

The

ENGLISH HOME



Celebrating the essence of English style

July 2024 | Issue 233 | £5.99 | UK Edition

SUMMER LIVING

Bright, playful interiors for relaxed, easy style



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EXPERT GUIDES

- Bold bathroom design
- Smart coastal style
- Perfect English escapes



GLOBAL AGENDA

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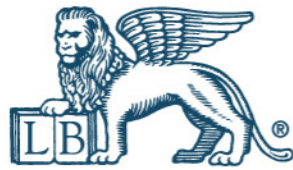
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CONTENTS

JULY 2024



Notebook

- 15 NEWS** Our edit of noteworthy people, places and products this month.
- 22 DESIGN DISCOVERIES** Connect to the great outdoors with buys in natural materials and pretty hues.
- 28 SPICE ROUTE** Enrich interiors with paprika, turmeric and cinnamon tones.
- 30 FRUITFUL SERVING** Summer tableware with colourful fruit themes and motifs.
- 33 THE EDIT** A round-up of brands and products on our radar this month.
- 70 SUBSCRIBE** Ensure you or a loved one never miss an issue with a subscription to *The English Home*.

English Homes

- 36 BOLD VISION** Moving from London to the Suffolk countryside has given a creative couple the space to grow their careers and family.
- 46 PATTERN PLAY** A Victorian townhouse is updated for family life with playful schemes infused with an abundance of pattern and colour.
- 54 TAILOR MADE** A pretty Lincolnshire village provides the perfect setting for the fruition of a long-held dream to build a home from scratch.
- 64 URBAN FABRIC** Layers of colour and pattern create a playful yet elegant home with an American twist in this flat in Central London.

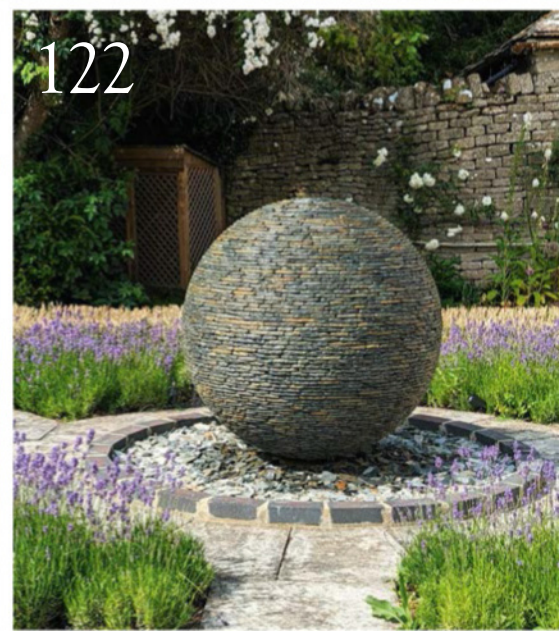
Style Inspiration

- 71 NATURAL CHOICE** Botanical textiles to bring the outside in.
- 72 COASTAL CALL** Create a gentle connection to seaside holidays with chic maritime and marine life motifs.
- 78 HOW TO COMMISSION AN INTERIOR DESIGNER** What to expect when calling in the professionals and how to make the process deliver the best results.
- 86 CREATIVE COMBINATIONS** Discover the enduring appeal of ikats and their use in contemporary decorating.
- 97 BOLD BATHROOMS** Confident use of colour, pattern and texture to express unique character.



Living The Season

- 107 MINI SUMMER BERRY TARTS** A sweet treat to round off a summer feast.
- 108 WHAT TO DO IN JULY** Savour the month in an English home with our edit of pursuits and inspiration.
- 114 THE PERFECT BREAK** Ultimate retreats in England for a summer escape.
- 122 LIQUID ASSETS** Eco-friendly water features to make the most of natural resources and the garden.
- 130 ONE FINAL THING** Update garden furniture with smart outdoor cushions.



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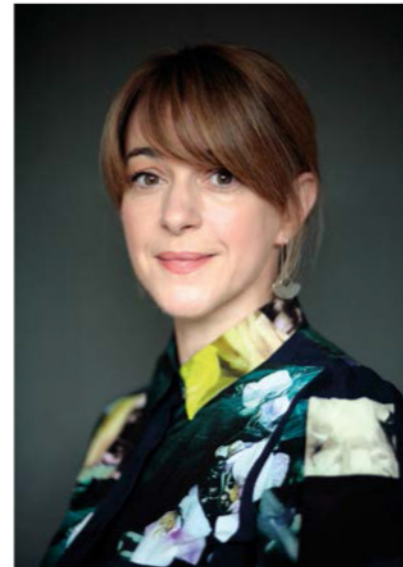
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A letter from home

The much-anticipated arrival of summer brings with it a desire for English homes to function a little differently. All that provided a cocooning, cosy haven in the winter months is eschewed for light, easy living. We want our interiors to be comfortable but relaxed, as well as low maintenance. We have a desire to bring a sense of the outside in, as we enjoy extending our living space to outdoors, too. Dining and hosting becomes light and understated, we find new ways to enjoy the bright mornings and long evenings, perhaps using and dressing rooms a little differently. At its best, I think of this as ‘holiday style at home’ – with all of our creature comforts to hand, combined with a lightness of touch and sense of calm and escapism that allows us to unwind.

For those keen to enhance that feel with decorating, this issue of *The English Home* explores the latest ways in the long British tradition of adding global influences to interiors, with our feature on ikat prints and easy-to-add accessories inspired by the Spice Routes. For a different look that’s similarly escapist, there’s also advice on adding a sophisticated, new take on coastal style to create fresh, breezy interiors.

Should you be planning a larger-scale project, we have an in-depth read on the benefits of working with an interior designer and how to get the most out of a collaboration. While for bathrooms, we explore the latest designs which favour colourful schemes replete with texture and personality.

Full of ideas for enjoying the best of the season along with some hand-picked English escapes to tempt a trip away, we hope this issue helps you savour the great British summer.

Samantha

Samantha Scott-Jeffries, Editor

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3 JULY 2024**

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Adelaide 6302, shot at Château de Purnon

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SPOTLIGHT ON...

Wanderlust Spirit

Interior designer Breegan Jane's world travels, her signature style of approachable luxury and her global philanthropic work inspired her new collaboration with Clarke & Clarke. Fabrics and wallpapers are adorned with African patterning and the dramatic side of nature with tropical motifs across jacquards, velvets, embroideries, prints and semi-sheer fabrics. She says: "If you're looking to make a major impact in your space, mural wallpaper has an immersive quality that you just can't get with any other type of wallcovering." clarke-clarke.sandersondesigngroup.com



Family Seat

Mother & son launch new chair

Antique-dealing mother and son team Val and Ed Foster of Foster & Gane have launched a new chair. Designed, made and upholstered in a choice of three fabrics near Thame in Oxfordshire, where the duo are based, The OX9 is crafted from English oak with a beech seat frame. They call the chair “a celebration of our brilliant local craftsmen and an opportunity for us to contribute to the canon of furniture-making, an industry that has provided for centuries the things we deal in and love”.

Its seat and back are traditionally upholstered with webbing and horsehair. “The foam upholstery widely used for modern chairs is a short-termist approach,” they explain. “Over 10 years or so, the foam will perish and turn to dust. A traditionally upholstered seat like The OX9 will keep its shape and last. We have antique chairs in stock now with 200-year-old upholstery which is still comfortable and looks good.”



Former writer and broadcaster Val founded the company in 2010, indulging her passion for antiques, design and interiors. Ed joined in 2015 after a History of Art degree, a Masters in Fine & Decorative Arts & Design at Sotheby’s Institute and experience at Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler and Rose Uniacke. fosterandgane.com



ABOVE The OX9 chair seen here upholstered in Fox Linton’s Hengistbury in Woodland (top) and an antique, circa 1900, Berber mouchtiya or bride’s blanket from North Africa.

ABOVE RIGHT Val and Ed Foster.

RIGHT Imogen Pope’s new Silk Embroidered Collection.

BELOW RIGHT Imogen Pope with some of her handmade lampshades.



Bright Idea

New lampshades from Imogen Pope

After seeing the impact of a single frilled lampshade in her home, Imogen Pope had a true lightbulb moment. Encouraged by her sister, she started a homeware brand in 2022, handmaking lampshades trimmed with a frill, which has since done so well she left her art-teaching career last year.

Her new limited-edition Silk Embroidered Collection sees lampshades made from the finest caramel silk with intricate, geometric patterns meticulously hand-embroidered onto the surface of the shade by artisans, resulting in a beautifully detailed and textured finish. With two embroidered colourways – Ivory and Red – and three different sizes, each lampshade is trimmed with a matching frill.

Also available to buy are lamps that are hand-turned in England before being sprayed with several layers of lacquer to a high-gloss finish, plus a ruffle-edged embroidered cotton tablecloth.

imogenpopelondon.com ▶

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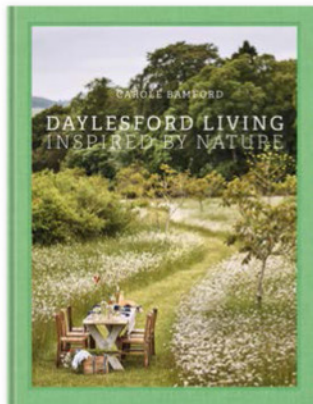


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Books

What we are reading this month



Daylesford Living
by Carole Bamford



(Vendome Press, £50)
The doyenne of Daylesford, Carole Bamford (or Baroness Bamford OBE to give her full title) is the visionary entrepreneur who founded Daylesford Organic over 20 years ago and turned a pioneering Cotswolds farmshop into a global lifestyle brand. Carole herself truly embodies her brand, and this dreamy book offers an intimate insight into her rural

life including never-before-seen parts of the Daylesford estate including the restored cottages and their stylish interiors, and the gardens, providing readers with inspirational decorating and entertaining ideas themed by seasonal flowers. With sumptuous photography and personal advice from Carole about how to live in harmony with nature, this book is a quintessential guide to stylish English country living.



Veere Grenney: Seeking Beauty
by Veere Grenney



(Vendome Press, £65)
Esteemed English interior designer Veere Grenney welcomes readers into his three spectacular homes. Set within the parkland of Tendring Hall in Suffolk with views of an idyllic fishing lake and geranium-filled garden, Grenney calls The Temple his 18th-century “pocket Palladian”. Opening the doors of his new London home for the first time, we see the ‘city’

application of his signature ‘serene yet exciting’ style and discover among other things that he has a high-gloss acid-yellow kitchen. And Grenney welcomes readers into his stunning villa in Tangier, Morocco – a decade-long labour of love which has truly captured his heart, whose decor blends grand English country house style with Tangerine flair, with decorative flourishes at every turn.

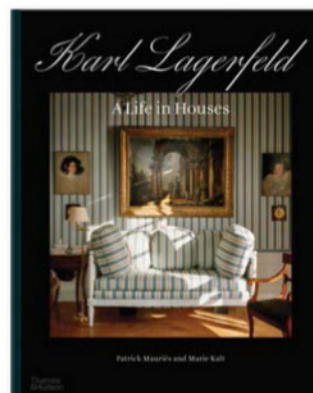


A Handmade Cottage
by Jodie May Seymour



(Murdoch Books, £23)
Crafter Jodie May Seymour demonstrates step by step how to create a picture-perfect personalised home, with projects and ideas for every room using simple craft and DIY techniques for everyone from absolute beginners to skilled crafters. From candles and lampshades to dressers and curtains, restoring old furniture, repurposing forgotten fabrics

and decorating the home using nature’s bounty, inspiration abounds in this charming book. Songwriter, musician and mother Jodie found that craft was a much-needed therapy from the stresses of everyday life, and she started a community-based craft club The Cottage Crafters. She lives in a large 18th-century flint stone house in the Norfolk countryside which she has adorned with handmade gems.



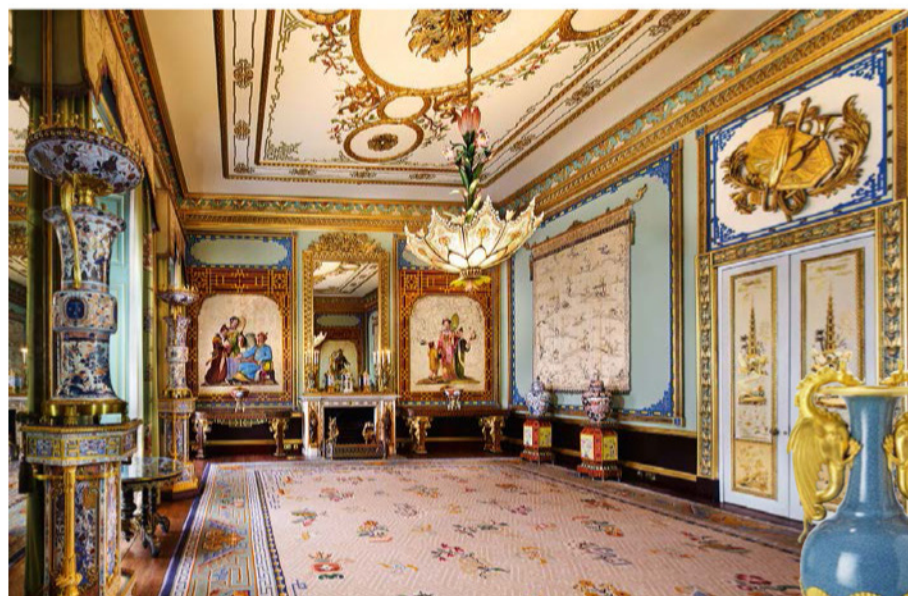
Karl Lagerfeld: A Life In Houses
by Patrick Mauriès & Marie Kalt



(Thames & Hudson, £75)
Legendary Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld used his homes as a private creative outlet away from the glare of the fashion spotlight, their decorating styles running the gamut from Art Deco to ultramodern. This elegant tome chronicles all of his homes with rare photography from the 1960s and 1970s through to his final house purchase in 2009. His Paris properties alone show

incredible breadth, from his elegant Art Deco-inspired Saint-Sulpice apartment to the minimalist decor of his 200-year-old Quai Voltaire apartment and his incredibly ornate 18th-century mansion Hôtel Pozzo di Borgo. Bucolic French country houses, a Grand Tour-themed Roman pied-à-terre, a Memphis-designed apartment in Monte Carlo and a majestic Nordic villa in his native Hamburg all dazzle. ▶





ABOVE The Yellow Drawing Room.
LEFT The Centre Room, which leads onto the famous balcony, with its lotus flower chandelier.
BELOW Chinese porcelain vases with 18th-century English mounts from the Royal Collection.



By Royal Appointment

Visit Buckingham Palace's East Wing

For the very first time, the East Wing of Buckingham Palace will open to the public for special guided tours this summer after over five years of improvement works.

It encompasses the front facade of the historic building and the famous central balcony where the Monarch and members of the Royal Family have appeared during historic moments since 1851. Its principal rooms are Chinese-themed and furnished with some of the finest works in the Royal Collection, many of which were moved from George IV's Royal Pavilion in Brighton upon its sale in 1850. Led by expert guides, small groups of visitors

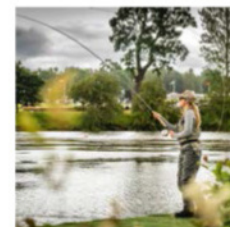
will be able to visit spectacular rooms and discover the history of the wing, which was first occupied by Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their children and is still used by the Royal Family today for official meetings and events. Highlights include priceless royal portraits, the Yellow Drawing Room with two large, hexagonal, nine-tiered Chinese porcelain pagodas, and a magnificent glass chandelier in the shape of a lotus flower in the Centre Room which leads onto the famous balcony.

