wright



Artist's counter chair, from £2,154, Matthew Cox

FEATURE CHARLOTTE DUNFORD PHOTOGRAPHS (AIMEE BETTS) © GARETH HACKER; (PETER LANYON FURNITURE) © ROD GONZALEZ, (JACQUELINE JAMES) © KIPPA MATTHEWS



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Caroline Wong *Little Boy's Suit*

SHOPPING



Pimlico Jazz lounge chair, £880, Indian Ocean



Safari Buckled chair, £2,800, Justin Van Breda



Tofinho garden chair, £350, OKA



Dahl chair, from £5,794 plus fabric, George Smith



Rattan sun lounger, £975, and other furnishings, all Birdie Fortescue

Harlyn outdoor dining chair, £499, Andrew Martin



DeCamp rocking chair, from £9,280, McKinnon & Harris

COUNTRY SEAT

Make the most of a sunny spot or shaded nook of the the garden with a special chair to while away the hours in comfort

Harrington footstool, £275, Neptune



Eichholtz Manzo outdoor sofa, £3,355, Sweetpea & Willow



Tassel fringe hammock, £65, Ella James



Allaperto Nautic hanging armchair £2,640, LuxDeco

Deck chair in Joker, £165; headrest cushion, £25, The Stripes Company



FEATURE KATY MCCLEAN

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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

SITTING PRETTY

With summer upon us, what better time for Sofas & Stuff to launch its latest RHS collection featuring the beautiful, varied patterns and floral sketches of legendary British horticulturalist Gertrude Jekyll? The seven new fabric designs, including Trailing Vine (right), can be chosen to adorn any of the brand's British-made sofas, chairs, beds, footstools, and cushions. Alongside these, sits a botanical collage design inspired by the artwork of 19th-century botanical artist, Caroline Maria Applebee. sofasandstuff.com



PRINTS CHARMING



Over the years, textile studio Titley & Marr has found design inspiration in everything from 18th-century European textiles to tribal patterns, with its latest print design, a stylised leaf floral called Amberley, inspired by the early 20th-century Arts and Crafts movement. Another charming new floral design, Bepton, is more akin to the later floral style of the Bloomsbury Group. Other fresh patterns include a mid-scale leaf, Midhurst, and a small-scale trellis, Fontwell. All are available in a variety of bold colour combinations. Produced on naturally-woven fabrics, each new addition to the range sits perfectly alongside the colour-coordinated stripe, Steyning. titleyandmarr.co.uk

TAP IT

Manufacturer of classic British bathroom and kitchen brassware Lefroy Brooks has created designs which span a century - from the Edwardian era to the modern day. The company's latest collection, The Kiln Room 1920 Ten Ten range makes a statement with its industrial brassware design, featuring machine-age handwheel taps in finishes including beaten brass. In contrast to this, The Vessel Room 1900 Classic range in a silver-nickel finish is perfect for those seeking a more traditional look. lestroybrooks.com ▶





UP, UP AND AWAY

Luxury tableware company Summerill & Bishop has teamed up with the beautiful country hotel Beaverbrook to launch its traditional summer dining experience. In a breathtaking display, six stationary hot air balloons, delicately embroidered with whimsical love hearts, frame The Italian Garden at The House for al fresco Japanese dining with a twist. Summerill & Bishop's signature heart motif, the Queen of Hearts, brings the Surrey skyline to life, making for a memorable meal and a rare chance to savour authentic Japanese cuisine in the extraordinary setting of a classic hot-air balloon basket. To book visit beaverbrook.co.uk, or to buy the Queen of Hearts table linen, visit summerillandbishop.com

DESIGN OF THE TIMES

When the British, family-run kitchen brand, Naked Kitchens is looking for ideas for its next colourways, it looks no further than the picturesque countryside surrounding its Norfolk headquarters. This summer, the company is inspiring customers with new ways to liven up their kitchens – whether traditional or modern – by mixing up the colour scheme. Bring a sense of playfulness to a food-preparation space by combining shades like Bramble and Wild Heather, or add enlivening pops of colour to kitchen cabinet interiors by teaming Sandringham Pine with blush-pink Pamment. nakedkitchens.com



6 OF THE BEST... PICNIC PLATES



- 1 Rice alabaster plate in Pale Green, £13 each, smallable.com
- 2 Melamine picnic plate, £20 for four, next.co.uk
- 3 Earthy large reusable bamboo plates, £48 for six, merimeri.co.uk
- 4 Strawberry melamine plate, £10, sophieallport.com
- 5 Striped melamine plate, £5.95 each, vibranthome.co.uk
- 6 Levantine mezze plates, £10 for four, johnlewis.com

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KITCHEN - PANTRY - LAUNDRY - BOOT ROOM





Palladian BEAUTY

At their Wiltshire manor house, Lucinda and James Bruce have been inspired by family history and a love of entertaining to create a very special country home in classic English style with a touch of *joie de vivre*

FEATURE COSMO BROCKWAY PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES MACDONALD

The elegant drawing room, restored to former glory by Lucinda and now the scene of many amusing evenings, has walls hand-painted by Kim Sisson, complemented by curtains in Chelsea by Bennett Silks. Lucinda sourced the Cyrano bullion fringe on the curtain pelmets from Passementerie Nouvelle.



Houses are often found by serendipitous chance and one classic example of this is the story of how Lucinda and James Bruce came to live at their Wiltshire home. “We had been renting an estate cottage as a bolthole in the early days of our marriage,” says Lucinda. “My husband, James, had always loved the ‘big house’, but never did we imagine that the chance would one day come to call it our own.”

The ‘big house’ in question is a William and Mary manor, deep in a Wiltshire valley, on the site of an old Roman settlement. The classic Palladian facade, with its quintessentially English charm, gives a clue to legendary inspiration. “It is thought to have been influenced by Inigo Jones,” says Lucinda. “It is mentioned in Pevsner’s *Wiltshire*, a bible of period architecture, and Dame Vivienne Westwood coveted it once upon a time,” she finishes with a laugh.

It is somehow hard to imagine the late ‘queen of punk’ residing in such traditional rooms, although, Lucinda remembers with an ironic smile, the interiors were not always such a beacon of understated elegance. “We came here in 1999 and suffice to say, the decoration was not entirely sympathetic with the architecture,” she says. “It was a remnant of 1980s ‘ragged and dragged’ decor. There were acres of shiny damask and flouncy pelmets. We had an initial moment of ‘What on earth do we do with this?’, but, very quickly, I relished the challenge of bringing it back to its original form.” ▶

‘It is thought to have been influenced by Inigo Jones, and Dame Vivienne Westwood coveted it once upon a time’

ABOVE Lucinda, wearing one of the detachable collars from her eponymous brand, stands before a treasured mirror from West Wycombe Park, childhood home of her mother-in-law.

RIGHT The charming Flemish bond brick facade of the Grade II* listed William and Mary era country house.





The dining room walls were inspired by West Wycombe Park, and cleverly created by decorative artist Kim Sisson. For a summer lunch Lucinda has used cabbage-leaf plates by Bordallo Pinheiro alongside glasses by La Verrerie de Biot and rattan carafes from Daylesford. The neutral rug is by Unnatural Flooring.



'We love to fill the house with guests and family ... It is a house that comes alive with voices and laughter'

ABOVE The design for the walls in the library was inspired by the Red Fort in Delhi. Soft furnishings in similar hues and inspiration, such as the chairs in Jaipur and Almond by Allegra Hicks continue the thread.

To help turn their plans into reality, Lucinda and James called on their friend, architectural historian John Martin Robinson – an inspired choice according to Lucinda. “He offered us brilliant historical guidance, as we were faced with this lovely large house that needed a makeover but also to be made personal to us.”

A trained interior designer and art curator who studied in Paris, Lucinda approached the redecoration with an intuitive eye that has allowed the sleeping beauty to be revived. “I wanted to create a sense of

symmetry, which was sorely lacking. Above all, I wanted to make the rooms sing,” says Lucinda.

Realising that a soft palette would suit the style of house “and the way we live in it”, Lucinda commissioned bespoke colours and paint effects from Suffolk-based decorative painter Kim Sisson for many of the main rooms. The classical marble effect on the walls in the dining room is a high note, with Lucinda explaining, “We were inspired by the Palmyra dining room at West Wycombe Park, where James’s mother grew up and he spent time ▶



ABOVE RIGHT A trio of floor-to-ceiling windows in the breakfast area of the kitchen open out on to the garden and landscape beyond.

RIGHT Lucinda has created a comfortable kitchen for family life to take place. The cupboards and furniture are in Farrow & Ball's Card Room Green, while the wall tiles are from White Horse Pottery in Westbury, Wiltshire.





‘We needed historical guidance as we were faced with this lovely large house that needed a makeover but also to be made personal to us’

ABOVE In Lucinda’s study, Les Colonnes fabric, edged with Rayures Mauresques, both by Braquenié, lines the walls. The simplicity of curtains in Ian Mankin’s Eau de Nil bordered with Passementerie Nouvelle’s Oleandre is a clever pairing.

in his childhood. Kim hand-painted the walls for us to incredible effect.” An imposing English gilt-framed mirror brought from West Wycombe Park and placed strikingly above an ornate marble-topped console table adds to the sense of grandeur. In a typical Lucinda touch, the room is given a sense of levity by the clever transformation of a homespun dining table, painted pale grey, and dining chairs covered in a butter-soft faux leather by Kravet.

The enchantment continues in the library, where cosy firelit autumn evenings are spent with dogs on the sofa. “I love the patterned cushions on the sofa in Muskan gold and dark peach by Allegra Hicks because they echo the walls,” says Lucinda. “I found Paris-based interior designer Rose Anne de Pampelonne and together we were inspired by a

Mughal design in the Red Fort in Delhi for the walls. I decided to cover the coffee table in a Colefax and Fowler chenille wide stripe in beige and Allegra Hicks fabrics for the smaller chairs. For the carpet, we went for a seagrass herringbone carpet by Crucial Trading with accents in red weft, and it’s just perfect.”

Lucinda has created an equally enticing interior in her study, lining the walls in a riotous pattern – Les Colonnes from Braquenié at Pierre Frey. This offsets a striking 17th-century group portrait of noble children and is given added impact by the inspired pairing with pretty curtains in Ian Mankin’s Eau de Nil.

Country house bedrooms can sometimes be slightly neglected, but here Lucinda has imbued them with a sense of enveloping elegance and nuance. In the red-themed guest bedroom, the main fabric on ▶

For a confident, impactful effect, in the red guest bedroom, Lucinda has used Toile Bougival teamed with a bedhead and valance in Contrefond Bougival, both Braquenié at Pierre Frey. "I repeated the pattern for the curtains, because it's irresistible, and found the rug on travels in Isfahan Iran," she says.





‘I wanted to create a sense of symmetry, which was sorely lacking, and, above all, I wanted to make the rooms sing’

ABOVE LEFT The gentle palette of Nina Campbell’s Bovary wallpaper together with curtains in Linara Parsnip and a dressing table skirt in Tyneham Clay, both by Romo, provides a soothing ambience in the principal bedroom.

ABOVE RIGHT Soft neutrals continue in the spacious en-suite bathroom, with walls painted in Paper & Paint Library’s Thames Mud.

the bed is a large-print pattern of exotic flowers inspired by Indian tree of life designs. “I repeated the pattern for the curtains because it’s irresistible, and found the rug on travels in Isfahan, Iran,” she explains. “And we used hand-mixed paint for the walls above the decorative border by Mauny.” There could be no happier place to awake and feel the warmth of sunshine streaming in from the long windows.

Lucinda and James love nothing more than to fill the house with friends and family. “We have three children together, Augusta, 30, Bobby, 28, and Algy, 25, plus James’s daughter, Antonia by his first marriage,” explains Lucinda. “They all love spending time here and we have a lot of fun together. It is a house that comes alive with voices and laughter.”

The main setting for the couple’s convivial gatherings is the handsome drawing room with its delicate plasterwork moulding and oval family

portraits. “We use it as a salon on long summer evenings. We like to dress for dinner, the men in smoking jackets, and to play bridge and backgammon,” Lucinda continues. “It is relaxed but also has elements of tradition that we enjoy keeping up.”

With her love of entertaining and eye for design, it is no surprise to learn that a few years ago Lucinda co-wrote a bestselling book, *Victoria and Lucinda’s Flavour of the Month: A Year of Food and Flowers*, with her great friend Victoria Cator. Never one to rest on her laurels, Lucinda is a trained yoga teacher and, passionate about its benefits, hosts retreats on the estate. She is also known for the beautiful, ruffled collars she creates, inspired by the romance of the Elizabethan era.

A house for all seasons, this bucolic idyll is in loving hands and will no doubt have many more happy chapters ahead. ■



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FRENCH LEAVE

At first uncertain that she could ever love her neglected Norfolk cottage, Sally Braithwaite took a chance and has created a convivial home full of French charm

FEATURE & STYLING AMANDER MEADE
PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

ABOVE Brocante aficionado Sally has an Etsy shop ([VintageJane88](#)) where she specialises in selling vintage monogrammed French linen.

Deciding to return to the UK after a decade living in France, in 2019 Sally Braithwaite was having no luck with her online property search. She spotted a Dutch gable cottage in Norfolk but initially discounted it, as a great deal of costly renovation work was required. Needing a home in a hurry and with no alternative properties appealing either, Sally flew to England for just 24 hours for a viewing. “I wasn’t impressed,” she recalls, “the cottage was in need of a vast amount of restorative work. I could see potential though, so despite feeling no emotional connection to the property whatsoever, I put in an offer which was accepted.” ▶

THIS PAGE The pedestal for this table matches one in the sitting room. Sally had originally intended them for outdoor use, but commissioned a glass top for the one that now sits in the entrance hall.





Antique books line the shelves along the corridor leading to the comfortable sitting room. Fresh flowers are displayed on a stone pedestal purchased while Sally lived in the Middle East.



'I love painting and reimagining items of furniture, so I revamped a lot of pieces'

ABOVE The sofas and armchair came from Sally's previous home and have recently been re-covered. The stool is a French antique, believed to have been made in Tours. **RIGHT** Sally believes this heirloom portrait to be of one of her ancestors: "We think it was painted by an impoverished artist who lodged with the family and offered it in lieu of rent."

