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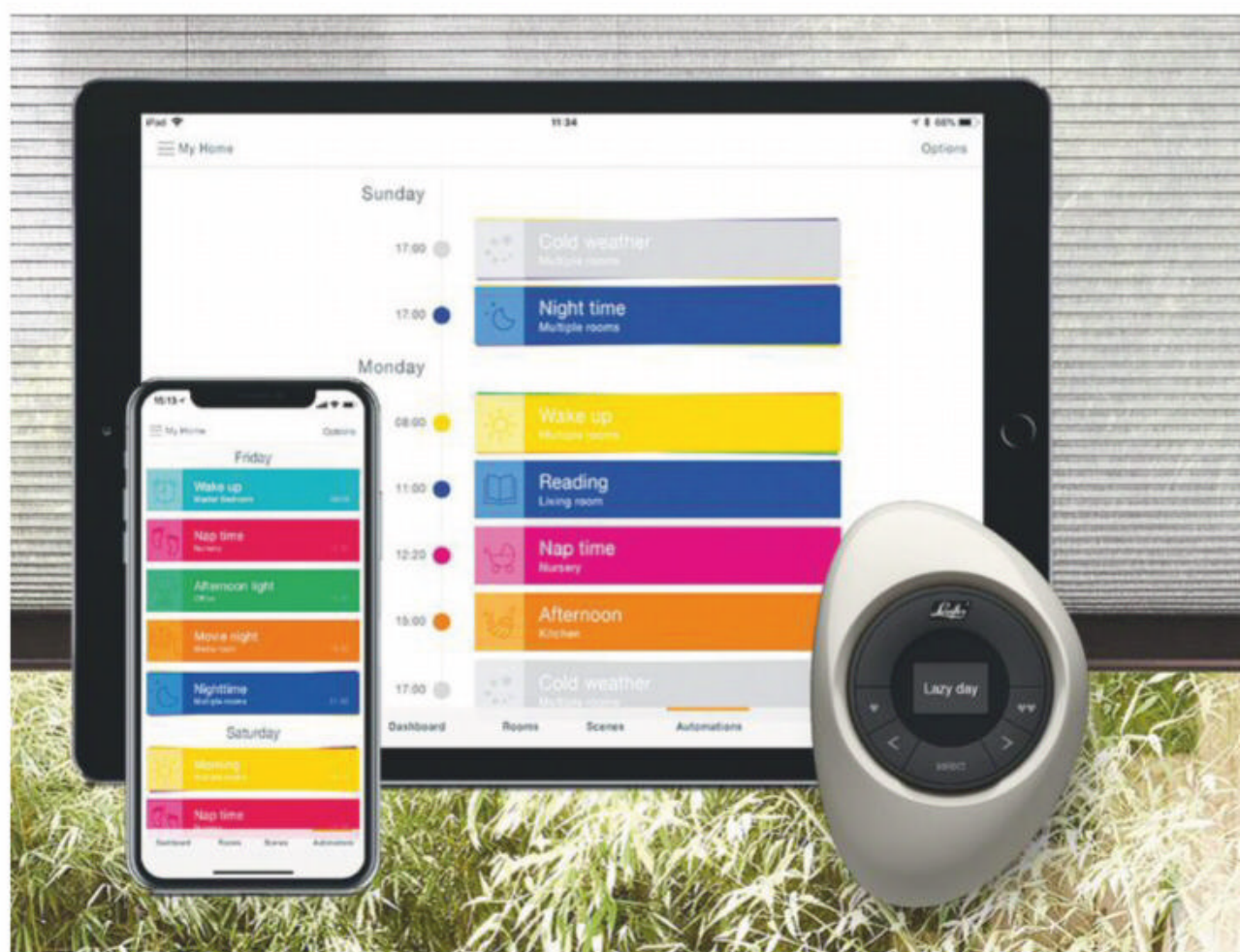


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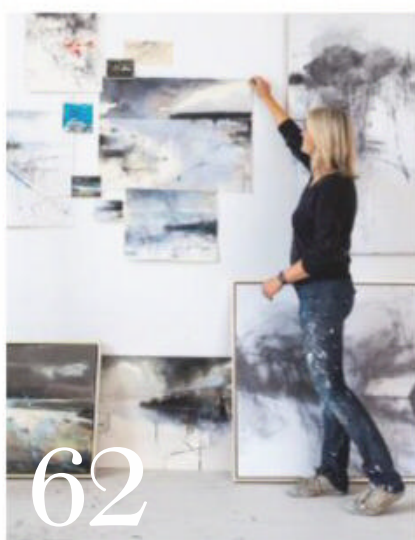
THE HOME OF *modern country*

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The mood of the moment: **HOOKED ON HAPPY COLOUR**

For some reason, I associate April with colour. Perhaps it's because as our grey, northern European winter light brightens into spring, colours become more noticeable. It's a potentially design-dangerous time, chez Richmond, as I get the urge to paint every wall and piece of furniture, and impulse-buy jazzy cushions. Anything could happen. This time last year, I did our north-facing living room in Dayroom Yellow, which raised eyebrows (but luckily didn't result in decorator's remorse – it's such a happy shade). This year, I'm feeling tempted by the fondant-pink front door on page 15 and wait until you see our 'A Brush With Blush' story on page 74. Resistance is futile...

Vanessa x

P.S. Have you found us on Instagram, yet?

Follow @countryhomesmag to get a sneak peek at beautiful homes and the inside track on interiors-industry news, events and people. No influencers, just a gentle slice of idyllic country life to give you a little escapism every day...

(BACKGROUND) FLEURS DE JOUR TRAVERTINE FABRIC, £75M, DESIGNERS GUILD

Things we can't live without...

APRIL

Dressing the table for an Easter egg-stravaganza.

Recycled glass jug, £20; jute place mats in Olive Green, £22 for four; Anni throw, £40; Booja-Booja assorted eggs with dairy-free caramel truffles, £15; Easter decorations, from a selection, all National Trust Shop



1 Shapely vessels for pouring fresh juices or filling with pretty stems. Recycled glass carafe, H25cm, £14, Greige **2 Charming the way underfoot with pastels and bolds woven in recycled textiles.** Boucherouite vintage rug, 168x85cm, £250, Maroc Tribal **3 Taking an unprecedented house tour through the pages with Cath Kidston.** *A Place Called Home* by Cath Kidston, (£30, Pavilion) **4 A dynamic duo for stashing sweet treats.** Semina Easter lambs bowl, H11.5cm, £30, Lene Bjerre at Sweetpea & Willow



Gorgeous bedroom additions in iconic, vivid, floral designs.

Quilts, £375 each, Once Milano X Liberty at Liberty



Updating timeless pieces with the best and brightest of British designs.

Chair in Jelly & Cake in Duck Egg Blue, £70m, Thornback & Peel



5 A perky fuchsia console to brighten up an (often neglected) hallway. Oscar two-section sideboard, H82.5xW119xD61.5cm, £1,995, Farmhouse Table Co

6 Fluffy grains for exciting fusion dishes. Rice pot and inner lid in Shell Pink, £175, Le Creuset

7 Family fun with an adorable half dozen with a difference! Easter puppies egg box decorations, £17.50, White Stuff

8 Home baking helpers inspired by Scandi shapes. Winter solstice bright oven glove, £20, Softer + Wild



An endlessly versatile piece that can be used for displaying plants, as well as for wheeling cocktails outside at sundown.
Tea cart, £255, Sophie Conran



9 A wonderfully whimsical lighting solution for the kitchen or dining room. Tea 3 pendant, £175, Original BTC **10 A hand-printed addition for the sofa.** Jiva natural embroidered cushion cover, 50x30cm, £70, Nichola Taylorson **11 Spreading sweet-toothed smiles with colourful nibbles to share.** Easter egg tin, £35, Biscuiteers **12 A functional yet loveable living room addition with have-to-touch charm!** Hermia handwoven merino wool footstool, H44cm, £300, Perch Upholstery



13 Waking up blank walls with idyllic outdoor inspirations. *The Greenhouse*, £69.95 framed, Sam Wilson **14 Keeping things simple with an artisan shopper.** Macramé jute tote bag, £35, Maison Bengal at Small Batch Goods **15 Getting stuck into the big spring clean without making a mess of ourselves!** Shropshire trimmed apron in Green leather, £155, Risdon & Risdon at Bombinate **16 Getting the conversation going over a platter.** Marble bird cheeseboard, £39.50, Oliver Bonas



Wearing a simple T and flirty skirt while arranging freshly cut blooms.
Celina drapey v-neck T-shirt, £19.95; Orielle woven skirt, £59.95, both Joules



Going that egg-stra mile for visiting guests!
Wreath, £3; marble-effect eggs, £3 for 12; hanging 3D wooden eggs, £1 each; hanging papier mâché eggs, £1 each; pastel fillable eggs, £1 for six, Egg Hunt sign, £2; bamboo basket, £1, all Hobbycraft

Things we can't live without...

“WELCOMING A HAPPY EASTER, WITH ALL THE SEASONAL COLOURS, SCENTS AND JOYS OF SPRINGTIME!”

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[@sanderson1860](http://stylelibrary.com/sanderson)

Reproduced from a Sanderson Wallpapers advert, 1930

DESIGN NEWS

Sustainable bed linen at Sainsbury's Home



Turning the bedtime dream of a life without single-use plastic into wide-awake reality, Sainsbury's Home has launched an exclusive range of bedlinen - made from a blend of recycled polyester and BCI cotton - presented in a fabric bag, fastened with a coconut husk button and jute string. Fitted sheets in Pink Floral, White Geo and Grey Plain, all £12 for a double, Sainsbury's Home

REFRESHING COLOUR FROM LSA INTERNATIONAL

Pairing traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design, Gems tumblers are inspired by the faceted shapes and lustrous hues of polished semi-precious stones. Each piece is painted by hand and enhanced with a fluted, tactile finish. Pick from a fun assortment of Garnet, Amber, Lustre and Jade colourways, available in two perfect hand-to-mouth sizes of 310ml and 560ml. (Shown below) Gems 310ml tumblers, £35 for set of four, LSA International



New additions from CH&I x One.World

The latest piece in our exclusive collection, this stunning salvaged wood table is perfect for Easter family feasts. It's joined by a whitewashed armoire and a plush velvet sofa, too. Country Homes & Interiors salvaged dining table, £1,995, One.World



FEATURE HOLLY PHILLIPS



LITTLE GREENE LAUNCHES NATIONAL TRUST PAPERS

Based on wallpapers still adorning ancient walls, fragments conserved in archive drawers and even rolls found in the back of an attic, Little Greene has produced an eclectic collection with the National Trust. Featuring 40 colourways and seven designs, the anthology translates 200 years of pattern into looks perfect for today. We adore Pavona in Sylvie, £101 a roll (shown above).

Stay style conscious with Heal's

It's a design evolution at this beloved British institution, with repurposed materials and sustainable processes at the heart of Heal's SS20 collection. Keep the shopping hit list ready for soft furnishings made from repurposed ocean plastics and yarns produced from fashion-industry waste, recycled glass and furniture made from sustainable timber. We love the Duo cushions in Viola and Ochre, £49 each, made from recycled yarns.



NEW BLOOM

Renovating their Oxfordshire farmhouse has allowed Charlie and Toby Quartley to grow an at-home floristry business, too





Exterior

Looking for a home with character, Charlie and Toby swapped their modern new-build for a 17th-century farmhouse in need of renovation

“TOBY ALWAYS SAID IT WOULD BE A 10 YEAR PROJECT, BUT I NAIVELY THOUGHT WE COULD DO IT IN FIVE”

Dining room

Once the kitchen, this space is now dedicated to family-style dining. For a similar **dining table**, try Martha's Attic. Herringbone **floor**, Direct Wood Flooring

Flower-filled and decorated in the colours of a spring bouquet, it's no surprise that this Cotswold home also doubles as a base for owner Charlie Quartley's floristry business, The Flower Fairies. In fact, when she and her husband, Toby, bought it in 2011, their first priority was to create her studio. 'I had a change of career when the children were born,' says Charlie. 'I longed for something that would express my creativity and allow me to be at home with the children. A few arrangements and a couple of friends' weddings later and my path was set.'

The family's previous home was a new build; this time they were looking for something with character. 'I wanted an old farmhouse,' says Charlie. 'The location was important; ideally close to the children's school and in a village community with good amenities.' Fortunately, the couple came across a 17th-century farmhouse in an Oxfordshire village. 'The interior was dated and because of the small windows and low ceilings, it appeared very dark inside,' she says. 'It had great potential; it just needed reconfiguring.'

Charlie and Toby moved into the property a month after they bought it. 'As it's a listed building, we thought it unlikely we would get planning consent to extend the main house. Instead, we applied for permission to knock down the existing garage and build a new double garage and annexe in its place, which would become the flower studio,' says Charlie. 'We also put an Airbnb suite in the roof space of the annexe.' The couple decided on a timber-framed, oak-clad structure to complement the Cotswold stone of the main house.

Charlie and Toby enlisted the help of local builder Stuart Henderson of SDH Builders. 'He came highly recommended and even lived on site in his caravan. It took him just over six months to complete the initial work,' says Charlie. Over subsequent years the couple transformed the interior, repairing and redecorating throughout. And like many couples living through a big refurb project, the strain began to show as they became exhausted by the volume of work and concerned about costs. 'A few years ago, we did consider selling and buying a newer property,' says Charlie.

It was the estate agent who gave them the idea of repositioning the kitchen at the centre of the house, creating the family hub and an informal eating area. 'Now you pretty much walk into the snug and kitchen,' says Charlie. 'This means the space is so much more sociable and has made such a difference to how we gather as a family.' Charlie has chosen pale tones of blue, grey and white for the interior, with her love of flowers adding the finishing touch. The original kitchen is now the dining room. 'We called in local carpenter Glen Jackson to source materials and manage the project. It was great working with someone who understood our requirements, had good design solutions and was also keen to utilise existing materials - for example, using an old beam as the new mantelpiece.'

The renovation has been exhausting, but the couple are now reaping the rewards. 'It's been such a long and challenging journey,' says Charlie. 'Toby always said it would be a 10-year project, but I naively thought we could do it in five. We are nearly there now, but there will always be a snag list - it's just that kind of house!'



AT HOME WITH...

Owners Charlie Quartley, a wedding and event florist, and her husband Toby, a doctor, moved into their home in 2011. They have three children, Freddie, 17, Max, 13 and Connie, 11. Pickles, a Cavapoo, is their much-loved family pet.

House A seven-bedroom, Grade II-listed, 17th-century, Cotswold stone farmhouse.