The East Wing tours will run as part of the summer opening of the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace from 11 July to 29 September. rct.uk

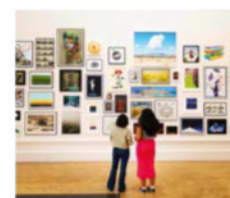
Diary



RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, from 2 to 7 July, promises inspirational show gardens, spectacular fragrant blooms, expert talks, demonstrations, and more – plus visit the stand of our sister magazine *The English Garden*. rhs.org.uk



Celebrate English countryside outdoor pursuits at Blenheim Palace Game Fair from 26 to 28 July with chic shopping, falconry displays, activities, artisanal food and drinks plus shooting and fishing demonstrations. blenheimpalace.com



Held every year since 1769, the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in London is the world's largest open submission exhibition, displaying art by household names alongside emerging artists. From 18 June to 18 August. royalacademy.org.uk

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DESIGN DISCOVERIES

Update interiors with refreshing colours, luxurious finishes and natural materials combined with clever ways of maximising space with multipurpose pieces



BRIGHT TILES

Suitable for walls and floors, these tiles come in two colourful starburst designs to imbue an authentic French Riviera mood. To ensure the depth of the colours remains true, the porcelain tiles are said to be fade-resistant, durable and easy to maintain over the years to come.

Tropez Cotto tiles, also available in Tropez Mint, £56.71 a square metre, Porcelain Superstore



FOOTSTOOL-TO-BED

This sizable stool has multiple uses, for everyday living it functions as an extra seat and footrest. However, if unexpected guests visit, the box folds out into a double guest bed with a foam mattress and a feather-wrapped foam top cushion. To match other furnishings within a sitting room or bedroom scheme, there is a choice of over 140 fabrics.

Slumberbox pull-out guest bed, £595, Loaf

REISSUED WALLPAPERS

In conjunction with the publication of a recent book exploring the work of the late artist, illustrator and printmaker Sheila Robinson, St Jude's is reissuing her Monkeys and Birds wallpaper. First designed in 1958, the pattern's contemporary palette ensures its enduring appeal for modern interiors.

Monkeys and Birds wallpaper, £84 a roll, Sheila Robinson for St Jude's





CHARACTERFUL SIDEBOARD

Doyenne of British interior design Nina Campbell has looked beyond standard designs to create her new collection. For example, this bamboo bookcase with a distinctive pagoda-style roof on top features open shelving to display decorative objects, barware or books. There is also a cupboard below with a shelf to store tableware and other items out of sight. To match different schemes, the internal paint comes in any RAL colour.

Alfred bamboo bookcase with RAL 6009 Fir Green interior, £5,823, Nina Campbell ▶

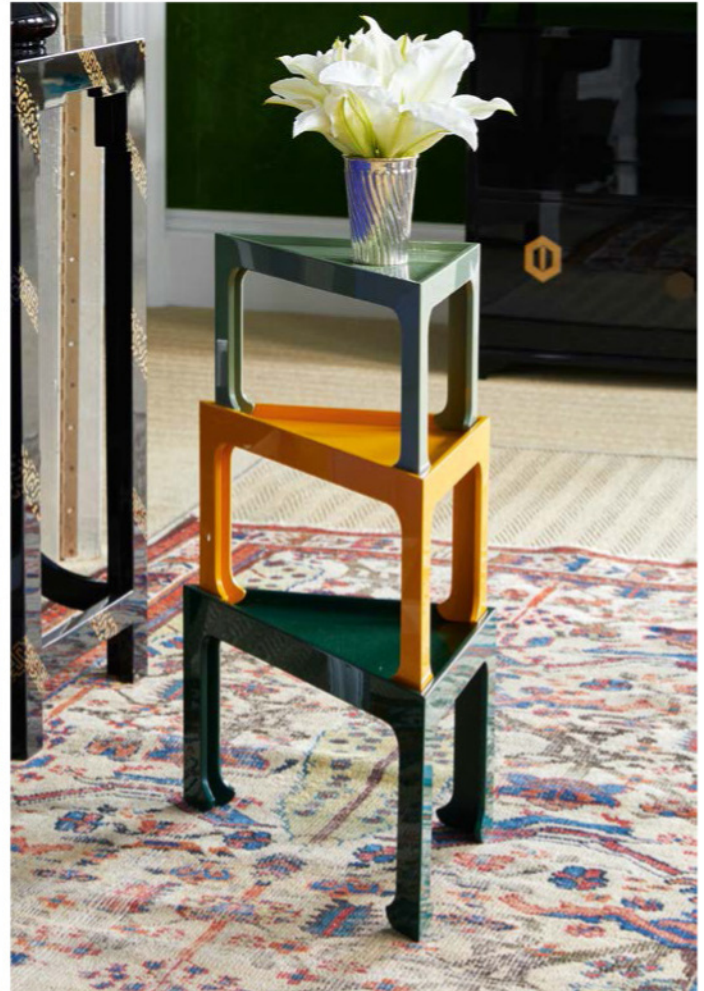
SHOPPING



LIGHT REED

This aged-rattan pendant in the large size (seen in this image, left), creates a dramatic statement while imbuing a more relaxed ambience compared to a traditional pendant. It is also available in medium and small sizes for a less imposing feature.

Gili pendant (large), £1,800; Amalfi sofa, £5,535, both Julian Chichester



TRIANGULATION OF TABLES

Stacking tables provide multiple-height flat surfaces in a compact space-saving design, which is ideal for homes with a lack of storage. These unusually shaped triangular tables come in a choice of two combinations of bold colourways with a stylised modern aesthetic.

Triangular stacking table, £1,750, Miles Redd for The Lacquer Company

INDOOR/OUTDOOR FABRICS

For busy family life and those hosting summer garden parties, consider soft furnishings designed to be taken outside. Indoor/outdoor fabrics are a design secret of many interior designers who use them for interiors requiring a higher durability of fabric than normal.

Fabrics (clockwise from bottom far left): Del Mar, Morro, La Jolla, all £156 a metre; Colma, £210 a metre, all from the Live It Up! indoor/outdoor collection, Schumacher ▶



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FOUR-IN-ONE SOFA

For those without storage space for multiple outdoor furnishings, this multipurpose sofa can provide a range of different ways to relax in the garden. The design can be easily transformed into a corner lounger, double-ended lounger or a full daybed. The sofa is made from FSC-certified Acacia wood with rope woven details on the arms and double-stacked cushions which fold out as required.

Mykonos outdoor pull-out sofa, £1,370, Sweetpea & Willow



LIGHTING LANDSCAPE

Bespoke lighting manufacturer FORM is introducing three new lamp designs. Each of the turned-wood lacquered pieces are handmade by master craftsmen in Yorkshire. The profiles and subtle colour palette of the new lights are inspired by the rugged Scottish landscape as interpreted by FORM's founder and designer Matt Dixon.

Thistle lacquered turned-wood table lamp, North Sea, £295, shade sold separately, FORM

LEADING EDGE

For those who love a creative embellishment, a new braid in four colourways has been unveiled by James Hare. The design marries a luxurious velvet jacquard with a modern geometric motif. The trims could add an elegant finish to cushions, curtains and walls.

Apollo Key braid (on wall and cushion), £57 a metre; Brush fringe (on cushion), £40.50 a metre, all James Hare ■



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SHOPPING

Paprika Red, £26.95 for 1l Chalk Paint, Annie Sloan



Anjali napkins, Curry, £32 for four, Natalia Willmott



Jaipur Ridhi pure cotton jacquard bedding set, £79 for a double, Marks & Spencer x Fired Earth



Adhurst lantern, £1,175, Vaughan Designs



Dibble diamond pendant, £178, Pooky

Mamora kilim, £245, Emma Mellor Handmade Rugs



Huxley mirror, Dirty Orange, £450; Huxley table lamp, Brushed Red, £175, Oka



SPICE ROUTE

Enrich interiors with warming spice tones of paprika, cinnamon and turmeric along with a touch of Indian and Moroccan flair



Loving Orange, £22 for 1l Emulsion, YesColours



Beresford Red, Hambleden Yellow, Saffron, £58 for 2.5l Emulsion, Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler at Fenwick & Tilbrook

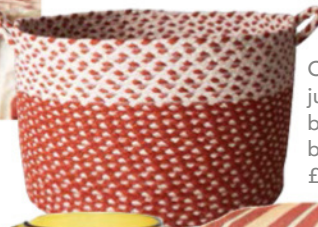


Gustav Charleston bedside table, £1,250, Trove by Studio Duggan



Belgrave chair £2,695 plus 4m fabric, David Seyfried

Spice Vivienne cushion cover, £28, The Secret Linen Store



Organic jute braided basket, £59, Toast



Discotheque Bronski tile, £42 a square metre, Claybrook



The Stripey Ottoman, £825, Birdie Fortescue

Beldi Amber glass jug, £20; Beldi Amber glasses, from £18 for six, Raj Tent Club





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SHOPPING

Fruit metal taper candle holder, from £56, Anthropologie



Lemon carafe and tumbler, £88, Petra Palumbo



Alani Orange fabric, £88 a metre, Iliv



Bordallo Pinheiro Strawberry earthenware serving dish, £29, John Lewis & Partners



Strawberries tableware, from £16, Emma Bridgewater

FRUITFUL SERVING

Add a delicious touch to summer table settings with these colourful and seasonal motifs



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FEATURE SUZANNA LE GROVE

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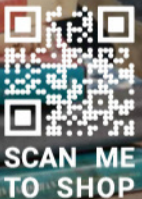


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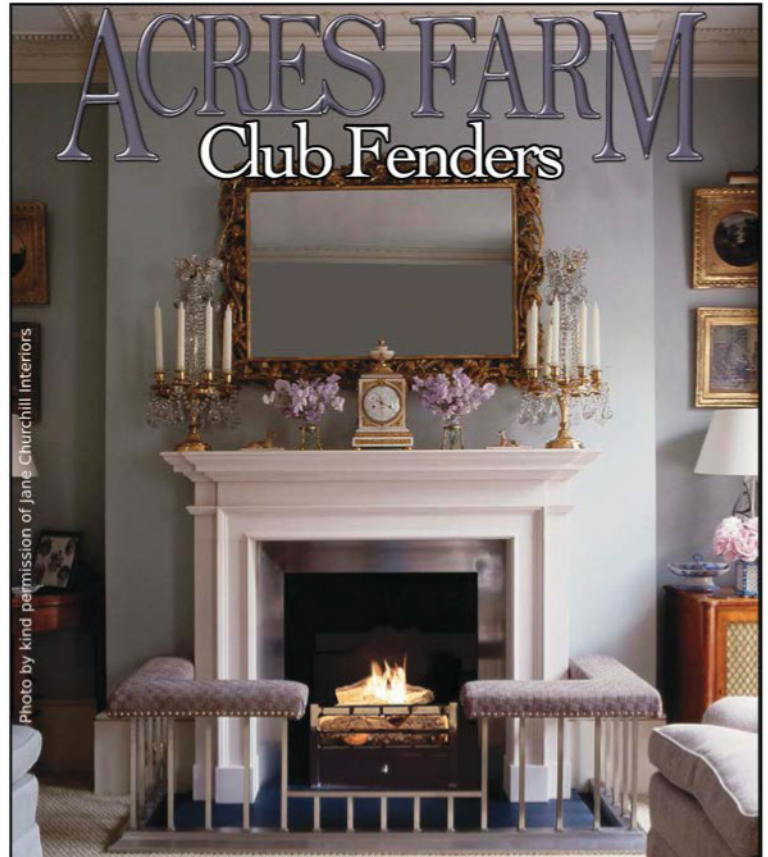


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deVOL

Simple Things, Beautifully Made

THE EDIT

This summer embrace the past, present and future with these brilliant brands

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

To celebrate its 140th anniversary this year, luxury British paint and wood polish manufacturer Mylands, a proud Royal Warrant holder, is releasing a collection of upcycled paints.

The Upcycled Collection, a range of high-quality matt-finish paints using leftover paints, is the latest step in the heritage brand's ongoing commitment to minimising the impact of paint on the planet and features some of its most popular colours.

Dominic Myland CEO says: "It is a huge privilege to be leading the company into its next chapter as we focus on innovating and developing collections that encapsulate the Mylands aesthetic – the finest quality paints and finishes with an awareness for the environment we inhabit." mylands.com



BEAUTIFUL BOTANICALS

A new collaboration between bespoke British furniture and fabric brand Sofas & Stuff and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has taken inspiration from the history of botanical exploration to create a collection that pays homage to the natural world.

RHS Botanicals has drawn upon the extensive archives of the RHS Lindley Collections to produce a unique set of prints honouring the floral designs and plant structures originally documented by some of our great botanical artists.

Launched at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, the seven designs can be used across the full Sofas & Stuff range of furniture and furnishings or purchased as fabrics for other projects. sofasandstuff.com





NEW HOME FOR ICONIC AUCTIONS

Renowned for its unique finds, Lots Road Auctions has moved premises to the Piper Centre in Fulham, where with 29,500 sq ft of space, it is now one of the largest single-space auction houses in the country.

A firm favourite for interior stylists and private collectors around the globe, Lots Road Auctions is renowned for its carefully curated mix of antiques and contemporary items.

Auctions are held every Sunday from 11am, with additional specialist sales throughout the year, such as the forthcoming auction on 20 June, where buyers can bid on designer handbags, jewellery, and accessories. Meanwhile, art lovers should make a note in their diary for the Fine Art Auction on 4 July. lotsroad.com



KITCHEN SOLUTIONS

With a busy summer of home renovations underway, those with period homes or unusual layouts could do well to turn to Devon-based Barnes of Ashburton, which produces bespoke handmade kitchens and can solve all manner of interior design problems.

Kim Whinnett, director of Barnes of Ashburton, says many clients come to them when off the peg simply will not do, and they are looking for a specific design that they cannot find on the high street.

“Every project is unique, and we work with our clients to ensure the timber elements, handles, and work surfaces all work together to give a beautiful end result,” she says.

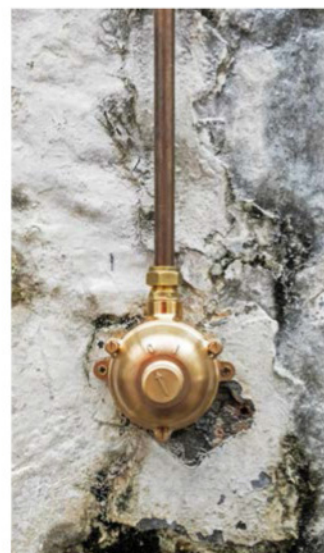
barnesofashburton.co.uk

A TOUCH OF BRASS

Two British brands committed to preserving our nation’s heritage have united to produce a line of lighting that will bring some regal elegance into our homes.

The Soho Lighting Royal Palace Collection, a collaboration between The Soho Lighting Company and Historic Royal Palaces – the independent charity that looks after Hampton Court Palace and Kensington Palace, among other historic buildings – includes solid brass switches that would not look out of place in a period drama.

Lee Lovett, founder and creative director of The Soho Lighting Company, says: “To create a collection that enables our customers to incorporate the heritage and characterful look and feel of the palaces within their homes is such a delight.” soholighting.com ■



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BOLD VISION

A move to the the Suffolk countryside has given Ambrice Miller and her husband Ben Joyce the space to grow their careers and their family

FEATURE IFEOLUWA ADEDEJI PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

ABOVE Ambrice sitting on one of the sofas from the Chapel Vale collection, available at Relic Interiors (relicinteriors.com), her art, antiques and handmade indoor and outdoor furniture business.



This was once the sitting room, Ambrice explains, "We changed the wall colour and have kept all of the original features, including the ceiling beam, which has a striking appearance in its lacquered black finish."