Almost immediately plunged into the global pandemic, Sally spent most of the next two years locked down with her elderly mother – a three-hour drive away from Norfolk. "Although I was pleased that rules allowed some initial building work to take place during my absence, it was difficult to manage the project remotely and I found it frustrating not to be able to personally oversee the work. I was paying the builders at each stage without seeing the results, so it was a real leap of faith." Downstairs a wall was removed to transform two dark, dingy rooms into what is now the bright, open-plan kitchen diner. A similar process took place upstairs to create a spacious bedroom and en-suite bathroom from part of a corridor and an unused box room.

Even as work continued, Sally was not certain she had done the right thing in buying the cottage. "At ►





ABOVE In the light and airy kitchen, a freestanding butcher's block kitchen island acts as a subtle boundary between the rustic cooking area and the more formal, graceful dining space. The large French armoire, originally meant to be upstairs, stores plates and glassware.

LEFT While it was a big renovation project, the Dutch-gable cottage is full of original period flourishes and charm.

every turn it seemed a new can of worms was opened," she remembers. "Every small job on the build rapidly became a larger one and the renovation budget doubled, which was a real worry." Eventually, with the substantial heavy work completed and the cottage layout improved, Sally gradually began to warm to her new home as the more enjoyable process of decoration and furnishing began.

"There was no question about how my decor would look. My style is entirely French-inspired and I brought all my possessions back to the UK with me from my house there," Sally explains. "Every single piece means something to me and has sentimental value. I am sure that having my own furniture and treasures installed, with the comforting memories they convey, was the key to me beginning to feel at home in the cottage."

Sally reveals that she never aims to emulate others but has instilled her own elegant taste to the cottage interior by simply displaying the things that she has



‘When I go back to visit friends in France, I still buy pieces of brocante I can’t resist and bring them home – especially vintage linen’

collected over a lifetime. “When I go back to visit friends in France, I still buy pieces of brocante I can’t resist and bring them home – especially beautiful vintage monogrammed linen, which I sometimes keep for myself or offer for sale through my Etsy shop.”

Putting her own stamp on the cottage involved placing all her furniture and the challenge of making everything fit, even down to the Aubusson rugs she adores. “I decided to install seagrass flooring everywhere upstairs as it is such a good base for rugs,” she says. On both floors, there are examples of her creativity as she has adapted to life in the cottage. Every table, console, chest or chair shows her inventive

touch through a coat of paint, an antiqued treatment or the addition of a vintage handle purchased from a local antique shop.

“I love painting and reimagining items of furniture, so I revamped and changed the colour of lots of pieces to refresh them for their new surroundings,” she explains. “I also owe a huge debt of gratitude to my sister Jennifer, who has made all the window dressings and blinds for me. She’s incredibly talented and also made most of the cushions around the cottage, using remnants of French linen collected on our travels.” Thanks to Jennifer’s skill and Sally’s practiced eye, each characterful room is now dressed with customised soft furnishings or Sally’s favourite French linen. ▶

ABOVE The unusual antique carved deer head above the range cooker is one of Sally’s classic brocante finds – it was once fixed above a trophy cabinet on a French estate.



ABOVE The petal pink bedspread from Sally's VintageJane88 store on Etsy was chosen to reflect the tones in the antique Aubusson rug. The hat collection stored above the mirror adds a witty touch.

LEFT Formerly a box room, painting the freestanding bath and installing a pretty chair has transformed the en-suite bathroom into a tranquil sanctuary. Blinds for the gothic window were made using vintage sheets.

The sunny, light-filled kitchen-diner is the star of the ground floor, and is often a hive of activity, as Sally cooks for dinner guests or gathers friends for drinks, with the painted kitchen island acting as a station for them to self-pour. "One of my favourite pieces in the cottage is the huge French armoire in the kitchen, which was intended for upstairs originally. The removal men were struggling with it and it was late in the day so I suggested popping it down there for a moment, and there it has stayed ever since, providing storage for all my cups and plates," she laughs.

Sally confirms that she is now besotted with her home, as well as life in Norfolk, where she has made many new friends and feels truly settled. "From being ready to just give the keys to the nearest passer-by during the worst of the building stress, I genuinely love the cottage now and am enormously happy here. Breathing new life into the building as well as surrounding myself with my much-loved, familiar furnishings has been the perfect magical combination and was just what both the cottage and I needed. I'm very glad I took a chance and couldn't be happier with how everything has turned out." ■

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Colourful HISTORY

A 15th-century farmhouse has been transformed into a magical family retreat whose interiors honour the vernacular architecture of the house while adding colour for the next stage of its journey

FEATURE ARABELLA MEZGER
PHOTOGRAPHY JONATHAN BOND

The 15th-century house looks out onto beautiful lawns, wild meadows and a lake below. The terrace has been designed for the Moynihans to entertain, with garden furniture from Indian Ocean.



ABOVE Harriet and Ted Moynihan and their Labrador Lexi stand before the ancient oak door.

ABOVE RIGHT The welcoming entrance hall is papered in Soane's Seraphic Star and features a distinct George III oval mirror from Lorfords. The David Seyfried bench is covered in Guy Goodfellow's Olive Sacking.

'There were wonderful beamy spaces and rich historical features that added character'



Tucked away down an unassuming lane in a pretty Buckinghamshire village is a Grade II listed 15th-century house with beautiful Tudor brickwork, mullion windows and an idiosyncratic charm. Built by a wealthy yeoman who arrived in the village in 1560 and catalysed the needle-making industry from one of the property's barns, it is an enchanting place. The timber-framed building and dilapidated barns were restored in the 1930s by Commander Getley who added a significant extension, but its vitality has been restored by Harriet and Ted Moynihan under the guidance of interior designer Leonora Birts.

"We had been living in Notting Hill for 10 years and had just had our third child so we were looking for a bit more space and a garden. We weren't thinking of moving out of London but we visited some friends in the next-door village on a sunny August day and they mentioned that this house was for sale. We

rather speculatively looked round and completely fell in love and decided to up sticks entirely. It was a bit serendipitous I suppose," says Harriet.

Attracted by the history of the house and its beguiling gardens, the Moynihans moved here in 2012 with their three children – Ellie, Arthur and Thea. "I've always loved period buildings and history, having studied Classics at university," explains Harriet. "The house has all these intriguing features like a late 16th-century frieze painted onto the walls of the drawing room. Records of it are kept by the Victoria and Albert Museum as it's one of the first examples of its kind." The family made other discoveries as they explored it, including ritual marks to ward off malevolent spirits etched above thresholds, as was typical of properties of the time. They uncovered a priest hole in one of the bedrooms, iron hooks along wonky walls, low chamfered beams and Lilliputian-sized doors, all of which add layers of character. ▶



ABOVE The drawing room contains one of the first recorded examples of a painted frieze in England. Its colours are echoed in decor, with walls painted in Edward Bulmer Natural Paint's Cuisse de Nymphe Emue and curtains in GP & J Baker's Coromandel.

RIGHT Paint & Paper Library's Blue Blood acts as enveloping backdrop to a corner sofa in Fermoie's vibrant Tickled Pink Linen and Matisse Jazz prints from Etalage. Matilda Goad & Co rattan shades top the Pooky lampbases.





ABOVE LEFT The Julian Chichester oak bobbin chairs in the kitchen are covered in Slatcane by CLJ Home. For a fresh colour scheme, the walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Breakfast Room Green. Belluno pendant lights by Vaughan add a sophisticated touch. **ABOVE RIGHT** The bookshelves in the library are painted in Farrow & Ball's Card Room Green, while a pair of Lorforde armchairs make the perfect settle down with a book.

When the family moved in, everything was painted magnolia, to lighten up the house but it did the opposite, and with all the timber and beige, made everything feel subdued. "We wanted to make it more colourful and to add warmth and texture but weren't quite sure how," says Harriet. Honouring the history of the house was also important to the Moynihans, and in 2020 they were introduced to Leonora Birts.

"Leo is amazing – she was incredibly responsive and versatile, and she beautifully blends classical and contemporary styles," Harriet says of the designer who started her career at Pierre Frey and set up her eponymous studio 15 years ago. The Moynihans worked with Leonora to overhaul five of the seven bedrooms and all the downstairs footprint, integrating soft furnishings and antiques to give the impression of having evolved over time.

"I was blown away by the house when I first saw it," says Leonora. "I could see the potential of all the rooms immediately. I love working with old houses

'The trick was getting lighting into places where it wasn't before – that has really transformed the house'



and there were all these wonderful beamy spaces and so many rich historical features that added character."

Pushing open the heavy oak front door, carved with figures and blackened by a fire in the convent it is rumoured have originated from, reveals a small hallway papered in Soane's divine Seraphic Star print and furnished with a David Seyfried bench covered in Guy Goodfellow's Olive Sacking. This is just one of many spaces in the house brought to life by rich, densely patterned papers and considered fabrics.

One of the keys to unlocking the warmth and energy of the house was lighting: "I find lighting so important, and the trick was getting lighting into places where it wasn't before – that has really transformed the house," explains Leonora. There is an array of different levels of lighting, from Hector Finch wall lights in the entrance hall, Vaughan pendants over the kitchen table, to a commissioned oak branch chandelier by Richard Taylor.

"I adore the kitchen. We spend a lot of time in it and it's a real country kitchen with the big wooden



ABOVE Farrow & Ball's Churlish Green sets the tone for the sitting room. A sofa by Lorffords Contemporary is covered in Guy Goodfellow's Ticking in Celery, while a woven ceramic red lamp base from Matilda Goad adds a pop of colour. LEFT The sideboard in Harriet's study was designed by Leonora Birts and is painted in Farrow & Ball's Card Room Green. Butterfly prints from Etalage sit beautifully against wallpaper by Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler. The lamps are from Oka.





‘We wanted to make it more colourful and to add warmth and texture’



table and floral curtains by Sarah Vanrenen that make it feel warm and cosy,” enthuses Harriet. Leonora chose Farrow & Ball’s Breakfast Room Green for an enveloping yet fresh appeal.

“One of the spaces I really savour is the library,” says Harriet. Leonora took an unused throughfare in the Tudor part of the house between the drawing room and Harriet’s study and turned it into a beautiful reading space. Bespoke bookshelves, Vaughan wall lights, and deliciously comfy chairs create somewhere that “entices you to curl up with a good book”.

Through the library windows the gardens beyond can be glimpsed. “The house is on the high street but from the garden it has this amazing aspect and you can see as far as the Chilterns,” explains Harriet. “On the day we first looked around, the children were gambolling down the hills and it seemed idyllic.”

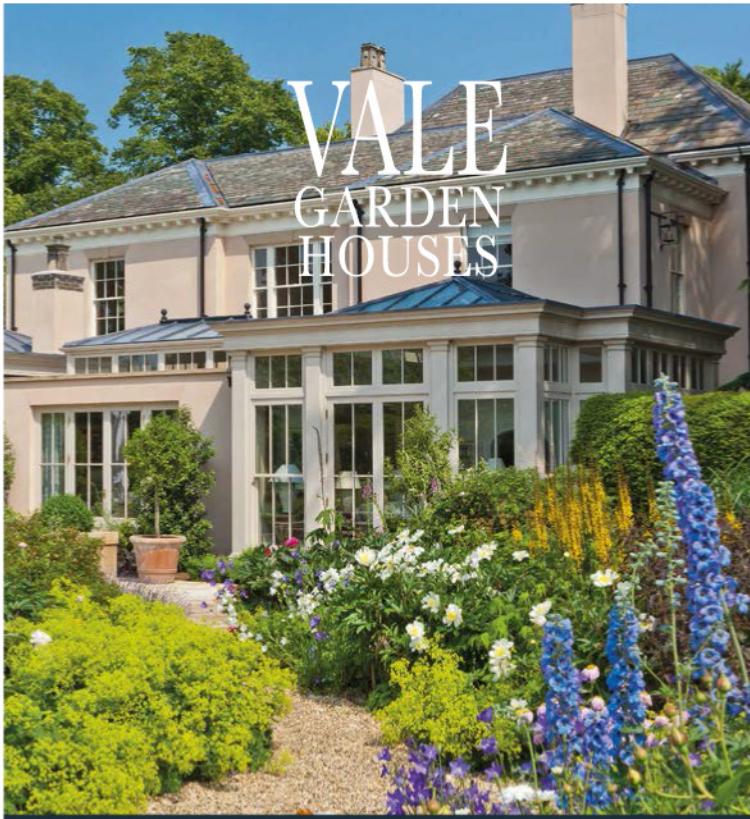
An Elizabethan knot garden, formal terraces with herbaceous borders, and a swimming pool, slope

down to manicured lawns and a stream-fed lake. Crossing a bridge at the bottom leads to wildflower meadows and a tennis court. “It’s a brilliant source of wildlife – we have roe deer, ducks, moorhens, red kite, carp and a heron.”

The house is suffused with classic elegance. Everything is calm, welcoming, and comfortable. The skilfully assembled contents are a lesson in English country house design, carefully contemporised by Leonora in a way that feels completely in keeping with the spirit of the house. Leonora’s focus on designing “rooms that last and that people will live in for a long time” seems a perfect match with the Moynihans’ delight in the history of their home and an understanding of its value in telling stories of the past and leaving a legacy for the future. “It feels like a very special place; you can’t really put your finger on it, but its rich history emanates in the warmth of the house,” Harriet says with a smile. ■

ABOVE LEFT Wallpapering a guest bedroom in the attic in this delicate Lake August Bettina print was a masterful feat. The headboard and matching valance covered in Pukka Print’s Petite Fleur add a soft femininity.

ABOVE RIGHT Thea’s bedroom is painted in Edward Bulmer Natural Paint’s Ethereal Blue. The hand-painted lampshades are by Hum London.



