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February 2024 | Issue 228 | £5.50 | UK Edition

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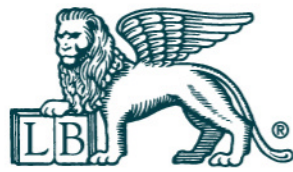


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A letter from home

How will your home evolve in 2024? Whether you're planning a major project or some simple updates, we welcome you to this special edition of *The English Home*, which we have put together to help guide your decorating choices as you embrace the year ahead.

Colour and pattern seem set to transform interiors into joyful and cocooning spaces this year. From bright, invigorating combinations to calm, sophisticated neutrals, there's an opportunity to choose palettes to reflect your unique style. One of the biggest shifts is the move away from grey tones towards warmer neutrals, with shades from buttery cream to deepest espresso providing plenty of temptation. While 'brown' might initially sound unappealing, our guide to decorating with chocolate tones might just change your perception on page 94.

Both pattern and colour are set to reinvigorate and soften the more practical spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms in the home this year. You'll find our feature on the movement away from predictable, clean-lined, boutique hotel-style bathrooms in favour of more comfortable, highly decorated and personal spaces on page 80. While our guide to creating a kitchen focuses on solutions that enhance the everyday experience of its inhabitants on p104.

As always at *The English Home*, we prize timeless style over trends, so for a further insight into the new movements that we predict will endure, don't miss our feature on page 72.

We hope this issue will spark a new idea to enhance your ever-evolving home and how you live in it this new year.

Samantha

Samantha Scott-Jeffries, Editor

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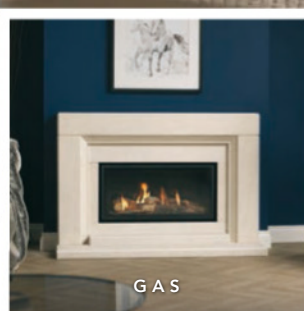
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SPOTLIGHT ON...

Painterly Charm

When Hector Coombs of Shame Studios saw interior designer Cindy Leveson's room portraits, he proposed collaborating on rugs based on her art. Watercolours is the resulting new collection of 18 painterly handwoven rugs and runners inspired by the formal structure of traditional carpets and the freedom and expressiveness of water and pigment. Patterns and colours range from deep reds and warm corals to Delft blues and ochres. Hand-knotted in India using yarns dyed and spun by hand, the materials and technique lend the weave its subtle variations in tone and colour, giving each rug "the soul of an antique," says Hector. shamestudios.com; levesondesign.com



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Fired Imagination

New work by celebrated ceramicist Florian Gadsby

Hypnotic videos of Florian Gadsby crafting quietly elegant clay wonders at his potter's wheel have gained him a global profile.

Yorkshire Sculpture Park is hosting Florian's first solo exhibition in Britain, *By My Hands*, showing a new collection of his work until 25 February, with everything available to buy. The show shares the title of his recently published first book, which he calls "an introspective tale of a teenager finding a calling in clay".

Iron-rich stoneware clay and traditional tools, techniques and processes are key to Florian's precision wheel-thrown tableware and one-off decorative sculptural vessels, which he crafts by hand in his London studio. He draws inspiration from pared-back forms and simple straight-sided objects of everyday use, his subtly detailed glazes have depth, crackled and flecked with iron, with red iron oxide controlling the colours. Cook and food writer Nigel Slater, who has collected Florian's ceramics since 2015, says: "I think of them as the changing colour of the British sky. There is something pure about them, unsullied and uncomplicated. A quiet perfection."

Born in Norfolk, his school pottery teacher first spotted and nurtured Florian's talent. This was bolstered by a work placement at Leach Pottery in St Ives and apprenticeships with Lisa Hammond MBE and Japanese master potter Ken Matsuzaki. yssp.org.uk; floriangadsby.com



Artisanal Blend

Damla Turgut launches new tiles

Born and raised in Istanbul, Turkey, Damla Turgut has turned her passion for art, design and her homeland into a career, launching Otto Tiles & Design in 2014. "I realised there was a gap in the design world for a blend of my homeland's culture and art with a contemporary, rustic touch," she says. "I am inspired by Turkey and the many civilisations and cultures who have called it home, mixing these traditional patterns with contemporary art to create something new and unique."

Damla's London-based company has three showrooms and the tiles she designs are handmade in Turkey by skilled artisans using traditional methods. Guided by the ancient art and handicrafts of her Turkish homeland, she mixes traditional aesthetics with contemporary style and modern with rustic, creating a uniquely captivating blend. Her newest launch is a bamboo-style tile collection crafted from lava stone and inspired by mystic mountainous regions and the elements surrounding volcanic peaks, the design and colours reflecting the atmospheric beauty of the raw material and its natural environment. Four colourways – misty teal, dark blue, white, and brown – come in two shapes, flat and fluted. "Lava stone is a new material that we have not previously worked with, and its sustainability benefits, coupled with its raw texture, offer a beautiful, environmentally friendly tiling option." ottotiles.co.uk ▶





ABOVE Floral Serenade in Verde was originally part of English textile manufacturer Morton Sundour's Cumberland Prints range and depicts

clematis, tree peonies and stylised birds.

BELOW LEFT Date Palm in Sand has a subtle grasscloth texture print to offer depth and interest.

BELOW RIGHT Calico Shell in Cobalt has been recreated with the exquisite surface print mark for an appealing, handcrafted appearance.



Narratives of Nature

V&A Decorative Papers II
by 1838 Wallcoverings

Joyful and captivating, the second collection of wallpapers by 1838 Wallcoverings is inspired by designs from the V&A's archive and celebrates artistry and craftsmanship. Featuring nine wallpapers in more than 30 enduring new colourways, the range includes intricate patterns dating back to the 1700s, with inspiration ranging from woodblock prints and watercolours to textile treasures and upholstery fabrics.

James Watson, managing director of 1838 Wallcoverings, says: "It is a privilege to be able to delve back into the archive and have access to these historic designs and recreate them in our family factory. We feel honoured to print these patterns in innovative ways such as digital printing, which allows us to take an intricate Indian painting from the 1700s and transform it into a dramatic large-scale mural, and traditional surface printing, which crafts a truly authentic feel with its beautiful painterly finish." The V&A's Amelia Calver calls the collection "a treasure trove of styles drawn from the V&A's illustrious archives ... a true celebration of craftsmanship, sophistication and artistry."

A 1920s woodblock-printed wallpaper sample inspired Rhododendron, while one of the V&A's greatest textile treasures, The Lemn Album, which holds Europe's earliest-dated silk designs was the inspiration behind Pineapple Garden. Adorned with peacocks and lotus blossoms, Garland of Rāgini is based on a love-themed Indian watercolour dating back to circa 1700. Kilburn's Maze is based on artwork by well-known 18th-century calico designer and printer William Kilburn. Calico Shell comes from a pattern chosen from an assortment of designs for chintz dating back to the 1760s or 1770s stored in the V&A's Prints and Drawings Department. An impressionistic watercolour sketch of a romantic Egyptian landscape by English Victorian painter Elijah Walton inspired Date Palm, while Laurel Leaf and Flower Meadow were both originally produced as woodblock-printed wallpaper by English artist Walter Crane, and furnishing fabric depicting clematis, tree peonies and stylised birds inspired Floral Serenade.

In the same family for four generations and currently led by brother and sister James and Abigail Watson, 1838 Wallcoverings prints all its papers at the company's factory in Lancashire. 1838wallcoverings.com ▶

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Diary



One of the best 16th-century artists, Hans Holbein was chosen to paint portraits of Henry VIII, his family and leading historical figures. *Holbein At The Tudor Court* runs at The Queen's Gallery Buckingham Palace until 14 April. rct.uk



A firm favourite of interior designers, Newark International Antiques & Collectors Fair in Nottinghamshire is the largest event of its kind in Europe with up to 2,500 stands. From 1–2 February. iacf.co.uk/newark



Snowdrops gladden the heart in winter, so visit RHS Garden Rosemoor in Devon from 1–11 February to marvel at delicate drifts of these wonderful wintry gems. rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor

Walking On Art


Lady Deirdre Dyson's new carpets

"You'll never make a career out of art – you'll never earn any money!" thundered Deirdre Dyson's headmistress in response to her dreams of an artistic future. The crushed pupil proved her headmistress wrong – today Lady Deirdre Dyson heads her own globally successful company making carpets and rugs based on her artwork. Her journey from dreams quashed to dreams fulfilled made her success all the sweeter. Born in Catford, as a teenager obsessed with drawing and painting – with the words of her headmistress ringing in her ears – Deirdre reluctantly became a secretary like her mother. Her boss spotted her drawing at lunchtime and said, "You should be at art school." After a year spent building up a portfolio around her day job, the principal of prestigious Byam Shaw School of Art agreed to give her a free foundation year place to study fine art in exchange for secretarial support. This is when and where she met fellow student James Dyson (long before he invented the bagless vacuum cleaner and their names would begin 'Lord' and 'Lady'). The Byam Shaw principal then gave Deirdre a scholarship for a second year, after which she moved to Wimbledon Art College to study for a three-year graphics and illustration diploma. Deirdre and James married in 1967, and she worked as a freelance graphic designer, set up a life-drawing class at home for extra income, and gained attention for her art, with gallery shows in London and New York.

After buying a new carpet, she was asked to design a range of carpets, and she designed two collections, only for the financial backer to pull out and the owner decide to leave. Having already put in so much creative energy, she decided to go it alone, launching her own company in 2000 designing bespoke carpets and rugs based on her art. Today, it is successful worldwide, with London and Paris showrooms, its luxurious carpets and rugs hand-knotted in Tibetan wool and pure silk by artisans in Kathmandu using ancient methods. Commissioned globally, Deirdre creates at least one themed carpet collection every year, and describes her newest – Graduation – as "the beauty of watercolour reimagined on a canvas of wool and silk, using colour play and wool as my canvas to evoke the beauty of nature's landscapes". Nine designs feature her signature tonal grading, and fine silk elements add a beautiful haze. "The subtlety and peacefulness allow the designs to work seamlessly with any surroundings," she says. deirdredyson.com



FROM TOP Topaz is like a tranquil pathway stretching out to sea, graduating from warm, palest sandy hues to cool azure crystal waters; Ingots, with its dusky raspberry ground, has gently undulating bars of bronze silk threads.



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DESIGN DISCOVERIES

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FITTING PATTERNS

Richard Smith has delved into Madeaux's fabric and wallpaper archive to create a new range of eight smaller-scale prints and woven patterns. The designs are ideal to upholster modest-size pieces such as this bench.

Seat, *Farfalle, Straw*, £132 a metre; cushions (from left): *Farfalle, Royal Blue*, £132 a metre; *Hourglass, Marine*, £124 a metre; *Pavé, Sea Mist*, £124 a metre; *Rowan, Berry*, £132 a metre; wallpaper, *Audrey Grasscloth, Charcoal*, £880 a roll, *Madeaux*

ORNATE TILES

Using the same patterned tiles on the work surface and splashback is an impactful way to soften kitchens and bathrooms with decorative embellishments. A replica of traditional Italian 'Majolica' tiles, these porcelain versions have a classic square format.

Pamplona Rosso patterned porcelain tiles, from £54.99 a square metre, *Quorn Stone*



WARM WEAVE

Heighten the warmth of a rug underfoot with a bright design that lifts the whole room and makes a colourful statement. This wool kilim is handwoven and available in bespoke sizes made to order.

Handwoven wool kilim, Tulip, Red/Gold, from £1,200; curtains, *Natasha hand-printed linen, Red Earth*, £256.50 for a 2.7m panel; *Tassel fringe*, £24; cushion, *Embroidered Tulip*, £125; *Harlequin Shetland wool throw, Grey/Russet*, £98, all *Susie Watson*



PRACTICAL CHIC

The addition of a paneled seating area with a smart paint finish gives this boot room a stylish mood and instantly makes it practical and comfortable. This Alderley in-frame design features classic beading and is available in 16 paint shades, ranging from soft neutrals to rich shades such as this striking green.

Alderley in Mallard Green, from £10,000, Burbidge & Son Kitchen Makers ▶



VERSATILE DESK

For multipurpose rooms, this versatile Holden desk has a decorative design that works for an area used as a home office in a variety of different spaces. Its large surface makes it practical for working during the day and a concealed drawer hides equipment at night. The burr wood patina looks fitting in a sitting room, bedroom (where it could be used as a dressing table) or on a landing. *Holden desk, £5,500, Trove by Studio Duggan*



ON REFLECTION

When looking to balance classic furnishings with modern accessories, natural textures can softly bridge the gap. The hoop of this Tom Raffield simple yet chic mirror is steam-bent from sustainably sourced ash wood and its quirky design adds playfulness to traditional interiors. *Carn mirror, from £195 (small), Tom Raffield*



GENEROUS HEADBOARD

Inspired by the signature architecture and flamboyance of Jaipur in India, this lofty headboard features intricately upholstered scallops and a pointed arch with a contrasting back-tacked edge. Make the most of the large surface area by showcasing a favourite fabric in all its glory. *Super-king Lewis headboard with Indian Summer fabric, £1,299, The Headboard Workshop* ▶



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WOODLAND FLOOR

Sanderson's woodland-themed collection with rug company Brink & Campman has resulted in five bold edits that celebrate the English countryside. In this room, a vibrant rug from the collaboration echoes the flowers found in a woodland glade. The uplifting golden shade is ideal to delineate and highlight a seating area within a sitting room.

Woodland Glade rug, Gold, 100% wool, from £609, Sanderson x Brink & Campman



ILLUMINATING STYLE

A lighting design with a sense of flair can instantly elevate a dining room ready for dinner parties and celebrations. Look to shapely models that feel special but are also practical for every day. This Glasshouse pendant has distinctive contours based on a rare vintage moulding. The glass comes in clear or aged-opaque styles combined with polished or lacquered metal.

Glasshouse clear pendant, £589.75, The Soho Lighting Company

MODERN LOUNGING

For those who love a button-back sofa yet feel the traditional aesthetic does not quite fit with the intended scheme, this three-seater sofa design combines a button-detailed sprung back with a sleek, modern padded seat. The design comes in 11 shades and two different fabrics to customise the finish.