‘The kitchen still has the service bells, which work. We jokingly call it a very miniature version of Downton Abbey’

Ambrice Miller is sitting in her dining room on a bobbin sofa she designed. On the wall behind her is a hyperrealistic drawing by Ramadhan Hamis, an artist she represents. An equine bust, two Persian rugs, another bust from an arts academy also fill the space, alongside an antique crystal chandelier from Provence, which hangs from one of the ceiling beams. This is actually one of the more understated rooms in her home. “Apparently a collector is just a hoarder, but I’ve also been told it’s not hoarding if what you’re holding on to is beautiful,” says the art and antiques dealer.

At 370 years old, the former malt master’s house has the character expected of its 17th-century origins. While there have been a few nips and tucks here and there over the years, thanks to its good bones, Ambrice and her husband Ben, who undertook most of the renovation work themselves, have not needed to do any structural work.

Birmingham, Alabama native Ambrice moved to London for work in 2010, and although it was this city that drew her to the UK, she knew it would not be where she would buy a house. “As I was raised in a small town and Ben grew up in Somerset, we agreed that when we wanted to start a family it would not be in London,” she says. The pair were open to various locations as long as they could easily commute to the capital. Other prerequisites included having outbuildings: “We have all these hobbies so space was a priority,” she adds.

After almost a dozen house viewings in early 2017, Ambrice and Ben saw the listing for a house in Suffolk that had been on the market for a while. Its price had been lowered, so it came up on their search list. “We ▶



Ambrice has used a neutral base for the sitting room walls, Farrow & Ball’s Borrowed Light, to let the art and decorative items bring the colour. The chandelier was the first item she bought for the house and it came from Paris.





‘Apparently a collector is just a hoarder, but I’ve also been told it’s not hoarding if what you’re holding on to is beautiful’

ABOVE The kitchen has an evolved look with its mix of built-in and freestanding furniture. The floor has been updated with slate tiles from Westminster Stone.

really liked it before we viewed it, but had no idea about the area,” says Ambrice. The property is made up of four main bedrooms and two smaller ones located in what would have been the servants’ quarters at the rear. “The kitchen still has the service bells, which work. We jokingly call it a very miniature version of Downton Abbey,” she laughs.

The kitchen was one of the first rooms the couple tackled, stripping the floor and dehumidifying the space. “Most of our friends come into the house through the kitchen, and when we first bought it, everyone was hit by this awful smell caused by damp that had been created by a leaking tap,” Ambrice explains. The room is modest in size, but there are



awkward spaces, so the couple had bespoke cabinets made and accessorised them with Jim Lawrence handles. “We were able to buy the Lacanche range second-hand from the manufacturer as we’d saved money on the kitchen.”

Putting Ben’s DIY skills to use, they made the island from a carpenter’s workbench bought online. “It came from an old school and looked like it had lived a life, but it wasn’t practical as you couldn’t fit your legs under it,” she says. It really came together when the couple found a custom-made oyster shucking table at auction from a restaurant that was closing. Ben

used an angle grinder to cut off the legs and Ambrice built the base for it to go on top of the carpenter’s bench. Now they can sit around it comfortably as there is an overhang that the bar stools and people’s legs can fit under.

Many of the areas that Ambrice and Ben do not use frequently are decorated in bold hues, for instance the guest bedrooms, which are full of treasured antique finds, too, and the utility room cupboards, which Ben built and are painted in Valspar’s Blue Fedora. “I read somewhere that spaces you don’t use that often should leave a lasting impression, otherwise it’s nice to keep ▶

ABOVE The utility room features solid brass cabinet handles, which are reproductions of Victorian Bloxwich design handles, and a reclaimed Belfast sink.



some areas clean and simple.” Which is what they have done in the principal bedroom. Here, they have installed built-in wardrobes painted in a soft green and inserted green onyx porcelain tiles from Mandarin Stone behind the headboard. “There was a lack of storage, and while we tried to buy pieces in keeping with the period of the house, they took up more floor space and still didn’t provide a solution, so we designed and built the wardrobes and painted them in French Gray by Farrow & Ball,” Ambrice says. “When Ben and I were dating, he said that he wanted a home where each room had a theme and I think that’s what we have here.”

There is a new addition, too – their now two-year-old son, Hendrix, who also has a unique space of his own, a long time in the making. His bedroom is painted in a Moroccan-inspired wall colour – Pâté by Valspar – which playfully combines with the safari theme and Ambrice’s enthusiasm for bobbin furniture. “I bought the Jenny Lind bobbin crib from the States when I was five months pregnant. Afterwards, my mother told me that I had the same ▶

ABOVE & LEFT Hendrix’s bedroom has an African safari theme along with antique features such as the

mercury glass star lantern from Lovejoy Antiques, and a comfortable Barker and Stonehouse sofa.

The principal bedroom features onyx tiles from Mandarin Stone that act as a backdrop to the bed and complement the wardrobes painted in Farrow & Ball's French Gray.





crib, so it seems that my obsession started from birth.” The decor includes 19th-century paintings of safari animals and embroidered samplers. “In the 1800s, little girls would work on their embroidery skills and would practise using letters of the alphabet. These beautiful pieces are dated and have the children’s names and ages, one was aged six.” There is also a bobbin bench in here, designed by Ambrice for Relic Interiors, along with a rug she sourced from the Atlas mountains, and antique suzani tapestry from Uzbekistan. “I’ve had these ideas in my head for a long time so it’s nice to see them come to fruition.”

Ambrice and Ben recently watched a video they took of the house before they started working on it. “What were we thinking!” she exclaims. “Each room was rented out and the decor was horrible. Everyone else who viewed it thought that although it was a beautiful house, it would be too much work. But we raised our hands and said, ‘We’ll do it!’” ■



LEFT The suzani in the blue guest bedroom is from a trip Ambrice made to Istanbul a couple of years ago. She finds textiles are the easiest way to soften and liven up a room.

ABOVE This guest bedroom is filled with a riot of colour and pattern found in the patchwork quilt, suzani curtain and cushions. Gilt frames and sconces add a decadent touch.

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Pattern play

Creating a home for her young family, Anna Cross has infused this Victorian townhouse with calming yet playful schemes filled with prints and colour

FEATURE CHARLOTTE DUNFORD PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER



DeVOL kitchen cabinets in Trinity Blue and walls in Fired Earth's Summer Lichen create a serene feeling in the kitchen, while a blind in Felicity Pink by Colefax and Fowler softens the scheme. The bar stools are from Paolo Moschino.



‘I wanted it to feel homely. Colour and pattern are a part of that for me, and with children, pattern can be much more forgiving’

ABOVE LEFT An Oak Leaf chandelier from Cox London hangs above the grand piano in the sitting room. The cream Ponza wool rug is from Tim Page.

ABOVE RIGHT Light streams through the Crittall doors in the lower ground floor living area. A Rose Uniacke sofa provides the perfect place to sit and admire the garden. The engineered oak flooring is by Trunk.

There was no doubt in Anna Cross’s mind that her next home would be situated in the peaceful, leafy streets of West London. “I was born around here and I’ve lived here for the last 10 years, so it’s home to me,” she says. Surrounded by scenic green spaces, within walking distance of her son’s nursery and with a welcoming “community feel”, yet in close proximity to the bustle of Central London, it was the perfect place to settle down and raise her growing family.

Anna and her husband previously lived in a smaller, Georgian, terraced house which, while adored by the couple, was not fit for raising children. “We loved it, but for a family, it was really badly set up. It had the principal bedroom at the top and the other bedrooms in the basement,” she says. With a clear checklist in

mind, including a separate study for Anna’s husband, a musician, to work in, and an open-plan area incorporating the living space, kitchen and garden, the couple began their search. “We had quite specific ideas of what we wanted, so it took us a while to find the right house,” Anna adds. Luckily, their search proved fruitful.

The 19th-century Victorian townhouse provided them with everything they had been hoping for, but it would require some work. “The house had been rented before, so it wasn’t in the best shape; we knew it was going to be a bit of a project,” remembers Anna. For assistance with the renovation she turned to interior designer Jess Lavers, known for her characterful schemes that champion craftsmanship and sustainability. “Jess had worked with my sister ▶

In the sitting room, a Fairfax sofa and Pollyanna armchairs, both by Kingcome, are arranged around a Rockford coffee table from Vaughan Designs. The shape of the Scallop rug from Jennifer Manners is cleverly mirrored in the Soane Britain ceiling light.





before and I'd been really impressed, and I had worked with her on our old house when we redid two rooms," Anna explains. "She's very easy to work with and she understands what I like, so I trust her. I always knew I'd work with her on this house too."

As a starting point, Anna and Jess agreed some alterations were needed to maximise flow, functionality and light throughout the property. "We did a little bit of changing the layout, we moved doors around and swapped some rooms, and we installed a new staircase," says Anna. "A lot of the period features had been removed too, so we put some of these back in." Having been taken practically back to a shell, the house was a blank canvas waiting to be brought to life.

"Colourful but calm" was the basis for the decoration. "I think it's inspired by my grandparents because their house was full of colour but in a really soothing way, with eau de Nil, peach and pale blue," says Anna. An updated take on this fresh palette winds its way through the house, from the bold blue-green kitchen cabinets on the lower ground floor and the elegant pink accents of the ground floor sitting room, up to the delicate blue textiles in the guest bedroom on the third floor.

Yet, there is certainly a sense of playfulness to be found throughout, too. "I wanted it to feel homely, and colour and pattern are a part of that for me. There was also the thinking that this is a family home, and with children, pattern can be much more forgiving," Anna laughs. Jess has found a happy medium between aesthetics and functionality. A Thibaut wallpaper lining the walls of the entrance hall has the texture of an extra fine sisal but is actually a wipeable vinyl, while the dining chairs are covered in a durable yet chic spotted outdoor fabric crafted from polyester.

The notion of family was at the forefront of Anna's mind when it came to furnishings too, but in a sentimental, rather than practical, way. Inheriting ►



ABOVE LEFT In the entrance hall, guests are greeted by the elegant sweeping Smet staircase installed at the start of the project. A Penny Morrison table lamp sits on the Wimpole console table and the Wimpole wall lights are by Robert Kime.

LEFT Schumacher's Tiger Palm wallpaper and the London Basin Company's bamboo-motif Sophia basin bring a playfulness to the cloakroom. Shades by Matilda Goad top Pooky's Elbow wall lights. The taps are by Lefroy Brooks.

Soothing hues and natural materials bring a sense of calm to the principal bedroom. Soane Britain's Rattan Daisy pendant light hangs above a Hypnos bed adorned with pretty cushions from Penny Morrison and Fanny Shorter. The walls are painted in Marshmallow by Rose Uniacke.





‘The decoration is inspired by my grandparents – their house was full of colour but in a soothing way, with eau de Nil, peach and pale blue’

ABOVE LEFT A Beata Heuman Dodo Egg lantern adds a whimsical touch to the main bathroom. The bath is from Bette and the blind is in Punch Paisley by Neisha Crosland for Christopher Farr.

ABOVE RIGHT A considered mix of pattern has been used in the guest bedroom, including Thibaut’s Julian Blue wallpaper, Mahala Textiles’ Ikat Stripe on the headboard and a Blue Calaloo box-pleat lampshade and valance from Alice Palmer & Co.

several pieces of furniture from her grandparents caused Anna to consider the future and the importance of being eco-aware. “I thought about furniture as being quite a lifelong thing; pieces that could be kept for ages and passed down to children,” she explains. “There are some that I always loved from my grandparents’ house and it’s really nice now to have them in our home to enjoy.”

Jess’s expert knowledge and network of contacts proved invaluable when it came to sourcing, and a strong focus was placed on artisanal British products that utilised environmentally friendly materials and techniques. Anna’s dream of having a deVOL kitchen was realised and Jess worked closely with several British makers, one of whom was furniture maker Barney Lee, who crafted the dining table from a single piece of sustainably sourced ash timber, designed to develop a unique patina with many years of wear.

A love of entertaining also guided the design of the house. “We have the upstairs living area, and

it was suggested, at one point, that maybe that could be a dining room, but we very much wanted the kitchen and the dining area to be right next to each other because we cook a lot and that’s the way that we entertain,” says Anna. The upstairs space remains a sitting room and has been decorated in a more sophisticated manner, ideal for the couple and their friends to retreat to after an evening of wine and dining.

The transformation of the house, which ended up taking two years, has been a long, but rewarding journey. With a second child on the way, Anna is looking forward to enjoying the home for many more years to come. “The downstairs area is exactly what we wanted and it makes life so enjoyable. Our son can play in one corner while we cook, or in summer we can open the doors and he can play in the garden and we can be right there,” says Anna. “We definitely planned it so that we can stay here as long as possible.” ■



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TAILOR MADE

Building their own home in a Lincolnshire village has given Hester and Richard Cresswell free rein to design it to suit their lifestyle and make a long-held dream a reality

FEATURE AMANDER MEADE PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH



One of Hester's favourite pieces is the Alfred Wallace-inspired painting above the fireplace. She found it at Newark Antiques Fair and Richard mounted it on linen and framed it for her. The pair of faux planters on the mantelpiece are from Oka.



ABOVE Built especially for al fresco entertainment, the outdoor dining area includes a locally-made table and comfortable Kensington chairs from Bridgman.

Almost 25 years ago, Hester Cresswell and her husband, Richard, were in search of their next property adventure and had started to look for a suitable plot of land to build on. “We loved the idea of building our own country home, but usually the hardest part of the process is finding land for sale in the right place at the right price,” says Hester. Noticing a planning

application on a paddock in a pretty Lincolnshire village near the town they were living in, Hester realised she knew the vendor and approached her directly. “We were very fortunate to have an offer for the land accepted in the early stages of the process and our plans for development began almost immediately.”

Working closely alongside a trusted builder, Hester and Richard issued a brief for a family home that



Hester enjoyed having free rein to decorate the house and create the garden from scratch.

would blend seamlessly into the local environment while at the same time offering them all the benefits of contemporary living. Determined to be fully 'hands on' once the house was built, the couple moved into the completed shell with only the basics of heating, light and water available, and installed the kitchen and bathrooms themselves. "I discovered it's amazing what you can learn to do when you need to, although, ▶

'We have a forever home that works beautifully for just the two of us, but adapts seamlessly into a sociable space'

Richard designed the elevated ceiling in the garden room. The couple love this room for its sunny aspect overlooking the garden in summer and its cosy, inviting ambience in winter. The rug is by La Redoute and Hester found the Swedish winged armchair at an antique fair and had it reupholstered.





'I love neutral tones as they always feel calm and I wanted to curate a very relaxed atmosphere for the house'

fortunately, Richard can turn his hand to almost all DIY skills," Hester says.

With the fixtures complete, it was time for Hester, a retired interior decorator, to enjoy creating schemes for each room. As a result of her former career she has lots of contacts in the interiors industry to call upon whenever she needs soft furnishings, curtains, blinds or lampshades. For walls and furniture, she loves experimenting with the colour palettes of paint suppliers Farrow & Ball and Norfolk-based Fenwick & Tilbrook. "During my working life, I followed briefs according to clients' wishes all the time," she explains, "so it was a wonderful privilege to have not only a free rein creatively, but a completely blank canvas to work on – an opportunity that rarely comes along. Richard ▶

ABOVE The beautifully secluded garden combines shrubs for structure with relaxed planting in the beds to give volume with plenty of plants cultivated for cut flowers.

RIGHT Built by the couple nearly 25 years ago on a former paddock, the house is now surrounded by well-established plants and hedges.





ABOVE Hester chose a Shaker-style kitchen for its timeless quality. Made by Intone Design of Oundle, it is painted in Skimming Stone by Farrow & Ball. **LEFT** As well as doubling up as a utility room and offering plenty of storage for outdoor clothing, the boot room is a cosy refuge for the couple's dog Hattie.

is very creative too and comes up with great ideas, so it was a really productive partnership.”