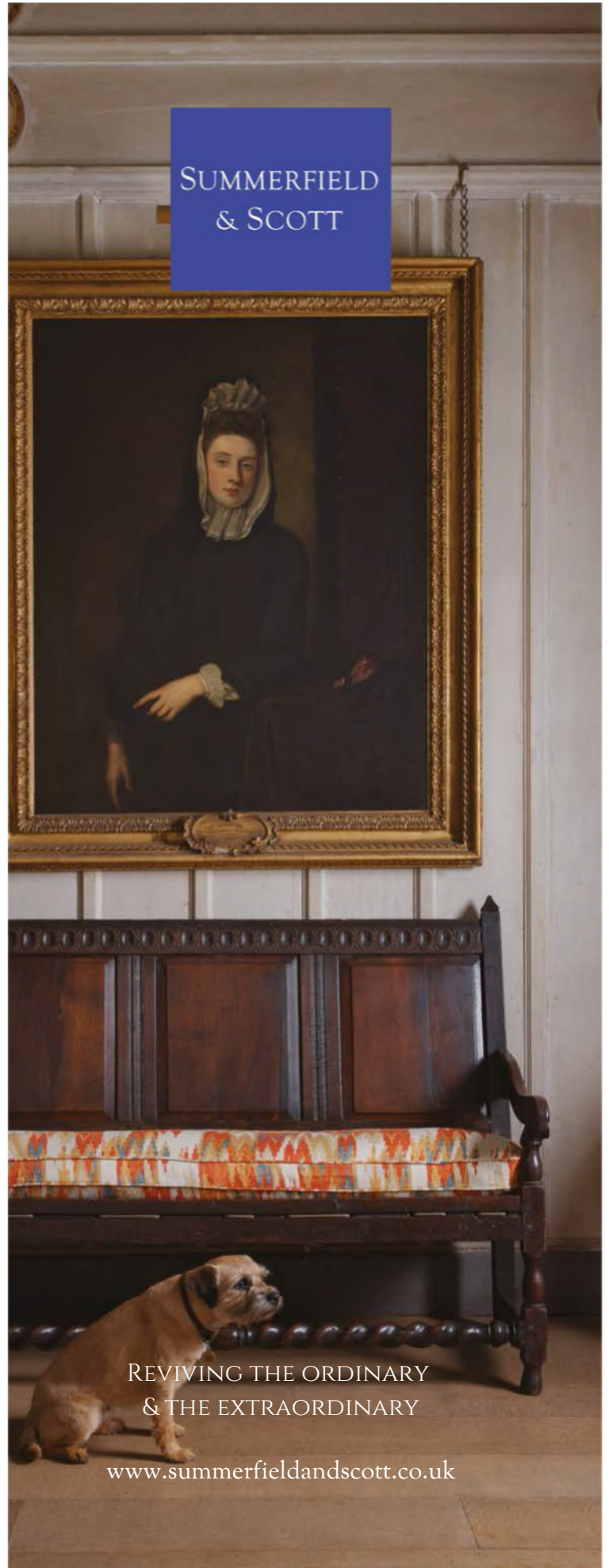
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EASTERN INFLUENCE

Influenced by protracted stints in south-east Asia, the country house of Charles and Luli Orchard is a vibrant blend of unusual textures, unexpected pops of colour, antique collections, Asian art and classic English silhouettes

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE PHOTOGRAPHY GRANT SCOTT

ABOVE Charles Orchard in the sitting room. **OPPOSITE** A vibrant red-and-white scheme adds dynamism to this room, with Cyrus Cane wallpaper by Thibaut intended to counteract a relatively low ceiling. A red resin and bamboo chest of drawers, teak dining table with chrome legs and bobbin dining room chairs – all produced by Charles – are testament to the couple's passion for playfully mixing different styles and eras. The painting above the console is by Ian Van Wieringen.





‘Art brings a scheme alive. Many of the pieces that I collect trigger a memory, which makes them even more meaningful’



ABOVE A Charles Orchard shagreen console table is topped by bronze portrait sculptures of the couple’s children Savannah and Inigo by Bryan Ellery.

ABOVE RIGHT Charles’ grandfather’s collection of nearly 2,000 antique lead soldiers are laid out in regiments on the cloakroom windowsill.

LEFT Originating in the early 18th century, with Victorian additions, the Grade II listed home is built in local Cotswold stone.

The relaxed decor of this Cotswolds home is an apt reflection of the building itself, which owners Charles and Luli Orchard describe as having “developed over time”. Built in local, honey-hued stone, it has Georgian bones, with Victorian additions forming its L-shape. In an echo of that organic footprint, the interiors are populated with a blend of art, books, sculpture, antique furniture and fabrics: testament to the intrepid life of its inhabitants.

The couple live here with their three children, Inigo, 19, Savannah, 17, and Otilie, 13, with Charles dividing his time between the UK and Bali, where their business produces vivid reinventions of rattan, lacquer and bamboo furniture. Having worked across Asia for nearly four decades as a supplier, maker and art consultant, it is no surprise that Charles has filled the country house with an eclectic blend of English florals, classic furniture and Indonesian art punctuated with dashes of bold colour, from bright coral-hued trellis wallpaper in the dining room to rich blue walls in the television room. “We were looking for



a house with the space to relax and entertain,” says Charles. “For us, nothing says ‘home’ more than being with friends and family, surrounded by meaningful pieces.”

While the listed property had a “good flow”, it needed reviving, so flagstone flooring, door frames and cornicing were repaired or reinstated and fireplaces sourced, all serving to elevate its Georgian architecture. “You know you are in a traditional country house as soon as you walk in, but there’s something playful about it too,” reflects Charles. “We are both drawn to bright tones and unusual finishes, from rosewood to shagreen, and we’ve paired those with classic pieces, such as Queen Anne chairs or 18th-century English oil paintings.”

It is an unexpected marriage, no doubt made harmonious by Luli’s decorative eye, trained during her career as a fashion editor at *The Telegraph* and later honed during a long stint in tropical Bali. “There can be a danger of using too much dark wood when you live in a country house with antiques,” says Charles. “We were careful to mix things up – so Georgian chairs sit next to bamboo, penshell next to lacquer.”

The couple have taken the same approach to their extensive art collection, which gets rotated often. “Nothing gives me more pleasure than shuffling

pieces around to accommodate a new addition,” says Charles. “Art brings a scheme alive.” Many of the couple’s pieces are by photographers and artists whose work captures Indonesian culture, South Africa, or the natural world. But it is the informal blend of styles and eras that captures the imagination. In the sitting room, a 1920s drawing of a Balinese lady by a Japanese artist co-exists easily with a painting of the Avon Gorge before the Clifton Suspension Bridge was built. “I enjoy that contrast,” says Charles. “Many of the pieces I collect trigger a memory, which makes them even more meaningful.”

The couple’s collections are not limited to art: in the cloakroom, a playful selection of lead soldiers takes centre stage; dotted around the house are bronze sculptures of the heads of their three children; elsewhere a collection of shell tea caddies adds an exotic twist. Photography dotted up the rear staircase pays homage to family adventures, from an Antarctic excursion to a Mount Everest base camp expedition.

Latterly, Charles says, he and Luli have become more confident in their design choices, by the creative possibilities of the materials that they work with. “It’s fun to rework classic shapes in unexpected finishes and colours, such as a bow-fronted chest of drawers in natural rattan, a scalloped table in ▶

ABOVE Farrow & Ball’s Drawing Room Blue creates a cocooning feel in the snug, aided by George Smith sofas that have travelled with the family for three decades. The mantelpiece is studded with Jonathan Adler vases, while an oil painting, *Ladies on the Beach*, by Burmese artist U Lun Gywe hangs above.



ABOVE A broad mix of eras defines the comfortable drawing room. On the coffee table sits a collection of books and Burmese lacquer boxes. The cushion fabrics are by Jim Thompson and the art-lined walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Custard.

LEFT In this peaceful drawing-room corner, a burr writing table by Charles Orchard and a lamp from Vaughan create an ideal home-working spot. Visit charlesorchard.com to find out more about Charles Orchard furniture.

celadon green lacquer or a bamboo chair upholstered in a small-scale floral. I think some of that playful sensibility has crept into these interiors." Those lively touches can be seen in zingy orange bookshelves, a sofa upholstered in bright florals, or a retro blue-and-white wallpaper. "There's a certain freedom that comes from only having pieces that you like," says Charles.

With conservation, travel and art playing a central role in the couple's life, it is little surprise that their home is both a showcase and a testing ground for their passions. "When working from home, I spend time in the sitting room because I'm drawn to its pale-yellow walls," says Charles. A bonus is that mid-morning, when work calls to Bali are done, he can relocate to the garden. "I'm an outdoor man at heart, so seeing the facade of the house covered in white roses in the summer gives me pleasure." Next on the to-do list is cultivating orchids in the Victorian greenhouse. The only issue is staying in one place long enough to get the job done. "I am an adventurer and I think that shines through here," concedes Charles. "Much of our style continues to be influenced by our time in Burma, Hong Kong, Singapore and Bali." It seems fitting then, that flowers associated with the East will soon appear in the period outhouse: a harmonious blend of English country style and tropical spirit that mirrors these exuberant decorative schemes. ■

Books, flowers and artworks lend the drawing room an informal feel. Its Regency rosewood table is topped by a 19th-century tortoiseshell tea caddy.





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STYLE INSPIRATION

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

A BEAUTIFUL VIEW

Set the scene in an entrance hall with a well considered vignette. Perfect for a country house, this ensemble of an oil painting depicting a country vista, and demi-lune table topped with a vase and bowl is simple yet effective. Dress the table with a seasonally inspired fabric – opting for verdant greens in spring and summer and warmer russets through autumn. The floral or foliage display can chime with the seasons too for a welcoming scene that is in harmony with the countryside.

*Broadleaf, Leaf Green, £89 a metre,
Colefax and Fowler*



COMFORT & STYLE

Whether it is a formal space for hosting guests or a relaxed snug for unwinding with the family, a beautiful country sitting room will need practical details, considered finishes and comforting touches that make for a warm welcome



DECORATING

THIS PAGE Calm cream and blue sets the scene in this drawing room. Chic pencil-pleat curtains give window treatments a more formal tone.

Blinds and chairs, Asscher in Blue Haze, £80 a metre; Curtains, Connaught Silk in Whisper White edged in Connaught Silk in Vista, £69 a metre, all James Hare

OPPOSITE

A comfortable armchair provides a spot by both the window and the fire, ideal for reading or simply relaxing.

Room by Vanessa Macdonald at Melissa Wyndham with armchair from William Yeoward in a Robert Kime fabric





Smart & elegant

Larger country houses will benefit from a formal drawing room or smart sitting room. A space where conversation is prioritised over watching television. Here, a fireplace might form the focal point around which to arrange furniture, perhaps with two larger sofas and an offering of armchairs too. Sofas should seat three comfortably and be formal in design – with tailored upholstery, perhaps some button-back detailing or piped cushions. They should also be positioned to allow for guests to socialise comfortably, with side tables within easy reach for placing drinks, and table and floor lamps providing soft pools of light around the room. There might be space for other areas, with an armchair and lamp for reading, or perhaps window seats for taking in a view of the garden. Windows should be dressed with full-length, pooling curtains with elegant tie-backs for an extra flourish of grandeur. ▶

LEFT A stool is a handy extra that adds modern flair to a period space. Robert Langford stool, Gloria in Rose Ancien, £132 a metre, Manuel Canovas at Colefax and Fowler

BELOW LEFT A well-stocked bar in a sitting room will keep conversation, and drinks, flowing. Wow!House drawing room design by Vanessa Macdonald for Melissa Wyndham

BELOW RIGHT Add a touch of opulence with impressively ornate tie-backs to match sumptuously embroidered full-length curtains. Hampton Embroidery in Tapestry, £279 a metre, Zoffany





ABOVE Add cushions to window seats to create a comfortable spot to sit and take in country vistas. Curtains, *Trailing Tree in Moth*, £150 a metre; blinds, *Pinstripe in Moth*, £105 a metre, and cushion fabrics, all James Hare

RIGHT Include well-crafted joinery to provide storage as well as a display space for curated *objets d'art* for a spacious, luxe feel. Sofa, *Skylon in Teal*, £125 a metre, and all other fabrics, Jane Churchill at Colefax and Fowler

STYLE NOTES:

- A smarter, more formal drawing room should feel curated, considered, comfortable and calm – avoid clutter.
- Position furniture to ease conversation, with drinks tables and stools nearby.
- Make the most of impressive full-height windows by dressing them with beautiful fabric finished with classic tie-backs.
- Fabrics can be decadent – silks, velvets and embroideries – if not subject to the wear and tear of family life.





Relaxed & restful

In smaller homes, or perhaps as a snug within grander properties, a sitting room should be a sanctuary in which to relax with family. This might include pets too, so choose furnishings that are accordingly practical such as loose covers that can be removed and washed. Sofas can be less tailored and formal as well as having more give and being comfortable for lounging on. Rugs can be made of natural fibres that are hardwearing yet cosy or sumptuously soft for added comfort. While a television might provide a focal point for furniture in this type of space, consider, too, creating a quiet spot for curling up with a book or magazine, with a table nearby for a cup of tea. Bring additional character, comfort and charm with the addition of assorted scatter cushions and an eclectic arrangement of much-loved pieces combined with newer additions.

LEFT A cushion with a frilly or ruffled trim always imbues an interior with country charm. *Candy Stripe* cotton and *Frilled* linen cushions, all £60 each, Sorbet Living

ABOVE LEFT Mix and match fabrics for an inviting, relaxed look. *Sofa, Irene in Spice*, £105 a metre; and all other fabrics, William Yeoward at Designers Guild

ABOVE RIGHT The antique look of this floral upholstery adds perfect time-worn charm. *Sofa, Tapestry Garden in Old Pink*, £110 a metre, Colefax and Fowler



STYLE NOTES:

- Make comfort a priority with both furniture and fabric choices.
- Loose covers make things easier to clean, but consider harder-wearing fabric choices for upholstery too.
- Loosen up the look with lots of cushions, with ruffles or frills to add country charm.
- Mix old and new, as well as layering pattern and colour for an evolved feel.



FEATURE: KATY MCLEAN; PHOTOGRAPHS: P73 (VANESSA MACDONALD AT MELISSA WINDHAM), SIMON BROWN; P66 (VANESSA MACDONALD AT MELISSA WINDHAM), JAMES MACDONALD; P68 (GORETT LIVING), SARAH BUTTON; P69 (SARAH VANRENN) MIKE GARLICK; (MORRIS & CO) ANDY GORE

ABOVE Opt for a deep sofa bedecked with cushions. A waterfall ruffle completes the laidback look. Cushions, Casper in Green, £231.01

a metre, Sarah Vanrenen for Penny Morrison. Interior design by Sarah Vanrenen **RIGHT** Loose covers are ideal for sofas shared with four-legged

friends, while pinky-red tones and accents give a room warmth. Walls, Emery's Willow in Chrysanthemum Pink, £109 a roll, Morris & Co ■

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A selection of art collected over the years and displayed in gallery style creates interest in this corner of paint expert Annie Sloan's sitting room.