Margeaux three-seater sofa, £2,650, Cox & Cox ■



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tetrad.co.uk



FIND A STOCKIST

SHOPPING



Glasshouse Cinnamon Fern, £115 for a four-tile panel, Decorum Tiles



Bug tiles, Coral, Black and London Stone, £18 each, Rye Pottery



Hex Oscuro handmade tiles, £125 a square metre, Maitland & Poate



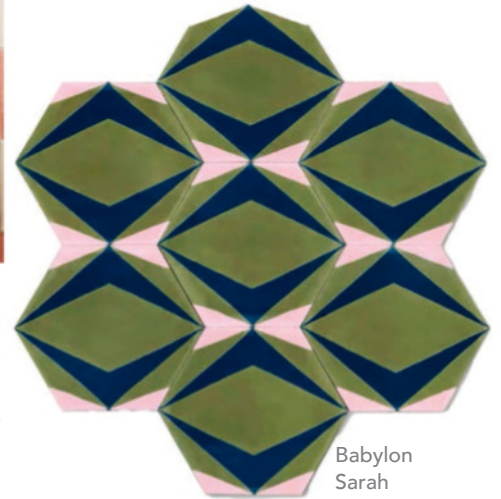
Fellini Argilla Gloss tiles, £69.60 a square metre, Claybrook Studio



Scallop 1, Hanley Tube Lined Decorative tiles £18.60 each, Balineum



Emma Collective Pattern brick tile, £28.87 each, Marlborough Tiles



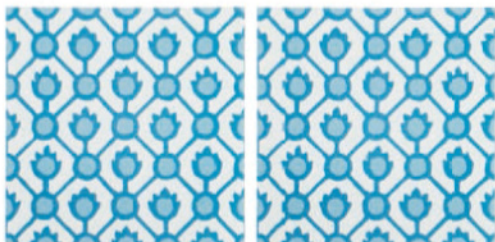
Babylon Sarah Verde Rose Hexagon tiles, £66 a square metre, Your Tiles

ON THE TILES

Interesting shapes, bold colours and pretty patterns help to elevate utilitarian spaces



Pavilion Porcelain Russet Red tiles, £99 a square metre, Ca' Pietra



Designers Guild Jaal Cobalt tiles, £79.80 a square metre, Fired Earth



Kit Kat Green Mix wall tiles, £59.75 a square metre, London Tile Co



Kelmescott Blackwell tiles, £95 a square metre, Fired Earth

Peachtree Oro Bianco handmade glass mosaic, £POA, Bisazza



Monchique tiles, £420 a square metre Everett and Blue



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Anna mirror, £941, Arteriors

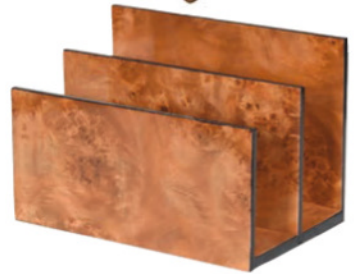
Aurora hurricane lantern, from £425, Katharine Pooley

Poplar door knob in antique brass, £90, Corston Architectural Detail



Anna-Lisa lampshade, £98; cushions, from £116, Cathy Nordstrom

Chateau outdoor lantern, £12,169, Christopher Hyde Lighting



Walnut Burl letter rack, £32, Joanna Wood



Las Salinas 4 wool draught excluder, £129, Andrew Martin

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Create a striking hallway with essential pieces that combine functionality and style

Empire candlestick lamp with marble centre, £525, Besselink & Jones



Edinburgh 3ft coat rack, £115, Neptune



Soumak paint, £60 for 2.5l Pure Flat Emulsion, Paint & Paper Library



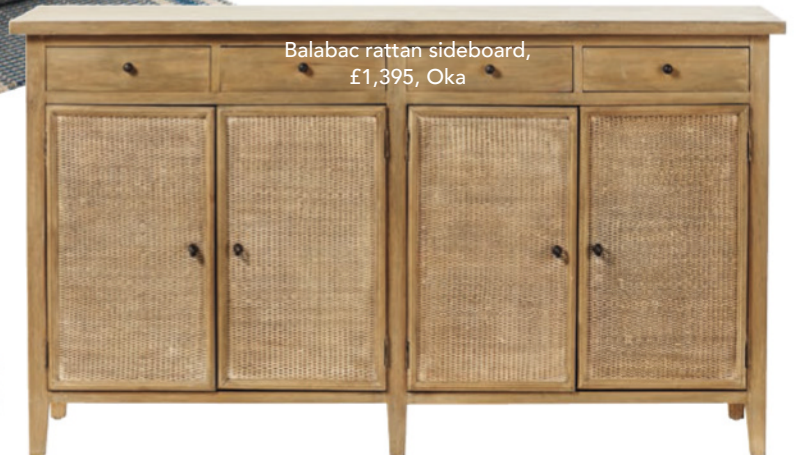
Tribal design runner, from £385 a metre, Sophie Cooney Runners



Mila runner collection, £149.50 a metre, Roger Oates Design

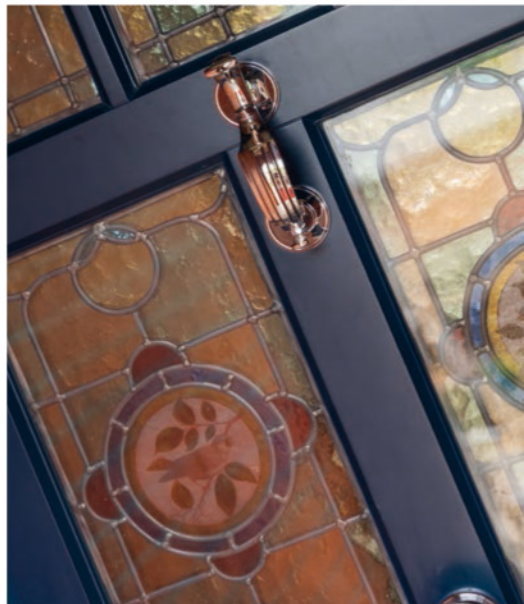


Green Smoke paint, £54.50 for 2.5l Estate Emulsion, Farrow & Ball



Balabac rattan sideboard, £1,395, Oka

FEATURE SUZANNA LE GROVE
PHOTOGRAPHS (CATHY NORDSTROM) © FANNY RADVIK;
(SOPHIE COONEY RUNNERS) © JONATHAN BOND



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GLORIOUS GLASS

There is something strikingly beautiful about the handcrafted glass wall art of Jo Downs, who creates her stunning designs in her Cornish studio. Finding much of her inspiration from her surroundings, she works with clear glass, adding colour with a palette of enamel powders that are brushed on. The colours fuse and blend in the kiln, with a different end-result every time, making for a truly bespoke piece to be handed down for generations.

jodowns.com

THE EDIT

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



RUFFLES GALORE

The idea for Rufflemouse came to Chloë Woods while decorating her cottage on the shores of Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland. Seeking a combination of traditional and playful textiles, she began experimenting with end-of-roll and offcut fabrics to create bows and ruffle-edged cushions. Through mixing and matching everything from classic Colefax and Fowler designs to timeless Fermoie patterns she has created a range of sustainable and unique soft furnishings that lift the mood of any room. With new designs available every month, bespoke creations can also be commissioned.

rufflemouse.com



MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Sophie Cooney, the brains behind the eponymous brand Sophie Cooney Runners believes that, if a stair runner is the first thing one sees in a home, it should make a statement (see page 80). Her unique kilim-inspired flatweave designs are guaranteed to do this, with outstanding craftsmanship adding a luxurious feel. Choose from the more affordable, raw-cotton designs, or from the Wool Range, with colours and striking designs that are certain to leave an impression.

sophiecooney.co.uk ▶



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Deceptively
YOUTHFUL

Rich colours, antique pieces and considered details have instilled a sense of history and character in this new-build home

FEATURE CHARLOTTE DUNFORD PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

THIS PAGE A cosy breakfast nook with red banquette seating and an antique Georgian table is enlivened with artwork and decorative accessories. OPPOSITE The heart of the kitchen is a Heritage model Reimagined Aga

range cooker from Blake & Bull. The walls and cabinets of the kitchen have been colour drenched with Little Greene's Juniper Ash, while the Rose Lace Market tiles from deVOL create a point of contrast.





‘If you’re taking apart a 300-year-old house to move some walls, you’ll find things you aren’t expecting. That’s one of the advantages in a new build’

ABOVE Matthew and Sarah in the sitting room. The beautifully harmonious colour scheme for the room came from a throw Sarah discovered at a flea market.

One could be forgiven for thinking this Georgian-style family home in Wiltshire, with its elegant facade and layered interiors, has a long and rich history. “It’s much more attractive than your average new build,” says Matthew Bates, founder of cooker and cookware company Blake & Bull, who lives in the house with his

wife Sarah, of interiors and creative consultancy May Blake, their two girls and their elderly Golden Retriever, Alfie. “Obviously, there are lots of lovely Georgian houses out there, but ours is interesting, I think, because it was only built six years ago,” he adds.

For Matthew and Sarah, the house carries the perfect balance of aesthetic appeal and contemporary



amenities needed for a growing household. “Modern houses are great to live in. They’re warm, non-draughty and things actually work, which was attractive with a young family,” Matthew says.

The two-storey house is a world away from the couple’s previous home, a tiny 17th-century cottage built into a cliff on the hillside of Bradford on Avon. Set among picturesque surroundings, their current home is situated on a development drawn up by architectural and interior designer Ben Pentreath and built by CG Fry and Son in 2017. “The exterior layout is very natural. There’s a Georgian-style crescent at one

end, which looks out over the views and there are lots of open spaces, woodland, parks and allotments,” says Matthew. In contrast, the interior layout left a lot to be desired when the couple bought the house. “It made no sense,” Matthew explains. “For example, the utility room was at the back overlooking the beautiful garden which looks down to the River Avon, bonkers.”

Once the sale was finalised in 2020, Matthew and Sarah set to work rectifying the layout, knocking through walls, replacing windows and floors, refurbishing the woodwork, installing French windows at the back of the house and adding a door from the

ABOVE There is an undeniable sense of comfort in the sitting room, with walls in Little Greene’s Sage Green, a sofa covered by Ebony Rosé upholstery in Charlton Ginger corduroy from Tissus d’Hélène and a sofa and ottoman from The One Off Chair Company.



"Clocks are something I love. The long case Bullocks clock in the hall is 1830s and made on the high street in Bradford-on-Avon, so I like that local connection," says Matthew. The wallpaper is Fruit by Morris & Co. The dining room has an atmospheric feel thanks to Little Greene's Basalt on the walls. The dining table was sourced by Sarah from Bath Decorative Arts Fair.



driveway to the newly located utility room. “You name it, we did it,” Matthew laughs.

Work ran smoothly throughout the renovation, which Matthew cites as another benefit of living in a modern home. “If you’re taking apart a 300-year-old house to move some walls, you’ll find things you aren’t expecting. That’s one of the advantages in a new build – it’s relatively easy to plan and cost things.”

Part of the reconfiguration included moving the kitchen to run along the length of the back of the house. “We spoke with a local architect to find out what was possible and decided we wanted the kitchen-diner to overlook the garden,” says Sarah, who worked in collaboration with one of Matthew’s friends, a joiner, to create the hand-built kitchen. A resonant, yet deeply comforting palette of blue and red defines the room, inspired by “a painting of my grandmother’s which is hanging in there now,” she adds. At the heart is, of course, a Blake & Bull Aga range cooker in a rich ▶

ABOVE The house features several key elements of the Georgian style in which it is built, including a hipped roof, overhanging eaves and a symmetrical facade.

RIGHT Farrow & Ball’s Sudbury Yellow brings a dose of sunshine to the boot room, while a capacious Ribchester sink from Shaws of Darwen provides a practical space for washing up when the couple entertain.





The use of rich, cossetting colours is at the core of the couple's incredible transformation of the once-stark monotone interiors

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE Sarah chose a Victorian-style bed frame from Bedsteads for the principal bedroom. Walls in Edward Bulmer Natural Paint's Jonquil provide the perfect backdrop.

terracotta shade to complement the handmade deVOL tiles behind. "Even when it's off, it feels very warm," adds Matthew.

The use of rich, cossetting colours is at the core of the couple's incredible transformation of the once-stark monotone interiors. "We wanted the house to feel cosy and comfortable and lived in," says Sarah, as Matthew adds, "What we've tried to do is give the house warmth and character, where before, to be blunt, it lacked both." Inspired by the Georgian-style

exterior, as well as the personality-filled schemes of Ben Pentreath and Ros Byam Shaw's acclaimed books on English design, the couple have created timeless, layered schemes that feel as though they have evolved over many years.

Each surface, textile and furnishing in the house has the distinct feeling that it has been carefully selected to bring a sense of charm and personality. Matthew chose a reclaimed 17th-century French wood floor for the hallway, cloakroom and kitchen. "It's bonkers because ▶





BELOW Matthew and Sarah's eldest daughter's bedroom has been given a soft yet sophisticated look with walls in Farrow & Ball's Setting Plaster, which sits beautifully with the rich-toned wood of the chest of drawers and bed.



The idea of adding history through pieces is carried through by Matthew and Sarah's growing collection of antiques

ABOVE Little Greene's Boringdon Green on the walls creates a calm and soothing atmosphere in the couple's younger daughter's bedroom, complemented by the marble-topped antique washstand.

we removed a perfect new floor and installed an incredibly uneven one, but we love it. It's engineered on the underside to make it easy to lay, but the top is all wobbly. It's even got the joiners' graffiti on it, that is, where they put numbers in so they would know which planks go where. That's lovely, that's history. Our carpenters thought we were mad but it's all part of the charm," he says.

The idea of adding history through pieces is carried through by Matthew and Sarah's growing collection of antiques, although the couple have a relaxed approach towards these treasured finds, as demonstrated by the well-worn Georgian table in the kitchen. "Often, my attitude to antiques is, they want to be used. Our breakfast table was quite an expensive antique and it was beautifully French polished, then if you feed a toddler at that table it gets ruined, but I kind of

like that. It could be French polished again in the future but at the moment it's living its best life," Matthew laughs.