LIVING THE DREAM

Charlie wanted to find a home where she could combine family life with her floristry business

Do you use the studio for anything other than flower arranging?

'I run workshops, too. As I have to fit these in around weddings, I tend to hold wreath-making classes at Christmastime and floristry skills, such as the art of wiring, in early spring.'

Is the studio also a shop or is it by appointment only?

'It's purely by appointment as all stock is for specific orders, weddings or events. This also allows me to better manage my work/life balance.'

What are the benefits of working from home?

'Childcare is easier to manage and, of course, it was helpful for project managing the renovations.'

Kitchen

The addition of a central island creates a home hub for the family to gather around. **Island** in Dix Blue estate eggshell; **cabinetry** in Ammonite estate eggshell, both Farrow & Ball. Bar **stools**, Cox & Cox

Snug area

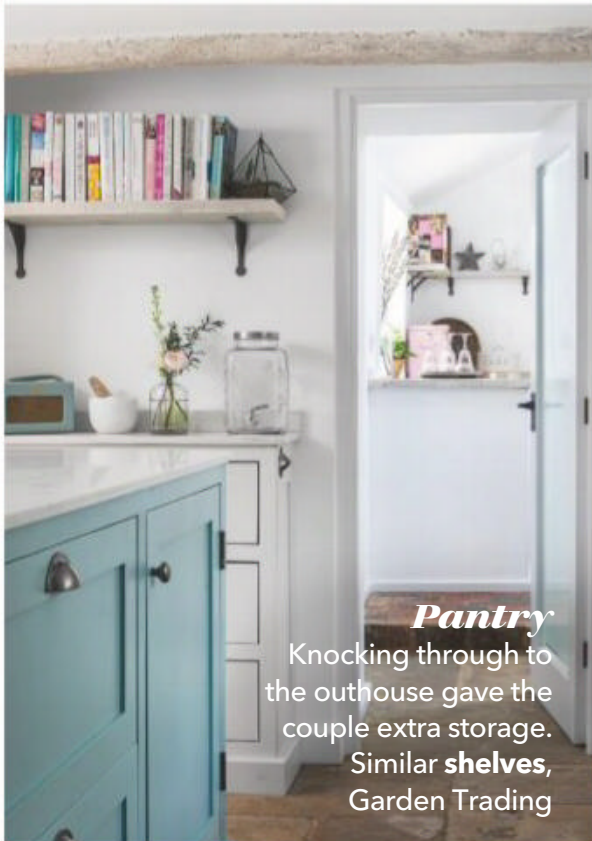
For informal meals, the family can use this space rather than the dining room. For a similar **table**, try The Old Pill Factory. Floor **baskets**, Teasels





Snug area

Uneven and wonky walls provide the character the couple were after. **Armchair**, Loaf. **Side tables**, Swoon



Pantry

Knocking through to the outhouse gave the couple extra storage. Similar **shelves**, Garden Trading

ON OUR DOORSTEP...

Visit... 'Blenheim Palace (blenheimpalace.com), set in beautiful parkland and formal gardens, is a wonderful day out for the family.'

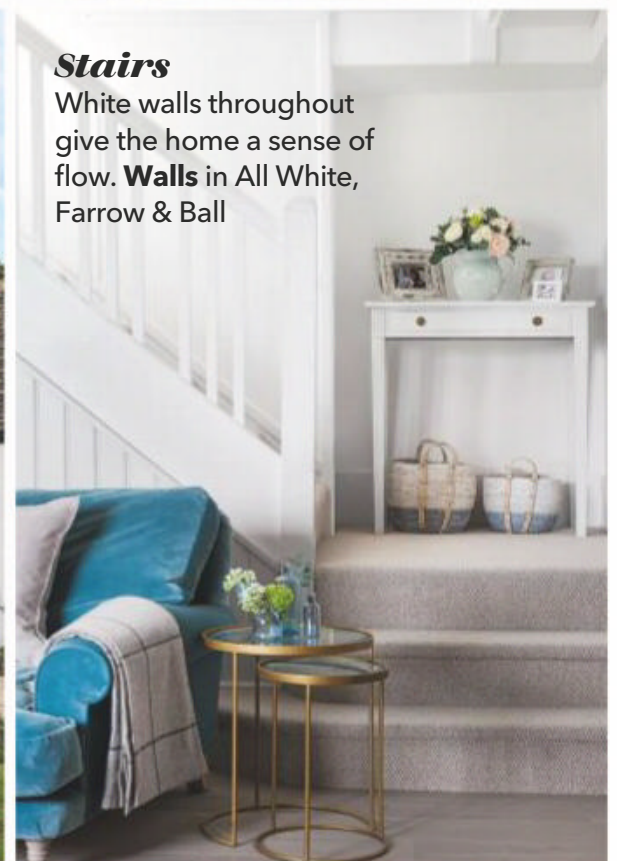
Shop at... 'The Market Garden (themarketgarden.co.uk) near Witney, a great village greengrocer's and deli, specialising in organic, vegetarian and vegan produce, locally grown and sourced - ideal for a daily shop!'

Go for a meal at... 'Worton Organic Garden (wortonorganicgarden.com) near Cassington is a lovely destination to meet friends and enjoy homemade cakes in the fabulous cafe. There is also a well-stocked farm shop.'



Snug area

Mixing vintage and Scandi brings warmth to a calm scheme. **Vase**, Cox & Cox. **Jug**, The Old Pill Factory



Stairs

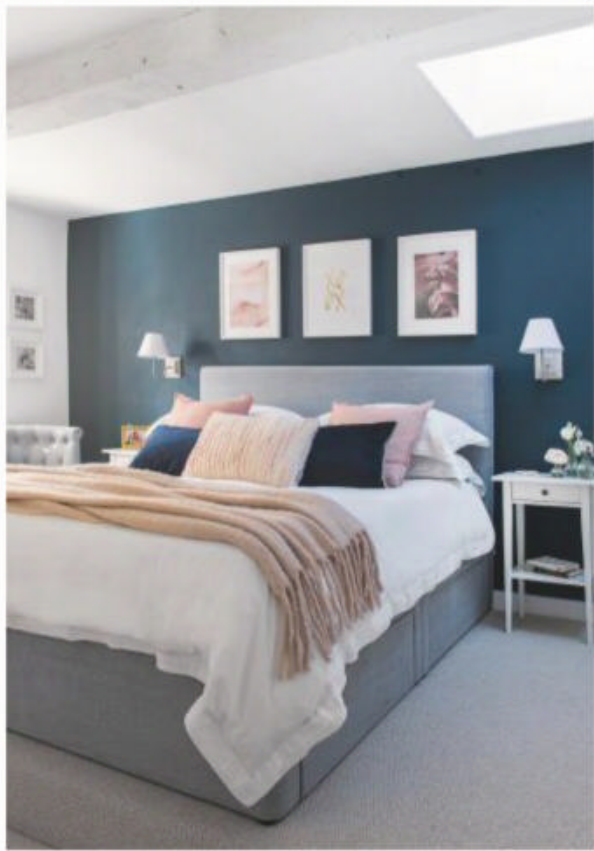
White walls throughout give the home a sense of flow. **Walls** in All White, Farrow & Ball



Living room
Charlie uses her own spring flower arrangements to add softness and femininity to the muted tones of the furniture. Cream **sofa**, Sofa.com. Grey **sofa**; **artwork**, both Loaf

Main bedroom
A symmetrical design paired with a deep blue feature wall has a cocooning and calming effect. **Wall** in Hague Blue modern emulsion, Farrow & Ball. **Bed**, Loaf. Bedside **tables**, Ikea. **Wall lights**, Cox & Cox

Bathroom
Tongue-and-groove panelling conceals the plumbing and creates a useful shelf for toiletries and decor. **Panelling** in Plummest estate eggshell, Farrow & Ball. Patisserie ceramic **floor tiles**, Fired Earth



Bedroom

Optimising space in the annexe, the couple created a guest suite in the eaves.

Armchair, Laura Ashley.

Bedlinen, The White Company. Yellow and grey **blanket**, The Old Pill Factory





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Lockhart **wall light** in Chrome, £50, John Lewis & Partners



Create dive-into appeal with co-ordinating scatters in luxurious textures.

Linen **cushion** in Blush Pink, £35, Idyll Home



CH&I
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Go for a touch-of-heaven upholstered design for comfort and warmth.

Piper **bed** in Cobble House, £845 for a double, Loaf



Add a touch of Georgian-inspired grace with a pair of versatile storage and display pieces.

Slim **bedside table**, £169.90 for two, Melody Maison

CH&I loves...

**DEEP,
DARK BLUES**

Hague Blue modern emulsion, £49.95 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball

Blue Velvet pure matt, £47 for 2.5ltr, Fenwick & Tilbrook

Observatory marble matt, £51 for 2.5ltr, Mylands

Encourage walls to bloom with pretty framed florals.

Pink Flowers poster, from £39.95 framed, Victoria Frost at Junique



Fill this shapely cutie with a sweet-smelling fresh stem to ensure wake-ups with a smile!

Little bud **vase** in Silver, H12cm, £20, Kelly Hoppen



Charlie's style tip...

ADD DEPTH AND SOPHISTICATION TO A CLASSIC SCHEME WITH A DRAMATICALLY DARK FEATURE WALL THAT OFFSETS GENTLY HUED FURNITURE



A BRIGHT OUTLOOK

Katy Hamilton gave her house on the edge of the rolling Oxfordshire countryside a much-needed refresh

Kitchen

The vaulted ceiling's generous skylights paired with bifold doors ensure this space is always full of natural light. **Cabinetry**, Andrew Lord Furniture





Kitchen

An extension at the back of the house has given Katy the light-filled, open-plan kitchen and dining area she longed for. High-back **bar stools**, Neptune



Kitchen

Katy painted these stylishly low-key Easter decorations herself. Wooden eggs, Amazon.co.uk



Kitchen

Open shelving means Katy's favourite kitchenware doubles as decor. Similar metal canisters, eBay

Having had her fingers badly burnt in a bidding war for another property, Katy Hamilton wasn't confident when she found that a house on a quiet private road in an area she'd always loved was unexpectedly on the market. 'It's very rare for houses to come up for sale here and they're always snapped up,' she says. 'The agent was holding an open day when potential buyers could view it, so my ex and I went along. We could see how special it was, but didn't feel hopeful that our bid would be successful.'

As it turned out, they were wrong. The 1930s house had only ever had three owners, the decor was tired and dated, the rooms small and cramped, and all the utilities needed replacing - a major renovation was clearly necessary. 'I'm not sure if that's what put people off, but to my amazement our bid was accepted,' says Katy.

The couple wasted no time planning a major extension with their architect. But first, everything from the plumbing to the electrics had to be replaced. 'The electrician was surprised to discover three different sets of electrics in the house - it was a total muddle,' says Katy.

Another puzzle arose when it came to reinstating a wall between the living room at the front of the house and the dining room at the back. 'I turned up one day to find the place deserted, but the radio was playing and there were >



AT HOME WITH

Owner Katy Hamilton is a marketing director and Instagram Influencer (@katyebh). She lives here with her pug Louis.

House A three-bedroom, 1930s semi-detached house. Katy moved here in 2013.



hot cups of tea on the side. I couldn't think what had possibly happened,' says Katy. It transpired the builders had discovered the opening between the two original rooms was being supported by nothing more than a too-small failing concrete lintel, and the brickwork surrounding it was crumbling badly. 'They'd dashed out to get what they needed to prop it all up while they rebuilt the wall properly. If it had been left as it was, the house could have fallen down!'

The plan for the extension was to create a large kitchen and dining area spanning right across the back of the house. The existing kitchen space, complete with a high vaulted ceiling with skylights, was incorporated on one side (with a new utility room and cloakroom built next to it). On the other, what had once been the dining room now became a cosy, open-plan snug.

Katy spent a long time considering the style of the kitchen. 'The whole house is designed around it, so it was important to get it right,' she says. 'The kitchen wasn't a standard size or shape, so the units had to be made specially by a carpenter.' One day, she passed a man making a boat in a yard outside his workshop. 'We got chatting and I asked him if he made kitchens as well. He took me inside to show me one he was working on. It was fantastic, and I asked him there and then if >

LIVING THE DREAM

Katy's eclectic collections give her home personality and allow her to create some eye-catching displays

How do you combine old and new, practical and pretty?

'I think it's important to have items with similar tonal qualities, which are in proportion to one another, so that the overall look is balanced.'

What keeps decor fresh and interesting?

'I'm always moving things around or switching items to complement the seasons. If nothing changes, even the most eclectic collection stops catching the eye.'

How do you make the most of what you've got?

'I love coming up with unusual ways to display things, like the hot chocolate tin I turned into a plant pot.'

Living room

The more formal sitting area is full of vintage finds. **Bureau** in Vivace Antique Rose by Autentico

“I LOVE COMBINING DIFFERENT STYLES – EVERYTHING FROM VINTAGE TO SCANDI, MODERN COUNTRY AND EVEN A BIT OF BOHO”

“THE HOUSE HAS SUCH A NICE FEELING THAT EVERYONE COMMENTS ON – IT’S FULL OF LIGHT, YET SO HOMELY AND COSY”

Main bedroom

Warm neutrals are ideal for this country cottage scheme. **Bed**, Feather & Black. Similar **bedside table**, Loaf

Bedroom

An iron bedstead adds a classic touch, while black-framed vintage pictures pick up on the bed frame.

Bed, Feather & Black



Bathroom

Katy modernised the set-up, turning the bathroom and loo into one big space. Isis **bath**, Ashton & Bentley. **Basin**, Burlington



he'd make ours, too.' The extensive building work took around six months to complete, then the furnishings, decorative elements and colour schemes could finally be considered. Sadly, Katy and her husband went their separate ways three years ago, but these ever-evolving finishing touches proved a welcome solace and have allowed Katy to put her own stamp on the house.

'A lot of the furniture held in storage didn't really work here,' she says. 'But that gave me the opportunity to consider new styles that really suited me and the house instead. I've become an expert at finding and upcycling old furniture that has been discarded.'

Throughout the house, displays and vignettes show Katy's love of collecting items that often have a little domestic history behind them. 'I love nothing more than rummaging around in charity shops, brocantes and antiques fairs,' she says. 'And I love mixing old with new and combining different styles - everything from vintage to Scandi, modern country and even a bit of boho!'

The palette throughout is fresh and airy and provides a subtle backdrop for all her treasured finds. 'One thing I really learnt as I've renovated this house is how interiors can make you feel, and lighter and brighter suits me best. This is now the home I've always wanted.'