On DISPLAY

Be inspired by expert interior design tips and create a curated collection of art and antiques with confidence

Decorating an interior with antiques, art and sculpture can introduce a wealth of historic interest and a bounty of visual charm to any room in an English home. From displaying gilt-framed oil paintings or bold contemporary art, to showcasing an eclectic mix of antique styles or a single, simple sculptural piece, take note of a few tips from interior design experts on the best way to display a collection, large or small, and enjoy the beauty of each, every day.

Combine old and new

Mixing together art and antique pieces that span different styles and historic periods can be a hugely successful way of creating an interior with a playful, eclectic feel and that is a joy to spend time in. A juxtaposition of old and modern can add depth and varying degrees of interest. Even something as simple as updating an antique chair with a flamboyant and boldly contemporary fabric, as seen in this design (right) by Paolo Moschino and Philip Vergeylen, can enliven an interior and create a cohesive but energetic link between antique and contemporary pieces. “We firmly believe mixtures of different periods and styles add depth and personality to an interior,” they say. “We always like to include unexpected elements. For us the most important thing is to make sure there is harmony between the styles and periods.”



Hang a pair of portraits

Use the natural formality, grace and composure of antique portraits of ladies and gentlemen dressed in their grand attire to add lively period charm to a bathroom or bedroom, perhaps to denote whose side of the bed is whose, or either side of a double vanity in an en-suite perhaps. Interior designer Samantha Todhunter explains, “Hanging ‘his and hers’ paintings in this Oxfordshire bedroom (left) was really just a playful touch that made us, and our clients smile, eternally amusing.” She adds they echoed the idea in the en-suite bathroom, too: “I also love using oil paintings, upholstery and rugs in bathrooms to dress them up and soften up the necessary but utilitarian elements.”

Contrast contemporary pieces with period wallcoverings

Colourful, contemporary art can be used to enhance the personality of a period-style room in conjunction with a traditional patterned wallpaper. Select a design that contrasts with the artwork, but has colours from a similar palette. Mary Graham and Nicole Salvesen of Salvesen Graham agree: “We like to blend more romantic and classical pieces with modern geometric shapes and bold, bright colours to create a fusion of the old and new that feels classic yet characterful and won’t become dated. Juxtaposing modern art pieces and heritage-patterned wallpaper as we have done here (right) prevents an interior from feeling stuck in a particular period. Choosing art and wallpaper with similar colour palettes can stop the contrast from looking too mismatched. It can even help the artwork blend more harmoniously and seamlessly with the rest of the room than a block colour might. Layering contemporary art over a heritage pattern is also a nice way to create texture.”



Create a gallery wall

Hang a lively mix of paintings of various styles and sizes with different types of frames together to create a relaxed gallery-style display. A combination of framed paintings, prints, and even wall-mounted sculpture, displayed against a patterned wallpaper or a plain surface can provide visual impact to a functional space such as a breakfast nook, office or hallway.

Bunny Turner of Turner Pocock designed the space shown here (left) and explains a gallery wall is a great way to add a personal touch to a home: “Your art tells your story, so you should enjoy creating and curating the perfect collection. Take pleasure in combining colours and styles. Vary the size of your pictures in a cluster hang, they will naturally come together in a group. We often work with Lyndsey Ingram Gallery, and the art consultant Rebecca Gordon to develop collections of art with clients.” ▶



Group similar items together

Three or more is an ideal number for any curated collection, grouping of similar objects or decorative sculptural accessories. Unify by type and colour, but use varying heights or shapes to add visual interest to an area of a room. For maximum impact, interior designer and antique dealer Max Rollitt likes to mix old and new, with antique furniture such as a display cabinet or an elegant side table lending themselves as perfect platforms for showcasing pieces. “My aim is always to make the eye move around a room,” he says. “To tempt it to travel by making sure things occupy space at different levels (as shown here). Furniture plays a big part in that, but actually it’s pictures, paintings and objets that really make a difference. I like using garniture to create a focal point atop an escritoire, for example, as per the centuries-old, originally Dutch, tradition, but opt for contemporary stoneware or ceramics to balance the overall effect.”

Use tonal colour for visual harmony

Decorate a room with a specific piece of art or sculpture in mind when updating an interior. The right background colour can create a suitably quiet, calm and contemplative atmosphere. This in turn will allow for maximum focus on the object’s individual shape and form, as well as intricate textural finishes on pieces such as bare porcelain, glazed ceramic pieces, marble, stone or even oil on canvas. Opt for a pale warm neutral to enhance the pinky tones of an antique terracotta urn for example, as Cassandra Ellis, colourist and founder of leading paint company Atelier Ellis has done here, or a dark shade to showcase the muddy tones of a glazed pottery bowl. “Art and ephemera like to sit within a nuanced palette – especially at home,” Ellis explains. “Whether a neutral or a stronger hue, it’s important that the colour is deeply pigmented, so that precious possessions are enhanced, and look settled in place.”



Elevate the everyday

Functional antique pieces can create intriguing displays that act as a nod to an interior's heritage. So many items that are highly collectible were originally designed to be used every day and can add a sense of history and decorative charm to a kitchen or dining room. Antique kitchenalia, from copper moulds and wooden boards through to elaborately decorated Georgian serving platters, antique linens and silver-plated candlesticks can be used to create inventive displays, creating a sense of provenance in a period home. Use existing surfaces such as a mantle, or alcove shelving to display items, or source a suitable dresser or cabinet such as the decorated Curiosity cupboard from deVOL (*right*), to showcase items to their best effect. Remember these pieces were designed and made to be used, so enjoy their versatility and employ them to elevate a dining experience with some lavish touches of days gone by.



Enhance artwork with the right lighting

Shine a light on artwork and paintings and enjoy being able to fully appreciate the texture, colour and detail. The right light is key and traditional picture lights are fitted with LEDs that will not emit any damaging ultraviolet or infrared light. Elegant designs in heritage finishes (such as this Neoclassical wall light in bronze by Cox London) are great for antique framed oil paintings, whilst contemporary stainless steel is the perfect complement for modern pieces. For displays of contemporary prints and artwork, that are less susceptible to colour damage opt for more decorative lighting designs such as a pair of wall sconces and position symmetrically either side of a neat display of framed prints to reference the formality of the arrangement. Remember too, that some lighting designs are highly prized as antiques or modern sculptural pieces in their own right, so why not combine art and light to make a statement in a hallway, landing or above the dining table. ▶

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Use smaller pieces of antique furniture strategically

Antique furniture that is slender in proportion can be used to great effect in both period and contemporary homes, providing practicality and elegance without dominating a hallway, small office or guest bedroom, for example. A bureau, armoire or side table with decorative details can easily be combined with modern fabrics and accessories, as Annabelle Holland, creative director of Anboise advises: “Adding antiques to a contemporary space is the best way to add depth and interest to a room. I find the best way to achieve the right balance is by using antiques as accent pieces, which can also serve a functional purpose, as seen here (right), for instance a chest of drawers or a side table. Antiques often have their own unique history and story to tell, by incorporating them into your design, you can add a sense of character and atmosphere, which is hard to achieve if you just use modern furniture.”



Create the unexpected

Achieving a sense of balance and symmetry in a room full of antiques and artwork is often the key to creating a satisfying sense of visual harmony. Formal elegance can be achieved with clever positioning of artwork, sculpture and antiques, as seen in this design (left) for Wow!House 2022 by Sybil Colefax & John Fowler co-managing directors Emma Burns and Phillip Hooper. “The architect in me always starts off with planning a degree of balance in a room,” Hooper explains. “That’s why we love furniture in pairs, or a pair of tables either side of a fireplace with matching mirrors above. However, the designer in me knows this mannerism allows us to break the rules, and by overturning the balance you create a far more interesting dynamic. Hanging paintings off-centre above the fireplace as a group creates something unexpected; if hung properly with the correct pieces it is still balanced.” ■



BIDDING *to* WIN

Expert advice on what to expect at an auction and tips from interior designers for a successful experience



Whether a first-timer or a long-time dabbler of buying at auction, it can pay to glean expert advice on how to prepare, what to expect and terms to be aware of when thinking of making a bid. Director of House Sales at Bonhams, Charlie Thomas, shares his expertise to make the process less intimidating, more successful and, most of all, enjoyable.

What to expect

“Auctions are incredibly fun and not the intimidating spaces people might assume. We always have an exhibition beforehand, which is free and open to all, so just come along, take a look and get a feel for it. If you decide you want to buy, register and you’ll be given a client number so you can bid. Auctions aren’t like the movies; we don’t speak at 100 miles per hour. There’s a certain amount of theatre. Bigger sales can be more dramatic. But largely it’s fun and not at all stuffy.”

Bidding can be done in a number of ways

“Bidding now is so easy. You can bid in the saleroom, with a paddle. Just raise your hand when you want to bid and when it goes over your budget, take it down. You don’t have to be afraid to

move or scratch your nose, the auctioneer will only accept a raised paddle as a bid. Or you can bid online. Almost 80 per cent of our buyers bid online now. You can just click away, or use an online aggregator, which is an internet platform with access to auctions around the world.

Telephone bids are still popular – you book a line and you’ll be asked during the sale if you want to bid or not.

My favourite way is to leave an absentee bid. You give us the highest amount you are willing to pay and we bid on your behalf. You’ll get it for the lowest amount depending on other bids.”

Things to remember or be aware of

“All lots will have a buyer’s premium. This will typically be an additional 25–30 per cent, plus VAT, so remember to add this to keep within your budget. Look out for symbols next to lot numbers. These can indicate additional taxes such as import duties from overseas, or something like ivory inclusion, for example.

Keep in mind how you will get a piece home. Can you carry it under your arm, take it in a taxi or will it need a courier. We store larger items free for the first two weeks, then we charge, so it pays to arrange collection.

If possible, come and see a piece at a viewing before a sale – if it’s an armchair, sit in it so you know it’s comfortable. Ask questions – auctioneers love nothing more than talking about what they’re selling. If you’re unable to view in person, we’ll send extra photos. We are often asked for a photo of us sitting in a chair or at a desk to assess size etc. We will even do video calls.”





Enjoy the experience

“The world has changed, so we do mainly see online bids. People adapted to buying everything online during the pandemic and now buy groceries as well as million-pound pieces of art with the click of a button. But my top advice is don’t be intimidated – come through the door, enjoy the experience and if you love something then go for it. If you buy what you love, you’ll never be disappointed.” ▶



AN EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

Antiques dealer Lennox Cato offers his advice for buying at auction

We may have a romantic idea about buying antiques and art at auctions, but when you get down to the workings, it isn’t that simple. However, if you do your research and are mindful, it can be great fun. These are my recommendations for those entering the world of buying at auction.

- Firstly, I would highly recommend that items should be viewed in person.
- Get yourself familiar with the auction house, attend and watch the dynamics and the theatre of the buyers and the auctioneers. This in time will make you less anxious on the day when you are bidding.
- If you spot something, always get a condition report. The auctioneer will put in writing and show faults which may need to be addressed.
- If bidding on a large item, consider the cost of having the piece restored (if necessary) and

delivery to your home. These hidden costs can soon mount up if you haven’t factored them into the cost of the item.

- Restoration can be expensive. To factor this cost in, take a restorer to the viewing for their opinion on what you are proposing to buy.
- If you have built up a good relationship with a dealer, listen to their advice – should this be purchased or not?
- Auctions charge the buyer a premium, which can be as much as 30 per cent, for buying each lot, so factor this, and VAT, into your budget for a piece.

ABOVE LEFT A mid-century desk gives gravitas to a home office design by Kitesgrove.

ABOVE Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors bids at auctions to find unique pieces for her interiors.

OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Buyers preview paintings ahead of a sale at Bonhams.

Phone bids are a popular way to take part.

Going once...an auctioneer takes bids in a Bonhams salesroom.

BUYING AT AUCTION

THE THRILL OF THE SALE

Interior designers tell why they love buying at auction and divulge the tips they have picked up over time



CLARA EWART

Head of design, Kitesgrove

"Auctions offer an opportunity to bid on a selection of antiques and

beautiful artwork curated by knowledgeable auctioneers with an eye for unique finds. This can be less intimidating than second-hand markets, which can often be overwhelming."



SUSIE ATKINSON

Director, Studio Atkinson

"It's important to be knowledgeable about what

you're going to buy. Do your research to evaluate how much you're willing to pay, otherwise it can lead to missing out on certain pieces or paying too much for others."

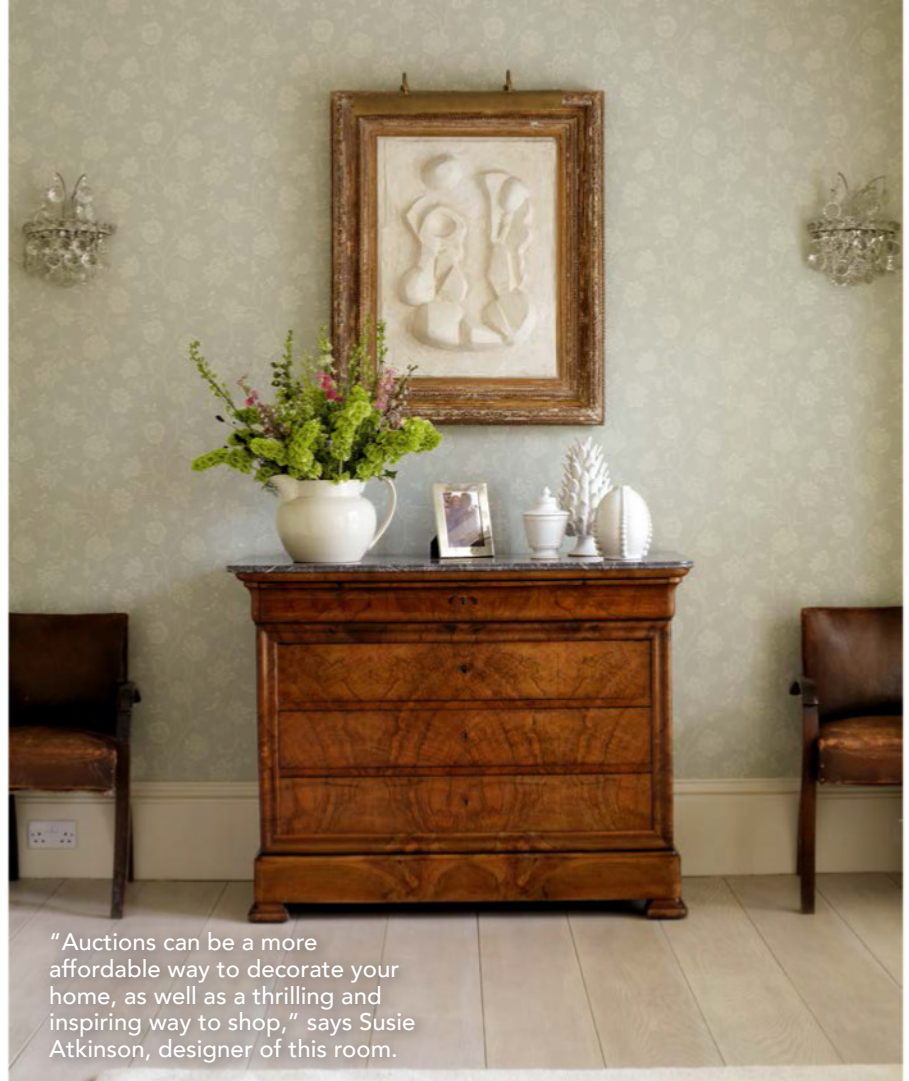


LIV WALLERS

Co-founder, Yellow London

"Auctions will often host previews so you can see everything up close.