A statement fireplace, modelled on an old design Matthew discovered, was a labour of love, but now rightfully sits as the focal point of the sitting room, one of the couple's favourite places. "I found an antique 1830s fireplace which was slightly the wrong size, so I had it copied by a local stonemason and the stone came out of the ground a few miles up the road," Matthew explains. "I always lay the fire the night before in case I'm up with the baby at five in the morning. It's bad being up early, but if you sit in a beautiful room like this with a fire going and drink a cup of tea, it's lovely." A true testament to the comfort and warmth the couple have brought into their home. ■



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William Yeoward Belleville cabinets and George Smith Emma sofas either side of the fireplace create a balanced look in the formal reception room. An Albany ottoman from Lorforde Contemporary upholstered in Euphorbia by Fabricut at Christian Lee adds a joyful burst of pattern.



A fresh START

When Nadia and Lee Taylor relocated their family from Singapore to Cheltenham, they could never have imagined the country house splendour in which they would find themselves living

FEATURE KATE FREUD
PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTOPHER HORWOOD



ABOVE In the formal reception room, a bespoke storage unit by Winter Furniture complements the high ceiling and adds a focal point. Library swing-arm wall lights by Vaughan add warmth to the display of the family's treasures at night.

“Living on top of a hill has definitely been a new experience for us,” laughs Nadia Taylor, who, with her husband Lee and their three daughters – Zara, 15, Anya, 12, and Sophia, 10 – moved from her native Singapore to The Hewletts, their Georgian home just outside Cheltenham, last year. “Driving down towards the town in winter, we were stunned as the temperature on the dashboard went up by two degrees each time.”

There is no question, though, that the midwinter mercury drop is worth it for the views from the family’s 18th-century Palladian-style home, perched

atop Aggs Hill, and overlooking nearly 50 acres of garden, parkland, pasture and woodland. The panoramic vistas are far-reaching, from Cheltenham racecourse to the Malvern Hills, with the Black Mountains in Wales visible in the distance.

Capturing a sense of this picturesque location was integral to interior design studio Sims Hilditch, appointed by the Taylors when they bought the property in September 2021. A soft palette of neutrals with pale greens, blues, pinks and ticking stripes is employed throughout the house to instill it with a feeling of warmth and cosiness despite its considerable footprint.



A soft palette of neutrals is employed throughout the house to instill it with a feeling of warmth and cosiness despite its considerable footprint

Sitting in the spacious kitchen – where the family spend most of their time – Nadia is confident their move was the right one. “After 17 years spent living in Singapore, where our daughters were born, we didn’t take the decision to relocate to the UK lightly,” she explains. “But we wanted the children to experience both sides of their heritage by living in England as well as Asia.”

Nadia and Lee met at Bristol University, where they were both studying law, before their careers took them to Singapore. However, when Lee retired from his role as a partner in an international law firm, the timing felt perfect for the family to move and for him to take ▶

ABOVE The hallway curtains are made from Lewis & Wood’s Oxus fabric, and provide both a decorative and practical function, keeping out draughts during the winter months.



'In Singapore, we lived in an old colonial house, with ceiling fans and lots of Chinese antiques, so here we were starting from scratch'

ABOVE The warm oak worktop and open shelves decorated with wooden chopping boards underline the strong country-house kitchen aesthetic, and tie in with the William Yeoward Overbury table in Greyed Oak, and Restoration Hardware Marisol Seagrass Track chairs.

the lead when it came to looking for their new home. Lee and eldest daughter Zara are both keen polo players, which narrowed the property search to the Cotswolds, an area which also boasts plenty of polo as well as good schools.

During the summer of 2019, Nadia, Lee and the girls lived in a couple of rented properties locally to get a feel for the place, the second of which, would turn out to be the home they would go on to buy. Given the splendour of the property, the Taylors were not the only interested party when it came up for sale, but after a nail-biting process of sealed bids with five other prospective buyers, they were thrilled to find out their bid had been successful.

"In Singapore, we lived in an old colonial house, with ceiling fans and lots of Chinese antiques," Nadia explains. "It had a very different feel from this house, so apart from the odd piece we brought with us, like the Chinese wedding cabinet, we were starting from

scratch. Lee prefers a more traditional style and I lean towards a more contemporary look, so we compromised in the middle and Sims Hilditch were able to take our Pinterest vision and make it a reality."

The Taylors were fortunate that, particularly with the property's Grade-II listed status, there was very little structurally to change as it had been restored by the previous owners (whose story with the house can be found in *The English Home's* October 2019 edition). Working with Zota Construction, aside from reconfiguring the principal suite to accommodate a new dressing room and knocking down the odd partition wall, most of the work the Taylors required was superficial, like stripping back floors, adding carpets and decorating. The house has six bedrooms and five bathrooms, and Nadia wanted the colour scheme to flow throughout the house, apart from the girls' bedrooms, which they were allowed to style themselves. ▶



Designed as a space for all the family's outdoor paraphernalia, the bespoke joinery in the boot room is painted in Little Greene's Sage Green, making it a practical yet pretty room. Bertie the cockapoo looks on.

The 'practical yet playful' theme for the dining room can be seen in the St Judes French Flowers fabric by Emily Sutton on the backs of The Dining Chair Company's Cromwell style. The low cupboard by Chelsea Textiles ties in perfectly with the panelling painted in Farrow & Ball's Shaded White.





ABOVE In the principal bedroom, the walls are covered in the natural fibre Boston wallcovering by Stereo Interiors, for a soft, cocooning feel. Providing a comfortable reading area, the bench is lit by a Tavistock lamp with a Pembroke shade from Vaughan.

The spacious kitchen epitomises the soft palette which has been used in other areas of the house, with cabinets painted in Neptune's Sage to echo the greens of the garden beyond. Through to the dining room, the classic colours continue, with the walls, painted in Shaded White by Farrow & Ball, providing a neutral backdrop to the more playful dining chairs by The Dining Chair Company. Upstairs, the theme continues with muted shades throughout the principal bedroom, as well as the en-suite bathroom, which has pretty, pale grey Fan Flower wallpaper by Lewis & Wood. These muted hues are contrasted in other areas of the house with



Half-height panelling ties in with the William Yeoward Bickerton commode, both painted in Neptune's Moss. The shower walls are in Marlborough Tiles' Savernake Manton Hollowline design.

'Lee prefers a more traditional style and I lean towards a more contemporary look, so we compromised in the middle'

bold shades used to paint the joinery in the boot room and formal reception room.

Once they had gained access to the property in June 2022, the Sims Hilditch team had a tight six weeks to transform the interiors before the family moved in by early July. "Though the house wasn't completely ready, the principal bedroom, children's rooms and kitchen were finished," Nadia says. "We were fortunate it was such a glorious summer we were able to be outside for most of it while the rest of the work was completed."

In keeping with the grand nature of the house, the principal bedroom is formal yet cosy, with soft lighting from Penny Morrison's Savitri lamp and lampshades ▶



The sense of country calm has seen the whole family relishing the change in pace since moving to their hilltop abode

ABOVE The principal bedroom is invitingly calm, with a linen wallcovering, by Stereo Interiors, adding an enveloping textural backdrop.

in Inverted Blue & White Tribal print. The large-scale headboard, upholstered in V&N's Art Garda Mandorla, was designed to complement the high ceilings, with Gustavian commodes by Chelsea Textiles used as bedside tables to help fill the space too. "It's such a peaceful place to rest," says Nadia.

This sense of country calm has seen the whole family relishing the change in pace since moving to their hilltop abode, with their cockapoo, Biscuit, in particular, enjoying free rein of the

garden and grounds with the couple's daughters. Lee, when not pursuing his new venture into property development, can be found tending the vegetable and flower-growing areas he has created in the walled garden of the grounds. "We came up with a list of fruit and vegetables we wanted to grow, like cherry tomatoes, broccoli, lettuce and cucumbers. But the flowers bring the greatest joy," says Nadia. "I love filling the house with them, particularly when we have the family to stay." ■

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In full COLOUR

Alex and Andrew Barnes brought the interior of their beloved Georgian home up to date with a vibrant palette of hues

FEATURE AMANDER MEADE
PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER

ABOVE The smart front exterior of Alex and Andrew's Georgian home. RIGHT A striking painting from Cricket Fine Art is a key focus of the room, with colours that reflect those used in the furnishings. The garnet-coloured Sanford sofa and the grey Elystan sofa are both by David Seyfried, while the Avaline wall lights are from The Lamp Factory London.







'We are so lucky to be the third generation to live in this wonderful family home. It's the house we plan to enjoy and grow old in together'

When it was time to create a new environment for their family, relocating from their home in London was never an option for Alex and Andrew Barnes. "Other than moving out when he was a young man, this house has always been Andrew's home. His late parents bought it for their family in the 1950s," explains Alex, who moved in when she and Andrew married.

Some years ago, the house was stripped back to its bones with repairs and renovations completed before it was redecorated throughout. "The interior had been tastefully and very traditionally decorated, but it was definitely time to brighten and refresh the look," Alex says. Unsure how to begin, she commissioned her friend and interior designer, Lucinda Sanford. "I have seen lots of Lucinda's projects, so I know she enjoys using plenty of colour. I knew she would do a superb job and she has proved me right of course."

Alex and Lucinda collaborated closely on the best ways to reimagine the entire interior while also

being mindful of the history and heritage of the house. Lucinda was given a simple brief – to inject stylish colour and fun which would create a livelier atmosphere more in keeping with the lives and tastes of a young family. "Andrew was happy to leave us to it, but had very clear ideas on which family heirlooms and antiques were definitely staying put. Lucinda carefully incorporated all his treasured pieces into the new room schemes. The result is a wonderful, eclectic mix of contemporary paint colours, combined with fresh fabrics and furnishings that sit beautifully alongside precious older items."

After an initial consultation and walk through the house, Lucinda returned with mood boards, samples and ideas for Alex to consider. "There was very little indecision on the whole as Lucinda's mood boards clarified exactly what I liked and what I didn't," she explains. "I found it easy to choose between her suggestions for each room. I'm a huge fan of Kit Kemp's hotel interiors. I've stayed in a couple and ▶

ABOVE The Otto sofa by Sofa.com in the cosy snug is covered in Lost and Found fabric by Christopher Farr Cloth and ties in with the cabinetry and walls painted in Hunter Dunn by Paint & Paper Library. The Moulin wall lamp is by Julian Chichester.

Alex could not resist these dining chairs by Howe London. "A modern take on traditional leather-seated chairs, they were one of very few indulgent spends during the project," she admits. The cabinet is a family piece and is painted in Blue's Blue by Paint & Paper Library.



Relaxed, comfortable seating is the key to the sitting room's classic appeal. Most of the furnishings in here have belonged to Alex for many years but repainting the walls in Yellow-Pink by Little Greene updated the entire look of the room and its contents.



‘I don’t have a favourite room because they all have colours and fabrics that I love and each has something special to make me smile every time’

took lots of inspiration from her fresh contemporary approach to decorating older buildings. I also like to browse Christopher Farr’s collections. His designs are so clever and uplifting and feel like pieces of art in their own right.”

As the project began, window dressings became a key part of creating a lighter, more streamlined effect. Heavy full-length curtains and drapes gave way to Roman blinds which allow much more natural daylight into each room and are integral to the overall finish. Modern, textural fabrics in confident prints were thoughtfully selected and vibrant paint colours applied to walls and panelling.

A constant source of surprise and delight was Lucinda’s ability to make a smaller space feel larger by changing wall colours or layout. Redundant space throughout the house was also quickly identified and transformed into useful storage. “It is a distinct skill to be able to visualise how a space can work better,” says Alex. “A professional designer can see exactly what needs to change and has the confidence to facilitate their vision. None of our rooms are particularly large but I learned that the smaller the room, the bolder you can be with colour and pattern which was contrary to what I previously imagined.”

Alex and Andrew could not be happier with the positive, cheerful and spirited feeling that now permeates their home. “I don’t have a favourite room because they all have colours and fabrics that I love and each has something special to make me smile every time. We certainly would never have achieved this effect on our own. I have worked alone on decorating projects in the past and which often haven’t turned out quite how I expected. Working ▶

ABOVE RIGHT In Alex and Andrew’s bedroom, a faux wall has been created just a foot in depth to allow additional shelving to be created on either side and bedside tables to fit. The headboard and valance are covered in Anoushka by Blithfield and the walls and joinery are painted in Bone China Mid Blue by Little Greene.

RIGHT The pretty, antique bedroom chair was inherited by Alex from her grandmother and has been reupholstered in Wickham Rose fabric and Capri, both by Blithfield.





with a designer helps you explore new possibilities and you are braver as a result. I would never have selected most of what Lucinda suggested, but I absolutely love everything she chose. My advice is to never be put off by thinking a design collaboration is unaffordable as I'm sure Lucinda saved us money with her ability to reinvent and to improve how our space was used."

The project is still gently evolving as Alex and Andrew continue to enjoy choosing *objets d'art*, but they agree that their home is now completely revitalised. "We are so lucky to be the third generation to live in this wonderful family home and we will never move. It's the house we plan to enjoy and grow old in together." ■

ABOVE The children's bunk beds are from Laurette and are painted in Hicks Blue by Little Greene to match the walls. The Aurora multicolour rug is by Benuta.

LEFT Also used as a playroom, and an office when Alex works from home, the guest bedroom is painted in soft Boringdon Green by Little Greene. The Roman blind and window seat cushion are in Chubby Check by Christopher Farr Cloth.

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NEW *Horizons*

A mix of classic and contemporary styles bring an original spin to this Edwardian home high above the riverside town of Dartmouth

FEATURE SHARON PARSONS
PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD GADSBY

The stately Victorian wingback chair was found at The Globe in Ashburton, and then reupholstered in Angkor Poudre from Pierre Frey. The shell lights on either side of the fireplace are from The Wall Lighting Company.



ABOVE Crawford (left) and Gareth Cooper-Prentice in the sitting room. Gareth built the seat to fit the bay window. A 1960s French brass-and-glass occasional stands next to the sofa.