Follow Katy on Instagram @katyebh

ON OUR DOORSTEP

Visit... 'Greys Court (nationaltrust.org.uk), just outside Henley, is a Tudor country house and garden, and my favourite place to walk Louis. The bluebells in springtime are incredible.'

Shop at... 'The Neptune store (neptune.com) in Reading is a favourite place for interiors inspiration. I love the antiques shops in Henley-on-Thames and Marlow, and the Sue Ryder Nettlebed sales (sueryder.org) to find treasures to upcycle.'

Go for a meal at...

'My favourite place for a lazy Sunday lunch is Antony Worrall Thompson's pub, The Greyhound (awtgreyhound.com), in Rotherfield Peppard. It's quirky but still cosy and the food is terrific.'

Exterior

In summer, Katy makes the most of the patio area. **Swing chair**, John Lewis & Partners. **Pouffe**, Bohemia Design



Be inspired by KATY'S KITCHEN

CH&I MODERN Country CLASSIC

In spaces with high ceilings, suspend a trio of marine-inspired lights.

Fisherman pendant in Cream, H24.5xDia29cm, £80.40, Firstlight at Dusk Lighting

Get sink duties in line with this highly absorbent, pure Italian linen helper.

Stripe tea towel in Midnight Blue, £42, Summerill & Bishop



This timeless Lloyd-Loom style offers a gentle, practical seating solution for the breakfast-cum-tea break spot. Montague high-back bar stool in Silver Birch, £265, Neptune



Use this artisan must-have to pour fresh juice or to display seasonal blooms.

Handmade ceramic jug in White, H20cm, £40, Zakkia at White Black Grey

[NAMASTE]

When things start to boil over, pause and remember to breathe.

Namaste poster, from £6.95 unframed, Desenio

CH&I loves... GLAZED TILES



Sanctuary in Cadiz, £64.24sq m, Claybrook



Aged crackle medium brick, £119.33sq m, Marlborough Tiles



Timeless Fennel rectangle, £91sq m, Bert & May



Lift a neutral space with this faux blooming beauty. Hydrangea in globe, H28xW32cm, £65, Laura Ashley

Give crunchy salad leaves a twirl and toss with these wonderfully tactile utensils.

Mango wood salad servers, L30cm, £16.50 for set of two, Nordic House

Katy's style tip...

KEEP THINGS FRESH WITH A PURIFIED PALETTE OF CLEAN NEUTRALS, INCLUDING WARM WHITES AND SUBTLE GREYS



RUSTIC REWORK

Caroline Hardy and Russell McCleave took this barn from abandoned farm building to cosy, country home

Living room

By leaving the old brick and flint bare, the couple have ensured the barn's characterful history shines through. For a similar **sofa**, try Sofa.com. Arco **floor lamp**, Flos at Heal's



Hallway

The vintage front door set-up makes it seem like Caroline and Russell have lived here for years



Living room

Unusual art in rich and vibrant shades stops the bare walls from feeling cold. **Artwork**, John Hoyland

Although this building has been well used by several generations of Suffolk farmers, Caroline Hardy and Russell McCleave are the first people actually to live in it. 'It's odd to think that before us, the most recent inhabitants were cattle and tractors,' says Russell. When the couple bought the property near Bury St Edmunds, it was in a raw, unmodernised state. 'It was a shell of a building really, with soil on the ground and hessian sackcloth tacked over the doorways,' says Caroline. But this was exactly what they wanted: 'It was our opportunity to create a home from scratch,' says Russell.

The structure is full of beautiful fragments of the barn's working past. 'The brick and flint walls are typical of the Suffolk vernacular and we love the character of the beams and posts,' says Caroline. A series of old farm hooks that are designed to hang off a beam have also been cleaned up and put back in place.

Converting this ramshackle building into a warm home was always going to take a lot of hard work, but the huge bonus was that it came with planning consent in place. This was a stark contrast to the restrictions that came with the couple's previous home, a Grade II-listed manor house. 'It was an atmospheric maze of rooms >



AT HOME WITH

Owners Caroline Hardy and Russell McCleave, who run handmade scented candle and diffuser company Illumens, live here with Fly the greyhound. They have two grown-up children and bought the barn in 2016.

House A 19th-century four-bedroom single-storey house, formerly a barn and stables.

Living room

A simple sliding door separates the living and dining rooms, creating an easy flow around the home. Similar vintage **side table**, Vinterior





Kitchen-diner

Such high ceilings and pale rafters mean this space can easily handle dark kitchen cabinetry. Ghost **chairs**, Kartell at The Conran Shop. Edinburgh **dining table**, Neptune, is a similar style



Kitchen

A new kitchen doesn't have to cost a fortune - Russell found this Bulthaup one on eBay



Hallway

Caroline's used plenty of soft textiles to offset all of the dark wood furniture. Similar cushions, Redbubble

and staircases, but once our children Finn and Lily had left home, we were ready for a new style of house,' says Caroline. The couple picked a much simpler layout for their new one-storey property - everything is centred around a large living room, which flows into the kitchen-diner, with four bedrooms off to the sides.

Textures are a key part of the home's personality, with restored flint walls, oak lintels and sections of tactile plaster. Some portions of the walls above head height are clad in old pine planks, indicating that a hayloft may have existed at one stage. These were sanded down and the few replacements needed were given an aged patina. Russell did most of the building, plumbing and electric work himself, aided by a good friend. The work was then signed off by professionals. Underfoot, they laid Indian limestone flagstones, sourced from eBay. 'Russell is a bit of an eBay addict,' says Caroline. 'We also found our Aga, the kitchen units and a wood-burning stove on there.'

Caroline and Russell's furniture is an elegant mix of contemporary design classics - such as the set of Louis Ghost chairs by Kartell and the Arco lamp by Flos - and interesting antiques that they have picked up locally. The couple has always enjoyed visiting Suffolk's small >

LIVING THE DREAM

Caroline and Russell found good-quality pieces to furnish their home in online auctions

What are your tips for online shopping?

'Save searches for particular items, set alerts and keep checking back for new items that eBay's algorithm suggests to you. Try different search terms, such as "multi-fuel stove" as well as "wood burner" and brand names. We got a Morso stove for £60.'

What about decorating materials?

'There is sometimes end-of-line stock on eBay and Gumtree and items sold by tradespeople or homeowners who have overestimated how much they needed. We got our Indian limestone floor tiles in this way. To avoid discrepancies in colour, try not to mix batches from different sellers.'



Main bedroom and en suite

A tub behind glass doors is more practical than in the room itself, yet still luxurious. Similar bath, Victorian Plumbing

auction houses and the large grandfather clock that presides over the comfortable seating area was an auction find. 'Buying vintage and second-hand items is a really economical way to furnish a home with interesting pieces and it also cuts down on waste,' says Caroline. Favourite antiques include their Windsor chairs, an Indian coffee table and the French carved bed. 'Somehow they all fit with the character of the property, perhaps because were all built by hand, as was the barn,' says Russell. They also lend the home an air of timelessness.

In theory, Caroline and Russell now have a moratorium on buying anything more for their barn home, but you get the impression that neither of them is taking it particularly seriously. 'Sometimes you see a painting or a piece of furniture that's just irresistible and you have to have it,' says Russell.

For the finishing touch to make their home feel extra welcoming, Caroline and Russell always have a scented candle burning from their own brand, Illumens. With evocative names like Horse's Neck, Reading Room and Gentleman's Shed, their fragrances are clearly rooted in a gentle pace of life. 'As the light starts to fade, we light a candle and wait for the smell to drift through the house - it makes it feel like home,' says Caroline.

ON OUR DOORSTEP

Visit... 'Little known gems, such as Gainsborough's House (gainsborough.org) in Sunbury and the Tudor mansion Kentwell Hall (kentwell.co.uk) - both have beautiful interiors and amazing topiary.'

Shop at... 'Posy (posy.online) in Lavenham and AG Lifestyle (aglifestyle.co.uk) in Sudbury are both beautifully curated. At Lavenham's monthly farmers' market, try a handmade sausage roll from Totally Traceable (trulytraceable.com).'

Go for a meal at... 'The Crown in Hartest (01284 830250, thecrownhartest.co.uk). The traditional Sunday lunch is particularly good.'

“WE DIDN'T WANT ANY OF THE FURNITURE TO BE FADDY, OR TO DATE TOO EASILY. BUYING VINTAGE AND SECOND-HAND ITEMS IS A REALLY ECONOMICAL WAY TO FURNISH A HOME WITH INTERESTING PIECES”



Main bedroom

An inky blue paint shade makes a bold backdrop and works with the warm timber tones. **Wall** in Night's Blue Arch, Valspar. For a similar antique **bed**, try La Maison London

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Be inspired by CAROLINE'S LIVING ROOM

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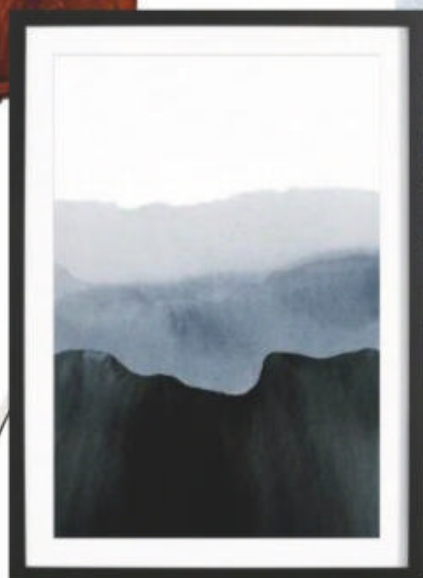
Travel back in time with an heirloom full of charm and chime.

Elegant mahogany antique grandfather clock, H222.5cm, £6,250, Haddack of Bath at PA Oxley



Admire the beauty of a minimal mountainscape.

Mountain Horizon 2 framed print, 70x100cm, £119.95, Iris Lehnhardt at Junique



Handcrafted and interwoven with cotton thread, this rustic design is soft underfoot with a natural-look finish.

Gabby flat-weave jute rug, 140x200cm, £150, Habitat

Caroline's style tip...

EXPOSED SURFACES LIKE OLD BRICK AND TIMBER COMPLEMENT AN ECLECTIC SCHEME ABUNDANT WITH CHARACTER

Embrace grace and functionality with a floor lamp that combines a sturdy base with an arching, suspended pendant.

Arco floor light, H240xW220cm, £1,710, Flos at Heal's



As beautiful as the Scottish island it's named after, this lounge mixes drawing-room elegance with refined luxury.

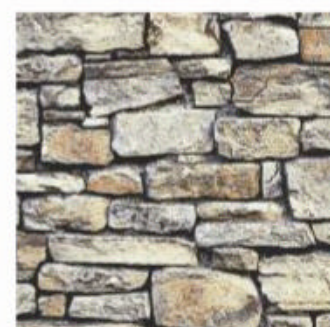
Isla sofa in Pumice house plain weave, H92xW193xD104cm, £1,470, Sofa.com



Add a colour-pop scatter to a sofa for a style boost.

Eske cushion cover in Canyon Rose Coral, £21, Broste Copenhagen at Nordic Nest

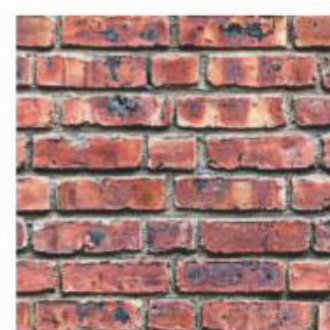
CH&I loves...
BRICK-EFFECT WALLPAPER



Cornish stone in Brown, £10.99 a roll, Arthouse at Wallpaper Direct



Decorama brick in Black, £19 a roll, Engblad & Co at Rockett St George



Floyd dark decayed brick wall mural, £36sqm, Murals Wallpaper

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Stamford Garden Centre • **Stratford-upon-Avon** Home of the Sofa • **Street and Weston-Super-Mare** Living Homes • **Swansea** Arthur Llewellyn Jenkins •
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HAPPY ENDING

A Cotswolds-based book led Jutta Betz and Andreas Erbe to take a novel approach to rural life, splitting their time between Britain and their native Germany



Study
Stacked wine crates make a unique bookcase. Blue and white throw, Oka



Living room

Sofas and mismatched soft furnishings create a relaxed, cosy atmosphere.

Cushions, Kate Forman
Chandelier (opposite page), Maisons du Monde

For Jutta Betz, loving this area of England started in an unusual way. While living in the countryside outside Frankfurt, she read an English crime novel based in the Cotswolds. The descriptions of rolling hills, bubbling streams, meadows dotted with sheep and ponies, and quaint villages filled with old stone cottages sounded so inviting, she decided to check it out for herself.

Soon, she persuaded her husband, Andreas, to book a holiday in a quintessentially English hotel in June, when the roses were in full bloom and lambs were still skipping in the meadows. That was back in 2016. 'Our first few days in the Cotswolds far exceeded our wildest expectations,' says Jutta. 'We were both so smitten that we decided to live in the UK for half the year and spend the other half in Germany.'

Finding the right property took almost 11 months and proved tricky. 'We have always loved period properties, but many homes we viewed had precariously low ceilings – as Andreas is quite tall, none of them worked for us. We almost gave up.' Then, one day, the couple found an idyllic Georgian property online. It was located in the village of Bibury, which William Morris famously described as the 'prettiest in England'. An old vicarage close to the nearby church, it had tall, elegant ceilings, square panelled rooms, original shutters and sash windows. The façade was romantically covered in Virginia creeper and it had every ingredient associated with the >



AT HOME WITH...

Owners Jutta Betz, a business coach, and her husband, Andreas Erbe, a financier, bought the house in 2016. They have three grown-up children, Miles, Meagan and Benia, and English bulldogs, Emil and Lotti.

House A Grade II-listed two-bedroom vicarage, built in 1820.

“I LOVE THE IMPERFECTIONS OF ANTIQUES. THEY HAVE CHARACTER AND THEY CONTRAST WELL WITH SILKY, GLAMOROUS TEXTURES, OR REFLECTIVE SURFACES”



Kitchen

A modern industrial cooker and old-style freestanding shop fittings combine to create an eclectic feel. **Cooker**, Siemens. **Units**, price on request, Cox & Cox



Conservatory

Two 19th-century demi lune tables fit together to make a round. **Tables**, Anton & K. Similar **chairs**, Scumble Goose

classic Cotswolds cottage, even down to its landscaped garden and the roses growing around the front door. 'It was as though the house had our names on it,' says Jutta.

Previous owners had added a charming, Gothic-style conservatory to one end of the kitchen, which was a huge asset. 'It's an all-year-round room,' says Jutta. 'In winter, you can sit in it and count the stars and, in the summer, we are bathed in the coloured rays of the setting sun.'