Don't be shy about handling and inspecting the pieces properly so you can make a note of any imperfections that might affect your bid. Always ask questions to be confident about what you're willing to bid for, and how much, on the day."



"Auctions can be a more affordable way to decorate your home, as well as a thrilling and inspiring way to shop," says Susie Atkinson, designer of this room.



TOMMASO FRANCHI, Founder & director, Tomef

"If you know you want to buy something, be quick and decisive. Missing out on a piece you really love can be heartbreaking, so decide which pieces you can't leave an auction without and be clear about what your maximum budget is."



OCTAVIA DICKINSON

"When buying online, I advise to always check where the location is and factor in delivery costs; always ask for more

photos and the condition report; and set your maximum price and don't go above it – do not get lured into a bidding war."



HENRIETTE VON STOCKHAUSEN

Creative director, VSP Interiors

"If it's the key piece in your main room, you can afford to bid slightly higher, but if it's only a little table, say, then you can hold back and look for another in a future auction. Most importantly though, try to enjoy the process – it's all part of the story of the piece that ends up a part of your home." ■

LEFT Octavia Dickinson used her vibrant Albie fabric to revitalise this antique sofa bought at auction.





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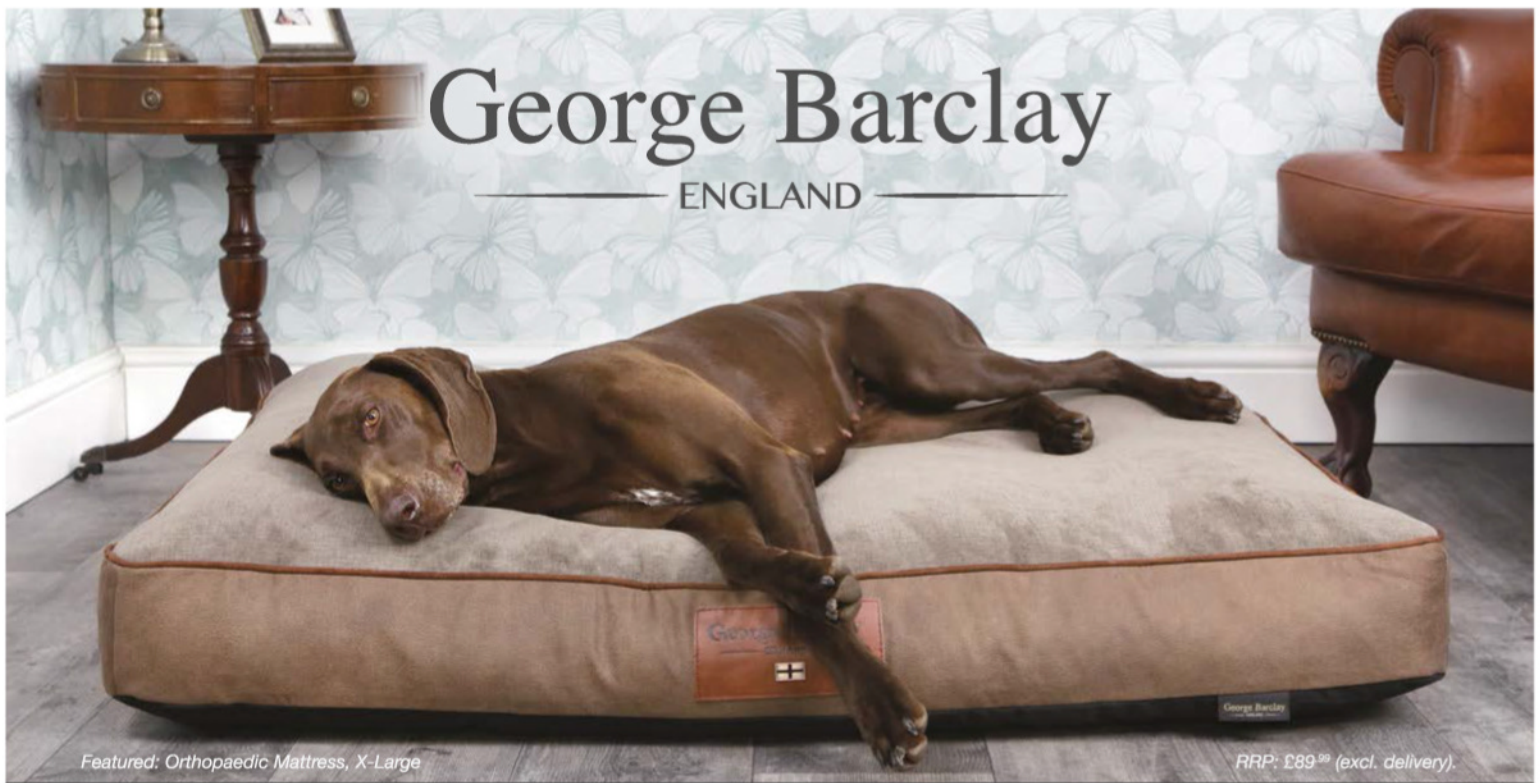
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CHINTZ

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Continuing our series celebrating the evolution of colour and pattern, we explore how trends and historical influences have shaped British interiors, this time focusing on the charm of traditional, time-honoured florals

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE

Few fabrics hold such enduring appeal as chintz – a term now widely associated with florals, though its name derives from a Hindu word that loosely translates as ‘spotted’ or ‘variegated’. Originating more than five centuries ago, the patterned fabric was known for its clarity of colour due to the use of local dyes, such as indigo, cochineal, and logwood. It was widely used for furnishings, often later recycled into clothing, which sparked a fashion

for printed cotton garments. Such was its appeal, that by the 18th century, both France and England temporarily banned its import in an attempt to protect their textile industries.

Now, chintz has become the generic term for any colourful designs on a fresh background, particularly florals. Traditional chintz has a glazed effect, originally achieved by polishing the cloth post-printing to make it long lasting. Over the years, it has fallen in and out of

THIS PAGE In this elegant scheme by Salvesen Graham, wide, contemporary checks offset a selection of florals, from a small-scale repeat to a classic rose-laden fabric. **OPPOSITE** Designer Richard Smith has papered the walls and ceiling of his light-filled Sussex bathroom in Madeaux’s Rose Trellis for a cossetting, pastoral appeal.





ABOVE LEFT These curtains, made from a hand-block-printed Molly Mahon fabric in Poppy – in the Oyster, Mustard and Sky palette – adds whimsical appeal to an otherwise simple sitting room.

ABOVE RIGHT In a bedroom designed by Lucy Cunningham, a frond-laden wallpaper, Bird and Thistle by Brunswick & Fils, is matched with fabric blinds in the same print for a cohesive look.

LEFT A vivid chintz by GP & J Baker lends classic appeal to this sitting-room armchair, tying in with the tones of the floral-papered walls.

fashion, culminating in Ikea’s 1990s campaign to ‘chuck out the chintz’ in favour of modern minimalism. Since then, florals have enjoyed a revival. “I love the fact that we always find our way back to this joyful celebration of intricate pattern,” says British printmaker Molly Mahon, “albeit reinvented for each new era.”

Power of the flower

Chintz adds a decorative layer to schemes, which can be both softening and impactful. The key to a modern interpretation is to use this vibrantly patterned fabric in a mindful way. “In the 1980s, there was a feeling of more is more when it came to chintzes, often with the addition of tassels or even floral carpets,” says interior designer Lucy Cunningham. “It was a bit much, with the result that people still shy away from it. I love using a mixture of different floral patterns, layered up with contrasting and complementing colours. That way, they become something cool rather than dated. There’s a perception that chintz work best in country homes, but we’ve used them to great effect in contemporary spaces in cities, too.”

Floral prints are wide ranging and versatile, which means they work in almost any room in the house. “We love them in bedrooms and living rooms, where a classic chintz or graphic floral design creates a ▶



Wide stripes on the diagonal lend a contemporary context to the traditional Midsummer Bloom wallpaper, from Cole & Son's Pearwood Collection, in this playful hallway.





space that feels comforting, restful and inviting,” says Yellow London’s Liv Wallers. “Florals that are vividly coloured bring a contemporary edge to this traditional motif. And a maximalist floral print throughout, via matching wallpaper, curtains and upholstery, envelops a scheme in pattern and can add a powerful punch.”

Using florals with moodier tones, graphic fabrics and bold artwork, instead of a neutral background, is another way to update this look. “Adding lacquered finishes in bright colours offsets florals nicely,” suggest Salvesen Graham’s Mary Graham and Nicole Salvesen. “Modern art also complements floral wallpaper. Curating the old and the new keeps a scheme fresh.”

Above all, chintz is a useful way of bringing nature into the home. “I can’t ever imagine tiring of patterns inspired by flora and fauna,” reflects Molly Mahon. “If you look to nature closely, you’ll see lines, curves and shapes everywhere – in the silhouette of the sky, the outline of a flower or fallen leaves on the ground. All of these can be drawn in the simplest form to become a print that enlivens the home.”

Fresh appeal

Introducing floral patterns to wallcoverings, upholstery and soft furnishings has always been a good way to

create a bold botanical statement indoors. “Period properties lend themselves naturally to chintz as a decor of choice,” says Jamie Watkins of design house Divine Savages. “Their colours can be used to pick out original features such as fireplaces and cornicing via paintwork. We often look to history for our wallpaper designs, keeping the opulence and grandeur of an era but adding our own playful twist in the same way that, for instance, the Victorians did.”

Curating florals irreverently in this way will result in an intentional yet informal scheme. Consider blending different scales, such as bold wallpaper with a small-scale repeat on an occasional chair, or vice versa, sticking to a tonal colour palette for cohesion. “Be brave in your scheming,” suggests Madeaux’s Richard Smith, whose designs take their cue from the natural world. “Either go all the way with matching fabric and wallpaper for a chic, immersive look or artfully place one statement piece of furniture like an armchair or headboard against a room full of colour-blocked planes and textures. An all-over patterned floral works particularly well when trying to hide lumps and bumps on a wall, or for rooms with odd angles – the eye is drawn to the pattern rather than the architecture. If you do prefer a more traditional application, such

ABOVE LEFT A headboard upholstered in Madeaux’s Octagon in Rose makes a graphic foil to the large-scale floral design of the Lucia wallpaper in Olive.

ABOVE RIGHT In this child’s bedroom by Naomi Astley Clarke, a branch-strewn hand-painted mural by Nancy Daniell adds elegant impact to an otherwise simple tonal scheme.

OPPOSITE Jaipur Flower in Ruby was the first print in Gaby Deeming’s clothing line; now it makes a pretty wallpaper design in her Daydress collection for Dado Atelier.



'A classic chintz or graphic floral design creates a space that feels comforting, restful and inviting'

Liv Wallers, Yellow London



as cream-ground floral curtains against plain painted walls, consider the curtain treatment carefully. To avoid an overwhelming, 1980s feel, make sure they are not overly full, opt for a light interlining and hang them from a simple pole to keep the look fresh."

Pairing chintz with other patterns will also introduce some edge. Salvesen Graham enjoys combining traditional florals with wide checks or stripes, "so that nothing shouts louder than anything else." Florals that are restricted to one or two colours also feel more contemporary. "I have learnt that a geometric really helps balance a floral print," advises Molly Mahon. "Something solid grounds the freer pattern of a floral. I also love the clashing colours that people say you should never use together, such as red and pink or blue and green. Those combinations create energy and vibrancy."

With a twist

Using chintz imaginatively will ring the changes. Try hanging a bold floral wallpaper in an unexpected place, such as a utility room, and painting joinery in one of its hues. Or opt for papering both walls and ceiling in a cloakroom or eaves space for an enveloping feel. "Another great wall-to-ceiling trick is to only paper up to the picture rail, then paint above this point in the exact same shade as the ceiling," says Jamie Watkins. "It can be a brave move when using a dark-coloured paint, but it perfectly balances a bold floral print giving

a less-is-more vibe." Papering within panels or alcoves is another good way of using florals as a decorative feature, as the panel becomes a work of art itself.

"To give florals a contemporary edge, we like to take a bolder or richer hue from the pattern and use it on woodwork or panelling," says Kate French of Dado Atelier, a collective of creatives who produce artisanal wallpapers. "It helps to frame the design and creates a layered scheme. I also like to see oversized florals in smaller rooms; it feels unexpected and modern."

For a subtle look, chintz fabrics add interest and depth. Try upholstering a headboard in a floral, framing it in smart piping, perhaps picking up the fabric in a simple, wide pleated bed valance and curtains. Give an antique chair a twist by reupholstering it with a modern floral design and placing in against a plain background, or, as Kitesgrove's Clara Ewart suggests, use an embroidered cushion on a more sculptural, modern sofa. Other clever ways include using a floral fabric as skirt in the kitchen or around a dressing table, or picking up a floral repeat in wall and table lamp shades. "British design heritage is very much wrapped up in chintz," reflects homeware designer and artist Sophie Harpley. "But rather than being fussy, what we are seeing now is an exciting mix of styles and a freedom to experiment. That blend of vintage patterns and new interpretations has the ability to tell a captivating story."