“We’ve always been up for a challenge when it comes to renovating properties,” admits Crawford Cooper-Prentice as he reflects on the various ambitious projects he and husband Gareth have embraced over the years. Crawford’s career in finance has meant that the couple have frequently uprooted to various locations both here and overseas over the years, giving them the opportunity to indulge their passion for interior design, creating beautiful, unique homes wherever they happened to be.

“Over time, our sense of style has evolved, but we’ve always aimed to combine a strong design aesthetic with

sound practicalities,” he explains. “While I tend to concentrate on the look – with some ideas vetoed by Gareth, I should add – he takes on the majority of the hard graft when it comes to the renovation and project management. It works well.”

Nevertheless, despite their extensive experience, when the couple originally decided to invest in a Devon property in 2019, the criteria were different. “We had agreed – or rather, Gareth had persuaded me – that we wouldn’t take on another big renovation project this time,” Crawford laughs. “We were based in Jersey at the time, and our original intention was to buy a little place in Dartmouth for



relaxing breaks, which wouldn't need much work. Famous last words!"

The pair already knew and loved the historic harbour town, having lived there twice over the years, and Crawford flew over to view a handful of properties "with a very specific brief from Gareth. By chance, this one had come on the market that weekend, and it looked interesting," he says.

The Edwardian house is one of three in a terrace built by the town's coal merchant for himself and his two offspring back in 1910, and is approached via a series of steep steps. "I immediately liked the traditional frontage of the house, which still had its

original features," Crawford says, "but inside it was very tired, and clearly needed a significant renovation to bring it up to scratch.

"Despite that, it ticked most of the boxes, from being south-facing with great views to having its own parking space - a bonus here." He pauses. "I think when I reported back to Gareth, I may have undersold the fact that it needed a lot of work."

Nevertheless, the magic word 'potential' was to persuade the pair that this was the one, and by the time they had completed on the sale in December 2019, ambitious plans were well underway. Needless to say, all the basics - from plumbing to electrics - ▶

ABOVE A chandelier from Pooky Lighting is centred over the Victorian table from Penderyn Antiques in the dining area. Two inherited 1920s mahogany carver chairs have been given a new lease of life with upholstery in Albaicin Palm from Rapture & Wright.



‘Our design decisions have become more focused on the pieces we have and treasure’

ABOVE The kitchen is compact and practical with units from Neptune by Closa in Tetbury painted in Farrow & Ball’s Green Smoke and Sulking Room Pink and solid brass handles from Buster + Punch.

LEFT The house looks out over Dartmouth’s rooftops, the River Dart and the hills beyond.

needed a complete overhaul, but they also planned a major reconfiguration of the layout downstairs to create an open-plan space, with a new kitchen to one side, and a seamless extension for a butler’s pantry and shower room.

Gareth based himself in Dartmouth to work alongside their builder for the first few months, and all was going well. But then, the unforeseen happened. “As the Pandemic took hold, Gareth had to quickly get back to Jersey before the borders closed and lockdown began,” Crawford recalls. “We stayed on the island until the first boat was allowed to leave it four months’ later, but by then, I’d got a posting overseas and we



relocated to Malta. As you can imagine, managing the ongoing renovations from afar was far from easy: the process became much more complex and lengthier than we'd originally anticipated."

Weekly Zoom meetings with their trusted builder, along with a friend who visited the house regularly to take videos and photographs of the work's progress, helped to keep things on track until restrictions were lifted and the couple could at last begin to travel back and forth again. "Lockdown certainly gave us more time to research and source all the materials and items we required," Crawford says. "We were very grateful for the patience of local pals who allowed us to arrange all sorts of deliveries to their homes."

Thanks to the many steps leading up to the front door, having items and materials conveyed directly to the house was not without its challenges, either – be it

the incredibly heavy Italian marble slabs for the kitchen surfaces, or the landscaping materials required for the garden. "An especially tricky time was when we took delivery of the range cooker on Christmas Eve," Crawford laughs at the memory. "It weighed so much, we had to call on several strong volunteers to help get it into the house so it could be installed. There's nothing like family arriving for the festivities to create a sense of urgency."

It was, however, all worth it. By this time – two years after the couple had first got the keys – the house had undergone a remarkable transformation, combining a carefully executed renovation with a dynamic decorative scheme. A cohesive palette of blue, green and pink, with shots of black and judicious use of white has been used throughout. "We've never painted walls white in any of our previous homes," ►

ABOVE LEFT Silverware and ceramics, including Admiral vases from Villa Bologna Pottery, add interest in the butler's pantry. The wall lights are by Tom Dixon.

ABOVE RIGHT Paint & Paper Library's Bubblegum and New Black make an impact in the entrance hall. Mirrored glass at the end fills the original doorway to what was the dining room and kitchen, giving the illusion of space.



Crawford reflects, “but this time it made sense: not only does it emphasise the light, but it acts as a backdrop for our art, furniture, textiles and collections. As time has passed, our design and style decisions have become more focused on the pieces we have and treasure: we want these to take centre stage, rather than the other way around, and hopefully we’ve achieved that here.”

Having now made this characterful property their main home, it would be understandable if this

enterprising couple were to sit back to enjoy the fruits of their labours. But that interior design itch never quite goes away. “It’s always been a passion, and is such a creative contrast to the world of finance,” Crawford admits. “I’ve even got a designated Instagram account – Tom McArthur Designs – which documents many of the house projects Gareth and I have undertaken over the years. We love it here and often say we’ll never take on another major renovation in the future, but somehow, I can’t quite swear to it.” ■

ABOVE The Loaf bed in the principal bedroom is finished with a throw and vibrant cushions from Jonathan Adler. The paintings are by Daniel Shadbolt.

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STYLE INSPIRATION

We reveal the decorating trends that are here to stay, offer expert advice on using brown, creating bathrooms with character, and kitchens that combine form and function ➤

CHOCOLATE COATED

The decisive move in interiors towards embracing warm neutrals is gaining momentum and now encapsulates dark, comforting browns as part of a rich, warming spectrum. As we discover in our feature on page 94, earthy shades of brown can be versatile, grounding and chic in every room of the house. It may not seem an obvious choice for a bathroom, but the enveloping wrap of deepest cocoa creates a soothing sanctuary that would look highly alluring in candlelight for a long evening soak. Interior designers reveal other ways to make bathrooms comfortable, beautifully decorated spaces on page 80.

Chocolate Colour, £57.50 for 2.5l Absolute Matt Emulsion, Little Greene





Style Guide 2024

Enduring TRENDS

Our curation of design
directions worthy of investing
in now for the years ahead

Unlike fast fashion, interior design trends tend to take a while to turn into definitive movements, and redecorating a home takes time and investment, so is certainly not for faddish ideas. This is particularly the case for those decorating classic English homes, who will want to ensure a style still looks good in years to come, so ascertaining which of the latest colours, patterns and designs will last is time well spent. To help with decision-making, over the next few pages we look at the directions interiors are gently moving towards and the designs we believe offer a timeless, yet relevant, knowing and considered approach to decorating – from warm colours to heritage revivals and statement pieces. ▶

LEFT From GP & J Baker's archives and dating from 1913, Magnolia has been rescaled to produce a smaller design for homes today as part of the Baker Originals collection. Wallpaper, Little Magnolia, Powder, £159 a roll, GP & J Baker

OPPOSITE Warm browns will continue to dominate interior palettes, with creative use of paint on woodwork and ceilings adding character. Walls, and swatches above, Lucienne Olive and Jarosite; plus swatch of Tapestry Green (left), all £45 for 2.5l, Craig & Rose





Soft pastel tones will bring lightness to deeper colours. Drinks cabinet, Chanterelle, and all other paint, £27 for 1l, Fenwick & Tilbrook



Colour

FABRICS, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT
Gentiane, Steel, £175 a metre, Nine Muses at The Fabric Collective;
Corfu, Azure, £197.40 a metre, Walter G at The Fabric Collective;
Clover Linen, Ochre, £162 a metre, Inchyra
PAINT SWATCHES ABOVE, FROM LEFT
Ganache, £57.50 for 2.5l, Little Greene;
Cricket, £57.50 for 2.5l, Earthborn;
Sweet Embrace, £31.73 for 2.5l, Dulux

A 'trend' we have focused on, and feel will only continue to deepen, is the move from cool greys to warm neutrals. Cream has made quite the comeback, not in the guise of the much-maligned magnolia, but in sophisticated, rich buttery tones that nestle alongside chocolate browns and honeyed yellows. (Turn to page 94 for our in-depth look at bringing earthy tones to interiors.) This base palette allows for keeping things light and calm or enriching with deeper layers of earthy terracotta and russet. There is also a call for some pretty notes of pastel green, pink and yellow, but not in saccharine hues - these colours have a smudgy softness that blends with neutrals and darks. Perpetual favourites green and pink continue to be popular, but for those looking to add colour, shades of blue are having a moment and being a classic, versatile choice, will stand the test of time. Deep navy has been prevalent, but heading into spring fresher shades of mid-blue are apparent. Pair with cream, linen, and beige tones for a twist on traditional blue and white. ▶



Layered tones of brown create a warm, welcoming space. Turkish console table, from £1,900, Georgie Wykeham Designs



LEFT Browns and blues work together in harmony.

Curtain, Helter Skelter, £69.90 a metre; sofa, Big Top, The Minister's Cat, £69.90 a metre, both Linwood

RIGHT Shades of blue are versatile for a modern look.

Wallpaper, Impatto, Midnight, £70 a roll, Clarke & Clarke

PAINT SWATCHES, FROM LEFT

Beige 02 Soho Farmhouse, £45, for 2.5l, Lick; Pale Periwinkle, £44.95 for 2.5l, Victory Colours; Viridis, £52 for 2.5l, Graham & Brown





Add panache and a tailored look to upholstery and curtains with trims. *Panthera Braid, Harvest Gold, £56 a metre, and all other trims and fabrics, James Hare*



Decorative details

We recognise that homes evolve and total redecoration is not always on the agenda. With this in mind, being smart with small but transformative details can be an affordable and quick way to update a room. Wallpaper borders are a feature of several interior design collections and can be used simply at ceiling or dado height, or creatively around door frames and other details to add drama. Paint can also be used playfully to highlight architectural details – consider adding a contrast or accent hue as an alternative to white.

Passementerie continues to be a powerful way to bring designer detail to cushions, curtains and upholstery. Maximalist fringes, tassels and braids will all add a finished, personalised look to a piece and elevate the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Statement pieces of furniture and lighting are excellent ways to update a room in a single purchase. Lighting can add a sculptural piece of art that is also functional, with exquisite options available from the likes of Porta Romana, Cox London and Ochre. A coloured piece of furniture or a mirror can also give a boost to a scheme, as can giving antiques a new lease of life with some fresh upholstery – mixing old and new will never go out of fashion. ▶

LEFT, FROM TOP 4004 tassel fringe, Walnut, £179 a metre, George Spencer Designs; Leaf Trail wallpaper border, Mushroom, £22 a roll, Fiona Howard Wallpapers; Northfield tassel, Autumn, £79 a metre, Sanderson x Salvesen Graham
RIGHT Give cushions added detail with a brush fringe. Re-purposed fringed cushions, from £145, 50% of proceeds from each sale are donated to charity, Lorfords Contemporary

A simple but effective use of colour and paint combine to create a fun decorating detail. Wall, Springtime Peach and Adam Green, from £20 for 0.94l, Benjamin Moore



Fringes, tassels and braids will add a finished, personalised look that elevates the ordinary into something special



TOP RIGHT

Use trims to add a contrasting colour. Sophie bullion fringe, Rose Water, £136 a metre, and all trims, Samuel & Sons

ABOVE Filigree mirror, from £3,601, Christopher Guy

RIGHT Morales chandelier, from £12,438, Porta Romana



A revival of heritage patterns has seen designers reimaging historical pieces from the archives for today



ABOVE LEFT Add subtle pattern underfoot with a striking rug. Manhattan rug, from £425, Agnella by Brintons for the V&A

LEFT Morris & Co has used velvets to give original designs a new look. Roman blinds, Artichoke Velvet, £179 a metre, Morris & Co

SWATCHES, FROM TOP Wallpaper, Emery's Willow, Chrysanthemum Pink, £109 a roll, Morris & Co; fabric, Églantine, Printemps, £163.13 a metre, Quenin at Lelièvre Paris; wallpaper, Pergolesi, Aqua, £96 a metre, Nile & York at The Fabric Collective; wallpaper, Pina de Indes, Tiger's Eye, £109 a roll, Zoffany



Interior designer Octavia Dickinson has used gathered fabrics to add softness and comfort to a highly decorative bathroom.

Pattern

A revival of heritage patterns has occurred this year. While many designers draw on archives, there has been a definitive turn to reimagining historical pieces for today. GP & J Baker's Originals collection sees some of its earliest and much-cherished designs from around 1915 recoloured and rescaled, and 1838 Wallcoverings is bringing a highly anticipated second wave of wallpapers with designs from the V&A archive. Arts and Crafts-inspired pieces permeate mainstream designs, perhaps fuelled by the recent success of Morris & Co's Emery Walker's House collection, with many decorative designs inspired by nature's beauty being given a fresh look for today. Schumacher's launch in collaboration with interior designer Celerie Kemble gives a sophisticated, contemporary take.

There has been a movement towards using pattern to add depth and character in bathrooms (turn to page 80 for advice on creating bathrooms to savour) and kitchens too. These are being treated as extensions of living spaces with textiles, rich paint hues and wallpapers combining to create comfortable, welcoming and decorated spaces, rather than purely practical environments. Consider, too, adding colour and decorative detail underfoot with patterned carpets and rugs. ■

ABOVE LEFT Fabrics and wallpaper add colour and flair to a kitchen that will be a joy to spend time in. Fabric, Larkin, £56 a metre; wallpaper, Albie, £69 a roll, both Jane Churchill

RIGHT Based on an archive fabric design, this rug adds ornate pattern to the floor. Chedigny rug, £2,543 a metre, Quenin at Lelièvre Paris





COMFORT & *Character*

Designers and decorators are breaking contemporary conventions in bathroom design, shunning spa-inspired calm and wet-room practicality for more playful, individual settings



A notable move to reinstate comfort, individuality – even drama – in bathroom design echoes those great decorators at the turn of the 20th century – Nancy Lancaster and Elsie de Wolfe – for

whom bathrooms had to have as much charm, interest and personality as any other room in the home. Here, we take inspiration from six detail-filled spaces created by modern decorators redefining expectations in bathroom design.