On the downside, some elements of the vicarage had been overly modernised. Adding to this, the previous owners had a burning passion for pink – numerous walls, as well as the kitchen units, had been painted in this rosy shade. Many of the original features were missing, replaced with new fireplaces and modern laminate floors. 'We had hoped to find flagstones below the laminate but, sadly, it was all concrete,' says Jutta. 'The kitchen presented other problems. It was rather dark and stark, dominated by an industrial cooker and modern units. I had so wanted an Aga, but the existing cooker was perfectly efficient and too expensive for us to justify replacing it.'

Fortunately for the couple, Andrew Coombs, a first-rate local builder, came to their rescue. 'Andrew understood the local planning regulations and had dealt with other period houses in the area,' says Jutta. 'He obtained permission to install two new sash windows on either side of the cooker, which has raised the light levels in the kitchen dramatically.' Jutta found >

ON OUR DOORSTEP

Visit... 'Blenheim Palace (blenheimpalace.com), seat of the Dukes of Marlborough and Winston Churchill's birthplace. It's full of grand rooms with painted ceilings and expansive landscaped grounds with lakes and follies. We love to walk the dogs here.'

Shop at... 'Burford Garden Company (burford.co.uk) for an ever-changing variety of quirky and unusual interior design accessories, fine food and wines, and lush plants for the garden.'

Go for a meal at... 'The Swan (info@swanhotel.co.uk) in Bibury, a quaint, charming inn dating back to the 1750s, with a healthy and delicious menu. Bibury trout is a speciality of theirs.'

Dining room

An antique mirror bounces light to create the illusion of space. Original Georgian **mirror** with foxed plate, Anton & K. **Table** and **chandelier**, both Maisons du Monde



En suite

Striped baskets used to store towels decorate a bespoke vanity unit made in old oak by Andrew Coombs. **Baskets**, Burford Garden Company. **Basin**, VictoriaPlum.com





Main bedroom

Panels enhance the Georgian proportions, while soft colours evoke a relaxing mood. Quilted **bedcover**, Maisons du Monde



En suite

A third bedroom was sacrificed to make a luxurious bathing space with a slipper bath as its focal point. **Floor tiles**, Fired Earth. **Walls** in Joa's White, Farrow & Ball

freestanding cottage-style units with a traditional feel, that counterbalance the stark look of the stainless-steel cooker.

Eliminating all trace of pink was next on the agenda. Andrew and his team removed the pink bathroom fittings and painted over the many pink walls in calming off whites and pale greys chosen by Jutta. New period fireplaces with woodburning stoves, flagstones in the kitchen, wooden floors and wide-planked doors with iron latches were sourced. A bedroom was turned into a luxurious en suite to the main bedroom and, gradually, Jutta put her stamp on each room.

Faded hues, chalky paints and vintage voile are at the heart of her French brocante look, lit by elegant crystal chandeliers that add sparkle and distinction to the main rooms. With so many antiques shops in the area, the couple sourced most of their furniture locally. A few single pieces, including an old Bavarian dresser and a vintage leather trunk used as a coffee table came from Germany, and shop fittings that display Jutta's collection of silver candlesticks were shipped from France.

'Interestingly, it is the sounds that enrich our life here,' says Jutta. 'Apart from birdsong, we love sitting in the conservatory, listening to the pitter patter of the rain. In summer, we all spill into the garden, which is divided into five areas, including a barbecue space and sunken garden. It is ideal for parties. We always feel on holiday here. It is magical.'

To rent The Flower Press, visit uniquehomestays.com

LIVING THE DREAM

Jutta Betz and Andreas Erbe divide their time between Germany and the UK, yet feel at home in both places.

Have you felt welcomed by the community?

'Yes. We take care to support local shops, such as the cheese shop and wine shop, and buy from nearby antiques stores. We have got to know the shop owners personally.'

What's the best way to get to know a new area?

'We made friends with neighbours and invited them to barbecues or for drinks. They told us about where to shop, good places to eat and lovely walks.'

How do you secure the house when it's empty?

'We rent out the house when we are in Germany, so it is hardly ever empty. We use a reliable, caring agent and make our guests feel special with a good welcome pack.'

Be inspired by JUTTA'S DINING ROOM



Gather ornate chairs around the table to add instant comfort and a touch of luxury.

Francois French dining **chair** in Grey, £174.99, My Furniture



This drop-bead chandelier adds a dash of baroque drama.

Gabrielle brown metal drop-bead **chandelier**, H96xW79xD68cm, £398.54, Maisons du Monde

Inspired by an ancient hand-applied metal leaf technique, this is truly gallery-worthy.

Barkham panelled wall **mirror**, H76xW51xD8cm, £298, ArtisanTi

Wine and dine in French Provençal style.

Charline dining **table**, H80xL160xD80cm, £329.99, Lily Manor at Wayfair

Add class with scallop-edged luxurious linens.

Place mats, £235 for four, Angela Wickstead at Matches Fashion

CH&I
**MODERN
Country
CLASSIC**

Jutta's style tip...

CREATE AN ILLUSION OF EXTRA SPACE WITH A HERO MIRROR, GLASS ACCESSORIES AND CRYSTAL DETAILS TO REFLECT LIGHT



Enjoy sparkling perfection with this robust crystal goblet.

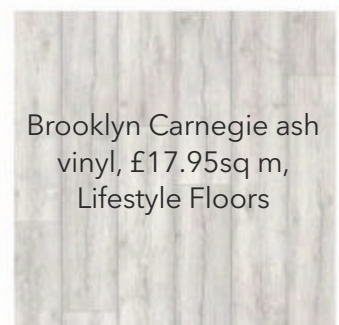
Boston white **wine glass**, £9.90, Villeroy & Boch

CH&I loves...

**PALE WASH
FLOORING**



Flair 537 Marilyn vinyl, £22.99sq m, Carpetright



Brooklyn Carnegie ash vinyl, £17.95sq m, Lifestyle Floors



Goodrich Cashmere oak, £116sq m, Woodpecker Flooring

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A You & your home

1 How old is your current home?

- Modern/new build/less than 10 years old (2010s) ☐ 1
- Between 10 and 30 years old (1980s/1990s/2000s) ☐ 2
- Around mid-century (1940s/1950s/1960s/1970s) ☐ 3
- Early 20th-century Edwardian (1900s/1910s/1920s/1930s) ☐ 4
- Victorian (1800s) ☐ 5
- Georgian (1700s) ☐ 6
- Earlier than Georgian (pre-1700s) ☐ 7
- Don't know ☐ 8

2 Is your home:

- Rented ☐ 1
- Owned with a mortgage ☐ 2
- Owned outright ☐ 3

3 How many homes have you owned so far?

- None ☐ 1
- 1 only (this is my first home) ☐ 2
- 2-3 ☐ 3
- 4-5 ☐ 4
- 6 or more ☐ 5

4 In the past five years have you undertaken any of the following major projects?

5 Do you intend to carry out any of the following projects in the next two years?

- | | Q4 Carried out in past 5 years | Q5 Planned for next 2 years |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Installed a new kitchen | ☐ 1 | ☐ 1 |
| • Had an extension built | ☐ 2 | ☐ 2 |
| • Had a loft conversion | ☐ 3 | ☐ 3 |
| • Had a new garden landscaped | ☐ 4 | ☐ 4 |
| • Installed a new bathroom | ☐ 5 | ☐ 5 |
| • House purchase/move | ☐ 6 | ☐ 6 |

6 Aside from these major projects how many rooms have you redecorated in the last year or so?

7 And how many rooms do you plan to redecorate in the next year or so?

- | | Q6 Number of rooms redecorated | Q7 Number planned to redecorate in next year |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--|
| • None | ☐ 1 | ☐ 1 |
| • 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 2 |
| • 2-3 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 3 |
| • 4-5 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 4 |
| • 6 or more | ☐ 5 | ☐ 5 |

8 Please read the following statements carefully and tick the one that best describes you:

- I don't really think too much about the decoration in my home - I buy things I need for the house without worrying how it will look. ☐ 1
- I really struggle decorating my home. I'm just not that confident in how to put things together nicely or how I'd like them. I often need a lot of help and advice to reassure me that I am doing the right things. ☐ 2
- I have some of my own ideas when it comes to decorating my home. However, I often need quite a bit of reassurance that my ideas are on trend and that I am doing things correctly. ☐ 3
- I have lots of my own ideas about how to decorate my home, however I'm not always happy with them. I often like to have some reassurance that what I am doing looks good and is on trend. ☐ 4
- I have loads of ideas about how to decorate my home and am quite confident putting things together by myself. Occasionally I will need some advice or help to get a look or trend exactly as I want it. ☐ 5
- I don't follow trends at all and come up with my own ideas when it comes to decorating my home. I don't need any help and just do what I like. ☐ 6

9 Which of the following best describes your decor taste?

Choose as many as apply and feel free to add more, if you feel we haven't captured your look.

- Contemporary ☐ 1
- Country/rustic ☐ 2
- Traditional ☐ 3
- Retro/mid-century ☐ 4
- Vintage ☐ 5
- Eclectic ☐ 6
- Other (please specify) ☐ 7

B Sources of home inspiration & information

10 How important are each of the following sources to you, when it comes to improving your home?

- | | Essential
1 | Very important
2 | Nice to have
3 | Could do without
4 |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Pinterest | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Facebook | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Instagram | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • YouTube | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Other social media | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Home interest magazines | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Friends and family | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • TV programmes | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Bloggers/vloggers/influencers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Websites | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Shops | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Shows/exhibitions | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Books | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

11 To what extent is your purchase of home magazines influenced by whether you have a project on the go?

- I **only** buy home magazines if I'm involved in a project ☐ 1
- I **mainly** buy home magazines if I'm involved in a project ☐ 2
- I buy home magazines **regardless** of whether I'm involved in a project or not ☐ 3

12 Are you currently involved in/planning any home improvement or decorating projects?

- Yes, planning a project ☐ 1
- Yes, just started work on a project ☐ 2
- Yes, in the middle of a project ☐ 3
- Not involved in any projects at the moment ☐ 4 skip to question 14

13 And how many home magazines have you bought so far in connection with this project?

- This is my first purchase ☐ 1
- 2-3 ☐ 2
- 4-5 ☐ 3
- 6 or more ☐ 4

14 How often do you buy Country Homes & Interiors?

- Always – I am a subscriber ☐ 1
- Every issue but don't subscribe ☐ 2
- 6 times a year ☐ 3
- 3-4 times a year ☐ 4
- Less than 3 times a year ☐ 5
- This is my first copy ☐ 6

15 And would you describe Country Homes & Interiors as:

- Your favourite home magazine ☐ 1
- One of your favourites ☐ 2
- Not usually one of your first choices ☐ 3

16 So which is your favourite home magazine?

17 Do you follow Country Homes & Interiors on any of the following social media channels?

- Instagram ☐ 1
- Facebook ☐ 2
- Pinterest ☐ 3
- Twitter ☐ 4
- I don't follow Country Homes & Interiors on any social media channel ☐ 5

C Attitudes to Country Homes & Interiors

18 What are your 3 main reasons for buying Country Homes & Interiors? Tick 3 only

- For decorating inspiration ☐ 1
- To dream/escape ☐ 2
- To keep up to date with trends ☐ 3
- To look at other people's homes ☐ 4
- To find practical advice ☐ 5
- To be informed ☐ 6
- To be entertained ☐ 7

19 In your opinion, how well does Country Homes & Interiors satisfy each of these needs?

- | | Very well
1 | Quite well
2 | Room for improvement
3 | No opinion
4 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • For decorating inspiration | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • To dream/escape | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • To keep up to date with trends | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • To look at other people's homes | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • To find practical advice | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • To be informed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • To be entertained | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

20 Listed below, in page order, are all the articles which appear in this issue of Country Homes & Interiors. For each item please tick the column which comes closest to your opinion.

Page No	Did not read 1	Very interesting 2	Quite interesting 3	Not very interesting 4	Not at all interesting 5
11 Editor's letter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12 Things we can't live without... April	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17 Design news	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18 New bloom (reader home)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30 A bright outlook (reader home)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40 Rustic rework (reader home)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
51 Happy ending (reader home)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
61 Let's move to Ribble Valley	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
62 'It's so special being alone in a wild, isolated place'	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
68 CH&I loves... Green shoots	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
73 Meet Richard Brendon ceramics designer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
74 A brush with blush	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
84 Create the prettiest Easter home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
91 'The whole village came together to save the GP surgery'	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
93 Beauty and utility...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
103 Buy the best... cordless vacuum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
104 The latest in wooden flooring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
108 Choose the best dresser	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
113 Made to measure (kitchen project)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
118 The nurturing garden	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
127 Naturally stylish outdoor planters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
128 Live life well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
131 My country passion night-walking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
133 A weekend away at Number One Bruton	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
135 Cooks' notes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
136 Springtime invitation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
154 My favourite view... Slad Valley	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21 How satisfied are you with the amount of coverage of each of the following subjects in the magazine?

- | | Would like more
1 | About right
2 | Would like less
3 |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • News/shopping | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Decorating ideas | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Real homes | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Trends | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Outdoor living/gardening | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Food | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Practical advice | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Reader offers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| • Before and after makeovers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

22 Have you noticed any changes to Country Homes & Interiors in the last year or so?

- Has improved considerably ☐ 1
- Has improved a little ☐ 2
- I have noticed some changes but preferred it the way it was ☐ 3
- I haven't noticed any changes ☐ 4

23 Please tell us what changes you have noticed:

24 How much did you enjoy this issue of Country Homes & Interiors?

- Very much ☐ 1
- Quite a lot ☐ 2
- Not very much ☐ 3
- Not at all ☐ 4

D About you

25 Are you:

- Female ☐ 1
- Male ☐ 2
- Prefer not to say ☐ 3

26 Which age group are you in?

- Under 25 ☐ 1
- 26-35 ☐ 2
- 36-45 ☐ 3
- 46-55 ☐ 4
- 56-65 ☐ 5
- 66-75 ☐ 6
- 75+ ☐ 7

27 Do you live:

- On your own ☐ 1
- With partner only (no children) ☐ 2
- With partner and children ☐ 3
- With children only (no partner) ☐ 4
- Other ☐ 5

28 What is your working status?

- Employed full-time ☐ 1
- Employed part-time ☐ 2
- Self-employed ☐ 3
- Not working ☐ 4
- Retired ☐ 5

29 How would you describe your financial status? Please be honest

- Very comfortable ☐ 1
- Comfortable ☐ 2
- Managing ☐ 3
- Struggling a bit ☐ 4
- Struggling a lot ☐ 5
- Not sure ☐ 6

30 What is your combined household income?

- Under £30,000 ☐ 1
- £30,000-£49,999 ☐ 2
- £50,000-£74,999 ☐ 3
- £75,000-£99,999 ☐ 4
- £100,000-£149,999 ☐ 5
- £150,000-£199,999 ☐ 6
- £200,000+ ☐ 7
- Prefer not to say ☐ 8

31 Do you live in the UK?

- Yes ☐ 1
- No ☐ 2

32 How would you describe the area you live in?

- Countryside ☐ 1
- Village ☐ 2
- Suburban ☐ 3
- Urban ☐ 4

33 Please write in your postcode

Please place your completed questionnaire in an envelope, affix the correct postage and return to us by 22 March 2020 to:

Country Homes & Interiors Reader Survey,
Box 113, 20 Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2LY

Thank you for your time. If you wish to be entered into our free prize draw, please fill in your name, email address (or your phone number if you don't have email) below. This contact data will only be used for the administration of the prize draw.