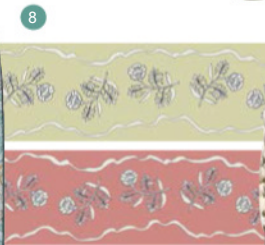
ABOVE A simple, contemporary desk is an ideal foil to walls, window treatment, wall light and desk chair finished in the same rich pattern, Antoinette Poisson's Jaipur, in this study by Salvesen Graham. **ABOVE RIGHT** In this striking bedroom scheme by Kit Kemp for The Crosby Street Hotel, deep pink walls lend a contemporary backdrop to a large-scale scalloped headboard upholstered in Edenwood by Brunschwig & Fils.



CHINTZ

Flower bomb

Lift interiors with irresistible florals in blowsy prints, ditsy patterns, and petal-inspired scalloped edges



FEATURE SUZANNA LE GROVE

- 1 Morris & Co set of four side plates, £66, Spode 2 Puffin daybed in Albertine Grey Skies fabric by Linwood, £1,899, The Headboard Workshop 3 Coco & Wolf x edit58 rectangular wicker picnic basket, £179, Coco & Wolf 4 Margot linen table cloth, from £209, Rebecca Udall 5 Blue ditsy pleated cotton lampshade, £85, Sarah K 6 Tarma armchair in Sheki Olive, £1,695, Oka 7 Raffia scallop candle shade, £80, Matilda Goad & Co 8 Jaipur wallpaper border, seen here in Olive and Raspberry, £64 a roll, Parker & Jules 9 Chester Castle headboard in Soldanelle, from £950 for a single size headboard, Anbôise 10 Tapestry Garden in Old Pink, £110 a metre; Claude Stripe in green, £86 a metre, both Colefax and Fowler 11 Bud Leaf Ruffle cushion, £79, Andrew Martin ■

Attention to functional details, such as a drain built into the floor and hooks for everyone's outerwear, makes this serene boot room, designed by VSP Interiors, work efficiently while being easy to keep tidy.





UTILITARIAN BEAUTY

These useful spaces can be tailored to the exact needs of every member of the house and help make daily life run more smoothly

From dealing with laundry to storing muddy boots and snipping flowers from the garden, 'behind-the-scenes' rooms are the secret workhorses of the home, offering practical solutions that make life easier and helping keep other spaces clear of dirt and clutter. Thoughtful design is key, so that every element works hard and makes the most of available space, as our experts explain. ▶



UTILITY ROOMS

“A utility room is a perfect place to mix humble style, cool simplicity, and proper function,” says Helen Parker, creative director of deVOL Kitchens. “Stick to things that are original, fit for purpose and good quality. We love the idea of natural stone or marble for a sink, for example. Although it may not stay perfect, it’s happy to be knocked, stained and marked – that’s the real purpose of a working room. Don’t put up pictures or ornaments out, just let the room and what you use it for dictate its decoration.”

For all-purpose utility rooms, laundry rooms and rooms where dogs may eat and sleep, a robust, durable and easy-to-clean floor is one of the main considerations. Richard Rench, managing director of Unfitted Kitchens, says that natural stone, with a non-slip surface, is always a good choice, and recommends large tiles for an unfussy look and dark grout so as not to show the dirt. A drain built into the floor may even be a good idea. “Tile the whole floor from wall to wall, not just to the fronts of the cupboards,” he adds. “It provides a proper waterproof area in case of leaks or spills.”

Mike Fetherston, design director of Hetherington Newman, recommends stone or hard-wearing ceramic tiles and slate floors, perhaps with a washable runner or rug for softness. As for worktops, he prefers to use non-absorbent granite, composite stone or

ABOVE This large scullery by The White Kitchen Company has extra-tall storage cupboards (painted in Dark Brunswick Green by Little Greene), a bespoke sink, copper fittings and a hidden pantry – plus a quiet space for a snack while admiring the views.

LEFT Bespoke joinery ensures that large laundry equipment can be stored efficiently out of sight. Here, the washing machine and tumble dryer are stacked to save vital space. Bespoke fittings, as seen here, are available to commission, from £35,000, Roundhouse Design.



even polished concrete, with upstands to protect the junction with the wall. He also points out that ventilation is important, whether an opening window or a stable door, and that an extractor fan may be necessary to comply with Building Regulations.

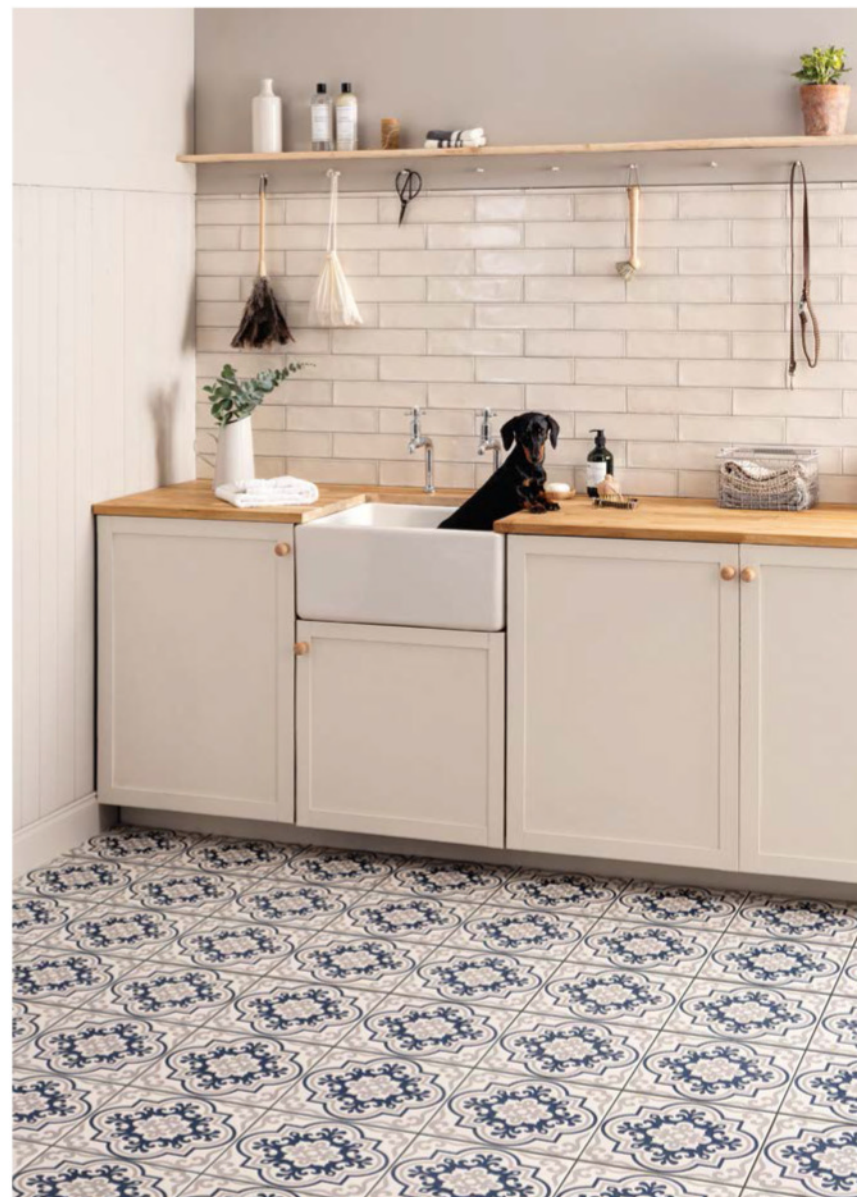
Good light should be provided over working areas, especially the sink, avoiding dangling flexes or arms that protrude too far from the wall. Heating, too, is vital, especially for laundry or dogs that sleep in a bed on the floor. Underfloor heating provides constant, gentle heat and does away with the need for radiators. Drying laundry can take up a great deal of space and, where ceiling height allows, a good solution is a pulley-operated wooden clothes rack. Another way to make the space work harder is to mount the tumble dryer above the washing machine. Adding a pull-out shelf (many stacking kits incorporate these), makes loading the machines easier.

As for storage, the experts prefer to keep cupboard doors to a minimum for ease of use, especially of appliances, though a tall cupboard for the ironing board and vacuum cleaner may be a priority, says cabinetmaker Charlie Kingham. Fetherston points out that cupboards can be made bespoke to suit whatever is being stored, whether pet treats, clothes pegs or hanging clothes, and designed to maximise space. "If there is enough room a large cupboard with doors, sub-divided inside with shelves and drawers, is always good so things can be hidden away," he says. ▶

ABOVE LEFT Designed with modern-family living in mind, this large, multi-purpose room by Humphrey Munson has durable limestone flooring and includes plenty of open and concealed storage, a dog shower, a dog bed and a deep sink.

ABOVE RIGHT A soft colourway imbues this laundry room with an airy mood, with Classic cabinets in Pale Ochre. *Utility rooms from £15,000, Martin Moore*

RIGHT Patterned tiles provide a practical and decorative floor. *Odyssey Grande Vogue tiles, £140.05 a square metre, Original Style*





LEFT Space permitting, a built-in seating area provides comfort and keeps muddy outerwear contained in one area. Interior design by Sims Hilditch.

BOTTOM LEFT Each family member has their own area in this combined laundry and boot room by Hetherington Newman, painted in Farrow & Ball's Bancha.

BELOW This hard-working boot room by Christopher Peters features an abundance of hanging space, shoe storage, and personalised family cupboards.



OPPOSITE TOP LEFT Built-in bench seating, a wall-to-wall hat shelf and convenient boot drawers make this boot room by Barnes of Ashburton a highly efficient space.

OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT Rich paint colours not only add a decorative backdrop to a boot room, they can also be practical in terms of not showing up dirt easily and being easy to touch up every so often.

Boot and utility rooms from £5,000, Olive and Barr

OPPOSITE RIGHT In especially small boot rooms, the addition of a single wardrobe creates a helpful amount of hanging storage. *Chester single wardrobe in Dove Grey, £699, The Cotswold Company*



BOOT ROOMS

Many of the principles that guide the design of a utility or laundry room apply equally to boot rooms, where mud is likely to be tracked in from outside and suitable storage for everyone's outdoor wear must be arranged for ease of use. A robust, easy-to-clean floor and worktop, good lighting and some form of heating are all necessities. "We normally put in a small radiator or a plug-in greenhouse heater under the welly rack," says Kingham. "They're low-consumption but help to dry boots out and make them slightly warm when you put them on." Rensch advises a built-in mat well to trap dirt inside the external door, recessed to be level with the hard flooring and as wide as possible. And Fetherston likes to add a hand-held vacuum cleaner, perhaps one that charges while mounted on the wall. "It can easily deal with any mud or muck straight away," he says. Panelling the lower walls provides protection and gives the opportunity for subtle decorative refinement, Fetherston adds. "Wallpaper above can be fun,

provided it is not in a humid area." He also advises simple window treatments, such as shutters or roller blinds, which can add colour without being overly obtrusive and are easier to keep clean than curtains.

In terms of overall design, where space allows, it is ideal to provide separate storage for each individual member of the household – perhaps labelled with an initial letter. A bench seat could have a leather, wipe-clean or washable-fabric seat pad, space below for shoes and boots (with or without baskets), hooks above for coats and a high shelf for hats or anything else.

While Fetherston advises that stained wood can be more durable than paint, choosing a good quality, highly pigmented paint in a wipeable finish, such as eggshell, will stand the test of time and offers the opportunity to introduce interesting colour to this contained space. "Bold colour choices are perfect for boot rooms, especially darker colours, which add style to the decor while staying practical and durable," says Kingham. ▶





ABOVE A practical floor, sturdy sink and variety of storage for pots, vases and baskets make this example of the Millhouse Scullery by deVOL the ultimate functional space.

RIGHT In this garden room by Charlie Kingham, the stone floor laid in a geometric pattern adds decorative interest while still being a practical design choice.

FAR RIGHT This boot room by Artichoke in a large country house doubles as a space to store flower vases, trugs, buckets and the like, with a robust sink and floor, ample worktop space and even a cosy niche for a dog bed.



FLOWER ROOMS

An area dedicated to arranging flowers could simply be a small space in which to snip stems and fill vases, perhaps with a cupboard below the sink and a shelf above for storage. For serious gardeners, who have a room with direct access to a garden, more is required. Flower farmer and florist Roz Chandler, of Field Gate Flowers, says a floor that is easy to brush and mop is essential, as is – for anyone spending any length of time arranging flowers – a high-level table to work on. She says that access to water is vital: either a sink that is large enough to fill a bucket or, if plumbing is tricky, simply a tap outside the door. “Temperature control is important,” she adds. “When working with flowers in the summer it’s a good idea to have blinds to keep the heat out, or else a fan or even air conditioning. In the winter, we light our log burner when we’re making Christmas wreaths.”

In terms of storage, somewhere to hang outdoor coats and footwear, perhaps also aprons, tool belts and kneelers, is useful, as well as places to store trugs and buckets, snippers and secateurs. A combination of shelves and drawers is best, says Chandler. “A pine chest painted with chalk paint is great, and we hang-dried flowers from a ceiling-mounted airer and ribbons from a wire across the room, which looks lovely. The room has to be functional but it can be beautiful, too.” ■

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COMING NEXT MONTH



The ENGLISH HOME

SEPTEMBER ISSUE

- Celebrate British craftsmanship with our edit of products, brands and makers
- Fresh ways to decorate with classic stripes
- How to grow and display vibrant dahlias beautifully
- Discover illuminating ideas for lighting interiors
- Plus beautiful homes, ideas for slow seasonal living, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

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CALLAGHANS OF SHREWSBURY

SHAPE & FORM

Tobias Martin's exceptional artistic talents allow him to hew bronze into stunning animal sculptures which depict each species with photographic precision

There are not many sculptors who can perfectly capture the unique characteristics of animal species with the meticulous precision of Tobias Martin (b. 1972), so it comes as no surprise he has emerged as one of the leading animaliers of his time. Born in Wiltshire, just 12 miles from Stonehenge, Martin is influenced by his idyllic rural upbringing, and the forces of nature around him, with animals proving a natural source of inspiration for his works.

Over the years, he has forged his signature style, which is enhanced by his tender observation and abundant admiration of the mammal world. For example, his life-size sculpture of Nico the gorilla is breathtaking in its detail. "Though many can capture something of the strength, grace and agility of our fellow creatures, it takes a real artist to convey the sense of inner being that we share with them," says Stella Callaghan, of Callaghans of Shrewsbury, who, along with husband Daniel, represents Martin's work. "Silverback gorillas usually live between 30 and 40 years, so it is quite astonishing for Nico to reach the grand age of 56. As one of the world's oldest living silverback gorillas, it's a fitting tribute that Martin has

sculpted him so his legacy can live on," says Daniel.