Hester had a very clear idea of how she wanted her home to look and feel. “I love neutral tones as they always feel calm for day-to-day living, and I wanted to curate a very relaxed atmosphere for the house – especially for the ground floor,” she explains. “We entertain family and friends frequently, so our reception rooms are designed to flow into one another, with double doors opening up to enhance the open-plan feeling when we are hosting guests. Keeping a neutral palette helps create that effortless movement. I enjoyed adding colour and pattern to the bedrooms to conjure up warmth and a welcoming mood.”

A lifelong collector and former dealer in art and antiques, Hester is not afraid to mix styles and combines vintage pieces with more contemporary items, as well as incorporating plenty of textural natural materials and interesting fabrics to add depth and character to the decor. “In the garden room, for example, I have French and Danish chairs and the sofa is from Ikea. I love to browse The Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair at Battersea, as well as Daylesford ▶

A bright runner, colourful floral arrangements and fresh white paintwork create a smart first impression in the entrance hall. The chair, mirror and runner were auction house finds and the Dār Ilario star ceiling pendant is from John Lewis & Partners.





‘My advice to anyone beginning with a blank canvas is to focus on something you love and start from there’

Organic in the Cotswolds. I’m a big fan of art fairs and galleries, too, and one of my favourite places is Kettle’s Yard in Cambridge, which was created in 1957 by Harold Stanley ‘Jim’ Ede, a former curator at the Tate Gallery. I find his home a great inspiration and have attended some fabulous exhibitions there.” Although Hester shops judiciously, as she prefers to keep things for many years, she admits that if she finds something she really loves, she will buy it and consider where to place it later. “I’m definitely not a minimalist but every item I display in my home brings a happy memory to mind.”

Looking back at the process, Hester has very few regrets. “The build was relatively stress-free, with no disasters, thankfully, and we enjoyed every part of it,” she says. “We kept the interior layout quite simple and straightforward, although I wish we had made the family bathroom slightly larger. The spacious boot room, however, was a great decision and has proved essential to living in the country with a dog and lots of visitors. We’ve updated it over recent years with new taps, countertops and wall colours to keep things fresh. I do like to reinvent rooms, too, by moving furniture and accessories around the house.

“My advice to anyone beginning with a blank canvas is to take your time. Don’t rush to fill the space. Focus on something you love – a piece of art or furniture, a rug or a fireplace – and start from there. Build up the scheme in layers from the ground up and remember to consider the lighting. I often find too much overhead lighting can be harsh, so I prefer lots of lamps to soften the mood and add a cosy atmosphere in the cooler months.”

Hester would definitely recommend self-building: “We have achieved what we wanted. A forever home that works beautifully for just the two of us, but adapts seamlessly into a sociable space when our ever-growing family visit and for our friends to enjoy with us.” ■

ABOVE LEFT The striking wallpaper in the principal bedroom is Stellar, Midnight, by local designer Annie Allison and the fabric on the headboard is by Peony & Sage. The chest of drawers is painted in Mole’s Breath by Farrow & Ball.

LEFT Hummingbirds wallpaper by Cole & Son greets visitors in the guest bedroom. The cushions are covered in Wisteria fabric by Chelsea Textiles.





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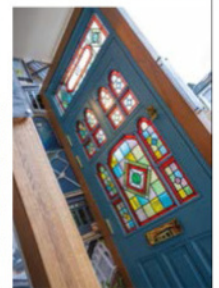
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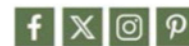


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Urban fabric

Sarah Mason has transformed her London flat with layers of colour and pattern to create a playful yet elegant home with an American twist

FEATURE CHARLOTTE DUNFORD
PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER

“I love colour and it shows,” says Sarah Mason, referencing the delightful hotchpotch of shades and patterns in her home. From the first step into the entrance hall, glossy walls in a deep teal paired with a striking checkerboard floor betray her penchant for bold and beautiful hues. “Although one thing you won’t see in this flat is yellow, I hate it. I know it’s a wonderful colour, but it’s just personal,” she laughs.

Searching for a home in Central London in the 1990s, Sarah came across this conversion of five stucco-fronted period houses with flats running laterally. “When I first moved to London I lived further down the street, so I knew the area well and that I wanted to live here,” she explains. On viewing it, she saw it was in bad shape, but the large outdoor area, a rare commodity in London, caught her eye. “I went out onto the terrace with the flowers and the sun shining, and I thought, this is the reason to buy it.”

Completely unmodernised, the flat required a major overhaul. Period features were repaired, the small hall and cloakroom were built at the entrance, bespoke storage was installed, and fireplaces were added. “I had a fair bit of colour in the flat and I lived in it for years,” says Sarah. “Then, I was asked ▶

RIGHT In the sitting room, sofas upholstered in GP & J Baker’s Magnolia in Cream/Blue and Kvadrat’s Vidar 4 in 0872 sit around a custom-made ottoman in Jajim 02 by Madeaux. The walls are in Little Greene’s Beauvais Lilac.







Madeaux's Samarkand 01 wallpaper makes a statement in the dining room. The antique table has been laid with Sarah's treasured crockery collection and a tablecloth made from Colefax and Fowler's Kendal in Leaf Green. The prints are by Robert Dash.



‘Because of the flow between the dining room and the sitting room, we came up with the designs and colours at the same time’

ABOVE A blind in Cabbages & Roses Jolly Stripe in French Blue on Natural Linen adds timeless elegance to the kitchen.

ABOVE RIGHT In the corner of the dining room sits an antique American maple desk given to Sarah by her great-grandmother. Above it hangs an assortment of artworks, including a watercolour painted by Sarah’s mother and a picture of her beloved terrier Archie.

to go to New York for work and I wanted to let it, so I decided that I had to make it ‘greige’.” She returned to the flat around nine years after leaving, having retired from a career in banking, and was keen to give it a fresh feel. “It needed a refurb, but nothing structural because that had all been done the first time around,” she recalls.

The project began with the terrace. “It was the first thing I did because I knew there’d be workmen coming in and out,” explains Sarah. While many homeowners with city gardens strive to create a boundary between their green space and the surroundings, Sarah embraced the city. “I wanted a fairly urban feel because it is super urban out there. I’ve tried a more traditional English look and it just doesn’t work,” she says. Yet, the terrace still has a softness to it, with patterned seat covers in florals and checks and a global-inspired outdoor rug. “I’m very happy with how it looks like just another room out there,” she adds.

With her attention turned to indoors, Sarah was keen to bring in a designer to help create the comfortable, yet clean, look she desired. She was introduced to Sarah Coates, of interior design and colour consultancy Smith & Coates, by an architect friend. “With Sarah being a colourist, he knew we would gel and we really did.” The two have worked together, employing a mix of wallpapers, fabrics and furnishings in a wonderfully eclectic palette, to create layered schemes which have a subtle “New York vibe”, something Sarah defines as “a sort of elegance with formality and lots of colour”.

In such a small home, the relationship between one room and another was front of mind. The redecoration began with the dining room – or “omni-room” as Sarah calls it, due to its numerous uses – and the sitting room, which are joined by a short corridor. “Because of the flow between them, we came up with the designs and colours at the same time,” she explains. “I wanted the omni-room ▶



‘I use the terrace in winter, too. Sometimes you can go out on a winter’s day and it’s just so beautiful’

ABOVE Sarah chose Millboard decking for the terrace because of its urban look and low maintenance.

A Nomad Atlas rug from Weaver Green softens the space.

ABOVE RIGHT Farrow & Ball’s Vardo in a gloss finish brings glamour to the entrance hall. Through the door, Sandberg’s Raphael wallpaper and an Opaline Beehive pendant from Old School Electric can be seen in the cloakroom. The painting is by Stanislav Brusilov.

to be elegant and formal and the sitting room to feel more relaxed.”

Sarah often enjoys hosting friends and family, so the rooms had to function in both an expansive and intimate way. The dining room is the setting for joyful dinner parties, and afterwards, guests can adjourn to the sitting room, which was specially designed to aid conversation. “We worked a lot on the seating because you don’t want it to look like an airport lounge with everyone around the edge,” she laughs.

An interesting mix of new and old is at play in the flat, with much of Sarah’s existing furniture being refurbished or reupholstered to extend its longevity. “A lot of the pieces are just old stuff I already had and most of the furniture has been back and forth across the ocean,” she says. “Sarah was great because she didn’t believe in starting afresh. If you have a sofa bought in New York in 1977 and it still works, why replace it!” Another highlight is the dining chairs which Sarah inherited from her grandfather, who was “involved in antiques and had them made out of old wood in a Queen Anne pattern”.

A full rehanging of Sarah’s art collection was a transformative final touch to the project. “I collected these pictures over the years, from junk shops in Warsaw to paintings done by family friends. There’s nothing valuable, they’re just special to me,” she muses. Great consideration went into the placement of each piece, ensuring it sat with the other elements in the scheme. “I was thrilled to have professional hanging. I could have hung them but there would be about 100 nails behind them where I’d tried,” she laughs. “The professionals have such an eye, it’s all very mathematical.”

As the seasons change, each part of the flat comes into its own. Cosy winter evenings are often spent in the dining room, while Sarah enjoys summer days in the sitting room with the doors open and natural light streaming in. The terrace, surprisingly, she enjoys year-round. “Ideally, you can have drinks and dinner there when it’s nice. It’s like the Sahara Desert in the summer,” she says. “But I use it in the winter, too. Sometimes you can go out on a December day and it’s just so beautiful.” ■



Aviary wallpaper in Morning Light by Madeaux ties in beautifully with the headboard, bed linen and woodwork in the bedroom. The Bobbin bedside table is from Chelsea Textiles and the painting is by Edyta Dzież, who Sarah became acquainted with when she lived and worked in Warsaw.

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STYLE INSPIRATION

Create a holiday mood at home, discover the benefits of commissioning an interior designer, decorate with ikat patterns and go bold in the bathroom ➤



NATURAL CHOICE

With the garden in full bloom, echoing leafy greens inside the home is an instinctive choice. Botanical prints such as these hand block-printed designs are a way to bridge the gap between indoors and out – perhaps dressing the dining table in joyous florals when al fresco dining is rained off, or using similar linens in both the house and the garden. Bungalow's range of decorative home textiles includes tablecloths, napkins and tea towels as well as seatpads and cushions to create a cohesive scheme, and comes in green, blue and rose palettes.

Selection of tea towels, £16 each, Bungalow, available at Curated Living





Coastal call

Prolong that summer holiday feeling by bringing a sense of sunny days and sea breezes to interiors with uplifting and chic marine life motifs in vibrant hues

Summer days spent by the coast, whether on British shores or further afield, can inspire a desire to recreate the same breezy, relaxed feel at home. While an overtly coastal theme might seem out of place in a country abode or townhouse, there are subtle ways to introduce a gentle hint of beach life. Simply adding a wallpaper with a coastal motif can instantly bring a holiday atmosphere to a room. However, striking a balance is key. Keep other elements in keeping with location rather than going overboard with classic coastal styling – too much white-painted furniture or driftwood may result in a ‘themed’ interior. Instead, consider antique furniture in dark wood for a timeless, sophisticated look, or add some striking contemporary pieces. Lacquered and high-gloss finishes can add a modern feel and provide an opportunity to bring in a bold, contrasting colour.

Looking at the overall palette is crucial to creating a nuanced coastal scheme. Blues are, of course, a natural choice due to their synergy with the sea, and take on a fresh ▶

Create a maritime feel with shell motifs in a soft palette of pale coral tones and flashes of sea blue.

ABOVE Fabrics (from top left): Kasuri, Ishi, Truffle, Monterey Bay, Cantaloupe, Calathea, all from £89 a metre, Indoor/Outdoor Prints collection, Sanderson

RIGHT Wallpaper, Beachcomber, Lady Coral, £75 a roll, Lucie Annabel







A classic blue-and-white palette is a harmonious choice for coastal style. Antique furnishings, contemporary pieces, subtle artworks and elegant ornaments will result in a sophisticated coastal look.

ABOVE Wallpaper, *Pleine Mer, Corail*, £105 a metre, Pierre Frey

FAR LEFT Wallpaper, *Maldives, Navy*, £162 a roll, Thibaut

LEFT Coral framed prints, £150 for four, Cox & Cox

guise when teamed with classic blue-and-white antique or vintage china and contemporary prints. Consider shapely pieces of coral or large decorative shells, too, rather than driftwood or pebbles. Other colours, such as pale shell pinks or muted corals, or even soft greens, can move coastal patterns in a new direction.

When it comes to wallpaper and fabric patterns with subtle takes on marine life, the scrolling, organic form of ▶



Blues are a natural choice due to their synergy with the sea. Pair with classic blue-and-white china and shapely pieces of coral or elegant large shells

SWATCHES, FROM TOP
 Calico Shell wallpaper,
 Cobalt, £94 a roll,
 1838 Wallcoverings
 Coral printed linen/cotton,
 £142 a metre, Molly Mahon
 Sea Coral wallpaper, Aqua,
 £88 a roll, Colefax & Fowler
 Medina Denim printed

cotton, £29 a metre,
 The Pure Edit
ABOVE Coralli wallpaper,
 Blue/Teal, £69 a roll, fabric
 £56 a metre, Jane Churchill
LEFT Fabrics (from top):
 Aquarium, Portside, Seastar,
 all £18 a metre, Studio G at
 Clarke & Clarke

DECORATING



Gentle tones of coral are a smart alternative to blues. Embrace the shapely forms of seaweed and coral as a different option to botanicals, too.

SWATCHES FROM TOP

Coral wallpaper, Red Toppings, £180 a roll, Josephine Munsey

Coral Stripe wallpaper, Faded Rose, £238 a roll, Madeaux

ABOVE RIGHT

Headboard and throw, Seabed fabric, Coral, £18 a metre, Clarke & Clarke

RIGHT Rockpools wallpaper, Shell, £144 a roll, Fiona Howard

FAR RIGHT Seaweed Prints, from £18 each, Beach House Art

BELOW RIGHT Wallpaper (from top): Payton, £69 a roll; Pryia Stripe, £69 a roll; Albie, £69 a roll; Coralli, £69 a roll; Millie, £74 a roll; Wilder, £88 a roll, all Jane Churchill



coral is particularly popular and versatile, providing an interesting alternative to leaf or floral designs.

While a bathroom is a typical place to explore a coastal look, sophisticated patterns and colours can make this style work in every room of the house. And, more importantly, prolong that joyous summer feeling throughout the year. ■



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CLOCKWISE FROM THIS PAGE
Otta Design's watercolour presentation of the drawing room concept and swatches of fabrics and flooring. Colour introduces

a modern twist to the classic drawing room design. A palette of materials and colours assembled by Otta Design to discuss with a client. Alex Keith, director of Otta Design.



How to commission an **INTERIOR DESIGNER**

What to expect when calling in the professionals – and how to get the best results from the process

From a whole house renovation to a single room refresh, it may be worth commissioning an interior designer to deliver a perfectly suited result. Crucially, a designer will have the expertise to offer a host of clever solutions and options – and help make the process smoother and more enjoyable. “Designers are there to make your ▶



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‘Professional knowledge and experience mean that your designer can save you time and save you from making mistakes’

Gail Taylor, co-founder and creative director, Th2 Designs



life easier, helping you visualise and streamline your ideas,” says interior designer Rosanna Bossom. “They have the best access to suppliers, can save you a lot of time, money and stress, and offer many solutions thanks to their experience.”

So what exactly does an interior designer do? Alex Keith, director of Otta Design, says, “A common misconception is that interior designers are only concerned with the ‘fluffy’ parts of renovation projects, picking fabrics and paint colours.” In reality, while they can provide plenty of help with an inspirational look, services are much more extensive and can cover space planning and layouts, detailed room designs and specification including electrical and lighting plans, designs for bespoke joinery, kitchen and bathrooms, all the way through to procurement, project management and installation. “Over 80 per cent of our time involves detailed planning, following processes, effective organisation and communication, budgeting, schedules and project co-ordination,” ▶



TOP The completed home office by Th2 Designs, produced after consultation with the client and their approval using the computer-aided design above.