Name:

Email address:

Phone number:

LET'S MOVE TO Ribble Valley

LAND OF BEAUTIFUL FELS, GOOD HONEST FOLK AND RENOWNED GASTROPUBS

With Clitheroe at its administrative centre, the Ribble Valley occupies more than 200 square miles of north-east Lancashire countryside along the River Ribble, and is something of a charmed realm. A far cry from the industrial towns that border it, this is a land of Best Kept Villages and towns that have changed little over time, dotted among the heathery heaths of the Forest of Bowland. Truly a happy valley, the Ribble scored highly on the Office for National Statistics' wellbeing index 2019.

IN THE ESTATE AGENT'S WINDOW

New developments have eased the market making now a good time to up sticks to Clitheroe or Whalley, where good schools attract families. Stone-built terraces, originally for mill workers, are typical; a sizeable one will cost £260,000. For a rural five-bed haven, prices rise to £450,000. Flooding isn't unheard of, but riverside homes in villages are very saleable, according to Angela Lorek of Anderton Bosonnet estate agents. 'You'll pay a higher pound per square foot for Waddington, Downham or Wiswell,' she says.

BUTCHERS, BAKERS & COFFEE

MAKERS Best known for Lancashire hotpot, the valley is now a hub for gastropubs. The Inn at Whitewell (featured in BBC2's *The Trip*) and the Assheton Arms in Downham are both commended by The Good Pub Guide. Star attraction in Clitheroe is former textile mill Holmes Mill, now a beer and food hall. And with 50 sausage types, Cowman's Famous Sausage Shop is a banger.

COUNTRY LIFE & CULTURE

Overlooked by a medieval castle, with an excellent museum, is vibrant



Enjoy rolling green fells and majestic buildings, such as Stonyhurst College

Clitheroe – Ribble's largest social centre. Ease your way in with a lunch club or pop choir. The Everyman Cinema offers good films. For festivals, expect everything from the sublime to the ridiculous, from *Last Night of the Proms* at the castle, to a rubber duck race on the river.

SCHOOLS 'Good' village primary schools abound. Of the secondary provision, Ofsted rates technology-focused Ribblesdale as 'Good';

Bowland High and St Augustine's RC High are 'Outstanding', as is Clitheroe Royal Grammar.

GET AROUND Country lanes are predominant, yet the A59 reaches the M6 in 30 minutes. Trains are regular from Manchester to Clitheroe over the Whalley viaduct. West of Clitheroe, they're patchier.

IN THE AREA For literature buffs, the Tolkien Trail is not to be missed. *The Lord of the Rings* author worked on his novel while visiting his son at Stonyhurst College. The local tourist office suggests 'Walks with Taste', which all start and finish at great places to eat. Or, rip round Gisburn Forest's bike trails, then indulge.

Dream homes in the Ribble Valley



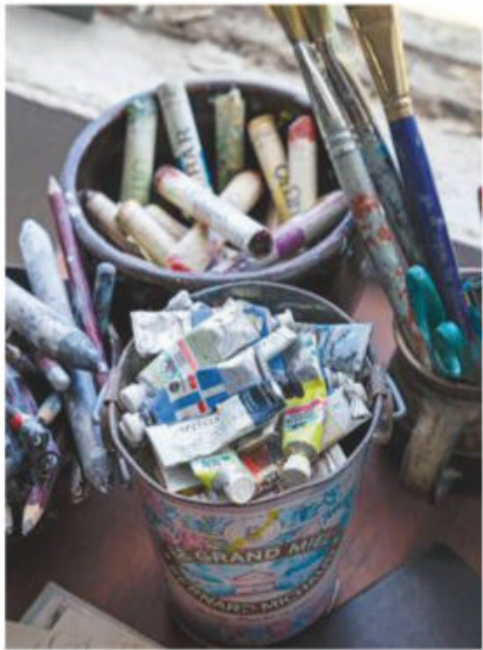
PEACE AND PLENTY
This five-bedroom detached house in Wiswell village has a secluded setting, mature gardens, an Aga, and four bathrooms. The price tag is £1,250,000.



COOL FOR SCHOOL
This wisteria-clad cottage in Grindleton has beautiful views of Pendle Hill, two bedrooms, timber beams and Italian limestone flooring, all for £270,000.



SMART MOVE
Town End is a pretty, detached five-bedroom 17th-century cottage in Slaidburn in olde-worlde Hodder Valley. A bit of a bargain at £400,000.



“It’s so special being alone in a wild, isolated place”

ARTIST HANNAH WOODMAN

Creativity runs in the family for Cornwall-based fine artist Hannah Woodman. ‘I grew up around an appreciation of both traditional crafts and fine art,’ she says. ‘My mother studied set design, and although my father had an engineering background, he loved art, too, and was always collecting unusual pieces. I think when you’re surrounded by creativity from a young age, it sort of seeps into you.’

Growing up near Dartington in Devon, Hannah cannot recall a time when she wasn’t trying to capture what she observed around her on paper. But while she received huge encouragement from her family, her traditional schooling didn’t support such artistic ambitions. ‘There was the age-old concern that trying to earn a living as an artist wouldn’t be sustainable,’ she says. She therefore took a degree in History of Art, then went on to study at the renowned Courtauld Institute of Art, before becoming a teacher, then a lecturer in schools, museums and galleries. Family life took over in her twenties (her three daughters, Ellie, Rosa and Lara, are now 24, 22 and 19), but her compulsion to paint remained constant, even in the midst of busy family life. ‘It was

my way of keeping a connection with art, and I couldn’t have been without it.’

At the time the family was living in London, but in 2003, Hannah and her former husband made the big decision to move to Truro in Cornwall. Some years previously, they’d purchased a very remote cottage at Gwithian on the west coast and this eventually became Hannah’s studio. ‘Whenever I could, I would drive out there to work. I loved the solitude and felt able to immerse myself in the extraordinary natural surroundings.’

This compulsion to connect fully to the landscape and then convey that in her work is something Hannah strives for constantly. ‘It’s as much about capturing the atmosphere of these places as what I see in front of me,’ she says. ‘I find there’s something so special about being alone in a wild, isolated space, and considering my place in it. That’s something I try to encapsulate on canvas.’

But the turning point in her career – ‘a true moment of serendipity’ – came just before the move to Cornwall, when she inadvertently left some photographs of her work at a friend’s house. ‘Her persistence meant they found their way to a gallerist in London called James Huntington-Whiteley,’ says Hannah. ‘He came >

Having a dedicated studio space means Hannah can keep all of her works out on show, without having to pack up at the end of the day



What I love most...

“THE ENDLESS SUPPLY OF INSPIRATION THAT CORNWALL HAS TO OFFER – I CAN TAKE MYSELF OFF TO THE MOST REMOTE PLACES”

to see my work and ended up offering me an exhibition on Cork Street, which was both exciting and terrifying at the same time.’

Hannah had to produce 40 pieces of work in just six months for the opening. ‘I was painting every day and was so determined, although I definitely had imposter syndrome – I thought that I probably wasn’t good enough for the opportunity,’ she says. But, her fears were completely unfounded. The exhibition was a resounding success, and finally gave Hannah the means and opportunity to completely immerse herself in her work as an artist.

Then, eight years ago, Hannah moved with her daughters to the Cornish river

town of Falmouth, drawn by its community spirit. ‘I wanted to feel connected with other creative souls and this place gave me that chance,’ she says. That connection is something she has been fundamental in establishing, too. She initially worked from a warehouse studio in Penryn, but she felt a strong need to create an affordable space to share with other artists. An opportunity presented itself three years ago when she discovered the historic warehouse next to the one she was working in was for sale.

Grays Wharf, overlooking the river, was run down and contained a warren of rooms, but Hannah could immediately see its potential. ‘It didn’t need to be fancy, just functional – it was exactly the right space.’ Hannah teamed up with her friend, jeweller Mirri Damer, and together they took a huge leap of faith and bought the building between them. ‘It was really nerve-racking and we had so much to get done before we could even get it up and running,’ says Hannah.

The two women needn’t have worried. Hannah was able to move into the one completed studio space just six months later. ‘It was just me and the builders for a while,’ she says. But an enormous response from local artists and designers who were equally keen to work in such a creative space meant there was soon a waiting list for the remaining studios and workspaces. There are now 20 people in residence – from painters to photographers, ceramicists and screen printers – spread across the 12 individual studios and the shared work area.

‘It really is the best of both worlds,’ says Hannah. ‘I love the sense of community and support we have at Grays Wharf, but I can also take myself off to some of the most remote corners of the country, which is where all my inspiration comes from. Living in this part of Cornwall and working in this community space, I feel creatively sustained in every sense of the word.’

hannahwoodman.co.uk



The large warehouse walls are perfect for creative planning

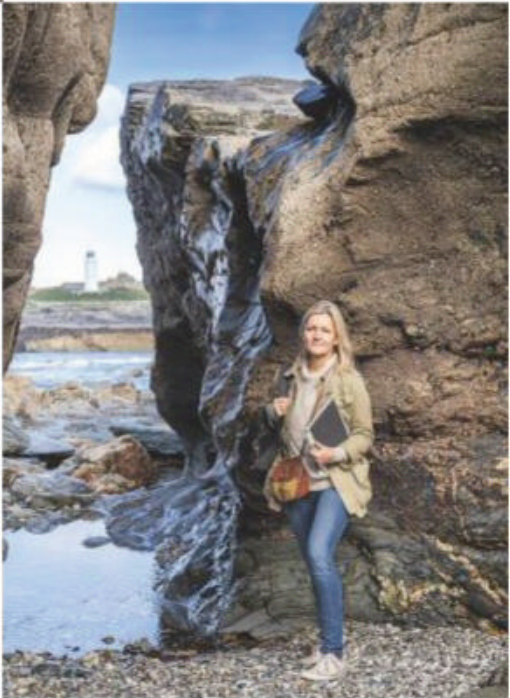
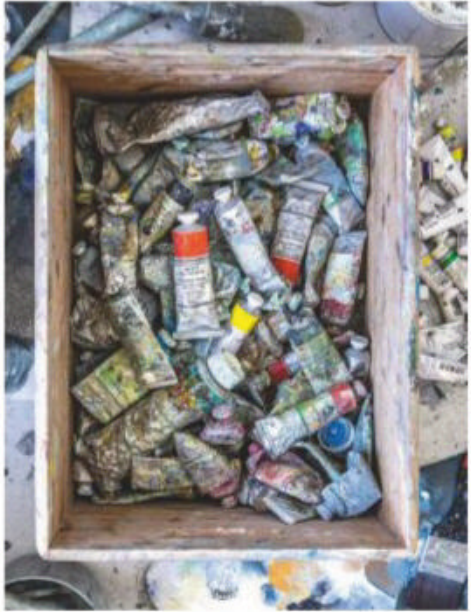
There are 12 studios in the warehouse - one is Hannah's own



Hannah starts with a sketchbook, recreating her paintings on canvas back at the studio



A display of photos and prints bring personality to the studio space





As much as she loves the sense of community at her studio, Hannah revels in solitary time out in the wild, too

ON MY DOORSTEP...

Visit... 'Potager Garden (potagergarden.org). These relaxing and restful gardens on the road between Falmouth and Constantine have been reclaimed from an abandoned nursery.'

Shop at... 'Willow & Stone (willowandstone.co.uk). I always find such lovely homeware, books and stationery here.'

Go for a meal at... 'The Star and Garter (starandgarter.square.space.com) in Falmouth has fantastic harbour views and a roaring fire. What more do you need?'

SMALL
BUSINESS
ADVICE

HOW TO MAKE A CREATIVE COMMUNITY SPACE WORK

BRINGING ARTISTS TOGETHER CAN BE COMMERCIALY VIABLE



Research recognises the important role creative destination enterprises, such as Grays Wharf, play in connecting people, enabling a sharing of knowledge and stimulating the imagination. Here, Hannah and her colleague, creative producer Megan Beck, share their tips and advice for anyone considering setting up a creative co-working space.

HAVE A VISION Hannah's long-held ambition was to create somewhere affordable, clean and safe for artists, designers and makers to work in a supported, social environment. 'Having a vibrant cultural space where like-minded people can create, talk about their work, share ideas and perhaps collaborate on a project has been one of our key objectives,' she says. 'The great thing about being here, however, is that when people want to work, they can simply close their studio door and continue without interruption.'

REACH OUT The other main aim at Grays Wharf has been to promote access to quality art and design for everyone. 'We've formed the Arts

Community Interest Company to increase engagement between those working here and the local community,' says Megan. 'My role involves establishing a programme of talks, exhibitions, courses, workshops and events to promote the business and support the individuals working here. We may approach someone, such as an art historian for instance, to run a course or give a talk, but the idea is that some of our practitioners host or teach, too.'

MAKE GOOD USE OF THE SPACE

At Grays Wharf, a gallery at the front along with a large central space and a courtyard offers a valuable opportunity. 'We hire out the spaces, provided the reasons for doing so fit our overall vision,' says Hannah. 'This could be anything from end-of-year shows for university and college students, to private creative workshops, screenings and presentations. Events also provide a good opportunity to collaborate with local caterers or musicians.'

BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE 'We're currently working on a new initiative

with our local Age Concern group to provide a creative social group for older people one afternoon a week. Activities such as drawing and painting stimulate the brain, but the group could also help to tackle loneliness,' says Megan.