Martin's sculptures, executed in bronze in either life-size or monumental scales, add a sense of intrigue to any home, public garden or landscape setting. Take *Boxing Hares*, which, standing at an impressive 175.26cm and full of dynamic movement, adds an extraordinary, eye-catching element to the garden in which it sits. Due to the level of detailed precision in each work, despite the heaviness of the material, there is a lightness of touch that draws the viewer's eye back to pore over every minute detail, again and again. The sculptures are made as one of a small worldwide limited edition series, signed and numbered, with a distinct patina adding an extra element of finesse.

"We are immensely proud to represent the work of Tobias, whose pieces express the dignity and gravitas of existence through an array of animals both big and small," says Stella. "His work never patronises or sentimentalises, but reveals, with respect and sensitivity, a deep knowledge of, and wonder at his subject in all its splendid variety." And for many of us, this could be as close as we come to extraordinary animals like this in the wild. ■ callaghan-finepaintings.com

LEFT *Nico*,
original bronze
edition of five,
height 175.26cm

BELOW *Boxing Hares*,
original bronze
edition of five,
height 180.34cm



FEATURE KATE FREUD



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LIVING THE SEASON

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

CELEBRATING STRAWBERRIES

Sweet British strawberries need few additions. Simple combinations to try with the fruit include balsamic vinegar and black pepper, and lime and basil (add balsamic and feta for a savoury salad). For a party centrepiece, a pavlova is an impressive crowd pleaser (Mary Berry has an easy recipe). Plant hardy British varieties such as 'Florence' and 'Cupid', with manure in August and September for the best crop next year.



Flower pressing
workshops £125
for two hours,
Jam Jar Edit



What to do in **AUGUST**

Make herby cocktails, cook with courgettes,
press flowers and revitalise a room or
two with some simple country style

GATHER... *flowers and press*

Select favourite stems from the garden, or pick a few meadow blooms from walks in the country. The simple, age-old method of laying flowers out carefully on blotting paper and sandwiching them between heavy books will, of course, work a treat and is ideal for really preserving the last of the colour and floral loveliness of an English summer. Once the blossoms are fully pressed and dried, why not use them to make handmade prints for the wall, greetings cards or present gift tags for friends and family? Alternatively, indulge in a course and really let your botanical creativity flow. Jam Jar Edit is renowned for workshops that cover everything from pressing the flowers to mounting and framing your wonderful, one-of-a-kind floral masterpieces. ▶





Cinco cocktail glasses, £36 for two; Cinco martini glasses, £36 for two; Sado tumblers, £56 for four; White Rattan tray, from £46, candlesticks, £44 for two; Brass cocktail shaker £45, all Layered Lounge

HARVEST... *herbs*

Soft herbs, such as mint and basil, are at their best at the height of summer, so maximise their sweet taste and fragrance in all sorts of concoctions, from salads to summer cocktails. Basil is an Italian favourite, so why not conjure up a cocktail using fresh Amalfi lemons and a dash of Limoncello?

Mint is marvellously versatile and comes in many varieties, all of which are easy to grow during the summer months – give mint space and it will thrive.

There are more than 600 varieties and some are renowned for their refreshing qualities, making them especially suitable for summer cocktails when mixed with citrus fruits and popular spirits such as gin, vodka and rum. Serve exotic mint-based drinks such as a vodka mojito, Cuban cocktail, mint julep or mint gimlet, by adding banana mint, chocolate mint, Moroccan mint or even grapefruit or strawberry mint to the mix. Pour over ice and enjoy!

CREATE... *a country-style bathroom*

Take inspiration from the long summer days and seemingly endless amount of light and brightness to infuse a bathroom with rustic appeal. Walls and woodwork in a warm white tone reminiscent of the fresh white of a daisy or the romance of a meadow of wildflowers will enhance a small space in an instant while avoiding the room feeling too cold when darker days come along. Accessorise with vintage linen, simple weathered-timber furniture or bath racks for scented candles, soap and reading material, and, of course, a vase of freshly picked wildflowers. ▶

The Plank Bath Board, £48, The Interiors Yard



EAT... *courgettes*

Abundant through summer, if tending to a plant or two at home, courgettes can seemingly spring up overnight. How to deal with a surfeit of them can be challenging, but this versatile summer squash can be used as an ingredient in a variety of ways. Try it grated into coleslaws, lightly pickled as a vibrant side dish, fried and served with a garlicky dip or even in cakes and muffins – either with cheese for a savoury treat, or paired with zesty lime as a sweet treat.



DAYLESFORD COURGETTE AND LIME FRITTERS

Makes 12

INGREDIENTS

60g self-raising flour	3 tbsp fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped
1 tsp ground cumin	1 lime, zest and juice
1–2 tsp flaky sea salt	200ml sunflower oil, for frying
1 egg	200g natural yogurt
40ml whole milk	
250g courgettes, trimmed	

METHOD

- Whisk together the flour, ground cumin, measured salt and a few turns of pepper in a large bowl.
- Beat the egg and milk together in a jug, then pour the mixture gradually into the dry mix, whisking as you go, to create a smooth batter.
- Grate the courgettes onto a chopping board using the coarse side of a box grater, then squeeze them between your hands to get rid of any excess liquid. Add the gratings to the batter with one tablespoon of the chopped coriander and the lime zest and stir through.
- Pour the sunflower oil into a large, non-stick frying pan so it is, give or take, 2cm deep. Warm over a medium-high heat until a droplet of batter fizzes on contact with the oil. Spoon big tablespoon-sized dollops of the batter into the pan and fry for 4–6 minutes on each side. They are ready when the outside is golden and the inside is fluffy and just cooked through. You may need to do this in batches, so transfer the cooked fritters to a plate lined with kitchen paper, and pop them into the warmed oven while you do the rest.
- Mix the yogurt with the remaining coriander leaves, the lime juice and a pinch of salt, and serve it in a bowl alongside the pile of warm fritters.

UPDATE... *a kitchen window with an eye-catching floral blind*

When considering window dressings for a kitchen, a Roman blind is a practical as well as aesthetically pleasing option. It can also add softness and acoustic benefits to a room full of hard surfaces. Choose a fabric in a lively, joyful pattern for a cheery summer mood all year long. If the view from the window looks out over the garden, why not be inspired by summer planting and bring the outside in? This vibrant update of the heritage Blackthorn design by leading light of the Arts and Crafts movement William Morris will lift the mood in an instant. ■

Made-to-measure Roman blind in Blackthorn, Summer Garden, from £53.15, V&A William Morris collection at Blinds2go





Head to the **COUNTRY**

From trying seasonal dishes and rural pursuits to taking interior design ideas home, staying in a country house hotel or visiting a country club is a chance to experience inspirational country living at its best

Country house hotels and country clubs celebrate the finest aspects of country life and, whether just looking to escape the hustle and bustle for a peaceful weekend or seeking new ways to enjoy seasonal activities, they offer an opportunity to sample the most life-enhancing principles of country living.

Seasonal delights

Being in step with the seasons is a cornerstone of country life. To appreciate how elegant dishes can be achieved with a mixture of home-grown and local produce, visit Devon's Lympstone Manor - the five-star luxury hotel and Michelin- ▶





TOP LEFT The Club by Bamford uses produce harvested from Daylesford farm.

ABOVE At Wiltshire's Lucknam Park, guests can ride one of 35 horses. Rooms from £295 a night, lucknampark.co.uk

LEFT Somerset's Babington House is a members' hotel with various memberships available. Book bedrooms without access to club space on a Soho Friends membership for £100 a year, sohohouse.com

RIGHT Try dishes featuring locally foraged produce at Hambleton Hall.





ABOVE & ABOVE RIGHT Devon's Lympstone Manor welcomes guests and members. House memberships, £860 a year; rooms from £356 a night, lympstonemanor.co.uk

RIGHT & BELOW The Club at Bamford in the Cotswolds has six tiers of membership, from £2,250 a year plus a £500 fee for Escape to the Farm membership with 25 visits a year included, bamfordclub.com



Caines MBE. For those confident in the kitchen, take inspiration from the hotel's vineyards that are used to produce award-winning wine made from grapes home-grown in Lympstone Manor's Devonshire grounds.

Alternatively, if interested in elevated farm-to-fork dishes, The Club by Bamford (a recently launched country club with a focus on holistic health) celebrates wholesome food that can be enjoyed while overlooking the orchards and farmland where the produce originated. Babington House, the original country club by Soho House, also has a similar philosophy with dishes inspired by the produce picked that morning and a garden-to-table menu that changes daily.

Wild ways

To sample a 'living off the land' approach to sourcing seasonal food, visit country house hotel Hambleton Hall and experience the foraged vegetables and game presented on its Michelin-star menu. For those keen to gain expert guidance to elevate country cooking skills, the country house hamlet Thyme offers cookery classes to teach the hotel's 'field-to-plate' techniques. Aside from food, seasonal produce can be used in many ways and country craft classes, including seasonal floristry classes and guest-maker masterclasses, are available at Thyme. For further inspiration, Babington House creates its own essential oils inspired by ingredients in its walled garden. If keen to try making natural products at home, Kew Garden is launching an 'Introduction to Aromatherapy' course online (visit kewonlinecourses.com). ▶



RIGHT Hambleton Hall in Rutland holds the UK's longest-retained Michelin star. Rooms from £355 a night, hambletonhall.com
BELOW LEFT With a well-stocked garden that produces food for the Orangery restaurant, Babington House is celebrating its 25th anniversary with events including a supper series featuring guest chefs. sohohouse.com
BELOW RIGHT, TOP & BOTTOM Centred around relaxing in rural beauty, Thyme in Gloucestershire hosts courses in cooking, painting and making. Courses individually priced; rooms from £400 a night, thyme.co.uk





Outdoor lifestyle

Embracing outdoor living is a great benefit of a country lifestyle, and country hotels and clubs' extensive grounds provide the ideal opportunity to try out different types of activities. To experience nature within daily routines, try The Club's open-air exercise classes set within Daylesford farm's far-reaching green acres. For a more traditional approach to country activities, Hambleton Hall can organise for guests to try out a range of traditional country pursuits, such as hunting and fishing. Alternatively, enjoy the beauty of the natural landscape from a different point of view; riding has long been a popular countryside activity and Lucknam Park specialises in providing all manner of equine pursuits at its well-equipped equine centre. With riding experiences to suit all ages and abilities, the 500-acre grounds can be explored on a gentle morning hack or taken in at speed on a confident gallop through the Park's various pockets of woodlands.

Country schemes

Post activities, when relaxing in a country house hotel, the eclectic-style interiors can spark new ideas to replicate at home. A visit to Callow Hall hotel reveals individual rooms designed in a modern English country house style with an enveloping sense of place. The charming interiors were created by interior designer Isabella Worsley, and to emulate its quirky character she advises, "pairing strong colours and fabrics with a sense of playfulness." There is a confident use of pattern throughout the hotel. Worsley's clever ideas to layer designs include repeating the same prints around the room and using contrasting patterns on chair backs to add unexpected interest. To anchor the busy schemes Worsley says, "I love using a strong backdrop colour to give warmth, which is particularly helpful for the English climate. A deep cognac or teal blue can act as a very effective ground palette on which other layered items can 'pop'. Stronger tones are also very effective to experiment with layering lighting." ■

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Callow Hall's private dining room features a mural by Melissa White which references the surrounding area.

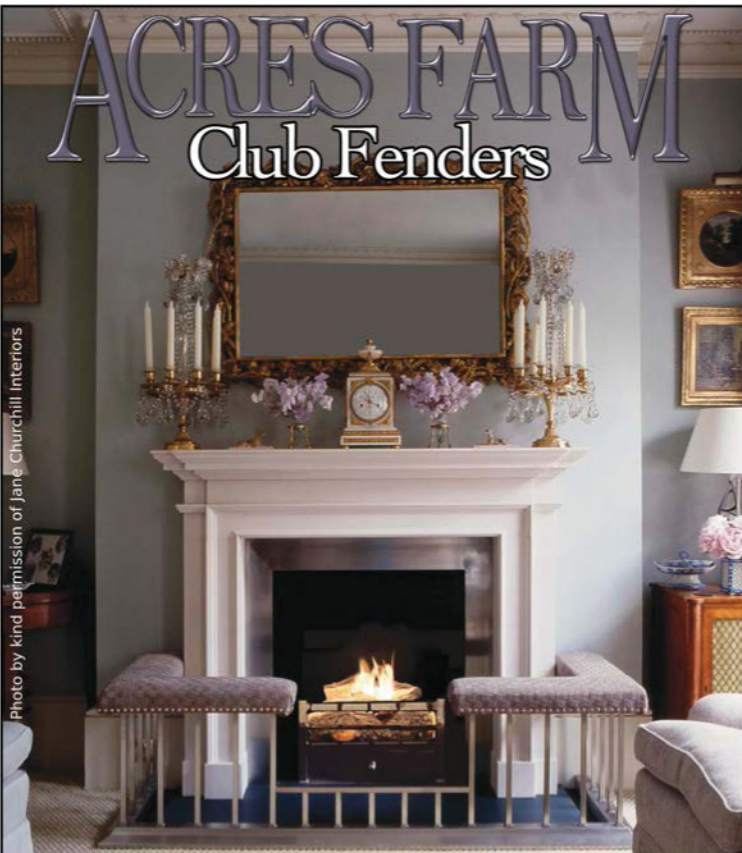
Cosy seating zones at Callow Hall feature a bright mix of prints.

Outdoor pursuits to try at Hambleton Hall include swimming, croquet and tennis.