MIDDLE Gail Taylor of Th2 Designs.
ABOVE The computer-aided design of the home office, produced to scale for accurate representation.



ABOVE This tranquil haven was created by Kelling Designs.

ABOVE Emma Deterding of Kelling Designs.

BELOW The original sketch for the design of the room.



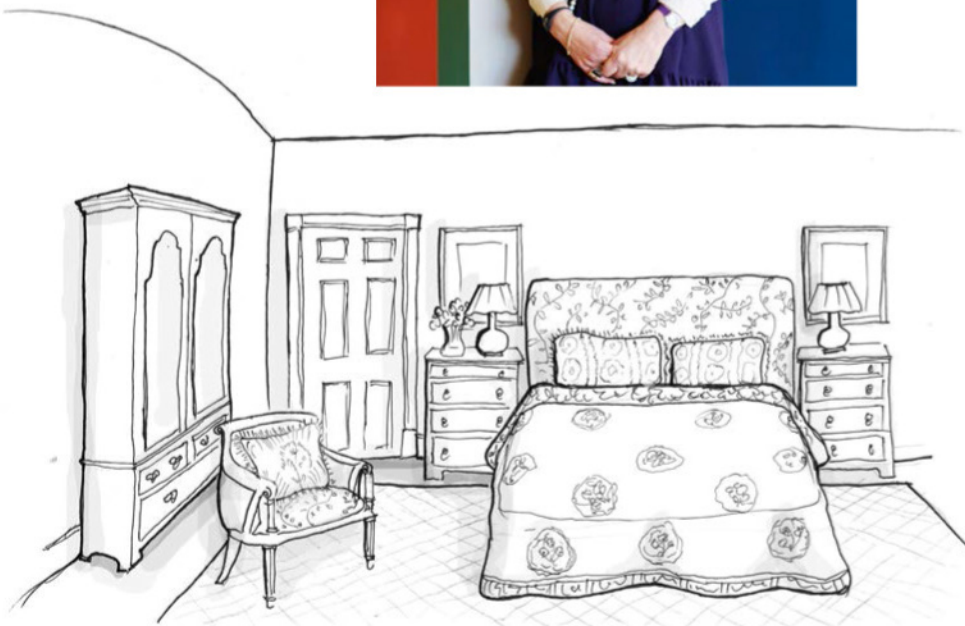
'It is worth noting that many interior designers share a portion of their trade discounts with you, resulting in a saving on purchasing costs'

Emma Deterding, founder and creative director, Kelling Designs

she adds. "This is where the true value of an established, respected interior designer lies."

To find the right designer for a project, it may be worth following up recommendations from friends, browsing magazines and social media. View portfolios on the designer's website and look for experience of the type of project. "Think about what you are trying to achieve and find someone with a similar aesthetic, so, for example, if you want a traditional interior, select someone with experience of antiques and classic period properties," advises Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors. "Have a first meeting – call it a 'chemistry meeting' – and see if you can imagine working with that person for a long time, sharing your personal experiences and likes and lifestyle with."

Most designers will be experienced at working with individual client preferences. "Some clients come to us with a file of design visuals and a clear brief,



MORE INTERIOR DESIGN OPTIONS

- Some home and lifestyle stores, such as Neptune, John Lewis, Oka and Susie Watson Designs, offer personalised interior design services. While these are, of course, geared to encourage clients to purchase their products, they can be a cost-effective way of receiving some professional assistance with a project, especially if planning to buy from the supplier anyway. Services may be free or charged per room, sometimes redeemable against a minimum spend on products.
- Some designers, such as Nicola Harding and Octavia Dickinson, offer one-to-one virtual interior design consultations, charged by the hour, from about £500. These are particularly useful for guidance on smaller projects or for solving particular interior design conundrums in a home or for simply trying out the experience of working with a professional designer.
- An interior design course may open possibilities to transform a home oneself, with the aid of expertise from sought-after designers. Create Academy offers online lessons by Nina Campbell, Alidad and Rita Konig, prices for nine hours from £127.

others come to find their style and final scheme as we progress,” says interior designer Samantha Watkins McRae. While every project and relationship is unique, a client will usually be asked to sign off approval to final layouts, designs, finishes and furniture prior to manufacture or to any drawings being issued to site. Designers may provide hand-drawn sketches, watercolours or computer-generated designs and walk-throughs, or a combination of these, as well as mood boards and samples of fabrics, colours, finishes and materials.

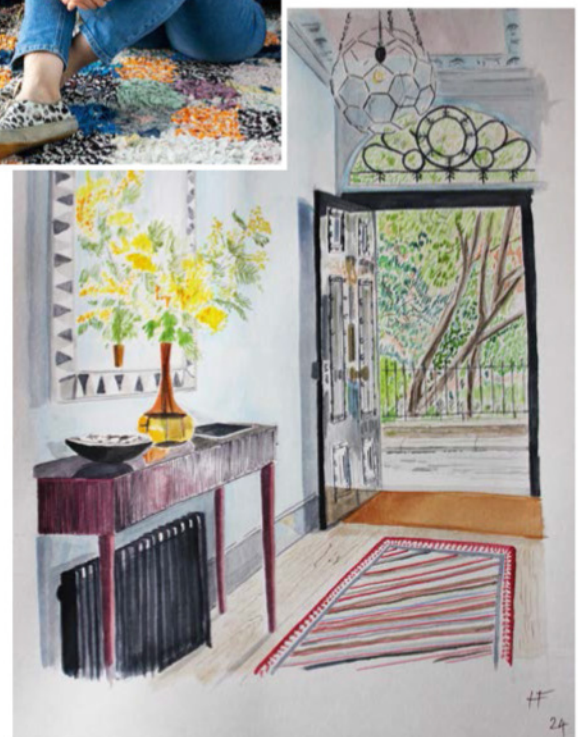
It is also worth thinking about the amount of time a client wants to devote to the project. “Some clients prefer to have fewer meetings and are quite decisive, which makes this possible, while others like and require a lot of back and forth,” explains interior designer Kate Guinness, whose studio divides each project into four phases, which may overlap depending on the project. Phase one is project scoping and concept to cover some high-level spatial planning and co-ordinate some key initial components, such as a measured survey; phase two is the design and procurement of all the technical elements, such as preparation of detailed layout plans and specifications for lighting, switches and sockets, ironmongery, sanitaryware, joinery, kitchen design, fireplaces and architectural detailing. Then comes phase three, ▶



TOP An elegant entrance hall sets the scene, by Kate Guinness Design.

ABOVE Kate Guinness in a bedroom of her design.

RIGHT This watercolour by Hugo Francis was created after completion of the project as a memento.





‘Have a first meeting – call it a chemistry meeting – and see if you can imagine working with that person, sharing your personal experiences, likes and lifestyle with them’

Henriette von Stockhausen, founder and creative director, VSP Interiors



ABOVE This watercolour of a room concept by VSP Interiors is drawn to scale and furnished with actual pieces to create a good sense of how the finished design will look. Watercolour by Leslie-jon Vickory.

ABOVE RIGHT Henriette von Stockhausen, designer of the bedroom shown here.

covering detailed design and procurement of the decorative elements, including furniture, fabrics, soft furnishings, window treatments and decorative lighting, with the final phase covering installation and snagging.

Most designers prefer clients to be frank about their budget at the outset, if possible, to get the best fit for the project. Interior design fees vary considerably – from less than £500 for an hour’s colour consultation to £20,000 and more for a house refurbishment. Prices will vary according to the scope of the project, the services and level of involvement required, and the experience and status of the chosen designer. “Design fees may be structured in different ways, including hourly rates, flat fees per project phase, or a percentage

of the total budget,” advises Emma Deterding, founder and creative director of Kelling Designs. It is worth noting that many interior designers share a portion of their trade discounts with their clients, resulting in a saving on purchasing costs. “Each designer has their own black book and an extensive network of suppliers and tradespeople, allowing them to source the best and most unique materials and furnishings at competitive prices,” adds Deterding.

The golden rule is to achieve a clear understanding with a designer about what is covered by the fee. “A good designer will save you a fortune,” explains Gail Taylor, director of Th2 Designs. “Professional knowledge and experience mean that a designer can save you time and save you from making mistakes.” ■

FEATURE AMELIA THORPE PHOTOGRAPHS (KATE GUINNESS HALLWAY) © JAMES McDONALD; (KELLING DESIGNS) © MARK BOLTON; (TOTTA DESIGN SITTING ROOM) © IONATHAN BOND; (TOTTA DESIGN ALL OTHER IMAGES) © ANYA CAMPBELL; (VSP INTERIORS PORTRAIT) © PAUL MASSEY



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IKATS

Creative Combinations

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

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE

Referring to a type of weave resulting from an ancient resist-dyeing technique originating in Indonesia, ikat has its roots in the Malay-Indonesian term 'to tie' or 'bundle', denoting the process of binding yarns with a tight wrapping applied in the desired pattern prior to dyeing. These fabrics have long been considered

precious because their creation is both time-consuming and skilled. Ikats - whose name has come to represent both the process and the finished product - have sprung up in several parts of the world over many centuries, including Peru, India, Egypt, Guatemala, Yemen, Japan and Uzbekistan. They are often characterised by an apparent blurriness, the result of ▶



OPPOSITE A traditional ikat is juxtaposed with a bold geometric print on either side on this buttoned slipper chair reworked by Kit Kemp Design Studio. THIS PAGE Thorp of London's Bupa wallpaper, inspired by Afghan chapans, provides a contemporary, colourful take on a classic ikat in this playful hallway scheme.



'I wouldn't use too many ikats in one space. Go for one amazing piece of upholstered furniture, or a few cushions, and let whatever you've chosen sing' Victoria Covell, interior designer

ABOVE In the London home of interior designer Carina Raymond, Pooky's Heraldic Print linen ikat lampshade adds the finishing touch to a vibrant palette.

ABOVE RIGHT A pouffe by Village London covered in Frida by Manuel Canovas acts as a dynamic addition to a period living room.

the difficulty in perfectly aligning the dyed yarns during the weaving process. The use of fine materials minimises this outcome, but the unique look is often prized by designers and collectors. Today, there are still traditional handwoven ikats produced in Uzbekistan and Turkey, alongside more affordable machine-made options. This distinctive pattern is also sometimes recreated in prints rather than weave.

Blurring boundaries

Historically, ikats held great cultural significance, often symbolising wealth, status and tradition within communities. They first appeared in Europe via Dutch traders in Southeast Asia, Spanish explorers in South America and travellers along the Silk Route, resulting in Western cultures embracing their appeal. "The power of ikat is that it is truly versatile," believes Laylah Holmes of rug company Holmes Bespoke. "Much as a stripe, this motif can easily work with a contrasting pattern such as a floral, but being less linear and

formulaic, it acts as a bridge between the geometric, graphic elements in a room and the whimsical."

The late interior decorator Robert Kime was a long-time champion of ikats, having first discovered them at Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, eventually commissioning his own. "I like using them on cushions, for lampshades and an array of upholstery," says his successor, Orlando Atty. "Because they are made in the traditional method, by hand, on the looms, what might initially be seen as a flaw is actually characterful. They always add a beautiful point of interest."

Ikats introduce a sophisticated colour burst. "They are particularly useful in adding pattern to a room without being too overbearing or overly figurative, which can sometimes be limiting," suggests Thompson Bell Interiors' Stephanie Thompson. "They deliver interest, beauty, a sense of craftsmanship and the exotic. Their inspiring colour combinations can often be the starting point to a scheme. We like to use them ▶

In this scheme featuring an 18th-century antique Italian half-tester bed, Green Chevron Ikat cushions by Robert Kime complement the restored and reworked original hangings.





ABOVE A pair of armchairs upholstered in Paxton Red/Gold from the Shalimar Collection by James Hare add colour and texture to a neutral scheme.

ABOVE RIGHT Mahala Textiles' Ikat Stripe in Gustavian Blue strikes an elegant note in this classic hallway.



either as accents, via lampshades and cushions, or as a showpiece through curtains or blinds."

Ikats are also prevalent in the Middle East and the Arab world. A distinction of the traditional Syrian and Lebanese versions is that they are much smaller in scale and often intertwined with stripes, with a subtle gold thread running through the pattern. "They continue to be reinvented in modern contexts," says Studio Raymond's Carina Raymond. "Printing them on fabrics like cotton or a cotton-linen mix creates a seamless blend of tradition and contemporary appeal. I enjoy being playful by combining them with other patterns such as stripes or florals."

These designs carry an indigenous feel that is familiar and yet speaks of travel and exploration. "Their stripe and zigzag nature is easy to relate to," believes The Mews Fabric & Furnishings' Annabel Haan. "Ikats add a touch of informality to a scheme or a simple break to a colour block. In addition, they introduce a welcome textural element."

Colour vision

There is no doubt that ikat, with its decorative detail, introduces drama, but it can also be surprisingly grounding. "Featured within a rug, it creates an anchoring feel that balances the other decorative elements within a room," says Holmes. "Opt for a

multi-coloured zigzag motif for a more show-stopping feel, or pare it back with a monochrome approach, such as a simple ikat rug border. This can be good to introduce beneath dining tables where it creates a natural frame and easy delineation. I like to combine ikat patterns with materials such as wood and rattan, plus plenty of plants and greenery."

Vintage ikats are often relatively narrow in terms of fabric and so lend themselves well to accent touches. "Originally, the women who wove these fabrics used their bodies to support the looms," says interior designer Emma Deterding. "This is why the fabric is often body-width. So we primarily use ikats to create cushions and lampshades, to play to that narrowness. Another creative way is to incorporate them as pelmets or as borders on curtains – they lend neutral window dressings an unexpected zing."

Prized for their ability to show the hand of their maker while injecting a contemporary note, ikats are also a recurring motif at Kit Kemp's Design Studio. "It's fantastic to be able to use these traditionally handcrafted pieces in new and exciting interpretations," says the designer, whose Ikat Weave design at Christopher Farr Cloth is inspired by modern Turkish flat weaves. "I've used the vibrant pink, orange and green colourway on sofas in our living room at home in the New Forest; the scale and joy they bring ▶

Trove by Studio Duggan's Bargello rug is a contemporary take on the classic vertical flame stitch of 17th-century Florence. Handwoven by Indian artisans using jute, it adds an ikat-inspired touch of colour to this living room.





OPPOSITE In this playful scheme by Kit Kemp Design Studio for the Covent Garden Hotel, Ikat Weave fabric by Kit Kemp for Christopher Farr makes for an unexpected contrast against a classic artwork and Kit Kemp's Mythical Land mural-style wallpaper.

RIGHT A selection of ikat prints by Robert Kime – each handwoven in Uzbekistan – add punches of bright and a relaxed feel to this country sitting room.

BELOW The Mews Furnishings x Gloria Gonzalez's Deia cushion, handmade in Mallorca, adds a rustic touch to this bedroom.



perfectly complement a rug adapted from a painting by late artist Breon O'Casey."

Ikats are easy to pair with other fabrics and furnishings, partly because multi-colourways seamlessly scheme with other decorative elements. "They work particularly well juxtaposed with bolder, more figurative designs, as they provide a more subdued pattern without being too sharp or compromising the balance of a room," advises Thompson.

The key is to give these prints room to breathe, so avoid too much of a pattern overload. "I wouldn't use too many ikats in one space," counsels interior designer Victoria Covell. "Go for one amazing piece of upholstered furniture, or a few cushions, and let whatever you've chosen sing."