THINK ABOUT FINANCE To fund many of the initiatives planned at Grays Wharf, it's been necessary to secure funding, which Megan is largely responsible for. 'We were able to get some financial assistance from an organisation in Cornwall called Cultivator (cultivatorcornwall.org.uk) to buy tools and equipment for a range of courses we have planned,' says Megan. 'There are also some good online sources, such as Funding Circle (fundingcircle.com) which can offer support, and it's worth talking to your local council, as it may have a small pot for community initiatives.'

KEEP EVERYONE INFORMED 'We produce a newsletter for all the residents and we're also establishing regular lunches where everyone can share ideas.' **For more information, go to grayswharf.co.uk**

The one lesson I've learnt...

“ I'VE HAD TO LEARN HOW TO RING-FENCE MY PAINTING TIME - OUR OFFICE IS OPEN TO EVERYONE, BUT MY STUDIO IS SACRED! ”

CH&I loves... **GREEN SHOOTS**

*Leafy prints are flourishing,
with verdant patterns that
bring hedgerow, field and
forest into your home*

Celebrating British riverlands, this collection translates wild-grass wetlands across ceramics, textiles and garden products. Nymans Foliage cushions, £25 each; Riverlands Fishbone throw, £40; Merino cable throw in Green, £80; Sissinghurst Wetland Grass throw, £35; Nymans Foliage vases, from £8 each; jute pot, £8; terrarium bottle, £50, all National Trust Shop

MAKE IT COUNTRY...

We love how this trend's leafy landscape is reflected across textiles, furniture and accessories. The new botanicals come in all shades of green, from energising mint and apple, to calming forest and olive. To bring your inner Eden to life, stagger real stems and leaves in glass vessels along surfaces, and welcome an abundance of potted and hanging plants.



Let nature's tranquility into the bedroom with ombre patterns featuring sage fronds on co-ordinating linens and soft furnishings. Pair with wood and seagrass to add an earthy touch. Costa Rica fern bed linen, £85 for a double set, Clarissa Hulse



1



2



3



4



5

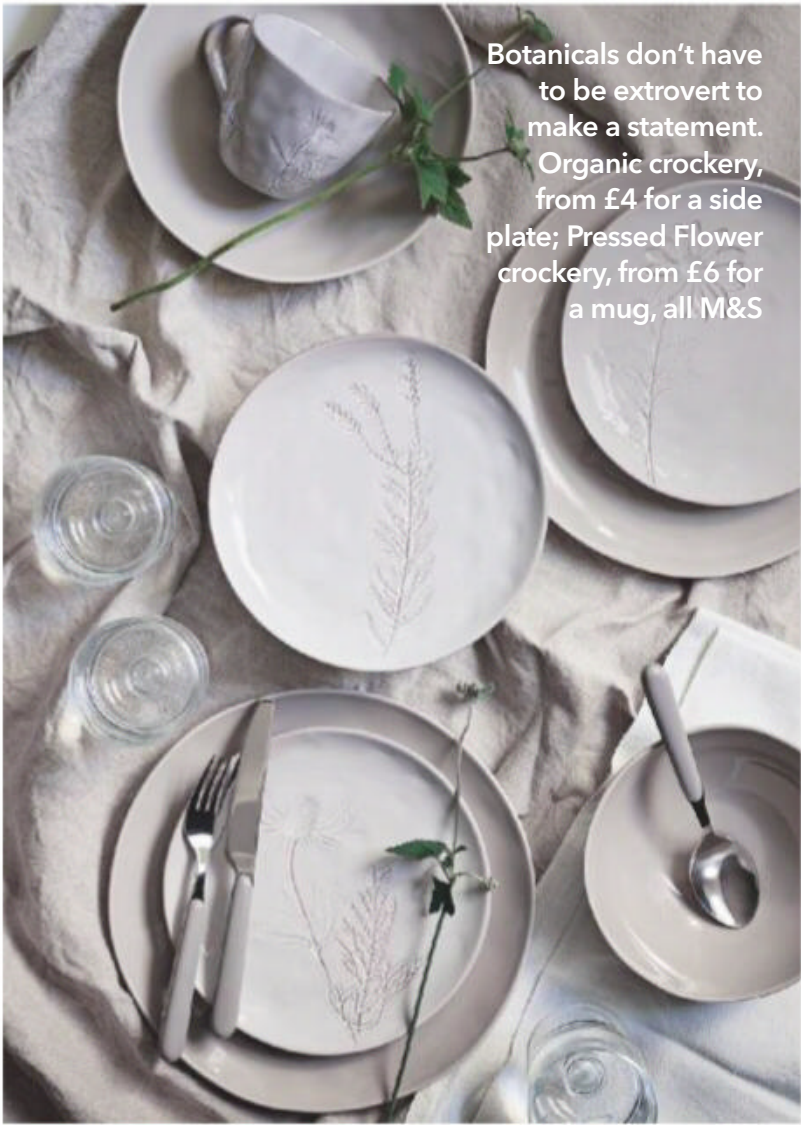
1 PENDANT Curved glass with an air of vintage chic makes a striking overhead feature in any country room. Retro palm leaf glass **pendant** in Light Green, £85, Cult Living at Cult Furniture

2 BOWLS Fallen leaves inspire this trio. Leaf **bowls**, £32.50 for set of three, Oliver Bonas

3 CHEST OF DRAWERS Tendrils carved into solid mango wood transform an essential storage piece. Fern **chest of drawers**, £599, Atkin and Thyme

4 CHAIR Bring bold blooms and glossy greens to the table with statement-making motifs on seating. Tamsin dining **chair** in Green, £118, Paule Marrot at Anthropologie

5 PLANTER Horticus vertical **planter kit**, £1,152, Chalk & Moss



Botanicals don't have to be extrovert to make a statement. Organic crockery, from £4 for a side plate; Pressed Flower crockery, from £6 for a mug, all M&S



Let climbing foliage patterns bring the illusion of a 'living wall' to a room. Partner busy designs with simple furniture so as not to overwhelm the space. Jasmine & Serin Symphony wallpaper, £120 a roll, Cole & Son

OUR EXPERT SAYS...

“FOR AN EXOTIC AND CONTEMPORARY TWIST ON THIS LUSCIOUS LOOK, TRY DESIGNS FEATURING SOME TROPICAL SPECIES AND EXAGGERATED JUNGLE LEAF STYLES”

HOLLY PHILLIPS, STYLE CONTENT EDITOR



6

7

8



9

10



6 NOTEBOOK Take note of blooming good ideas as they start to sprout! Botanicals A5 **notebook**, £7.99, The Gifted Stationery Company

7 CANDLE Channel the scent of a herb garden wafting through a window. Rooftop Garden botanical **candle**, £26, Sunday of London

8 NAPKINS Hand screen-printed creations juxtapose organic and natural forms with gentle, geometric repeats. Tropical leaf **napkins** in Jungle Green, from £30 for four, Lara Görlach

9 DISPLAY FRAME Preserve the fragility of nature's bounty with a wall display of pressed leaves encased within gilded glass. Pressed flower **frames**, from £10 each, PalyGlass at Etsy

10 CUSHION Mix feathery leaf designs with plain fabrics in tonal colours to cultivate cosy seating arrangements. Printed fern **cushion**, £32, HK Living at Flo & Joe

FEATURE HOLLY PHILLIPS

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Bali Collection



www.prestigious.co.uk

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Meet Richard Brendon

CERAMICS DESIGNER

London-based ceramicist Richard Brendon is known for his refined tableware designs. His latest collection, Dip, pays tribute to the heritage of British pottery and offers a modern spin on 18th-century earthenware

Is your background in design?

Yes, I studied design at Kingston. I was working in a pub during my final year, and became fascinated by antiques. I would go via Portobello Road as part of my commute and was curious as to why I would find saucers without their teacups (teacups have a tendency of breaking more frequently than saucers). I wanted to bring these orphaned saucers back to life, and so my passion for ceramics was sparked.

What inspired the Dip collection?

A trip to the V&A when I saw the archives of 'creamware' – a light-coloured earthenware developed by famed potter Thomas Wedgwood in mid-18th-century Staffordshire. The pieces were simple, and the designs naive yet charming. I wondered how we might be able to bring back the production style of these pieces with a modern design twist.



Each piece is hand-dipped

How does your work keep traditional skills alive?

The more I looked into the world of ceramics – particularly that of bone china – the more I realised that the pottery industry is declining. I'm passionate about regenerating it and the traditional techniques used by skilled craftspeople all over the world.

Talk us through your process.

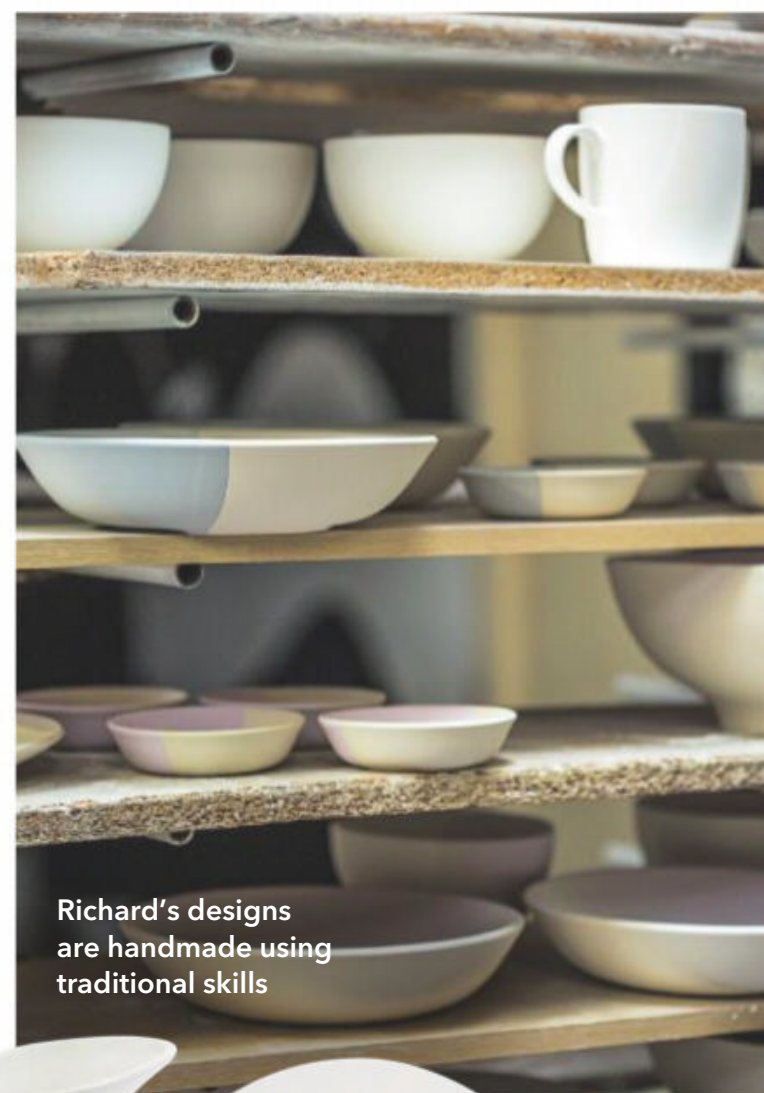
We start by making the 'wares', using a light-coloured clay. They're then fired before being hand-dipped in one of our three glaze colours. Then they are hand-sprayed with a clear glaze, dried, and placed in the kiln for firing overnight. It is time-consuming, but honours traditional techniques.

What about colour choices?

I wanted to use cobalt blue, as it's the most prevalent colour in the history of British ceramics, and after playing around with various hues, we settled on a smoky grey tone to add drama, with a subtle white base.

What's been your career highlight?

That's a tricky one! It would have to be collaborating with wine expert



Richard's designs are handmade using traditional skills



Dip 16cm coupe bread plate, £20; jug, £85

Jancis Robinson. It was an incredibly humbling experience to be chosen to work with someone so knowledgeable in their field.

Sum up your style in three words.

Considered, crafted and timeless.

Richard Brendon, 020 8962 8924, richardbrendon.com

3 more ceramics designers to watch ...

JOHN WHEELDON offers a contemporary take on early 19th-century teapots for **The New Craftsmen**. johnwheeldonceramics.co.uk **JULIAN SAINSBURY** creates pared-back porcelain designs from his artisan workshop in Wiltshire. 01722 744 805, johnjulian.co.uk **JEANNETT STEVENSON'S** earthenware collection is available in a range of rustic shades. 01803 865 557, pippiandmeceramics.com



A brush *with blush*

Like petals on a spring breeze, blossom tones drift gently through interiors this season, in impressionistic shifts of colour

LIGHT AS AIR

Frame a garden view with pretty pastel window drapes. Blowsy prints in soft shades bring the beauty of blossom inside.

TULIP FEVER

A springtime still life swaps Old Master richness for pastel hues. A swag of fabric hung on the wall creates an evocative background to an ephemeral display of seasonal fancies.



EASTER ELEGANCE

Combine plain cloths with painterly patterned napkins, matt-textured plates with gleaming glass, and metallic details on chairs, cutlery and lighting for an elegant setting.



Grace & favour

STYLE SEASONAL
PLACE SETTINGS
WITH EASE, USING
INDIVIDUAL
NESTING EGGS,
OR OFFER TAKE-
HOME TREATS
IN HOMEMADE
DRAWSTRING
PURSES



FRAGRANT FINISHING TOUCH

Evoke petal scents with fragranced candles in reusable decorative jars. Swirling and speckled finishes add a subtle hint of pattern.



DREAM CATCHER

Pick a pretty, blown-out wallpaper to draw the eye to a main wall in a bedroom. Dress the bed with plainer linens, featuring on-trend embroidery edging with discreet pattern pops on complementary cushions.