Callow Hall is situated in the Peak District. Rooms from £214 a night, wildhive.uk

ACRES FARM Club Fenders

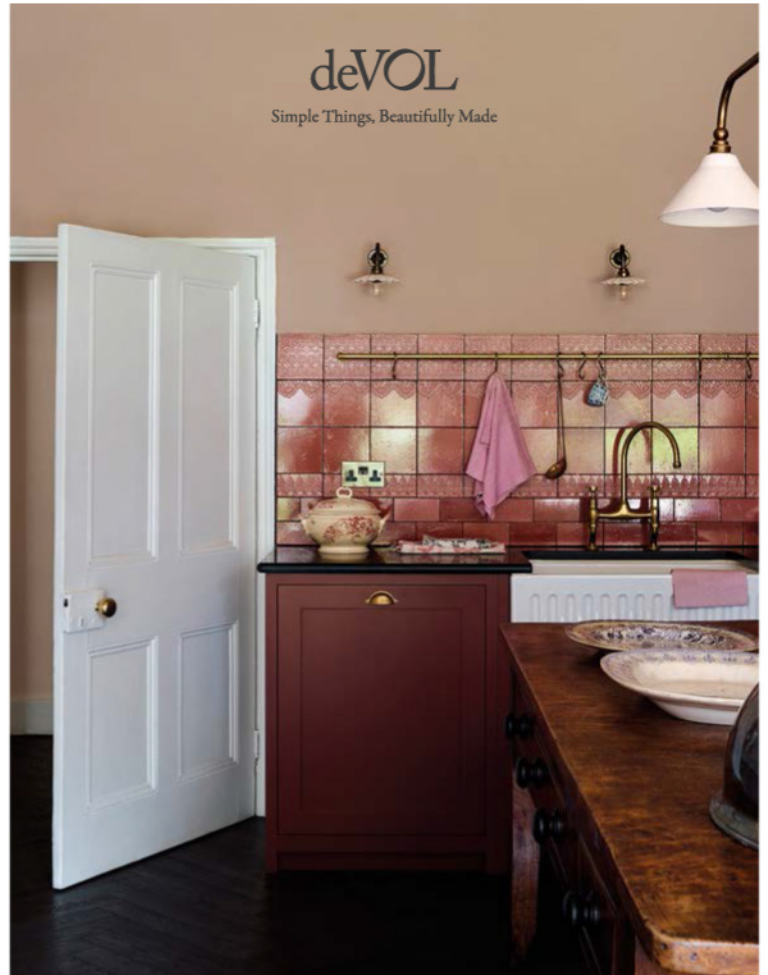
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Taking SHAPE

Materiality has a significant impact on garden sculpture. Here, we look to five respected sculptors working in wood, stone and bronze, their extraordinary vision, and their shared natural-world inspiration

FEATURE KERRY N HARPER-CUSS



ABOVE Dominic Welch has been a sculptor for over 25 years and exhibited all over the world.
BELOW Aureorean

Moon in bronze, part of a display at Welch's house in Devon.
BELOW RIGHT Welch carefully honing one of his works.

POETRY IN STONE

The pure lines of Dominic Welch's stone sculptures settle serenely into nature and have garnered international recognition

Celebrating the strength and serenity of stone, Dominic Welch composes poetic sculptures that feel strikingly contemporary yet agelessly at home in natural settings. He sculpts almost exclusively in creamy-coloured Carrara marble and blue-grey Kilkenny limestone: yin and yang in terms of hue but sharing the quality of barely discernible grain. "Both have so much beauty in them with their subtle marbling. I don't like stones that are too noisy," he says.

Working solo in his Devon workshop, Welch extracts forms from blocks of stone with hammers, chisels and air tools as well as stone grinders. The final polishing is always done by hand, although, even at this point, he might put small marks in with a chisel. He can have as many as 10 pieces of work on the go at a time; some made to commission, some for sale through exhibitions.

"It is hard to put a time frame on creating a piece. During the first three solid working days, a piece can come on enormously from a rough block of stone, but then it all slows down," Welch explains. "Working on the larger pieces is very physical, particularly standing them up to have a look and then laying them down again to work."

Occasionally, he works for up to three years on a piece, until he feels the subtleties of line and light are just right. "Natural stone lasts forever and weathers almost imperceptibly, although it ages more quickly if located in a damper, shadier part of a garden or if regularly perched on by birds," he explains.

"However, gentle regular cleaning with water is all that's required, although many like to allow pieces to grow into their landscape, becoming more organic - like living sculptures - which can be amazing." ▶



A large, vibrant bush of pink and orange azaleas in full bloom, with a stone sculpture in the foreground. The sculpture is a large, smooth, grey stone piece with a spiral design, mounted on a dark wooden post. The background is a lush green lawn with ferns in the foreground.

GARDEN DESIGN

Embryonic Form is carved from Ancaster Weatherbed limestone, is priced £15,000 through Messum's.



LIGHT & SHADE

Reflecting nature's constant interplay of sunlight and shadow, David Harber's captivating sculptures and water features honour the passing of time

More than 30 years ago, David Harber began making and restoring armillary spheres, captivated by the timeless quality of these pieces designed to communicate across the ages. During one restoration, he found a maker's mark dated 1452. "After that, I wanted to only make sculptures that would last at least 500 years," he reveals.

Movement of sunlight is, of course, pivotal to an armillary sphere's purpose, and fittingly, Harber's portfolio is a homage to the romance and flux of light and shade, whether created in mirror-finish steel or softly patinated copper or bronze.

Designs are intricately fabricated rather than forged or cast. This allows Harber and his team to experiment with silhouettes. "I don't have formal training, so this allows me to be audacious," he says. "Designs are formed from individual pieces, hand-positioned and welded together. The result is organic." *Mantle*, with its gilded interior, is a case in point. "I love the relationship between the outer surface, the gaps in between, and the inner surface, which creates optical illusions. With just a wisp of sunlight, the interior explodes with light bouncing off all surfaces."



ABOVE LEFT Harber now works with a team of 40 from his Oxfordshire workshop. Alongside made-to-order pieces, they create bespoke works for hotel chains, universities and luxury yachts.

LEFT A limited edition collaboration with British jeweller Annoushka Ducas MBE, *Sycamore* rotates and has fine latticework which makes mesmerising shadows on the grass below.

MEDITATION WITH NATURE

James Parker's thoughtful, textural sculptures are underpinned by his attentive perception of the intricate patterns and rhythms of natural forms

Growing up on the family farm in Galloway, James Parker fell in love with the tactility of stone as a child while tending drystone walls with his father. For over two decades, he has won admiration for constructing dexterously layered sculptures, primarily in slate but also in glass, as well as modelling in clay and plaster to cast in bronze or replicate in forged stainless steel.

"Slate is where it began for me," says Parker. "Shaping each piece with a hammer and chisel, before stacking layer upon layer to create comforting forms with gentle transitions is something that I'll never tire of. I love riving [splitting] the layers apart."

He starts each commission by making a site visit, or looking at photographs – working with owners of luxurious homes and gardens all around the world means site visits are not always possible. He discusses preferred materials with clients and asks whether they want curved or more geometric forms. "Sometimes symbolism is important, while on other occasions a beautiful form is all that is required," he says. "The construction, as much as the form, is a source of intrigue. From a distance, the form takes precedence, then as the viewer moves closer, the layered construction captures the imagination. Stacking stone excites me as much now as it did as a four year old."



LEFT James Parker has showcased his work many times since his first exhibition in 2008, including 10 years at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

BELOW His award-winning sculptural forms include fruit, spheres and columnar works. Each can stand alone or be part of a water feature.



FEMALE SCULPTORS

ALISON CROWTHER

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JANE SHAW

Specialises in expressive animal and wildlife forms in bronze and bronze resin, with an emphasis on capturing movement. janeshawsculpture.com

JILLY SUTTON

Known for carving large heads and figures from fallen wood, Sutton sandblasts and limes or dyes pieces to magnify their grainy contours. jillysutton.com

KIM FRANCIS

This Cotswolds-based sculptor carves sensual pieces out of marble and stone expressly encouraging touch of the finished works. kimfrancis.com

MARCIA BENNETT-MALE

London-based sculptor, architectural stone carver, letter cutter and stone mason as well as a QEST scholar. mbennettmale.co.uk

ANNE CURRY

Creates large resin and bronze pieces, inspired by natural forms. annecurry-sculpture.co.uk

JENNY PICKFORD

A Hertfordshire-based contemporary blacksmith and QEST scholar creating blown-glass sculptures and architectural ironwork. jennypickford.co.uk



FELLED & FALLEN

Philip Walker creates fluid, organic sculptures in wood as well as bespoke pieces from fallen and storm-damaged trees from clients' own gardens

Gouging, carving and scorching are just some of the techniques Philip Walker uses to magnify wood hues and textures. "I'm obsessed with the variety it offers," says the Hampshire-based sculptor. "The range of properties across thousands of species can make two timbers seem like different materials entirely."

His work honours trees fallen in private gardens or transforms wood felled due to damage or disease. "A tree from the client's own garden is significant to them, so it's important to honour it the best way I can, working closely with them to deliver a design that they are happy with," he says.

"Grain patterns and colour can be exploited using various techniques. A timber with very little character or colour can present a chance to focus entirely on form, which can be very freeing as I don't worry about showing off existing features," he adds. "There are few species that will last for a long time outside, namely oak and cedar. They will lose their colour, so, form is particularly important. For large works, I use green timber. Its high-moisture content means that the elements will change its surface over time; all of this has to be considered and accepted. Oak sculptures can last for decades outside, mellowing into their surroundings." ▶

ABOVE Ranging vastly in size, Philip Walker's sculptures can take anything from a week to several months to complete. The pricing of his pieces ranges from £250 to £25,000. Most of the work is for private clients, with around 80 per cent being commissioned art.

RIGHT Making form, flow and texture a priority, Walker also designs and makes seating that is a standout feature.





EXPRESSIVE FORM

Capturing the spirit and physicality of wild animals with expressive metal forms, sculptor Hamish Mackie's driving force is honouring their strength, elegance and character traits

Hamish Mackie - one of Britain's foremost wildlife sculptors - is driven to capture the energy and expression of animals. His dynamic cast-bronze pieces begin with detailed observation of animals in their natural habitats and research trips take him around the world. "Observing a tiger in the wild in Assam is totally different to observing a captive animal in a zoo," he says. "I've travelled to the Arctic, the Middle East, Russia and Australia, and spent a great deal of time sculpting the leopards and cheetahs at the AfriCat Foundation in Namibia, and rhinos at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya. My passion feeds my sculpture and vice versa."

Mackie works spontaneously, direct to armatures (wire skeleton frames), in his studio or by creating maquettes 'en plein air', using oil-based clays that do not dry out, even in extreme heat. Maquettes are sent back to his Oxfordshire studio so that life-sized sculptures can be crafted over an average of three to four months.

The sculptures are cast in bronze (and occasionally silver, gold or stainless steel) at Lockbund Sculpture Foundry using the lost-wax technique. "Lost-wax casting has been a specialist technique for 6,000 years," he says. "It still amazes me that it's possible to capture the fingerprint I press into soft, wet clay within cold, hard metal."

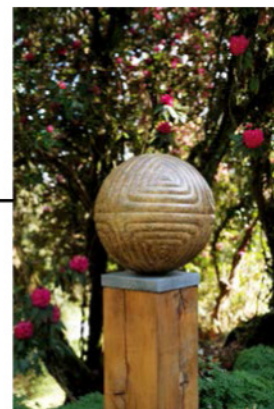
Alongside limited editions, Mackie works to commission. He has exhibited globally, as well as at the Royal Academy and RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Lauded commissions include pieces for Blenheim Palace and the piazza at Goodman's Fields in London, which won the PMSA award. ■

TOP Hamish Mackie's passion for his subject matter results in dynamic sculptures created with a deeply instinctive process.

LEFT Nine out of 10 of Mackie's works are limited edition pieces. These Wild

Boar sculptures are life-sized.

TOP RIGHT Dominic Welch's Geotropic Sphere in bronze. Cast from original stone, each piece ends up with a unique colour and patina.



THOUGHTS ON LOCATING SCULPTURE

Dominic Welch advises that placing a sculpture in a garden is an art in itself. Things to consider include the fall of light throughout the day and the year, the position and impact of leaves on surrounding trees, and whether it is desirable to see the piece through windows of the rooms one spends most time in or whether it is preferable to locate it in a secluded spot.

He keeps in touch with clients for years, reconnecting when they move home or want to re-site a sculpture. Even though stone is heavy, he says it is always possible to find the perfect location.

"The plinth needs careful consideration and is quite often one of the most difficult parts of the process because the bases tend to be submerged in a bed, so that the sculpture looks to be growing out of the ground," he says, adding, "I tend to use solid oak with a cap of stone on top or below: oak lasts - if oiled - for years." He advises that it is important to think about the plinth and consider whether it will add height, how it will be fixed, and if it should be hidden for less formality.



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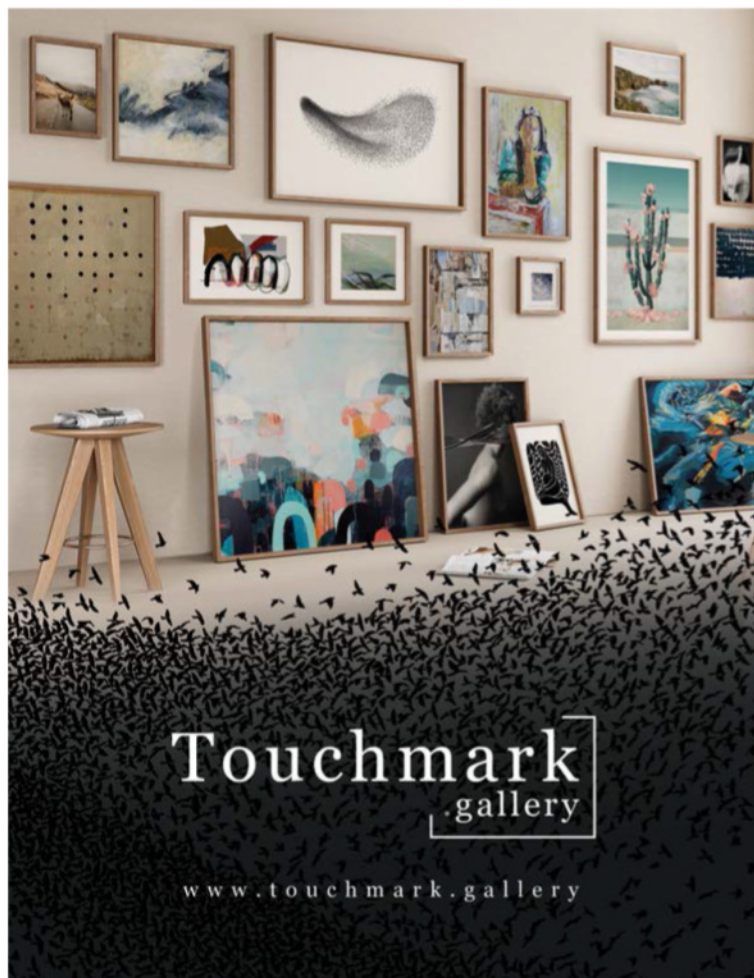
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