SARAH VANRENEN *Interior designer*

En-suite bathroom in her own home

“Growing up I went to stay in lots of country houses which all had uber-comfortable bathrooms, usually with carpets and often with armchairs or something comfortable to sit on. Bathrooms are so important; they are the first room you enter in the morning and the last you leave at night and they should be welcoming, a place to linger (if you have time). There is something so wonderfully luxurious about sitting in the bath with a glass of wine while your other half chats to you from a chair. It is great, when the opportunity allows, to treat the bathroom like an extension of the bedroom. Using curtains or upholstery in bathrooms is similar to including a carpet or a rug. If it gets wet, it gets wet – it will dry again. Nowadays there are so many incredible tiles to choose from that you can have fun creating different patterns and atmospheres while being able to have underfloor heating to boot.” ▶

DESIGN INSIGHT

THIS PAGE AND
OPPOSITE
Interior design by
Sarah Vanrenen for
the en-suite bathroom
in her London home,
with curtains in Aspa
in Raspberry from her
eponymous brand,
and floor tiles sourced
from Morocco.





HENRI FITZWILLIAM-LAY *Interior designer*

En-suite bathroom in a period rectory for a client

“ Tiles are the perfect way to bring colour, pattern and texture into a bathroom. I like to see the walls and floors as a blank canvas and create a ‘frieze’ or ‘carpet’ to fill the space. How you lay a tile can completely change the way it reads and it creates its own texture. For example, a rectangular tile can be laid in a brick bond (staggered) or herringbone style, or stacked in vertical or horizontal rows, and each will change the look of the tile. You can create pattern by mixing colours, make stripes by using rows in different shades, or add a patterned border to define areas – the possibilities are endless. The tiles we used here are from Balineum’s Hanley and Hanley Tube Line collections. There is an enormous variety of shapes, sizes and colours and Balineum is happy to turn its hands to bespoke colour combinations as well. The pelmet design was created to disguise the existing low window which felt disproportionate to the room and to the tall window opposite it.”

This glamorous en-suite bathroom by interior designer Henri Fitzwilliam-Lay features tiles from the Hanley Tube Line collection by Balineum and a pelmet in Magic Mountain Dragon floral fabric by Schumacher.



LIZZI CATCHPOLE *Head of design, Catchpole & Rye*
Principal bathroom in a Victorian family home in East Sussex

“ I am a very enthusiastic advocate of using colour and pattern in the bathroom and, when done well, one can very successfully complement the other. I love the use of the chinoiserie wallpaper in this bathroom belonging to one of our clients. The pattern is feminine and organic and the gorgeous olive green background holds continuity interest around the room; anything echoing nature always works so beautifully. We can expertly colour-match our baths and cisterns, such as here, with a hue from the wallpaper, which makes the bathroom feel bespoke. If desired, these could be updated at some point in the future to completely refresh the scheme. The geometric, monochromatic floor is a great juxtaposition to the delicate wallpaper. The tiles create a bold, classic pattern and have been cleverly used to flow straight through into the shower area. Using just one surface and pattern with no breaks, helps creates sense of cohesion.” ▶

Hand-painted chinoiserie wallpaper by de Gournay and a Niederbronn bath by Catchpole & Rye in Farrow & Ball's Sulking Room Pink form a delicate counterpoint to the geometric Gramercy Park floor tiles from Lapidica. Catchpole & Rye's Le Thermo Grand shower, towel rail and bath taps in aged brass add a warm tone.



THE BEST DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES

Add personality with colourful and shapely finishing touches



- 1 Alice Meadow wallpaper, £155, Olenka Design
- 2 Arrezzi double vanity basin unit, £3,089, The Albion Bath Company
- 3 Classic Torch wall lamp, £422.40, Lefroy Brooks
- 4 Black curved scalloped framed wall mirror, £89.95, Melody Maison
- 5 Swedish Homage Lilly rug, £1,240, Layered Interior
- 6 Peacock tissue box cover, £47.50, Must Have Bins
- 7 Floral ribbon cushion with brush fringe, £80, Pomily
- 8 Fitzroy Tufted chair in Remondini Floral linen, £1,030, Mind The Gap



RACHEL CHUDLEY

Interior designer

Principal bathroom in the designer's own London home

“ I love drama and narrative [in interiors] and see no reason why that shouldn't continue in bathrooms. For too long they have been treated as wipeable spaces to perform the task of washing. I want the room to reflect enjoyment and invite a peace of mind. I love experimenting with interesting combinations, playing with contrasts and bringing in unexpected original touches, so here I chose a rich flamestitch velvet to bring a feeling of organic movement into my own bathroom. I chose a Rosso Levanto marble to pick up the movement of the design and add warmth. The soft Mandarin Silk Stripe in Gold Dust on the blinds gives a beautiful luminosity.

“Lining the walls with velvet is a risk, so do your research and find an appropriate performance fabric. Schumacher's Empress performance velvet is water-repellent, stain-resistant and very sturdy. The beauty of working on my own bathroom was that I could explore something brave, and I can report, that even with the occasional bathing of our toddler son, it has stood the test of time. It was daring but well worth it.” ▶

Interior design by Rachel Chudley featuring Green Empress performance velvet in Leaf and Beziue flamestitch velvet in Red and Peacock on the walls, and Corail velvet in Mediterranean on the chair, all Schumacher.





FEATURE KERRYN HARPER-CUSS PHOTOGRAPHS (SARAH VANRENEN PORTRAIT) © RACHAEL SMITH; (SARAH VANRENEN LIFESTYLE) © MIKE GARLICK; (DRUMMONDS LIFESTYLE) © OLI DOUGLAS; (RACHEL CHUDLEY PORTRAIT AND LIFESTYLE) © SIMON UPTON



GREG PENN *aka Man with a Hammer*

Guest bathroom in Penn's own 30-bedroom Georgian property
DIY restoration project

“ This guest bathroom was in a terrible state with rot caused by leaks and needed taking right back. I do all the work myself and it was a huge task, taking about four months of DIY. I like bathrooms not to feel too ‘bathroomy’ as I often find them cold, hard and a bit sterile, so I approach them as I would any other space. This north-facing room has quite a cool, unforgiving light, so I’ve chosen a warm neutral eggshell paint for the panelling and solid oak parquet to add texture and warmth. My starting point for the whole scheme was the wallpaper – a late-18th-century chinoiserie fishing scene. It’s a little whimsical and gave a greater sense of height. Pops of coral add more warmth and restoring features like the fireplace, and using handmade, patterned tiles, pleated lampshades and a few antique pieces adds further interest and texture, making it a relaxing and welcoming spot to while away an hour in a hot bath.”

Greg Penn has redecorated this guest bathroom using Warner House’s Les Pecheurs wallpaper, Aged Oak parquet by Broadleaf Timber, a bath and sanitaryware from Burlington, wall panels by The English Panelling Company, Pooky lighting, Original Style tiles, and Fenwick & Tilbrook paint. Follow his project on Instagram.



Designed to evoke the period of the house it is in, this luxurious, eclectic bathroom features a Wye bateau cast-iron bath with a burnished copper exterior, a Crake double vanity basin suite in Black Marquina marble and brassware in unlacquered brass, all from Drummonds.

JAMES LENTAIGNE *Creative director, Drummonds* A rural villa on England's south coast

“Even in the grandest households, the bathroom is usually the only space for real solitude; it offers a wonderful pause from the many demands of modern life. In this precious stillness, we have time to look around us and it is no surprise to see customers curating spaces that feel personal to them. Here, the framed prints and woven rug give a sense of the building's history with a comfortable intimacy you might associate with a collector's private study. The oval mirror is a brilliant addition, transforming this corner alcove into a bright and airy focal point.

“When restoring heritage properties, freestanding bathtubs look the part and are also very practical as they can be placed anywhere and unobtrusively plumbed through the floor. Here, the owner has paired our copper-wrapped cast-iron bathtub with bright polished brassware. The variation of metals in the room feels eclectic and characterful, but note that they carry a consistent warm gold tone to create a uniform accent against the neutral floor and wallpaper. The black marble countertop gives a depth and luxury at the centre of the room. It is always worth the effort to call in samples of your chosen finishes and place them on a mood board to check how the tones work together.” ■

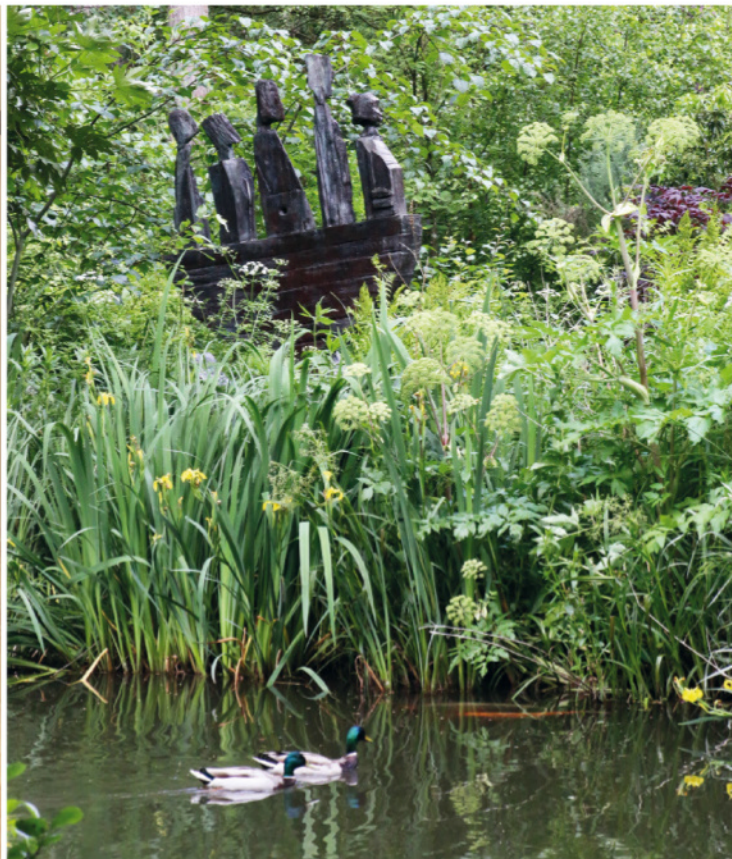


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FABRIC SOURCING SECRETS

For savvy shoppers, with a bit of forward planning and flexibility, quality fabrics can be purchased for a fraction of the price and help prevent unnecessary wastage

The stockroom at Bennison Fabrics holds examples of its 17th and 18th-century inspired prints giving an idea of their designs and colours. Some will be part of the company's autumn warehouse sale.



Buying high-quality fabrics is always a worthy investment, particularly in timeless designs that combine longevity with classic good looks. There are ways, however, for those in the know to obtain such fabrics for reduced costs – at end-of-line sales or on specialist websites. This also chimes with concerns around sustainability, an issue that permeates many areas of our lives – from the fabrics we wear to the ones we buy to furnish our homes. Fashion scores badly with its landfill ratio, but the interiors industry is also reckoned to send thousands of tonnes of fabric waste to landfill or to be burnt. This is why some fabric houses are finding ways to extend public access to textiles they cannot otherwise sell. That this can also be an asset to our furnishing budgets is tempting on both fronts.

Warehouse sales

Warehouse sales are one way fabric companies dispose of stock they cannot sell by usual routes. Most are held in September or October and offer considerable discounts – signing up for early notification is key, so it pays to be planning early in the year. Designers Guild is one company holding warehouse sales in April and September with dates and venue posted on its website. Among autumn warehouse sales, Marvic Textiles has a following for the variety of stock it offers, and Chelsea Textiles, famous for its hand-embroidered linens, weaves and prints, includes cushions and curtains in its sale. Bennison Fabrics adds public access days to its sale where visitors can buy whatever is left on a roll of its printed linens, from 1m to 40m, at half price.

More companies are now selling discounted fabrics direct from their websites. As part of its Zero Waste Initiative, the sale section of the Ian Mankin website always shows curtain and upholstery fabrics with original and reduced sale prices and number of metres available, from as little as 2m, to 40m and more. Tinsmiths' website does the same. Penny Morrison is putting new strategies in place to make her company more sustainable. In late February, an end-of-line fabric sale will launch on her website, followed later by a permanent sale area for discounted fabrics. Vanessa Arbuthnott posts discontinued designs and colourways by the metre, in cut lengths and as folded fabric remnants, on her website. And the Lewis & Wood Top Floor Sale Shop opens once a month on a Friday at its Mill in Stroud, Gloucestershire, and on different dates creative workshops using fabric offcuts also give participants access to all sale fabrics.

Online shopping

Covetable fabrics at attractive prices can also be found on websites set up specifically to trade ends of lines from prestigious companies at competitive prices. Jules Haines launched Haines Collection as a sale platform in 2022. "We work with a number of brands directly, taking any prints that tip over some element of colour tolerance so have to be sold as seconds. Others can be end-of-line, ex-display or come to us from interior designers. We also have a collaboration with Lorfords Contemporary and any ►

LEFT Pieces from antique quilts, old curtains and fabric lengths are sought after at Su Mason.

OPPOSITE TOP Marvic Textiles is adding an online sale, running

from 8 January to the end of the month. Expect to find silks, printed cottons, upholstery plains and cut velvets, all at competitive prices.



'We work with a number of brands, taking any prints that have to be sold as seconds, or are end-of line or ex-display'

Jules Haines, Haines Collection

USING SHORT LENGTHS - PIECE BY PIECE

"Leftover fabric is inevitable, certainly in a workshop context," says Anne-Marie Bruce of Bruce Upholstery & Furniture Rescue, "but that doesn't mean it has to be wasted. The length and width of a piece, its quality and, importantly, any pattern repeat, will suggest further use."

"Cushions are often the first thought and the variety of cushion pad sizes helps cope with pattern placement, so too can backing with a plain fabric. A metre of fabric can be sufficient to cover a footstool, a piano stool, or a drop-in chair seat, while an ottoman may require two to three metres. Don't miss the chance to upholster a headboard with a longer piece, depending on the headboard's height and the direction of any pattern."