Bear in mind that vintage ikat can add a whole new dimension, given the history of handwoven pieces. Saffron Hare, of James Hare – whose Paxton weave features ikat combined with a statement stripe – suggests using antique remnants as bed throws because they have weight, look smart and act as an extra layer in colder months. Olivine Designs' Taline Findlater believes that the timelessness of the print can happily sit alongside an inherited piece of furniture and not overpower the space. "A Roman blind in ikat, which is then framed by elegant curtains in a more neutral palette, would really pop and would be elegant rather than overpowering," she says. ▶





'Ikats are particularly useful in adding pattern to a room without being too overbearing or overly figurative'

Stephanie Thompson, Thompson Bell Interiors

Compare & contrast

Ikats work well in both contemporary and traditional settings because they are not associated with a particular era or fashion and therefore are not limited to one decorative style. Nonetheless, switching up the colourways and using them in unexpected settings are ways to keep this look current.

"I like to upholster the back of a chair or sofa with them for a subtle statement," says Raymond. "On a recent project, we also applied ikat-patterned wallpaper to a dressing room and then as window treatments for the library – both of which are now the clients' favourite rooms."

Unusual colour combinations within the weave, such as red and pink, pastel blues or greens and yellows offer a softer, more lived-in look. "I have an ikat footstool in our family bathroom," says Holmes. "I enjoy the wave effect of the pattern; it's a great foil to the more angular shapes of the room's harder surfaces and adds a touch of softness and fun – as well as being a practical seat for me during my children's bath time."

When it comes to inspiring options, many fabric houses have paid homage to this time-honoured pattern. "My two favourites are GP & Baker's Ikat Bokhara and Pierre Frey's Le Manach Galigai," says Otta Design's Alex Keith, who recommends using one of these to paper a cloakroom. "The former is soft and calm, the latter a bold statement. In their more muted colourways, they can work well in a traditional scheme, while more vivid hues have brought the pattern up-to-date."

Of course, in its most ancient form, ikat is an artwork in its own right. "It looks beautiful hung as a tapestry, or mounted within an open tray frame, painted in a bold colour to really set the textile off," says Victoria Covell. "I also love to use ikat as inserts inside wardrobe panelling, or as gathered curtains behind glazed wardrobe doors. Ultimately, this fabric has been treasured for millennia, transcending time, geography and different cultures. How many other fabrics have been so unanimously adored in quite the same way?" An ancient textile, ikat has endured for generations and today continues to be interpreted in joyful new ways.



ABOVE Otta Design introduced Echo Raffia in Moss by Christopher Farr Cloth to add invigorating appeal to this home office. The blurred silhouette of the repeat pays homage to traditional ikat designs.

LEFT In this elegant girl's bedroom scheme by Thompson Bell Interiors, a blind in Christopher Farr Cloth's La Jungle contrasts with a chair back in Boheme Rose/Orange by Manuel Canovas for a playful take on ikat's traditional appeal.



IRRESISTIBLE IKATS

From crisp modern prints to those with a softened style, ikat patterns in colourful finishes lift interiors with exotic notions underpinned by a classic heritage print

1 Ikat Check fabric in Blue, Rose, Green and Aqua, £132 a metre, Blithfield **2** Cuzcita outdoor cushion, Ocean, £75, William Yeoward by Designers Guild **3** Ernest rechargeable table lamp with 16cm empire shade in St Clements Egg & Spoon Ikat, £122, Pooky **4** Ikat Fair Dusty Blue Green handwoven tea towel, £16, Considered Store **5** Flavia Ikat ice bucket, £164.97, Decoralist **6** Baroda Pataudi fabric, £143, Nina Campbell for Osborne & Little **7** Ikat Stripe Pale Green fabric, £125, Eloise Home **8** Hemp Collection Wavy Print fabric, Misty Grey, £162 a metre, Fameed Khaliq **9** Volcano Lagoon fabric, £86, Andrew Martin **10** Hudson stool covered in Mediterraneo Ikat linen, £740, Mind The Gap **11** Betty sideboard in Ikat Red, also available in Ikat Blue, £POA, Matthew Williamson Design **12** Mrs Godfrey chair in Marrakesh Sea Ikat linen with wenge legs, £2,300, Jonathan Adler **13** Ikat oval picnic platter, £14, Marks & Spencer **14** Ikat embroidered blue cushion, £60, French Bedroom **15** Fuse rug, from £2,344, The Rug Company **16** Fibre glass tray FGRS31, around £37, Les Ottomans ■

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BOLD BATHROOMS

A confident use of colour, pattern and texture can result in a bathroom that expresses unique character while still being a delightful place in which to refresh and relax

*Walls in Mockingbird,
bath in Kasbah,
ceiling in Lead II,
all £67 for 2.5l
Architects' Matt,
Paint & Paper Library*



The bathroom has often been a place in which to play it safe, employing subtle colours and minimal patterns in order to create a room that is neutral and understated. Recently, however, there has been an obvious shift away from such schemes – which can sometimes come with the disadvantage of feeling rather cool and clinical – towards a bolder look, in which colour is layered upon colour, often incorporating large-scale patterns and intriguing textures, too. As Nigel Palmer from House of Rohl, says: “The rigid formality of bathroom planning, dominated by minimalist products precisely matched, has been replaced by a more relaxed approach to design. The new wave is more personal, more eclectic and more expressive.”

A BOLD PALETTE

What bold colours can work in a bathroom without being overly trend-led and liable to date? James Sirett, director of product at Fired Earth, says customers are increasingly choosing terracotta, which he believes has longevity thanks to its natural origins. Tiffany Duggan, of Studio Duggan, feels that earthy greens work well. And Keely Fifield, designer at Ripples Truro, advises taking colour inspiration from an artwork rather than what is in fashion, adding: “I think, with clever lighting, any colour palette can work in any room. Green, blue and pink are all popular bathroom colours right now, and by pairing these with more neutral tones, a bathroom won’t date easily.”

For balance and harmony, Fifield recommends placing one strong colour, or variants of one colour, in different areas around the room rather than in just one place. “it’s an elegant way of introducing bold colours without it feeling overwhelming,” she points out. Along similar lines, Duggan is currently working on a bathroom with plaster-coloured walls and deep red marble for the vanity and shower tray. “It’s a really nice combination of quite bold accents, but the room will still feel very calm.”

White sanitaryware is still by far the most conventional option, and in a bold scheme it can easily be teamed with coloured and patterned walls, floors and furniture to make an impact. On the other hand, many companies offer the opportunity to custom-paint the exterior of a free-standing bath – with the possibility of matching it to the floor, wallpaper, tiles or even window treatment. As for coloured sanitaryware, the consensus is that it can definitely have a place. “If you’re the sort of person who adores colour and that’s never going to change, then great,” ▶



ABOVE These ornate tiles are inspired by Moorish architecture and grounded by a classic blue and white colourway for a timeless-yet-also-bold scheme.

Nina Campbell Ronda Blue tiles, £84,90 a square metre, Fired Earth

LEFT This bathroom designed by Ripples features a bold checkerboard floor and a painted freestanding bath. *From £11,900 plus installation, Ripples*



Loki Pink Gloss ceramic tiles, from £65.76 a square metre, Mandarin Stone; Le Thermo exposed thermostatic shower in polished brass, from £2,880, Catchpole & Rye



HOW TO USE WALLPAPER IN THE BATHROOM

Kathryn Chadwick, from Sanderson Design Group provides useful pointers.

- By choosing the right type of wallpaper, properly preparing the walls, and taking measures to protect it against steam and moisture, it is possible to achieve beautiful and long-lasting results in a bathroom.
- The biggest challenge to overcome is the effect any steam or water will have on both the adhesion and the surface of the paper. Moisture-resistant and vinyl-coated papers are better equipped to withstand humidity and moisture, helping to prevent peeling and mould growth. In bathrooms where steam is not a factor, non-vinyl wallpapers can be used.
- It is crucial to adequately prepare the walls by ensuring they are clean, dry, and free from any existing wallpaper or paint residue. Properly priming the walls can also help improve adhesion and prevent moisture from seeping through. Once the wallpaper has been hung, consider applying a waterproof sealant to provide an additional layer of protection.
- As there are so many wallpaper qualities available, it is important to test a small sample piece in situ before hanging. Avoid harsh chemicals or abrasive cleaners, as these can damage the wallpaper's surface. Additionally, should any signs of peeling occur over time, these should be promptly addressed to prevent further deterioration.



says Duggan, “but it’s not for everyone.” While Fifield adds: “Coloured basins are hugely popular amongst our clientele, especially concrete basins. They’re a great way to add that pop of fun.”

For a less permanent option compared to coloured sanitaryware, painted cabinetry finished in a striking colour could potentially be repainted as necessary. As Josie Medved, design manager at Symphony, points out, “Incorporating dark hues in the cabinetry can create a sumptuous look, and pairs beautifully with traditional-style patterned tiles and glass wall lights for ambience when relaxing in the bath.” ▶

OPPOSITE Poppy Trail Masquerade wallpaper, £117 a roll, National Trust III Papers, Little Greene
ABOVE Palette wallpaper, £229 a panel (156cm x 300cm), Minnie Kemp x MindTheGap

RIGHT Truffle wallpaper in Flax, £75 a roll; panelling, Botanical Green paint, from £39 for 1l Water Based Eggshell; Kirklington Strie braid trim in Thyme, £15 a metre, all Sanderson x Salvesen Graham Edit



Labyrinth
fluted back-
to-wall bath,
£2,300, Scudo
Bathrooms



TILES AND TEXTURE

Including a variety of textures in any bathroom helps prevent it from feeling cold and sterile, and in a bold scheme it plays alongside colour to create additional interest and drama. “For floors, there are a wide range of textured tiles, both small and large format, which work wonderfully in wet rooms,” says Fifield. “Texture can range from the natural pitted styles, such as terracotta and limestone, to subtly textured porcelain. You can also choose from a variety of wood-effect tiles, which appear heavily textured but are actually relatively smooth underfoot.” Duggan adds that choosing a striking floor surface, whether marble or tile, combined with a subtler finish on the walls, is a good way to add bold interest without being too emphatic. “You don’t read that plane as much as you do the walls,” she explains.

As for walls, adding texture is less of a practical requirement but still makes an aesthetic contribution. Duggan often uses béton ciré, a kind of polished concrete which has a matt, chalky and waterproof surface. She also loves hand-made zellige tiles, which are irregular and highly light-reflective. “It’s really nice to pair the rough with the smooth and mix things up a bit. We often pair a glossy zellige tile, or a hand-made, crackle-glaze tile, with a concrete and cement tile or something a bit tougher, to make the most of those different textures. If we use marble, we like to use a honed or leathered finish.”

Fifield is also a fan of zellige tiles and adds that fluted wall tiles are beautifully textural, too. She points out that texture can also be extended to sanitaryware, furniture and even glass. “For something a little bit different, slatted wall panelling is a great way to introduce texture and depth to bathroom walls,” she adds. “It’s fully waterproof, so it’s practical, too. We’re also seeing clients experimenting with waterproof wallpaper as a way of bringing colour and pattern into the bathroom without the cost and effort of installing tiles.” ▶

SIX OF THE BEST COLOURED BATHS



1

1 Ellipse Bath in Lake Red, £2,695,
Waters Baths of Ashbourne



2

2 Painted copper bath, £5,580,
BC Designs.



3

3 Painted Pescadero bath, from £3,663.72,
Victoria & Albert Baths



TOP LEFT Tropical Oasis mural, £595 for a panel of eight tiles, Original Style
LEFT Jungle porcelain tiles, £95.98 a square

metre, Clarissa Hulse collaboration with Ca'Pietra
ABOVE Stix ceramic tiles, from £82.56 a square

metre; Gemstone green onyx-effect porcelain tiles, from £86.40 a square metre, Mandarin Stone

Choose a bold freestanding bath to create a striking focal point



4

4 Oxidised copper bath, from £2,630, Indigenous



5

5 Solus roll-top bath, from £1,844, Albion



6

6 Muse Bolivian blue marble sodalite bath, £35,997, Lusso

BUYER'S GUIDE



ABOVE Peabody heated towel rail including a cast-iron radiator, £2,773, Rutland London
ABOVE RIGHT Sheraton IP44-rated Art Deco

pillar wall lights, £354.55 each, Soho Lighting
BELOW LEFT TH 1233 Ten Ten basin mixer with handwheels, £1035.60, Lefroy Brooks

BELOW RIGHT Harwood cloakroom basin, £495; Fontley three-hole basin wall mixer, £675; medium brackets, £245, all Thomas Crapper



HARDWARE

Taps, wastes, shower fittings and towel rails can have huge impact in a bathroom, and there are many options other than popular chrome. Fired Earth's best-selling towel rail, for example, is in matt black, and Ripples is seeing a demand for brushed gold. While some experts prefer all the metal finishes to match, others have observed a trend towards a variety within the room - which complements the idea of making a decorative impression. "Mixing metals can create a unique and individual look," says Lizzi Catchpole of Catchpole & Rye. "I would recommend that tones are kept close, such as an aged brass and aged copper, or to mix finishes within the same metal, such as a brushed silver nickel with a black nickel finish." Sirett advises that, when buying brassware in the same finish but from different suppliers, check that they look the same and are not slightly different.

"Hardware finishes such as brass and copper come in a variety of depths and shades, which will give your bathroom highlights and points of bright punctuation or subtle, warm depth," says Catchpole. "Polished brass has a wonderful bright, lively appearance, which will keep your scheme vibrant, whereas the deeper tones of aged brass create a more subtle, moody finish. Cooler tones such as polished silver nickel and brushed nickel can be used in contemporary and traditional ways."

Finally, she adds that some finishes are more stable than others. "Polished brass, unless lacquered, will gradually lose its very bright appearance and gain its own unique patina over time and use, while silver nickel will retain its beautiful, subtle tone throughout its life." ■



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MINI SUMMER BERRY TARTS

If seeking a sweet treat for a summer gathering, this mini tart recipe is easy to make and creates 12 fruity canapés, light puddings or dainty afternoon tea servings.

For 12 tarts

INGREDIENTS

600g ready-made shortcrust pastry
200g ricotta cheese
200g Greek yoghurt
4 tbsp agave syrup
1 tsp agar agar powder
350g mixed berries
Lemon verbena to decorate

METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 180°C, gas 4. Grease 12 individual brioche moulds.
- Divide the pastry into 12 and roll each one out thinly. Use to line the moulds. Trim edges if needed.
- Line each pastry case with baking paper, top with baking beans and bake for 12 minutes. Remove the beans and paper. Bake for a further eight minutes. Leave to cool, then turn out.
- Mix the ricotta, yoghurt and agave syrup.
- Place two tablespoons in a pan with two tablespoons of water and the agar agar and bring to the boil. Stir into the rest of the ricotta mix then stir in the berries, reserving a few for decoration.
- Spoon into the pastry cases and chill for one hour.
- Decorate with verbena and berries before serving.