ALL THE DETAILS, PRODUCTS & PRICES



PAGES 74-75

LIGHT AS AIR

Eva medium **sofa** in Harry Sand, £3,010, Neptune. Mila large **side table** in Blush, £125; Herringbone wool **pouffe** in Blush, £70; Luna medium **rug** in Blush, £425, all Cox & Cox. **Curtain** in Floriana, £81m, Nina Campbell at Osborne & Little. Tall Pink glazed jug **vase**, £95, Rockett St George. Deltona Grey round glass **vase**, £25, Habitat. Blush **mug**, £3.50, Sainsbury's Home. Holcombe Green and Peach **cushion**, £69; Beardwood Grey and Coral **cushion**, £69, both Aire Studio. Linen **cushion** in Dusty Pink, £30, Nordic House. Washed velvet **cushion** in Toasted Almond, £36; Blush Sky **throw**, £55, both French Connection Home

TULIP FEVER

Chinoiserie **fabric** in Soft Coral, £69m, Sarah Hardaker. Linen throw in Heather Pink (used as **tablecloth**), £110, Nordic House. Urn planter (used as **vase**), £15, Homesense. Utvandig decorative **bowl**, £12; Hantverk **vase**, £19; Gradvis **vase**, £10; Foradla **cake stand**, £17, all Ikea. Palm leaf mini **basket**, £3, Rowen & Wren. Rose **cakes**, £4.20; Honey **cakes**, £1.30 each, all Gail's Bakery. Duck **eggs**; mini **chocolate eggs**, both from a selection at Waitrose & Partners



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EASTER ELEGANCE

Jupiter pendant **light**, £240, Rockett St George. Angling for Gold **chairs**, £199 each, The French Bedroom Company. **Stool**, £165, Cox & Cox. Bed linen in Blush (used as **tablecloth**), £150 for a double set, The French Bedroom Company. Tassel **cushion**, £7; storage **basket**, £8 for two, both George Home. Wilworth **tea towel**, £12, Aire Studio. Gradvis **vase**, £10, Ikea. Water **glasses**, £32.50 for four; margarita **glasses**, £30 for two, both Rockett St George. Mila gin **glasses**, £20 for two, Oliver Bonas. Atkinson dinner **plates**, £40 for a 12-piece set, Habitat. Blush side **plates**, £3.75 each; **bowls**, £3.75 each, both Sainsbury's Home. Cake **plate**, £70 for six, Cox & Cox. Brushed Gold-effect **cutlery**, £15 for a 16-piece set, George Home. Mini **baskets**, £3 each, Rowen & Wren. Beardwood tea towel (used as **napkin**), £12, Aire Studio. **Cakes**, from a selection at Gail's Bakery



PAGES 78-79

FRAGRANT FINISHING TOUCH

Water glass (used as **vase**), as before. Terracotta **pot**, £4, Rowen & Wren. Rosehip Pink **candle**, £19, French Connection Home. **Wallpaper** sample, from a selection at Aire Studio. Gold and glass **ring box**, £18, Oliver Bonas

DREAM CATCHER

Fleur de Nuit Pale Coral **wallpaper**, £195 a roll, Designers Guild. Tria brass side **table**, £125, Loaf. Glass shade and marble table **lamp**, £78, Oliver Bonas. Soleil textured highball **glass**, £25 for four; Polly scalloped edge **pillowcases**, £30 for two, both Habitat. **Bed linen** in Pink, £165 for a king-size set, The French Bedroom Company. Mellor Cherry Blossom **cushion**, £69, Aire Studio. Chinoiserie **cushion** in Old Pink, £40, Sarah Hardaker. Waffle **throw** in Dusky Pink, £79, Rockett St George

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NATURE'S NEST

A pretty bowl or small, rustic basket filled with hen and quail eggs in a mixture of painted and natural shells is an easy table display, and a gentle nod to Easter.



SWEET TREATS

Easter tree DIY kit, £35, Biscuiteers. Basket, from £16, Bohemia. Happy Easter bunting, £12, Gisela Graham

Create the prettiest EASTER HOME

Celebrate Easter and the return of spring, and make the most of a long weekend with family and friends, with simple decorative touches that bring joy and life to your home



SET THE SCENE

Falling in the midst of spring, Easter is the perfect excuse to style your home with plenty of blossom and blooms, fresh foliage and pretty decorations. Garlands and pom-pom balls add seasonal style and are easy to take down again once the celebrations are over - and an egg hunt is a must for all ages!



CENTRE OF ATTENTION

A simple cake stand is easy to turn into an Easter centrepiece or a side table display. Start with a twig-wrapped wreath from a florist, then add natural textures, such as moss and hessian, into the circle for a rustic finish. Fill the 'nest' with a potted plant and seasonal accessories to suit your setting.



TABLE TALK

Leave a wooden tabletop bare for a casual setting inspired by nature. Pastel pink and duck egg blues provide the perfect colour accents against natural linens and woven mats, while a painted egg place setting adds a homespun touch. A potted bulb or homemade marzipan egg decorates a place setting and makes a pretty take-home gift once dinner is over.

EASTER BUNNY

Pom-pom paper cups, £3.99 for eight, Ginger Ray. Crinkle reversible throw, £75, Habitat. Bunny egg cosy, £8 for two, The White Company





SWAP IN TOUCHES OF SPRING

Pretty floral cushions, natural linens and tableware in pastel tones will instantly give a neutral dining room a lift, as well as bring a seasonal touch to your home. Echo floral prints with bunches of fresh daffodils dotted around the room, and line a dresser with nesting hen ceramics for a fun display.

OUR EXPERT SAYS...

“KEEP FLORAL DISPLAYS THRIVING BY MIXING IN DIFFERENT-COLOURED SPRING BLOOMS AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE CHANGING SEASONS”

TARA KING, STYLE CONTENT EDITOR

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

If you've used eggshells to make decorations, don't throw away the contents. Yolks and whites can be used in a variety of recipes - from macaroons and fluffy meringues, to a traditional Simnel cake. Both will keep in the fridge for up to three days - just add a little water to the yolks to stop them drying out.



START A NEW TRADITION

Get all the family involved in Easter egg decorating. Painting is quick and easy, or try your hand at decoupage. Using some decoupage glue (try Mod Podge matt finish, £5 for 236ml, Hobbycraft) and a small brush, delicately attach floral paper designs to the shells. Continue to build up the pattern, then leave to dry. If you want to keep them for next year, blow them first and store safely in an empty egg box.



SHOWPIECE

Cake stand, £19.99, Homesense. Flower and twig wreath, £30, Gisela Graham



BRING THE OUTSIDE IN

Draw on the spring in bloom theme with naturalistic floral arrangements – think daffodils, hyacinths and wild greenery, as well as sculptural blossom branches. Consider an Easter tree – they look so pretty and really set the scene. Try a ready-made design or make your own with slender branches – twisted willow is good, or use real catkin or forsythia stems. Dress with twine-hung egg decorations.



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“The whole village came together to save the GP surgery”

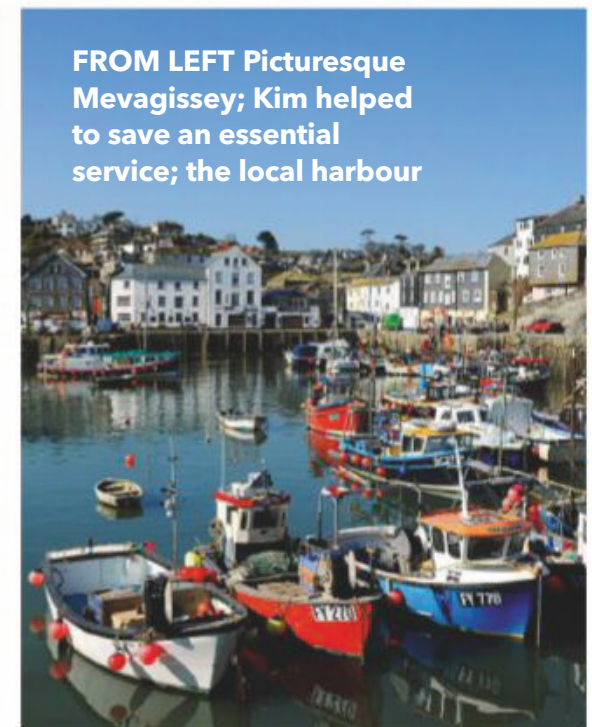
Along with friends and fellow residents, Kim Andrews helped campaign to keep the local GP surgery in Mevagissey

Eleven years ago, I moved from the New Forest, bought a motorhome and started travelling.

I'd been made redundant after a 25-year career in IT. One afternoon, I found myself in a quayside cafe in Mevagissey, a tiny fishing village in Cornwall. Having travelled extensively, I always ask myself, 'Could I live here?' at each new destination. Looking out at the boats sat calmly in the water, with cottages round the bay, 'Yes' came my answer. Before long I was renting a flat, volunteering with the RNLI and had found a job, running Boots pharmacy in neighbouring St Blazey.

Through my work, I am well aware of how important local care is in a small community. I know my own patients well and will always be a listening ear. So when I learnt in May 2019 that the Mevagissey GP surgery was under threat of closure, I felt a deep concern. Having been running the practice single-handedly, serving 5,300 patients, the local GP Dr James had decided to leave. With no one at the helm, it would be closed

by August and patients would have to travel further to see a doctor. Expecting an elderly person, perhaps walking with a stick, or young mums, to struggle their way to more distant districts, catching buses that run only once an hour, would be a huge blow to many. **One thing I know from building a new life is that it's always worth trying to change a situation that isn't right - it's surprising how often it comes off!** A support group called Friends of the Surgery or FOTS was already on the case. They had made placards saying, 'Will you be my GP?' My friend James Mustoe, a Cornwall councillor, and I immediately saw the potential for a hashtag. I offered to start a Twitter account and Facebook page. I was using my background in IT to contribute, but everyone in the village was also using whatever skill set they had, holding meetings and placing posters in windows. **I thought a 'beach write' seemed like a good idea, given our location.** Photos of the message in



FROM LEFT Picturesque Mevagissey; Kim helped to save an essential service; the local harbour

the sand went out on social media. Soon we were inundated with media interest from Radio 4, *The Guardian* - even CNN. GPs replied on Twitter and, meanwhile, the local MP Steve Double was taking our predicament to the House of Commons.

Then, almost as quickly as it had started, the campaign was over - we had rescued the GP service.

I was thankful, but also gobsmacked! A Cornish surgery in Cambourne had entered discussions about working jointly with Dr James, and she reversed her decision to leave. It was an amazing result, spurred by the positivity and passion of local people.

What a whirlwind of a summer it was. To take on something so important with friends, and win, was thrilling. Now, I would always get on board with anything of similar importance. There will always be a minority of people who say, 'That will never work.' But you might just find that community spirit is alive and well, as it is in Mevagissey!

Find out more about village life at facebook.com/mevagisseyweb



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Atlas II floor tiles, £4.45 each, Cement Tile Shop.
Dutch door paint in Watercolour Blue, £23 for 0.94ltr, Benjamin Moore



PRETTY AS A PICTURE

When the boot room is integral to the house, it can be more decorative. American interior designer Brooke Crew took this approach for her client. 'The room is off her patio and garden so the floral wallpaper felt right, but I wanted it be practical, too, so I balanced the prettiness with cement tiles.' The existing door was replaced by a Dutch door, painted in high gloss.

Beauty and UTILITY...

BE IT A BOOT ROOM OR A DEDICATED LAUNDRY AREA, A COUNTRY HOME CRIES OUT FOR AN OFF-STAGE SPACE TO HOUSE HARDWORKING ELEMENTS. HERE'S HOW TO MAKE YOURS DECORATIVE AS WELL AS PRACTICAL

Reclaimed sink, sourced through Wilsons Yard. Westminster Victorian floor tiles, £225.37sq m, Original Style

LET'S GET PERSONAL

Give each member of the family their own section in a boot room and increase the chances that items will always be found when needed. This scheme by Louise Jones Interiors uses patterned Victorian floor tiles – ideal for this type of room as they mask all manner of mud and outside dirt. If you can't find a similar sized ceramic butler sink, soapstone is a good alternative. As it's impermeable, it doesn't harbour bacteria and can be cut to size.

NEAT AND SLEEK

If the boot room leads directly off the kitchen, create a seamless flow by choosing the same cabinetry, paint colour and flooring tiles. A more contemporary interpretation of a country-house boot room, this design by Sustainable Kitchens uses smooth panels with J-pull handles, paired with pale wood. Maximise space with a bench seat featuring a hinged lid.



Boot room, from £5,000, Sustainable Kitchens.
Cabinetry in Purbeck
 Stone estate eggshell, £64
 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball



Bespoke shoe rack, K&H Design. Cupboard interior in Red Ochre finish, £49.50 for 2.5ltr, Edward Bulmer. Antique umbrella stand, Bamfords Auctioneers



Cley boot room design, from £10,000, Naked Kitchens. Leather handles, from £13.99 each, Dowsing & Reynolds

TIDY HIDEAWAY

To maintain a sense of calm and order, hive off messier elements behind closed doors. K&H Design came up with this scheme to conceal flower room paraphernalia within a cupboard. If pushed for space, designate a cleaning cupboard below a sink with places to store boots beneath. Close the double doors, and the room returns to a serene state. To keep spaces such as this box-fresh, paint skirting boards and furniture with washable paint, such as the Intelligent range from Little Greene – it will prevent scuff marks from muddy paws or kicking off wellies.

ON THE HOUSE

Georgian-style housekeeper cupboards are seeing a return in popularity for their Narnia-like ability to hide all kinds of magic behind their doors – seen here fitting out a side-return extension. Although not a cheap option, commissioning a pair of generously sized cupboards will prove a good investment for a tidy house. Keep a few open shelves for some of the better-looking kit; or go a step further and have special items left out on show.

Bespoke joinery, Ham Interiors. Reclaimed brick floor tiles, similar from £79sq m, Lubelska

CLEAR THINKING

Make the best use of existing alcoves to create a handy place where visitors can decant their outdoor wear. 'Here, I wanted to create a functional boot room that was a rustic yet decorative entrance to a country house,' explains designer Tom Cox of Ham Interiors. Using glass for doors draws visitors further into the house. They also make an entrance area feel more generous, allow in additional light and inject a contemporary edge.



FRONT OF HOUSE

If there isn't an obvious area that can be a designated boot room, consider building an extension from the front door that can double as one. Charlotte Crosland designed this entrance with a glass-pitched roof to add light and the feeling of space, helping to balance all the cubbies and hooks for coats. Tongue-and-groove clad walls, attractive wall lights and floor tiles add style and character.



Traditional wall lanterns in Zinc, from £450 each, Hector Finch. Opera coat hooks in nickel, £58 each, Chloe Alberry



Boot room using Neptune's Suffolk Collection, from £25,000, Sims Hilditch. Rattan wicker baskets, from £45, Garden Trading. Similar bench seat fabric, Beam, £102m, Romo

SOFT TOUCH

Cladding the walls of a utility or boot room in tongue-and-groove panels and covering the floor with indoor brick pavers (which are thinner and have a less porous surface than construction bricks) immediately sets an appropriate workaday tone. Here, Emma Sims-Hilditch has designed built-in joinery with a mix of open shelves and closed storage, then added large floor baskets and a comfortable seating area to help break up the space and make it a more welcoming setting. A soft paint colour (this is Pigeon by Farrow & Ball) adds the finishing touch.