"Four or five metres of fabric is often enough to upholster a chair; consider combining fabrics to make up the quantity needed to upholster a side chair or sofa. If the dominant remnant is sufficient to cover seat and inner back, teaming it with a plain or minor pattern on arms, sides and back can be highly effective. Borders on curtains or bedcovers can combine more than one fabric successfully too"

"Lightweight cottons and linens can have a future as lampshades, and never forget armcaps for sofas and chairs. They can add considerably to how upholstered seating retains its overall appearance through a long life."

Top Floor on the Lewis & Wood website is where to find information on its sales of end-of-line fabrics and offcuts. Even small lengths can be used to give a quirky update to a chair, as seen here.





‘Leftover fabric is inevitable, certainly in a workshop context, but that doesn’t mean it needs to be wasted’

Anne-Marie Bruce, Bruce Upholstery & Furniture Rescue

customer can use fabric from Haines Collection to cover any seating from its range.” Lorfords Contemporary has also launched its own Vintage Cloth in antique salvaged hemp. It is hand-dyed in 11 plain colours, including in natural indigo, by Polly Lyster of Dyeworks, an inspired collaboration, as recycling is a major part of her working ethos. “I don’t want to use new fabric when I can recycle and give beautiful old pieces a continued history,” she says. Remnant pieces from Dyeworks are always worth investigating.

The Loft at More Hall near Much Wenlock, Shropshire, is a platform set up by interior designer Sarah Cavendish to sell ends-of-lines, seconds and discontinued fabrics from design-led companies including Lewis & Wood, Blithfield and Titley & Marr, also short lengths and carefully assembled bundles for piecing. For people living near the Hall, its showroom opens on Wednesdays from 10am to 3pm or by appointment. Unusually, Sarah also buys fabric from individuals. “If anyone has fabric from a top design house that they don’t want, they can call me, send a photograph and, if it’s suitable, we negotiate a price. It is so important that unwanted fabric doesn’t go to landfill.”

A fabric’s composition is important too when buying for furnishings. Weaves and prints in natural yarns, including linen, cotton, wool and silk, are biodegradable so will break down naturally even if sent to landfill. Many furnishing fabrics already meet this criteria – for instance, all designs in Vanessa Arbuthnott’s collection, and every fabric in collections by de Le Cuona, the star in this firmament. Other stars are antique and vintage fabrics that pre-date synthetic yarns and sell at prices comparable with those at warehouse sales and on websites. Textiles dealers sell at fairs and events or via Instagram, and Su Mason is one with much to offer lovers of French textiles. She trades long and smaller lengths for cushions and minor upholstery, pieces from curtains and quilts, and wonderful handwoven sheets. Those who gravitate to classic English style should visit Perfect English Stuff for its mix of vintage curtains, cushions, table linen, bedcovers and fabric lengths, all in useable condition.

The movement towards sustainability is gathering pace across the furnishings world. Leftover fabrics, natural fabrics, antique and vintage fabrics are linking up with recycling and reuse initiatives. When these fabrics also tempt our budgets, everyone gains and a remnant can be born again as a piece to treasure. ■



BE PREPARED

A few notes for success at fabric sales

- Warehouse sales, end-of-line discounts and remnants require a flexibility in what is required. This is not the time for being set on a particular thing. Be open to different colours and patterns.
- Try to have a use in mind, and the quantities needed – it can be tempting to buy a highly discounted remnant, but if it’s not fit for purpose, it may end up wasted anyway.
- Have figures such as window sizes or furniture dimensions at hand to get the right-size piece.
- Think creatively about using multiple fabrics on one chair or adding a wide stripe or edge to make a piece go further on a blind or curtain.
- Remember small pieces can be used for mix-and-match seat pads on dining chairs, to enliven a footstool or make cushions.

ABOVE LEFT Using remnants can result in creative and chic upholstery.

Fabric, William Yeoward at Designers Guild

LEFT Check the Fabric Remnants section of the lan Mankin website where fabrics at reduced prices are regularly added.

INSIDER KNOWLEDGE

The Penny Morrison website will soon have a sales section for end-of-line fabrics.





BROWN

Creative Combinations

Continuing our series charting the evolution of colour and pattern, we explore how trends and historical influences have shaped British interiors, this time exploring the potential of brown

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE

Reminiscent of the earth and therefore conjuring a sense of solidity, brown, in its many guises, from tobacco to terracotta, is a grounding neutral that has anchored interiors through the ages. One of the first colours to be used in art, thanks to natural pigments found in umber, sienna and ochre, it dates back to Ancient Egyptian and Greek culture. This is also one of the most prevalent colours in architecture, thanks to materials such as timber, brick and stone. However, the tone also garnered associations with drabness throughout the Middle Ages, when brown clothes were

associated with the mundane and the ordinary. Rich browns found favour again in the 1960s and 1970s, especially when paired with vibrant pops of purple and orange, before falling on hard times. Now, brown is having a resurgence, thanks to its renewed associations with earthiness and elegance.

New neutral

Few colours encompass as many tones as brown, whether lightest beige, rich russet and burgundy or darkest chocolate. And few have as many verbal associations with food, from caramel and toffee to ▶

A photograph of a study room. The walls are a deep red color with vertical wood paneling. In the center is a fireplace with a dark marble surround and a brass fire surround. Above the fireplace is an octagonal mirror with a dark frame. To the left is a bookshelf filled with books and a red floor lamp. To the right is a wooden desk with a lamp and an open book. The floor is covered in a light-colored, patterned rug.

THIS PAGE Designed by Albion Nord, this study has walls in Rose Uniacke Paint's Hickory, adding warmth and earthiness while bringing out the tones of the marble fire surround and the fumed oak and leather desk. OPPOSITE In this relaxed deVOL Haberdasher's kitchen, designed by Leanne Kilroy of Good Bones, texture prevails with tambour-style joinery offset by chequerboard flooring, marble counters and aged-brass elements.



‘Brown brings warmth to interiors and provides a strong anchor to rich colour palettes’

Sarah Henry, managing director, La Manufacture Cogolin

ABOVE LEFT Soft taupe, including walls and woodwork in Mylands’ Egerton Place and a contemporary chandelier, add a touch of old-school glamour to this principal bedroom.

ABOVE RIGHT Earthy notes prevail in this bathroom, with walls in Whitall Brown and ceiling in Swiss Coffee, both by Benjamin Moore.

LEFT In this soothing bedroom scheme designed by Kit Kemp for Ham Yard hotel, espresso walls provide an anchoring backdrop for statement artwork and timber elements.

hazelnut, mushroom and cocoa, perhaps indicating that this is a colour that appeals to the senses. Of course, this is a hue found in a wealth of natural materials too, including timber, grasses, terracotta and marble, reinforcing its connection to the elements. Perhaps in part due to our renewed appreciation of organic materials, brown is once again in focus, prized for its restful yet grounding qualities. “For me, brown evokes paintings by Rembrandt or Vermeer, leather club chairs, libraries, smoking rooms and hunting lodges,” says La Manufacture Cogolin’s Sarah Henry. “It brings warmth to interiors and provides a strong anchor to rich colour palettes.”

Modern treatments of this earthy colour avoid overload and instead focus on texture. “Unlike the 1960s and 70s, this isn’t about an abundance of dark wood or heavy materials,” says colour consultant and stylist Emily Brooks. “A contemporary application of brown feels fresher and more handmade and artisanal, with the addition of linens, plants, ceramics and other tones from nature’s colour palette to lift the look. The aim is to avoid a flat finish and instead create a wonderfully tactile experience with wools, ▶

In a Regency apartment renovated by Elicyon, this layered, textural living room combines curved and sculptural shapes in a tonal palette of browns for timeless appeal.





LEFT A raw plaster finish, oak bar stools and accessories from Cuisinart's Neutral Collection create a rustic, back-to-nature feel in this pared-back kitchen.

BELOW In this playful bedroom scheme designed by Martin Brudnizki for Le Grand Mazarin hotel in Paris, earthy browns, such as a velvet headboard and painted cabinetry, provide a springboard for an energetic palette of yellows, greens and blues.



woven wall hangings, cosseting throws and ceramics or earthy metals.”

Rich chocolatey browns add depth and gravitas. “I enjoy how it is a softer and prettier alternative to black and grey,” says interior designer Louise Robinson. “I find the right shade of brown will go with almost anything and I enjoy how it can bring an unexpected warmth and softness, both when used in its natural form such as dark wooden furniture, but also in other finishes, including patterns, paints and floor tiles.” This is a colour that can act as an effective textural base, from oak parquet to sisal flooring, or as a canvas, such as an exposed brick or micro-cement wall. As a painted finish, it comes alive when paired with other earthy tones. “As a rule of thumb, colours that work in nature also work well in the home,” says Benjamin Moore’s Helen Shaw. “So, combinations such as brown and green feel nourishing and soothing, while dusky pink and pale-mid blue contrasts lend an airy, harmonious atmosphere.”

Drab to dramatic

These days, brown has shaken off its utilitarian, paper bag image. “We probably need a complete change of language as we explore the full-colour range,” says TH2 Design’s Sheila El Hadery. “Cacao, espresso, cappuccino, toffee, peat, tobacco, tan, bronze: the right tones have no dreary connotations. Dark chocolate velvets are inviting on sofas, caramel and almond linens conjure a feeling of quiet luxury and peaty timbers provide depth and warmth. At the other end of the spectrum, when paired with ivory and used as a glossy lacquer finish in combination with bronze metals, brown can inject a deeply luxurious and glamorous feel.”

Dark furniture too has fallen out of favour in recent years, but reframed in a new context, it has a reassuring, noble quality. “It is slowly making its way back into the spotlight,” believes Neptune’s Simon Temprell. “Unlike the wenge wood of the 1990s, today’s furnishings are lighter and warmer, introducing a sense of heritage and history. Try allowing natural timbers to speak for themselves, without getting too hung-up on everything in the room matching. Textural fabrics like velvet and tweed, plus black-bronze hardware and finishes on cabinetry and lighting are all good foils.”

If mid-century or 1970s pieces are appealing, introduce these elements with a light touch. “Lean into selecting vintage furniture with timber frames, ▶

ABOVE RIGHT A lower wall in terracotta, Benjamin Moore’s Topaz, and upper walls in its White Dove, echo the oak treads and white risers in this elegant hallway.

RIGHT Cabinetry painted in Neptune’s rich Walnut provides a grounding canvas to a bold pop of mustard yellow, thanks to its Dominic armchair.





ABOVE To create an inviting living room that transitions easily from day to evening, Kinder Design's Leo Wood has opted for walls and skirtings painted in Little Greene's Middle Buff. **LEFT** Muted fabrics, including Trellis in Natural and a cushion in Athena in Ocean from Isabella Worsley Collection, are offset by sandy tones and dark wood in this elegant period setting.

but vary your furniture finishes and styles to create a more timeless approach," suggests Elicyon's Holly Beazley. "For example, pair a 1970s timber chair with a contemporary lacquer table in a pop of colour to vary styles and finishes. In a recent project, we used high gloss cherry red timber chairs piped in yellow and upholstered in a blue and white patterned fabric. They brought a touch of the unexpected into an otherwise formal dining space."

This is a tone that can be smart and sophisticated or natural and earthy. "It acts as a fabulous foil to orange and yellow," says Otta Designs' Alexandra Keith. "Artwork also pops against a backdrop of warm mid-tone browns. We have recently used Edward Bulmer's Clove in a country house project to great effect."

Perfect pairings

When it comes to decorating, the formality of classic wood can be instantly contemporised by the right colour combinations. In kitchens, walnut cabinetry partners beautifully with raspberry or plaster pink, sky blue or mustard yellow, while dark wood joinery paired with burgundy accents lends a cosy feeling to snugs. Introducing texture in brown joinery brings energy and verve, whether a fluted finish on cabinets, bars and room dividers or scalloped wooden shelving.

Painting with brown can produce either dramatic or subtle effects depending on context. "The best paint ▶

DESIGN INSIGHT

The richness of sleek, handleless walnut joinery is brought out by aubergine-painted cabinetry in this contemporary scheme by Naked Kitchens.



DESIGN INSIGHT



‘A powdery blue is like a breath of fresh air against a steady ground of brown’

Emily Brooks, colour consultant and stylist

colours to pair with it depends on the light in the room, the effect you want to achieve and your personal style,” advises Mylands’ Dominic Myland. “Contrasting brown with black tones can create a striking modern interior, while combining it with a warm off-white or pastels will give it a much lighter appearance. Pay attention to a brown paint’s undertones: most will have hints of red, umber or yellow, and so pair better with warmer shades of white with a hint of yellow, rather than cooler-based tones.”

For timeless appeal, Emily Brooks suggests pairing a golden brown like Paint & Paper Library’s Caddie with a Dorset-inspired hue like Farrow & Ball’s Lulworth Blue. “A powdery blue is like a breath of fresh air against the steady ground of brown,” she says. “This is a perfect pairing in rooms filled with daylight, generating both a grounding and calm atmosphere. Introduce pattern with a checked tile, veiny marble or striped fabric. Choose brass fixtures and something floaty to freshen the look – I always add a linen cafe curtain or tablecloth to soften a brown kitchen or scullery.”

ABOVE LEFT This classic combination of natural wood and panelling in pale blue makes for an elegant-rustic feel in this kitchen by HÁM Interiors.

ABOVE RIGHT In this library scheme by Otta Design, an earthy terracotta introduces depth and warmth, working both as a cocoon and an effective foil for books, artwork and mid-century cane furniture

Living rooms in a soft tobacco finish have subtly sophisticated appeal. Tones like this have a lived-in, almost 1940s feel, lending a scheme warmth and atmosphere, particularly in period properties with gracious architectural features. “I’d pair brown walls with yellow ochre, burnt orange, olive green or aubergine-plum via curtains, furnishings or other accents,” suggests Brooks. “The effect is an analogous scheme that is both opulent and anchoring.”

Interior designer Paolo Moschino uses several shades of brown as a failsafe option. “I often turn to this colour in my schemes because I associate it with warmth, comfort, and stability,” he says. “It has a classic and timeless quality because it doesn’t go in and out of fashion as quickly as some other colours. In both decoration and my personal wardrobe, brown and blue is a go-to combination.”