Patterned white tableware, from £26 for a cake plate; Floral & Leaf napkins, £24 for a set of four; Striped linen tablecloth, from £115; Olive Green glasses, £12.90 each; Handmade candleholders, £22 each; Dining candles, £30 for a set of four; Scalloped vase, £36; Fluted Urn vase, £32; Striped seat cushions, £36 each; Gift wrap, from £4 a sheet, all Sorbet Living

What to do in JULY

This is a joyful month for making the most of the midsummer magic by throwing a party, gathering flowers, relaxing outdoors and savouring the sweet scents of summer

GATHER TOGETHER *and celebrate*

Whether it is a birthday, a special anniversary, or just an excuse to raise a glass to the lovely long, lazy days of midsummer, there is no better way to mark the occasion than with a banquet-style table dressed to perfection in summer's prettiest shades. Treat guests to a truly magical occasion that will be remembered for years to come by transforming a summerhouse, barn or outbuilding into an impromptu but idyllic rustic venue. Make it all the more special with smart stripes and cheery mix of colours that complement the landscape and garden outside. Make chairs extra comfy with cushions and dress the table with displays of freshly cut flowers in tiny vases interspersed with fragrant summer herbs in terracotta pots. Linger into the evening with lanterns, candles, and perhaps a string or two of fairy lights. ▶





HONEY LAVENDER ICE CREAM WITH FRESH PEACHES

SERVES 8–10

INGREDIENTS

400ml double cream
400ml whole milk
60g sugar
1 teaspoon salt
120g egg yolks (about 6 eggs)
70g honey, or more according to taste
2 teaspoons fresh culinary lavender buds

TO SERVE

1 quantity Peaches in Syrup (below)

METHOD

- Pour the double cream, milk, sugar and salt into a heavy, non-reactive saucepan and place over a medium heat. Take two large bowls and add iced water to the largest bowl, nestling the other bowl inside. Sit a fine-mesh sieve over the top bowl and set it aside somewhere nearby.
- Whisk the yolks in a separate bowl, then wrap a towel around the base to stabilize it. Once the milk mixture begins to simmer, gradually add the hot milk to the yolks, whisking constantly as you pour. (If your saucepan is too heavy to hold with one hand, then use a ladle or small cup.) Return the mixture to the pan and reduce to a medium-low heat. Gently cook, stirring constantly until the mixture is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Remove the saucepan from the heat and strain the mixture through the fine-mesh sieve into the cold bowl over the ice. Add the honey and lavender and continue to cool the mixture fully.
- Once the ice cream base is properly chilled pour into a container and store in the refrigerator.
- The following day, strain the base through a sieve to remove the lavender. Taste and adjust to your liking. Churn in an ice-cream maker following the manufacturer's instructions, then place into the freezer until you are ready to serve. Serve with slices of Peaches in Syrup.

PEACHES IN SYRUP

400ml water
300g caster sugar
juice of ¼ lemon
3 juicy, ripe peaches, yielding at the base

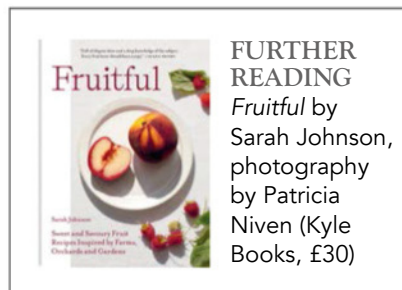
- Combine the water and sugar in a small saucepan and warm to dissolve the sugar, remove from the heat and cool completely, then stir in the lemon juice. (This can be made in advance and stored in the refrigerator for up to a week.)
- Blanch the peaches then peel, stone and slice into wedges about 2cm thick and slip them into the syrup.

MAKE *ice cream*

Ice cream and a hot summer's day are a perfect marriage. A home-made ice cream offers the opportunity to experiment with flavour combinations, so celebrate the tastes of summer with this delicious combination of lavender and honey. Served with ripe peaches, it will evoke the spirit of Mediterranean holidays.


The flavour of lavender has fallen out of fashion over the last few years, which is a shame because when used in moderation, good-quality lavender can be complex and seductive. The mix of floral, herbaceous and earthy aromas give it an alluring charm.

The freshest lavender can be found at farmers' markets, or if choosing to grow some at home, seek out a variety suitable for culinary use, such as *Lavandula angustifolia*.



PICK *some flowers*

There is nothing nicer than whiling away an hour or two pottering in the garden particularly at the end of the day. As the sun cools take time to water any thirsty plants, do the deadheading and tidy up the borders. Of course, do not forget the pleasure of picking some favourite flowers that are at their best to enjoy inside. So, head out with a basket and secateurs in hand and select a few for a spot of flower arranging. Long stemmed varieties such as delphiniums, roses and even gladioli are ideal for adding visual impact with just two or three single flowers, particularly when displayed in beautiful eye-catching vases such as the sought after traditional Spanish ceramic ones. These lovely artisan-made vessels are much admired for their charming hand painted designs that are always gloriously vibrant in colour. Left empty or filled with a floral spectacle from the garden, they will be a welcome addition to the English home, bringing a lovely Mediterranean holiday vibe to any room. ▶



'Too Hot to Handle' ceramic vase, £118, from a selection, Vaisselle Boutique



INTRODUCE *a new floral note*

It is hard to imagine summer ever coming to an end, particularly when the air is filled with the fragrance of the flowers, shrubs and trees. To maintain the joy of summer, take the time now to source a new seasonal scent and introduce it into the home.

A bath oil or body lotion in the bathroom infused with intoxicating fragrances such as geranium, jasmine, mint or the citrusy notes of orange, lemon or mandarin, or perhaps the powerful, sweet scent of rose or lavender, will evoke memories of summer when used in the colder, darker months of the year. And

if used on holiday, when back home, will prolong that wonderful, relaxed summer feeling. Consider, too, eco-friendly, toxin-free wax melts made from 100 per cent plant-based and vegan-friendly rapeseed and coconut oil wax. These can be popped onto a burner with a tealight to release the fragrance as it melts, and provide a healthy way of enjoying the scent throughout the year. ■

Luxury fragranced wax melts infused with dried botanicals, £4.95 for a pack of six, Yinky Tree

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The inviting outdoor pool has some of the best views in Fowey, overlooking the estuary and out across the sea to the horizon



TOP Enjoy a cocktail on the terrace while little ones are taken care of at the on-site childcare. **MIDDLE** A family suite which features a spacious main bedroom and living area and a separate room with bunk beds. **ABOVE** A short walk from Fowey Hall, Readymoney Beach is a charming cove, with a small shop and sandy beach.

The family holiday

With a commanding position above the charming Cornish town of Fowey (rhymes with joy), Fowey Hall gazes out across the estuary to the sea. Fittingly for the property which inspired Toad Hall in beloved children's classic, *The Wind in the Willows*, the grand house is now part of Luxury Family Hotels. Effortlessly combining all the luxurious touches adults will desire from a hotel with thoughtful and considered facilities that cater for children of all ages, Fowey Hall provides a restful, fun and indulgent holiday for all generations. Those travelling with babies will enjoy packing light since highchairs,



The perfect break

Whether holidaying as a family, taking the dog, gathering with friends, or indulging in a romantic getaway, we have found the ultimate retreats for a summer escape in England

cots, and even a pushchair can be provided, along with baby monitors and a milk butler service bringing sterilised bottles.

Built in 1889 as a family home, the property has had a new extension which sympathetically blends into the splendid original facade – most notable for its rounded turrets. Rooms in the original building combine heritage with modern luxury, while newer rooms have a chic finish, and several suites feature a separate room with bunk beds for little ones.

A heated outdoor pool and terrace that looks out to sea and could easily be mistaken for being on the Amalfi coast on a glorious summer day, is a highlight –

though an indoor pool and spa can be enjoyed on cooler days, too.

The relaxed ethos allows children to wander around freely – perhaps visiting the well-equipped games room. There is a refined dining space for adults and older children, while a family dining room serves the same delicious menu with a more relaxed attitude. Afternoon teas are also a treat and include a specially designed children's menu.

Other benefits that will be appreciated by families include 90 minutes of childcare at the OFSTED-registered Four Bears Den for each night's stay, feeding the resident bunnies, marshmallow toasting, bedtime

stories with milk and cookies, a cinema showing two films each night, a library with books for all ages that can be borrowed for the stay and, of course, the hotel enjoys close proximity to Fowey itself. A short walk downhill takes guests to Readymoney Beach, a delightful cove perfect for sandcastle building and enjoying an ice-cream. Stroll down the Esplanade into town, which is full of shops, pubs, galleries and bakeries to explore, and the riverside location provides ample opportunity for 'messing around in boats'.

For more information and to book visit luxuryfamilyhotels.co.uk ▶



The Riviera-inspired South Terrace has a 25-metre swimming pool, comfortable sunbeds and a well-appointed bar.

A romantic retreat

For an indulgent escape as a couple, the setting needs to be beautiful, luxurious and romantic. These boxes are all ticked at Estelle Manor, a Grade II listed manor house in the Oxfordshire countryside, bordering all the delights of the Cotswolds. A countryside companion to private members' club Maison Estelle in London, the manor is available to all, but does offer benefits to members such as exclusive access to certain areas of the hotel.

While families are welcome, it is truly a place where adults can indulge in a decadent weekend. For those celebrating an anniversary or other romantic occasion, the Estelle Suite with a private balcony offers a special experience, with an enormous emperor-size bed, generous bath tub and an impressive view across the Riviera-inspired terrace. Bouquets of flowers hand-picked from the estate can be requested, or perhaps woo a loved one with their favourite cocktail waiting in the room upon arrival.

Couples can relax in the adults-only spa, which is inspired by classic Roman baths, with neo-classical architecture referencing a local Roman villa close to the manor. The Ceremony Suite provides a tranquil location for a couple's 'Ceremony for the Soul' treatment, including a choice of four bath soaks in a marble-clad tub, exfoliation on the stone bed, mineral-rich mud application in the private Rasul room and a facial or massage of choice. A butler is also on-hand for drinks and any other needs during the treatment.

The extensive grounds and ornate gardens provide the perfect setting for sunset strolls hand in hand, and there is a choice of four restaurants for a romantic meal. For days out nearby, Blenheim Palace is not far away, or take a romantic punt along the river in Oxford.

For more information and to book visit estellemanor.com ▶



TOP Estelle Manor has been beautifully furnished with a combination of modern pieces and curated antiques. **MIDDLE** The Roman baths-inspired spa is for over 18s only and ideal for some pampering and relaxation. **ABOVE** The Estelle Suite is generously proportioned and features a private balcony on which to sit and enjoy a morning coffee or sundowner cocktail.



Dog-lovers paradise

Often, finding a holiday house that accepts dogs can mean compromising on the quality of the lodgings. This is not the case at Rockton Mews in North Devon. The high standard expected of all Boutique Retreat properties is evident in the aesthetic and finish of the interiors, which are high-end yet rustic and relaxed, making it a luxurious haven for guests. Practical consideration has been given to the interior design when it comes to four-legged friends, too – tiled and wooden floors alleviate any muddy-paws-on-cream-carpet anxiety, and a generous boot room, complete with a dog-friendly sofa, is a welcome sight upon returning from a walk.

The breathtaking location, in a secluded setting within Exmoor National Park, is perfect for long coastal walks. The house is actually sited on the South West Coast Path, in the Valley of Rocks section, often noted as one of the most picturesque and interesting stretches, so daily walks with dogs are easy. A number of other well-known walks, including the Tarka Trail and Coleridge Way, are nearby and the

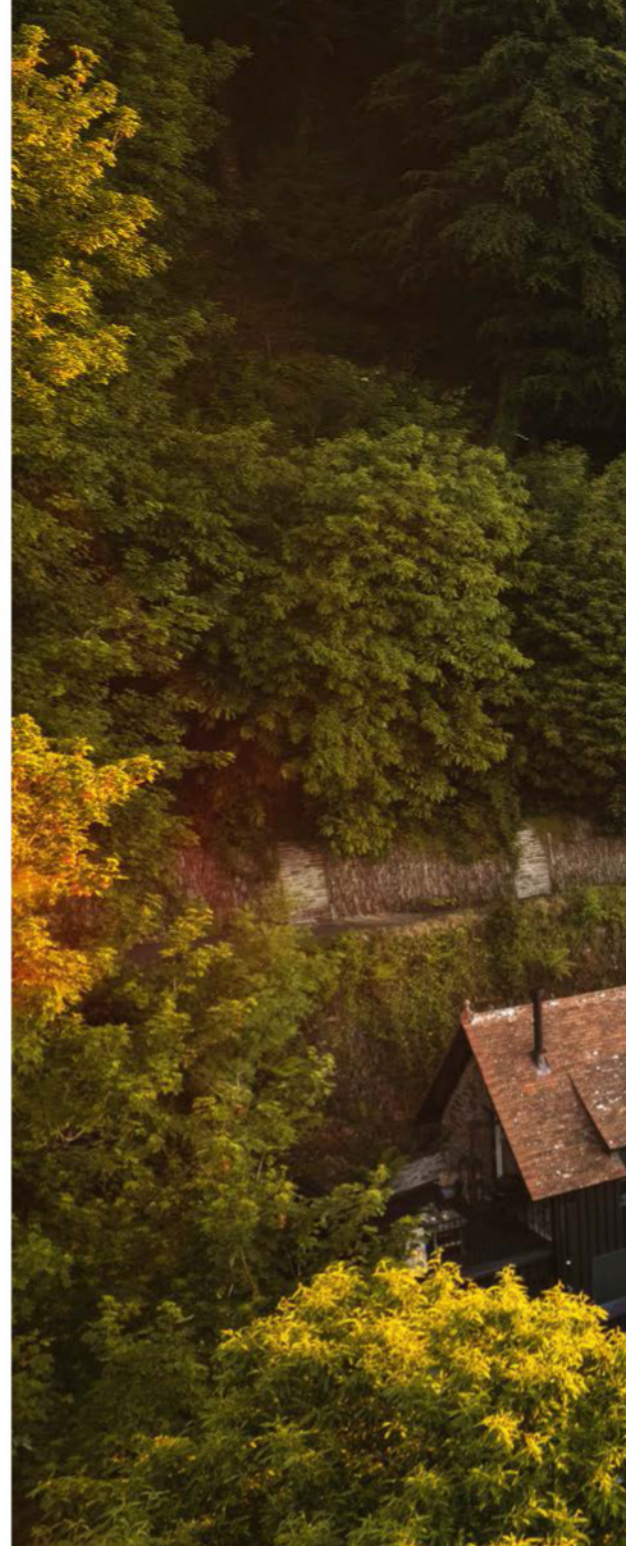
property is within easy reach of several beaches that allow dogs year-round.

The homeowner welcomes all guests with a hamper of goodies – including one for dogs, filled with organic chews and a toy sourced at nearby shop Lyn Valley Dog House, a must-visit for a doggy souvenir.

The nearby village of Lynton is also dog-orientated with dog-friendly pubs and restaurants, and even a cinema where dogs can curl up with owners to watch the latest blockbuster. A trip to the supermarket can also be taken with dogs in tow – they might even be given a biscuit treat at the till.

Returning to Rockton Mews, if weather allows, supper can be enjoyed on the balcony set among the treetops and with a spectacular view out to sea, before turning in for the night and dreaming of venturing out on a new walk in the Devonshire countryside in the morning.