Often underestimated for its power and longevity, brown is slowly inching towards the spotlight again. “Thanks to its subtle, warming, and luxurious qualities, I predict that we will be seeing much more of this hue across design, interiors, and even fashion over the upcoming seasons,” says Studio Lodha’s Blandine de Navacelle. There is no doubt that in periods of uncertainty, hues of earthy bronze and rich mahogany hint at the consistency of the elements, of wood and of nature – and all the reassurance that they offer.

PHOTOGRAPHS (HAM YARD HOTEL) © SIMON BROWN; (KINDER DESIGN) © LEO DAVUT; (HAM INTERIORS) © ALEXANDER JAMES; (OTTA DESIGN) © JONATHAN BOND



GROUNDING TONES

Brown has many facets – in its lighter expressions, cappuccino prints add intrigue to neutrals, while classic chocolate finishes are of-the-moment

- 1** Astrid light pendant in Aubergine, £204, David Hunt Lighting **2** Blenheim coffee table, £499; Sidonia corner sofa, £2,999; Bolster cushion, £39.50; cushion, £35; throw, £39.50; vase, £39.50, all M&S x Fired Earth **3** From top: Freckle, Little Rascal and Muddy Boots, all £57.50 for 2.5l Claypaint, Earthborn **4** Nut Brown Wicker lampshade, 14-inch oval, £240, Fermoie **5** Brown ceramic ramen spoons, £5.60 for a set of two, Marquis & Dawe **6** Chocolate Ditsy ruffle napkins, £30 for a set of four, Sarah K **7** Ashbury fabric, Soft Sage, £139 a metre, GP & J Baker **8** Leaf impression vase, £31.49 (large), Gisela Graham **9** Brown armchair, £1,899, plus 7m fabric, Violet & George **10** Rattan rectangular storage basket, Brown, £96, Rebecca Udall **11** Eichholtz Aristide dining chair, £950, Sweetpea & Willow ■



Open shelves, a hanging rail and spacious worktops are the main ingredients in this kitchen.
The Real Shaker Kitchen,
from £12,000, deVOL

FORM & FUNCTION

The perfect kitchen design is tailored to all practical requirements, while possessing a welcoming and desirable aesthetic





When it comes to designing a new kitchen, it could be argued that there has never been so much choice available. It follows that for many this poses more dilemmas than solutions. Industry experts recommend that a good starting point is to focus and tailor a design around use and requirements. Whether the space is for foodies, families, keen hosts or anyone trying to maximise a small space, a well-thought-out kitchen carefully combines practicalities, from the initial layout and lighting plan through to worktops and seating, while incorporating aesthetic choices such as colours and decorative accessories.

Whatever size or style the kitchen, a good design results in a space that is aesthetically pleasing and works hard on a day-to-day practical level – truly the heart of the home.

A COOK'S RETREAT

For anyone who loves trying out new recipes, experimenting with ingredients and generally being adventurous with food, sleek, integrated looks most likely take second place to practicality and comfort.

While many foodies accumulate gadgets (and will, therefore, need suitable storage to accommodate them) and may wish to include large-scale and unusual appliances with which to create adventurous meals, solid, functional and high-quality equipment will always be the go-to. “The things I feel are the most important to me are a good, reliable gas hob and a large electric oven,” says Helen Parker, creative director of deVOL. “I need a fair amount of preparation space and easy-to-access utensils and crockery. Open shelves, pot racks and hanging rails mean everything is easy to put away and easy to find and use quickly.”

High up on the list will also be shelves for cookery books, a pantry – whether a separate room or a floor-to-ceiling cupboard – and a boiling-water tap to make it easy and quick to cook vegetables and pasta, make stock and more.

Another essential, says Parker, is a kitchen table. “For the keen cook, having friends and family around you as you cook and socialise is absolutely paramount to a happy cook and a happy family. The biggest joy of cooking is sharing the time, the food and the experience with other people,” she adds. ▶

ABOVE A large marble island is ideal for keen cooks who regularly make pastry from scratch.

Highgate walnut kitchen, from £15,000, Naked Kitchens

OPPOSITE A hanging rack above the island keeps pots and pans within easy reach.

Splashback and island in Verde Tinos marble, from £600 a square metre, Cullifords





ABOVE With sage green walls and statement artwork, this inviting kitchen-diner by Violet & George includes a marble-topped island with an inset hob and sink facing a seating area.

LEFT This spacious kitchen by Lewis Alderson includes an array of ovens, two concealed larder cupboards and a stainless-steel worktop which echoes those of a professional kitchen.

ENTERTAINING SPACES

For those who love to host regularly on a large scale, an open-plan kitchen is ideal, incorporating different zones for cooking, serving drinks, socialising and dining. The atmosphere can be very convivial, but it is important, says Mike Fetherston of Hetherington Newman, that the areas flow seamlessly, rather than creating a feel of a kitchen set down in the middle of a living space. Integrating appliances as much as possible helps, as can co-ordinating colours, art, accessories and soft furnishings. Using bright task lighting over worktops and low, warm ambient lighting for social spaces differentiates areas, too.

In terms of layout, having a distinct drinks area or installing a separate bar, perhaps in a cupboard with integral lighting and a mirrored interior, means guests can be served, or serve themselves, drinks without getting in the cook's way. Tom Howley, design director of the eponymous kitchen company, advises placing the hob on an island, across from bar seating. "This way you can socialise while cooking," he says. "Your fridge, oven, and sink can sit close to hand on the wall behind you, ensuring easy access while remaining away from guest traffic."

Including as much storage and worktop space as possible is also vital. "A separate area just off the kitchen is really useful," says Fetherston. "Having a pantry with a worktop, a sink, maybe a dishwasher and even some space to do additional cooking keeps the mess out of the way." ▶



ABOVE With integrated wine fridges and storage for glasses, this dresser is perfectly sited for keeping guests glasses topped up. *Shaker kitchen, from £70,000, Ledbury Studio*

BELOW This spacious Ovolo design by 1909 Kitchens includes a range of seating options and plenty of worktop and dining space. *1909 Kitchens are priced from £25,000*





THE FAMILY HUB

Kitchens designed for family life need excellent storage to keep worktops uncluttered and make clearing away easy. “Bespoke, walk-in pantries and standalone larders are essential in large family households,” says Elizabeth Sherwin, creative director of Naked Kitchens. “Having storage in an island means it can also be a practical haven, housing all your essential items and making them easily accessible when needed. In the case of larger families, the capacity of a fridge-freezer is key, so factor a larger size into the overall design of the space.”

Tom Howley is a fan of the breakfast pantry. “It can incorporate your entire morning, from a professional coffee machine and toaster to storage for everyday crockery and a whole host of cereal options,” he says. “The best thing is that once you’ve had enough, you can close the doors behind you, concealing all the clutter.”

Plenty of seating is important, too, whether for family meals or gathering while the cook prepares vegetables. “Banquette-style seating integrated into an island will save space and be more accessible and practical for elderly relatives compared to a breakfast bar,” says Sherwin. “Alternatively, if you’ve got young children, a multi-level island is a fantastic choice. The design allows for lower-level seating that will not only protect little ones from the hob or tap, but also means they can get on with homework while in eyesight.” ▶





THIS PAGE A bespoke breakfast pantry can contain everything for an on-the-go morning. *The Hartford Collection in Oak & Tansy by Tom Howley*

ABOVE LEFT For a busy kitchen, opt for a design with deep drawers and add subtle elegance with striking marble surfaces. *Henley Dove Grey and Lead Light cabinetry from £14,000, price for cabinetry only, Neptune*

LEFT Plenty of seating and a multi-functional island unit help make a family kitchen practical and pleasing. *Bespoke kitchen, from £25,000, The Main Company*



COMPACT SOLUTIONS

ABOVE Curved corners help maximise space while pale colours reflect the light in this room by The White Kitchen Company.

LEFT Dark colours are glamorous and work surprisingly well in a kitchen with little natural light.

Classic kitchen in Indigo Blue, from £35,000, Roundhouse

In a compact kitchen, the most important element is light, says Paula Carter of The White Kitchen Company. “If you don’t have a large amount of natural light, choose artificial lights which illuminate your kitchen well. A low-hanging statement light can add a much-needed wow factor to your space.” She also advises choosing either pale colours or (perhaps counter-intuitively) dark colours, which she says give the room depth and the illusion of a larger space. “In addition, opt for a light worktop material, such as an elegant marble or porcelain stone-effect tiles.”

Storage is, of course, key to keeping the room clear of clutter and creating good order and, therefore, a sense of space. Use the height of the room and install full-length cupboards in a section of the kitchen that will not obstruct natural light or impede the doorway. Rather than solid doors, glass fronts can help open up the space. For the same reason, avoid wall cabinets in favour of open shelving.

In terms of layout, Tom Howley recommends at least a metre of walkway space, which means there may not always be room for an island. Where possible, however, Carter says that an island serves a variety of purposes. “They allow for storage and grant a space for seating and eating, as well as a spot for you to place your appliances. So although they do take up space, they do maximise a small kitchen.” ■

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BLOOD ORANGE SALAD WITH BEETROOT, RED ONIONS AND MOZZARELLA

This seasonal salad features blood oranges and fresh produce in a rainbow of colours for a vibrant lunch

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS


¼ red cabbage	salt
2 blood oranges	pepper, from the mill
1 onion, red	½ tsp honey
2 handfuls of baby spinach	6 tbsp olive oil
1 handful of lettuce	125g mini mozzarella balls
1 spring onion	2 tbsp pistachios, chopped
1 beetroot, cooked	2 tsp poppy seeds
1 tbsp white wine vinegar	1–2 tsp sesame seeds
1 tbsp lemon juice	1 tbsp cress
2 tbsp blood orange juice	1 tbsp micro herbs

METHOD

- Clean and finely slice the red cabbage. Peel and slice the blood oranges, reserving the excess juice. Peel and slice the red onion into very fine rings. Prepare the spinach and lettuce. Trim the spring onions and cut the white part into rings and the green part into fine strips. Slice the beetroot. Drain the mozzarella.
- For the dressing, whisk the vinegar, lemon juice and reserved orange juice with the salt, pepper, honey and oil. Arrange the salad on plates, drizzle the dressing over it, sprinkle it with the pistachios, poppy seeds and sesame seeds. Serve garnished with the cress and micro herbs.







What to do in FEBRUARY

Take time out to recalibrate with candlelit suppers, cabin-style spaces for cosy slumber and some quiet time to create a seasonal plan for the year ahead

RETREAT *indoors*

February can be the cruellest of months when the winter weather of cold, rain and sleet seems unrelenting. Why not enjoy the great indoors and create a cocoon-like interior that is warming, comforting and the perfect place to hunker down? Linger in the kitchen and make it the real heart of the home; stock up on winter vegetables and cook heartwarming dishes, light a fire, turn the lights down low, and of course, enjoy the simple solitude and soft glow of candlelight. Choose candles made from natural beeswax using traditional techniques, in colours that bring joy and warmth and the intoxicating natural scent of floral honey to brighten up even the most miserable of days. ▶

Long slim taper candles, £35 for a bundle of six; Stubby candles, £40 for a bundle of four; Twisted candles, £40 for five, all Wax Atelier

EAT leeks

Create a slow-cooked risotto with fresh, tender leeks as the focus. Try the Winter Leek Prasorizo from Rachel de Thample's book *Winter Wellness*; a wonderful collection of what she describes as "nourishing recipes to keep you healthy when it's cold".

"In the winter," she says, "leeks are a valuable staple. Prasorizo is almost poetic in its simplicity, an elegant Greek rice dish featuring little other than sweet winter leeks, new season's olive oil, lemon and herbs. Use dried herbs if you haven't got fresh, or snip in some fresh pine needles for a citrusy, complementary flavour. The nutmeg is not traditional, but a delicious suggestion from my son Rory. The spice is soporific, making it a great help towards the dream of restful evening slumber."

SERVES 4

3 large leeks, or 6 smaller leeks
6 tbsp new season's olive oil, plus more (optional) to serve
2 tbsp thyme and/or rosemary leaves, fresh or dried, plus more to serve
2 garlic cloves
200g raw risotto rice, or 400g cooked and chilled risotto rice
200–400ml gut-healing vegetable stock, herb broth or water, plus more if needed
1 lemon
generous grating of nutmeg
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

- Finely chop the leeks, right the way down to the dark green ends: they have the most goodness and will soften into tender strands once cooked. Place in a colander and rinse under warm water to ensure they're fully cleaned and to help soften them in the warmth of the water. Shake dry.
- Set a large pot over a medium heat. Add the cleaned leeks with all the olive oil and a good pinch of salt and pepper.

Gently cook for 10 minutes to further soften the leeks.

- Add the herbs to the leeks. Peel and grate in the garlic cloves. Add the rice. If using raw rice, pour in 400ml stock or water, or use just 200ml if you are using cold cooked rice. Stir the stock or water through and pop a lid on.
- Simmer on the hob for 20 minutes if using raw rice or 10 minutes if the rice is already cooked. Stir halfway through to ensure it does not catch on the bottom and add more stock or water, if needed.
- Take off the heat and let it sit, lid on, for a further 5 minutes. Remove the lid. Finely grate in the zest of the lemon. Season with salt, pepper and a good squeeze of lemon juice as well as a generous grating of nutmeg. Add a finishing gloss of olive oil, if you like, and an extra smattering of herbs, then serve.

Extract taken from Winter Wellness by Rachel de Thample, (Bloomsbury, £22), photography by Nassima Rothacker





HARVEST *winter herbs*

Collect thyme, rosemary, bay and even chillies to preserve for the year ahead. Hand tie with string to create bunches that can be hung on a hook and placed near a radiator to gradually dry out. Alternatively, suspend them from a pot hanger positioned above a range cooker and utilise the slow-releasing heat to dry them out for use in the months ahead. Once dry, store in airtight containers as they are, or strip the leaves from the stems and store them in small herb jars. ▶

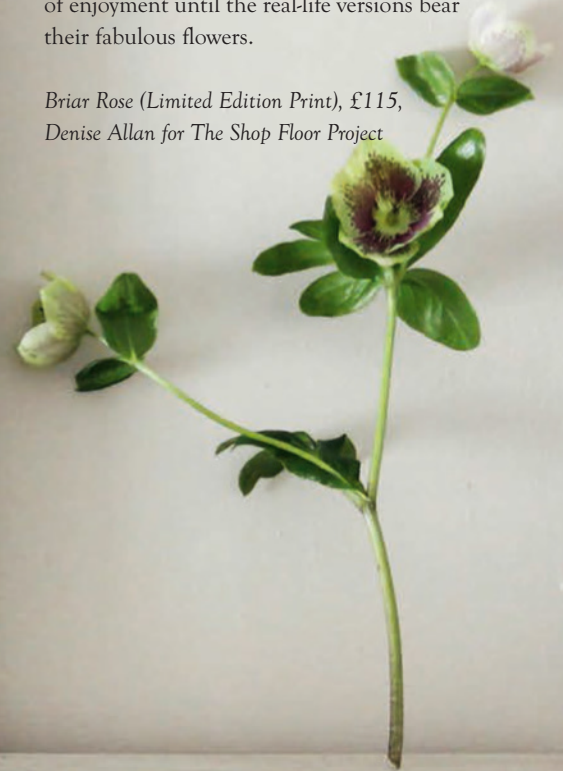
Pot hanger, £1,050, deVOL



PLANT *roses*

Summer is a little while away, and in the midst of winter it may be hard to imagine the glory of a garden in full bloom with a flourish of fragrant roses rambling around the windows or climbing up a trellis. But do not despair, February is an ideal time to plan ahead, research different varieties, each revered for their individual colour, flower shape or scent. Order varieties of bare root roses now as these are best planted any time before early spring, as long as the ground is not frozen or waterlogged, and before any new growth appears. In the meantime, while waiting for these to grow, why not invest in a framed piece of art that beautifully captures the delicate form and elegance of a rose perfectly, providing plenty of enjoyment until the real-life versions bear their fabulous flowers.

*Briar Rose (Limited Edition Print), £115,
Denise Allan for The Shop Floor Project*



TAKE *bedroom inspiration*

Emulate the cosiness of an alpine log cabin or a woodland retreat by creating a similarly cocooning bedroom with the emotional warmth of wood-panelled walls, teamed with textural appeal in bedlinen, blankets and throws. Consider installing a panelled wall that can double up as a headboard made from repurposed scaffolding boards or planks of wood, painted a dark off-black, forest green or brown for a similar effect, perhaps using a gloss finish as a rich alternative to eggshell as the ideal backdrop. Dress the bed with the softest of fabrics such as brushed cotton, flannel and wool, in classic stripes and checks, layered with blankets and throws, for the perfect place for some winter slumber. Fill the hot-water bottle, light a candle, get comfortable with a good book and nestle down for an evening of quiet solitude and sweet dreams. ■

Check brushed-cotton double duvet cover, £109, pillowcases, £49 for a pair and flat sheet, £69 for a double; Waffle cotton throw, £79, all Piglet in Bed

Finest FAUX

Exquisitely crafted artificial flowers bring joy and
beauty into the home all year round





THIS PAGE A mix of tight buds and open blooms make these stems especially realistic. *Faux Wild Magnolia arrangement*, £78, Little Buds

OPPOSITE A mass of carefully formed petals in subtle shades replicate the fading beauty of dried hydrangeas. Pair with tactile ceramics for an aged and earthy touch. *Hydrangea Dusk*, £12 a stem, Abigail Ahern



'The number of leaves or branches is a good indicator of quality. A faux plant should look like the healthiest version of the real plant'

Fresh flora and foliage bring interiors to life, but there are times when fresh cuttings are not seasonally available without paying a hefty environmental price. This is when the top tier of faux flowers and foliage come into their own, bridging the gap between winter and spring when English gardens start to bloom again.

Fastidiously observed and meticulously crafted, artificial stems have become increasingly realistic in recent years. Thanks to advances in construction techniques and materials, it is now possible to replicate intricate details and subtle minutiae, so a growing number of leading florists, interior designers and discerning homeowners are embracing these long-lasting and versatile products.

Desirable details

The finest faux stems are almost indistinguishable from the real item, and informed choice of material is key, as designer Abigail Ahern explains: “Our fauxs are made from a range of different materials, like silk, fabric or paper, to best emulate the structure and movement of real flowers. Many of them are hand-painted and finished to capture the subtle nuances of fading petals or gnarly branches and make them look as near to the real thing as possible.”

Bramble & Velvet founder Belinda Sadek says: “The buzzword of the moment is ‘real touch’ – a technique of coating the petals and leaves to make them feel, as well as look, real – these are the crème de la crème of faux flowers.”

“The innovations are in the type of varieties on offer; the advancements are in realism and breadth of choice,” says Danielle Le Vaillant of Cox & Cox. “We’re seeing new material combinations like resin and paper – assortments that will create a realistic stem now that we have meadow flowers – and exotic flowers on the market.”

“Roses are difficult to replicate,” says Caroline Beaton of Victoria James Floral Designs. “Few stems are realistic enough to mimic the natural movement and drop of the head that you get with a real garden rose, or the unique colouring of the petals. I like to use roses with hand-painted and hand-curved petals, giving each stem a unique character.” ▶

LEFT Versatile and subtly charming, faux blossom stems are alluring when displayed with full blooms or on their own. Gently bend the twigs and buds slightly in one direction for a natural windswept look. *Faux Blossom Branch*, £72.50 for a set of three stems, *Layered Lounge*

fluctuating temperatures, faux flowers make for a fuss-free decorative display. *Leilani bouquet: Mimosa spray in White*, £25; *Olive branch*, £9; *Sage Leaf spray*, £11; *Dahlia stem in Cream*, £10, all *Neptune*

RIGHT Serrated leaves and pale green and pink petals make a striking centrepiece. *Faux large mixed Hydrangea Bunch multi*, £175, *Oka*





FINEST FAUX HOUSE PLANTS

As biophilia continues to inform our interior decor, the demand for premium faux indoor plants has soared. Lyz Igwe of Dowsing & Reynolds shares advice for best results:

- The best faux materials reflect the true nature of the plant. Silk works well for delicate or small leaves and flower petals while rigid plastics convey the upright, fountain-like nature of tall grasses.
- Look at where the leaves join the stems – premium quality joins are neat and even.
- Check leaves are the right colour – premium plants will be practically indistinguishable from the real thing, cheaper will often look artificially green.
- The number of leaves or branches is a good indicator of quality. A faux plant should look like the healthiest version of the real plant.
- Ensure the structure of tall plants have enough integrity to maintain their upright habit – cheaper faux plants can droop under their own weight.

ABOVE Fine trailing stems and rounded leaves are just two details that make this faux plant so lifelike. *Faux Potted String of Pearls*, £60, Cox & Cox

RIGHT A beautiful balance of crisp white, powder pink and cool green lend this forward-facing arrangement a fresh contemporary feel. *Garden Rosa*, £150, Grace & Eden

Perfect placement

Safe around pets and children, with little chance of spillages, faux flowers have many advantages over freshly cut displays. Tolerant of dark, hot, cold and exposed areas, they can brighten up any spot in the home.

“A small bouquet on the coffee table works really well but the stems shouldn’t be too tall,” says Le Vaillant. “For the bedroom, several bud vases with dried stems add to a calm atmosphere, while in the hallway it’s more important to make a statement with your flowers for entranceway impact.” Oka creative director Sue Jones agrees: “If it’s in the centre of a dining table, opt for a lower style so people can still see one another. If you’re placing it on a console table, consider any artwork that might be behind it.”

“Faux flowers don’t need to be restricted to vases,” says Sadek. “The trend is growing for using wreaths and swags inside the home as a focal point to a room. They can be hung on an interior door, above a fireplace, on a mirror or on the wall as a piece of art.”

Flawless displays

With myriad vase and container options, heed expert advice for best results. “I think your choice of container is extremely important,” says Jones. “I personally like to use a medium-sized vase with a fluted neck, as this creates the impression of fuller, more rounded display. Remember to think about the style too – if you’re planning to use a particularly vibrant collection of flowers, opt for a more minimalist vase to let your blooms stand out.”

“We recommend something opaque that hides your stems and the absence of water,” Ahern says. “Earthy oversized vases, rustic pots and textural baskets in contrasting or subtle tones that complement your gathering are simple but very effective.”

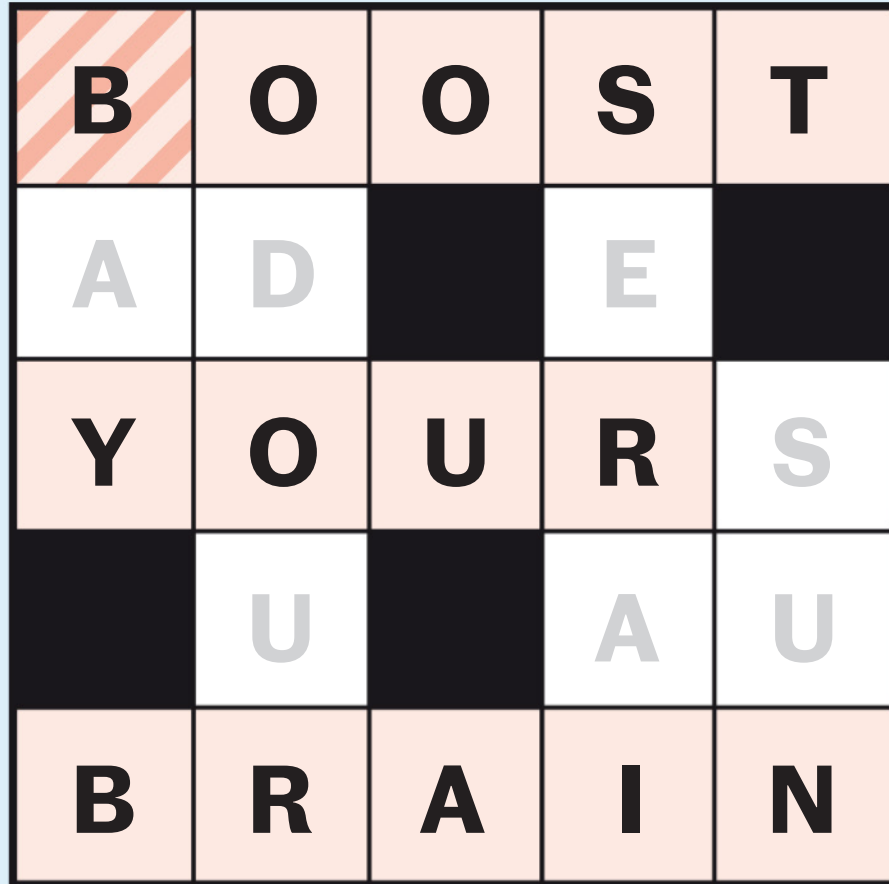
Selecting faux flower stems can be daunting, but following a few simple rules can help. “One of my biggest tips for keeping things realistic is to stay in line with what’s happening in nature,” says Jones. “For example, not displaying summer blooms such as peonies or delphinium during the autumn or winter months.”

Sadek adds: “Invest in some good quality faux foliage that you can use all year round, and then you can elevate your arrangement by adding a couple of seasonal faux stems throughout the year as the seasons change.”

Premium faux stems will last for years but do require some looking after. “Petals and leaves can be wiped gently with a soft dry cloth or blown gently with a hairdryer on its coolest setting,” says Ahern. “If you store them, pop them in a box in a damp- and dust-free environment, they can then be repurposed into new gatherings for another season.” ■



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‘Home is a wonderful canvas on which you can say so much about your personality and style’

What does home mean to you?

‘Home’ is a refuge. It is somewhere that you can escape from the everyday, as well as indulge in the everyday. It is about closing the door on the outside world for that moment of respite, as much as it is about welcoming people into it. For me, one’s home is a wonderful canvas on which you can say so much about your own personality and style. And in my role as a decorator, I encourage my clients to be proud to display their lives, individual styles and tastes for all to see. Our styles and needs of a home change as we change, and it is incredibly important to allow your home to transition with you.

In your recently released book, *The One Day Box*, you write about your out-of-control collecting habit. What is your current obsession?

I have always had a ‘One Day Box’, where I have collected things I just could not quite bear to throw away. Not just fragments of textiles and wallpaper (which I am known to collect and work from for my expanding collection today), but also photographs, quilts, letters, furniture. Things that are deeply sentimental as well as those which are inspiring. In that vein, I continue to buy things I just like the look of. There is much (cracked) china and glassware, old cushions... and so the list goes on.

How does your home accommodate your husband’s minimalist approach as well as your aesthetic?

I’m afraid there is little room for his love of a minimalist aesthetic in our shared home. We both come with too much stuff and there are too many of us. Thankfully he loves me for what I do and can openly appreciate living in a home constructed of many layers, as a result!

Finally, what should no English home be without?

Dogs! ■

The One Day Box: A Life-Changing Love of Home by Flora Soames (Rizzoli, £47.50)

My English Home

Great-granddaughter of Sir Winston Churchill, Flora Soames is a renowned interior decorator and designer of furniture, wallpaper and fabrics with a lifelong passion for collecting

Who do you live with, and where?

I live in a rented house on the Wiltshire-Dorset border. It is part farmhouse, part new-build with lovely large windows and capacious, light rooms, something I was not used to in my previous cottage in the woods which we outgrew as a family!

Who do you live with?

I live with my husband Alexander Macdonald-Buchanan, who is a ceramic artist with a workshop nearby in Wilton. Our daughter Lily-Hope lives with us and her step-brother and step-sister Jacobi and Constance stay with us weekly. We also have two devoted spaniels – mother Humbug and her daughter Coco.

How has your approach to homemaking been influenced by the Churchill legacy you have inherited?

I come from a long line of homemakers, but not in the conformist sense of the word. My great-grandmother Clementine Churchill was very vocal about her dislike for the contrived effects of decorating, and both she and my grandmother Mary Soames knew exactly what they wanted. Similarly, my mother is a very natural homemaker with an instinct for what makes a house welcoming. They have all, directly and indirectly, been enormously influential on my career and the way I live in my homes today.



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