Rockton Mews is available via Boutique Retreats. See @rocktonmews on Instagram or visit boutiqueretreats.co.uk for more information ▶



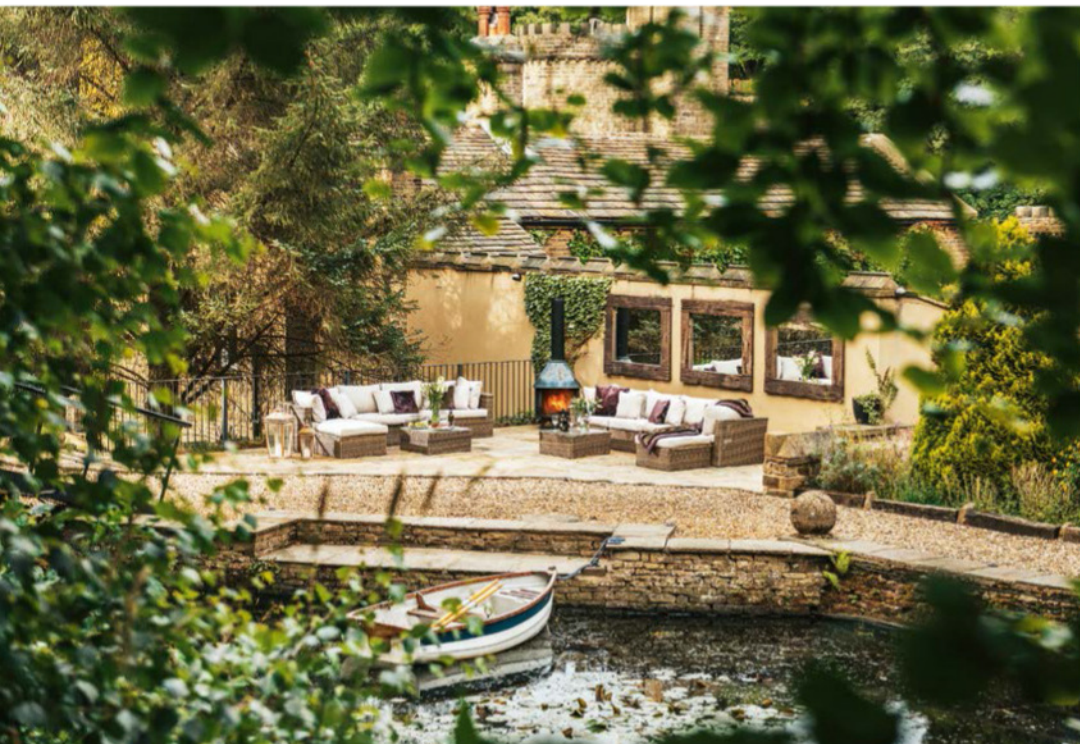
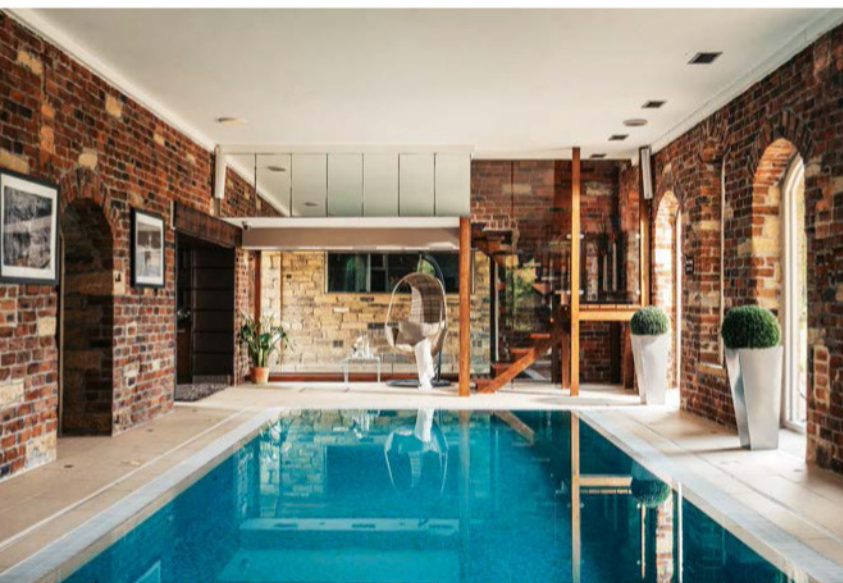


ABOVE Rockton Mews's magnificent setting overlooking the sea.

LEFT TO RIGHT The balcony off the living area is the perfect spot for watching the sunset. The dog-friendly boot room.

A recent guest enjoying the view.

OPPOSITE The property is tastefully decorated, with comfort a priority.



ABOVE The impressive sight of the turreted castle will amaze guests upon arrival.

LEFT The indoor swimming pool is just one of the enticing facilities at Castle Trinity.

BELOW The grounds include a boating lake as well as plenty of outdoor seating for large gatherings.

The big get-together

Whether celebrating a significant birthday or anniversary, organising a reunion of friends living across the country, or bringing the whole family together, a large house is ideal for a summer gathering. Or, for the ultimate large-scale celebration, a castle might be more apt.

Built as a folly in the style of a Norman castle in 1860, Grade II listed Castle Trinity in West Yorkshire is reached up a long private drive through a deer park, and the first glimpse of its turrets will certainly impress guests as they arrive.

Sleeping up to 10, the glamorous interiors have plenty to keep everyone occupied, from an indoor heated swimming pool, gym and yoga studio – perfect for those wanting to keep up with exercise – to a grand piano for music maestros to strike up a tune and a games room offering hours of fun. In addition, there are 12 acres of grounds to explore, including boating on the lake, after which guests can relax by enjoying a glass of something chilled while relaxing in the hot tub. For those wanting to strike out further afield, Castle Trinity is close to the Peak District, where walks and adventures abound. Others may simply wish to indulge in the gastronomic delights on offer at a traditional Yorkshire tearoom in one of the nearby villages.

If a party is on the agenda, as with all Unique Home Stay properties, private catering can be arranged to make the event go smoothly. Everything from a barbecue to a showstopping dinner party, as well as extras such as in-house massages or archery sessions, can be organised by the housekeeper in advance. For a truly memorable break for a special occasion, Castle Trinity will impress – arrival by helicopter can even be arranged for a glamorous entrance.

Castle Trinity is available through Unique Home Stays uniquehomestays.co.uk
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Exclusive to The Telegraph

Four days from £1,299pp*

Discover Agatha Christie's Torquay with Dr Lucy Worsley



Departs November 1, 2024 and March 17, 2025

Torquay is a destination that brings to mind images of seaside promenades, palm trees, beautiful beaches and grand Italianate villas on the hills overlooking Tor Bay.

The hometown of Agatha Christie, it provided inspiration for some of her best-loved mysteries. This tour will immerse you in the life and times of the Queen of Crime.

You'll be joined by historian and writer Dr Lucy Worsley – author of *Agatha Christie: A Very Elusive Woman* – at Burgh Island Hotel, which inspired the settings for *And Then There Were None* and the Poirot mystery *Evil Under the Sun*. Here you'll have lunch, plus Lucy will give a talk and Q&A.

What's included

- ◆ Lunch at Burgh Island Hotel with a talk and Q&A from Dr Lucy Worsley
- ◆ Three nights' accommodation at the Imperial Hotel in Torquay
- ◆ Lunch at the Moorland Hotel
- ◆ Murder on the Riviera murder-mystery dinner
- ◆ Visits to several locations with links to Agatha Christie

About the expert

Dr Lucy Worsley is chief curator at Historic Royal Palaces and the author of several books. She has presented TV shows for Channel 4 and the History Channel.

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THIS IMAGE Simple but mesmerising, a framed curtain of water adds reflective calm to a garden wall. *Stainless steel water wall, from £22,106, David Harber*

ABOVE RIGHT Stainless steel, acrylic and water combine in this self-contained water feature to form a magical centrepiece. *Aqualens, £POA, Allison Armour*



Liquid ASSETS

Captivating water features that use clever design to minimise the impact on the planet's resources

Responsible use of precious natural resources within the home is a high priority for many of us today, and these concerns are extending into the garden. Water features have long fascinated homeowners and visitors alike with their aesthetic and sensory charms. Designers and brands have responded to demand by conscious consumers and devised more energy- and water-efficient options with no-less dazzling designs. "There is magic and joy in water features, and if we can minimise the power requirement by clever design and minimal water flow, a well-designed water feature will be an enchanting and evocative focal point," says renowned sculptor David Harber.

Mindful design

Mesmerising shallow rills, water walls and spheres use a fraction of the water and power needed for formerly ▶



‘Running water a few millimetres over a surface can create both optical illusions and a large expanse of shimmering water while only using a modest amount of water’ David Harber, sculptor

TOP Movement and drama entertain with this rotating water sphere. Finishes include copper and mirror polish. *Nebula*, from £10,800, Giles Rayner
ABOVE Water glistens when flowing over this meticulously handcrafted Cornish slate sphere. *Rustic Watersphere*, from £9,000, Jeremy Hastings

popular deep pools, waterfalls and cascades. “Running water a few millimetres thick over a surface such as a Water Wall or a Chalice can create both optical illusions and a large expanse of shimmering water while only using a modest amount of water per minute,” continues Harber.
 As well as keeping the water clean being a key concern, not just for managing health risks but to maintain the smooth running of the water pump and thereby helping to conserve energy usage, there are other environmental factors to consider. “Filtration is an additional consideration in terms of maintaining a water feature in the most environmentally friendly way,” says Harber. “Luckily, gone are the days of heavy

chlorination – we are now able to use small UV filters which maintain water quality.”
Balanced approach
 Balancing the power and volume of water needed for a water feature to perform can be a delicate matter. Consistency is required if the intended effect is to be enjoyed all day and, crucially, to avoid damaging the pump itself.
 While the volume of water and flow rate depends directly on the size and power of the pump, there are some energy-saving specifications to look out for. “Low-wattage pumps are miserly on electricity and the flow can be adjusted to give variable effects while



THIS IMAGE Create a magical focal point with a vintage-style water tank. *George & Dragon water tank and backplate, from £773, The Worm That Turned* BELOW Shallow pools and rills use less water but still add contemplative qualities, as shown in this design by Nicola Wakefield.

saving energy,” says Foras content and design creator Jenny Lilley-Harris.

Solar-powered pumps are widely available but are currently more associated with smaller water features. “All the pumps we use are powered by mains electric as the solar power ones aren’t really sufficient enough for purpose yet,” explains sculptor Jeremy Hastings. Harber adds, “While there are low-voltage and even solar-powered pumps, generally speaking a low-consumption mains power pump is the most practical.” Artist Allison Armour, who designs sculptures and water features, says, “They make solar-powered pumps, but if you need it to always work, electricity is best.”

Setting timers is a clever way to conserve energy. “All the pumps for our water features come with a 10-metre cable which is then plugged into the mains,” says Nicola Clements of Haddonstone. “Timers can be ▶



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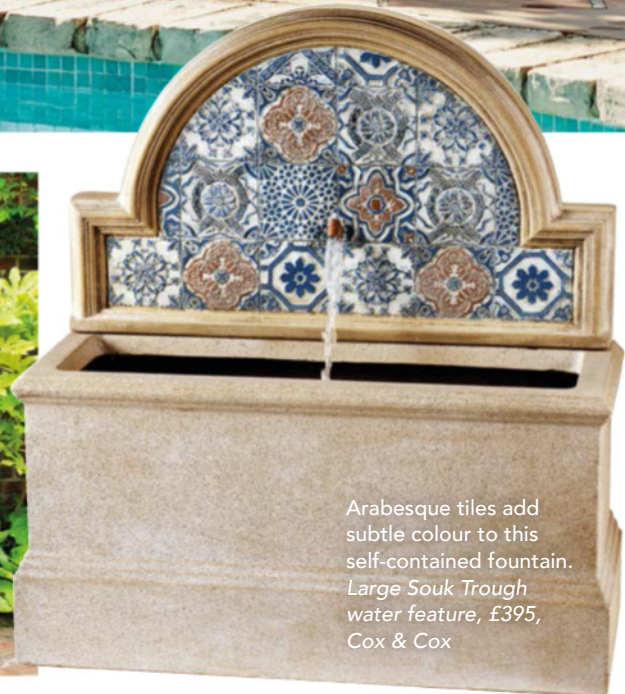


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SENSORY APPEAL

The sound produced by a water feature needs careful management. If the flow is too forceful, the roar can prove overwhelming; too gentle, and the quiet babble can be overpowered by neighbouring sounds. There are a few points to consider to strike the right balance:

- Sound is created by vibrations in the air, and it is the intensity of this movement that determines the volume. There are several factors that determine the level of sound created by a water feature, these include the flow rate, the size and shape of the design and the materials used. Varying these key elements can help manage noise levels, ensuring the perfect result for a garden.
- The greater the height the water falls from, the louder the sound created, but there are several ways to reduce this noise, including the angle of impact. Placing stones or gravel below falling water can disperse the sound, while aquatic plants – such as water lilies, water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and rushes – will absorb soundwaves.
- Different materials impact sound levels. Stone and rock water features are quieter than metal designs due to how effectively they absorb the sound vibrations.



Arabesque tiles add subtle colour to this self-contained fountain. Large Souk Trough water feature, £395, Cox & Cox

TOP RIGHT Add a touch of grandeur with a self-circulating fountain. *Outdoor Luxury Lion water feature, £599.99, Crocus*

ABOVE Hand-cast and finished in Cambridgeshire, this self-circulating lead cistern features five water spouts. *F18 multispout cistern, £POA, Bulbeck Foundry*

used to limit and set the times that the fountain is operational, this will determine the amount of energy that is used. The pumps also come with a dial on the side of them that can be altered to determine the strength of the water flow (litres per hour)."

Recycling water and reducing water loss through splash and evaporation are also vital. Most contemporary water features are self-circulating, with a sump to collect and store the water. "Our water features are all self-contained, so they simply recirculate the water round and again," says Hastings. "This is something that we take into consideration, the sump reservoir size below the sphere has to be larger than the sphere and sufficient enough to collect the splash water to retain the water levels. As with any body of water, you will get some water loss through

evaporation, but the benefit of using a natural resource such as slate is that it remains cool, so therefore evaporation is less compared to metal features."

Plum placement

Thoughtful water feature positioning plays a vital role in its success in terms of the sensory pleasure it gives its owners, its practical efficiency and environmental considerations. Placing any water feature under trees is best avoided as it can lead to clogging, clarity issues and constant clear outs. "A lot of contamination, mainly in ponds and open water comes from nutrients that run off from flower beds, and this change in nutrients can often lead to algae build up and is harder to manage," says Hastings. "We recommend raised steel pools to prevent any runoff water and ▶

GARDENING

A bespoke basalt water feature sits amongst hostas and hydrangeas in this design by Acres Wild.



LEFT Sitting low and wide, this substantial cast-stone fountain makes an elegant statement.

Romanesque fountain, £499, Haddonstone

BELOW Tall yet delicate, watch water flow continuously down shaped metal leaves.

Large Metal Lily Pad water feature, £299.99, Gardenesque



ABOVE This freestanding whirlpool feature is made from copper and has a theatrical glow.

Fibonacci, from £10,800, Giles Rayner

ABOVE LEFT More robust than glass, this high-grade acrylic water bowl is lit with a tiny LED light.

Oceanic Jade 90 water feature, £3,495, Foras

therefore nutrients going into the water feature water. When our water features are at ground level, this isn't so much of a problem as the water in the sump reservoir is covered by a lid."

The size, shape of the design and materials must be sensitively chosen to relate to the immediate surroundings, and there are practical considerations too. "The Foras range of portable reservoir solutions is ideal for listed properties or those unable to dig down," says Lilley-Harris. Discreetly housing a self-contained water reservoir, these mains-powered designs can be located in paved areas without the need for a water supply. Recent years have seen a steady increase in convenient and neat 'plug-and-play' self-contained water features. A few smaller designs are solar-powered with a cabled panel and battery to store excess energy, but more substantial designs remain mains-powered.

Weight is another key factor that should be considered, particularly with sizeable stone designs. "Fountains must be on firm, level ground," says Kate Walker of Chilstone, "not on a muddy, waterlogged area that may shift and cause leaks, cracking and sinking as stone is heavy."

Design enhancers

Not just for daytime delight, many of today's water features impress at night thanks to energy-efficient LED lights and the use of glistening materials such as high-grade acrylic, fused glass and stainless steel. Keeping these materials in top condition is key and there are steps to follow. "Deionised water will control limescale on concrete, and standard stainless steel or brass cleansers will maintain the metal spout," says Lisa Greenway of Solus Decor. ■

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ONE FINAL THING...

Create a peaceful spot to sit back, relax and appreciate the joys of a sunny summer's day

A simple update such as adding a cushion or mattress in a different fabric can breathe new life into outdoor furniture. While there are many specialist outdoor fabrics available, linen or cotton are ideal too for making covers that can be attached with fabric ties and easily removed for laundering or when the weather turns. Fabric designer Cathy Nordström has taken inspiration from iconic 19th-century Swedish textile artist Karin Larssen and her waterside summerhouse retreat to create a collection of patterns with nostalgic Scandinavian retro charm. Why not make a cushion for a favourite garden chair in this wave-like design that was inspired by the movement of water in the stream that ran adjacent to the Larssen's summerhouse. It is perfect for a spot of tranquil waterside relaxation.

Cushion, Karin's Portiere, Sunflower, £146 a metre, Cathy Nordström





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