LOCKER-ROOM STYLE

Even when space is tight, a multifunctional room with a deep sink (handy for cleaning muddy paws or handwashing), laundry appliances (stacked for a smaller footprint), hooks and storage will see plenty of use. Designers Blakes London has added personality here with the cabinetry in an inky blue and covering the floor in geometric cement tiles. Use natural stone or composite stone for work surfaces, as they are better for water and rough handling than wood.



Cabinetry, price on request, Blakes London. **Paint**, Stiffkey Blue, £47.95 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball

Boot rooms, from £12,000, Humphrey Munson. Ionian bridge kitchen tap, £522, Perrin & Rowe

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Channel a classic country house style by creating a traditional boot room. This catch-all space covers all practical bases, from shelving with plenty of pegs for coats, a bench seat for pulling wellies on and off (as well as providing a place underneath to house them tidily), a useful spare sink and integrated dog beds. A pretty blind adds a touch of pattern and softens the predominance of hard surfaces.



FEATURE ARABELLA YOUENS **PHOTOGRAPHS** (LET'S GET PERSONAL, CLEAR THINKING) ALEXANDER JAMES, (TIDY HIDEAWAY) SIMON BROWN, (FRONT OF HOUSE) JAKE FITZJONES, (SOFT TOUCH) JAKE EASTHAM, (LOCKER ROOM STYLE) @82MMPHOTOGRAPHY, (PAWS FOR THOUGHT) PAUL CRAIG, (THE BIG CHILL) DARREN CHUNG **STYLING** (PRETTY AS A PICTURE) BEATRIZ DA COSTA

Bespoke boot rooms, from £7,500, Martin Moore. **Flooring**, aged Steinach limestone, from £80sq m, Martin Moore Stone

THE BIG CHILL

A boot room can be so much more than the barrier between the internal and external spaces in a house. It can double as a laundry room, flower room and a secondary kitchen area – which can be handy as a place to put dishes and plates while entertaining. In this scheme by Martin Moore, a double-door fridge finds a home in a multipurpose space that is packed with cupboards, shelves and pigeonholes. The result: an efficient storage system where everything has its place.



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(H112.3xW27.9
xD19.6cm),
£349.99, Bissell

■ BATTERY LIFE

Short battery life may have put you off buying a cordless vacuum in the past, but it's hard to find a machine that has less than a 30-minute run time on one charge now. More companies are creating universal rechargeable batteries, meaning you can use the same battery pack across an entire range of products. Bosch's Power For All and Vax's OnePWR ranges both offer this option.

■ BUILT-IN FILTER

For allergy sufferers, it's definitely worth investing in a vacuum that completely removes irritants, such as dust particles, pet hair and dander, rather than just disturbing them and making them airborne. Certain machines – usually labelled either 'pet' or 'animal' – feature HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters that remove around 99% of allergens from the air.

■ THE CONVENIENCE OF CORDLESS

Traditionally a 'do-the-whole-house-in-one-go' chore, vacuuming habits have evolved over the years to a 'little and often' approach. Convenient cordless machines mean that you can store your vacuum in a smaller space (closer to the 'action'), grabbing it whenever required.

BEST FOR CONSTANT USE

Bosch Unlimited Serie 6 BCS612GB
(H120xW20xD26.5cm), £289,
John Lewis & Partners

The Serie 6 conveniently comes with two battery packs, so you can always have one charged and ready to go if you run out of power mid-clean (each pack can keep going for up to 30 minutes on one charge). As well as boasting an AllFloor Power Brush that tackles hard floors as easily as it cleans carpets and rugs, it also features an array of extras – including an upholstery brush, a mattress nozzle and a flexible crevice tool.



BEST FOR MANOEUVRABILITY

Blade 4 cordless vacuum
(H115xW24xD18cm), £219.99, Vax

Fully charged from flat in three hours, the new Blade 4 features a 45-minute run time and an extra boost button to enhance the suction by up to three times. Weighing 3.1kg (or 2kg in handheld mode) the balanced, ergonomic design makes it easy to move around, while the handy LED headlights brighten up dark corners and under furniture so you can see exactly what dust and dirt you need to suck up.



BEST FOR ALLERGY SUFFERERS

Powerstick Jet
(H113.6xW25xD21.5cm),
£549, Samsung

Featuring a 60-minute battery life, 200W suction power and an easy-to-empty bin, the 2.8kg PowerJET is a great choice for those who vacuum little and often. It has a five-layered HEPA filtration system that captures 99.999% of micro dust, mould and pollen, so is an excellent choice if any of your family suffer from hay fever or allergies. The telescopic wand extends out by up to 21cm so you won't have to bend and crouch when you vacuum, regardless of your height.



The latest in **WOODEN FLOORING**

TIMELESS AND NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL, WOODEN FLOORING IS A MAINSTAY OF THE COUNTRY HOME. WE LOVE IT WITH A MODERN TWIST...



Solid reclaimed flooring, from £48sq m, The Main Company

IN WITH THE OLD

'With a rise in awareness and demand for sustainability and eco-conscious materials, reclaimed wood is a great option that not only considers the environment but also introduces authentic charm to the home,' says Alex Main, director at The Main Company. 'We're one of only a few companies in the UK that engineers reclaimed flooring that's compatible with underfloor heating, which is highly desirable in older properties.'

Levana
Herringbone
LV414, from
£72.98sq m,
Kersaint Cobb



GO BLONDE

Choose blonde wood flooring to give your home a spacious, airy feel that makes a beautiful base for your chosen decorating scheme. Naturally light woods, such as ash or birch, work particularly well, but a light finish on traditional oak will achieve a similar effect.

Versaille panel flooring, £120sq m, The Natural Wood Floor Company

LAY PARQUET

The traditional Parquet de Versailles design is currently enjoying a renaissance due to its elegant, yet contemporary, feel. 'Our version has been smoked to enhance the rich oak colour tones and we supply it unsealed, so it can be finished to suit individual tastes,' says Peter Keane, director of The Natural Wood Floor Company.

PATTERN PLAY

We're becoming ever-more adventurous with our wooden flooring choices. 'Combining planks in different shades and textures is a great way to create a unique design,' says Kevin Hill, sales director at Ted Todd. 'Try warmer tones with pale shades to add a modern edge that will age beautifully.'

Hoxton chevron and Brooklyn chevron, both £148.74sq m, Woodworks by Ted Todd

OUR EXPERT SAYS...

“DON'T RELY ON SAMPLES – VISIT A SHOWROOM TO SEE FULL-SIZE BOARDS, AS THE COLOUR, GRAINS AND KNOTS IN TIMBER CAN VARY”

TARA KING, CONTENT STYLE EDITOR

SHADES OF GREY

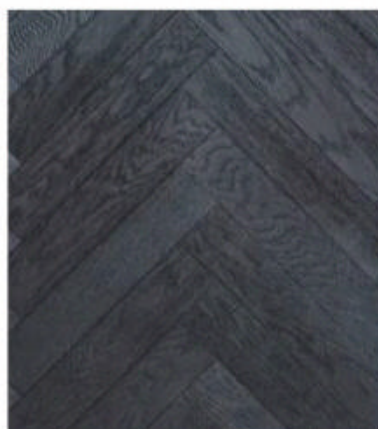
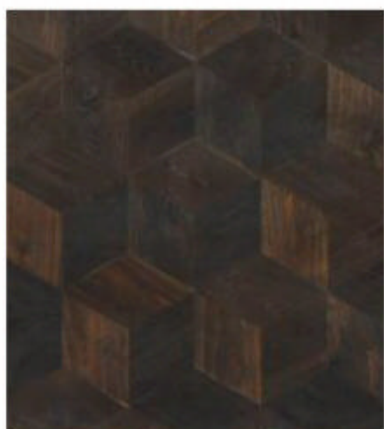
Cool grey finishes offer a modern twist on the more traditional yellow hues of natural oak or pine, perfect for achieving that sought-after Scandinavian feel. 'Our mansion-weave design is non-directional and is therefore suitable for unusual spaces - you can pretty much lay it anywhere and then go back to planks when the room opens up,' says Philip Seidl, sales director at Element 7.



Mansion Weave
Sachs Grey oak,
from £225sq m,
Element 7

3 OF THE BEST DARK WOODS

On-trend shades bring the drama to the floor



1. Hexparket in Black oak, £269sq m, Junckers **2.** Parquetry Deimos, £237.54sq m, Woodworks by Ted Todd **3.** Dusk oak herringbone, from £145sq m, Root London

FEATURE TARA KING



PICK 'N' MIX

Give traditional chevron and herringbone patterns a twist by choosing two tones of oak grain. 'Mixing wood tones offers the chance to be less uniform in your styling, adding a lived-in feel to the room,' says David Snazel, hard flooring buyer at Carpetright. Left and right planks are easier to install than traditional parquet - ideal for getting the look without the cost.

Kahrs Chevron
Light Brown
engineered wood,
£119.99sq m,
Carpentryright

Need to know... WOODEN FLOORS

■ **SOLID WOOD LASTS FOR YEARS** For heavy traffic areas like a kitchen, hardwoods – such as oak, ash or teak – are good options. Wear and tear over time only adds to their charm.

■ **ENGINEERED WOOD IS BEST IN HUMID ROOMS** As it's less prone to changes caused by temperature or humidity in the room, engineered wood is a good choice for kitchens and bathrooms. Click joints also make it much easier to install than solid wood.

■ **YOUR SUB-FLOOR MUST BE DAMP-PROOF** Before installing a new floor, it's essential you check the sub-floor is damp-proof. You should also decide on the layout of your planks in advance, taking into consideration pattern direction between rooms.

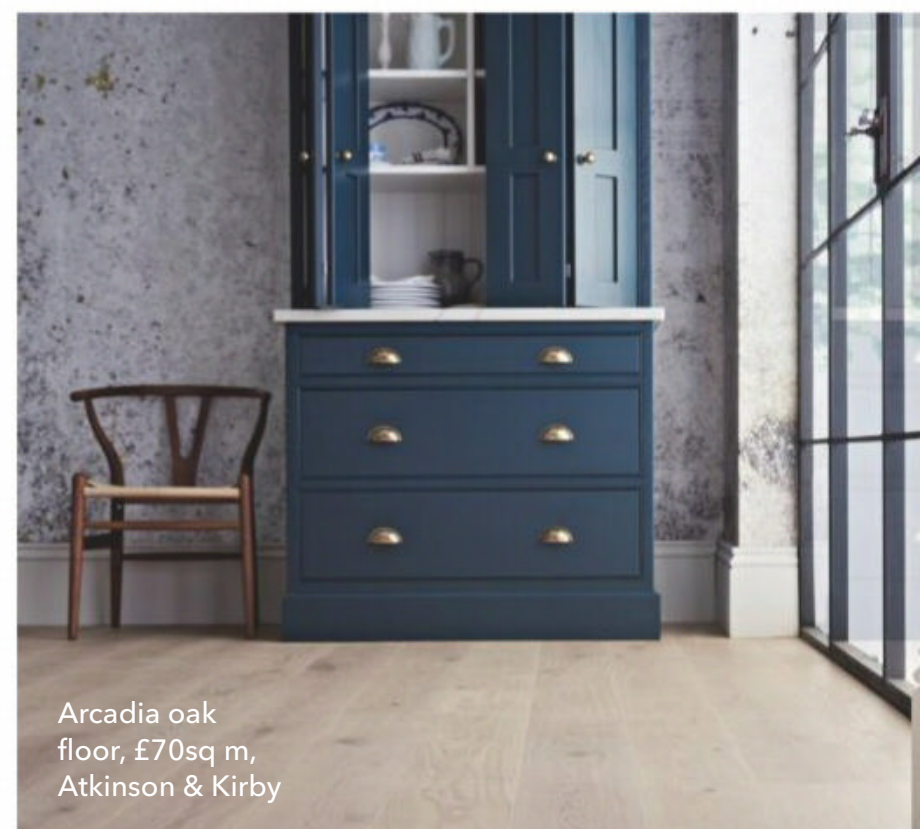
■ **THE FINISH IS A STYLE CHOICE** You may like the gloss of varnish, or prefer the matt look of oil or wax. Lacquer creates a film over the surface of the wood, which is highly durable.

■ **IT REQUIRES SOME MAINTENANCE** Regular re-waxing or oiling will keep your floor in optimum condition. For a complete refresh in the future, simply sand it down and reseal.

OUR EXPERT SAYS...

“HARD FLOORING IS A GOOD CHOICE IF YOU HAVE ALLERGIES AS DUST, MITES, POLLEN AND ANIMAL HAIR ARE LESS LIKELY TO BUILD UP”

TARA KING, CONTENT STYLE EDITOR



Arcadia oak
floor, £70sq m,
Atkinson & Kirby

BROAD APPEAL

With open-plan living as popular as ever, wide timber planks are in high demand. 'As well as creating the illusion of depth and space, they display the beauty of the grain and knots to greater effect,' says Josh Burbidge, flooring director at Atkinson & Kirby. Their durability also makes them ideal for heavy furnishings.



TIMELESS LINES

The generous cupboards, drawers and shelves of this country charmer give a warm welcome to crockery, table linens, cutlery and cooking utensils. It also incorporates a 15-bottle wine rack.

Lundy Stone Grey **dresser** with wine rack, sideboard H85xW128xD40cm; top H100xW128xD30cm, £949, The Cotswold Company

Choose the best... **DRESSER**

TAKING CENTRE STAGE WHILE TACKLING STORAGE WOES, THESE ENDLESSLY VERSATILE, WELL-PROPORTIONED AND PRACTICAL DESIGNS BALANCE CLASSIC GRACE WITH FORWARD-THINKING FUNCTIONALITY

► QUALITY CONTROL

Choose from a decisions-decisions range of satin, eggshell, antique or distressed finishes to complement your home.

Shaker **dresser**, H21xW145xD50cm, from £1,957.20, John Lewis of Hungerford



▼ DESIGN HOUND

The 'kennel' opening in this versatile Welsh dresser is perfect for stashing a dog basket (pup not included).

Dog Kennel 5ft closed-top **dresser** in Kiln Brick Red and internal panels in Meadow Silk, H212xD46cm, £2,715.45, Mudd & Co



“CHOOSE OPEN-SHELF DESIGNS TO DISPLAY YOUR TREASURED COLLECTIONS, OR CREATE A MINIMAL, MORE DISCREET LOOK WITH CONCEALED OPTIONS”



▲ ATTRACTIVE DISPLAY

This open-shelf option with three useful drawers provides an opportunity for both hoarding and showboating, letting you keep items tactfully hidden away or extrovertly on show!

Oxford medium **dresser** with open shelves and three drawers in Little Boy Blue, H189.6xW140xD46cm, £1,365, The Painted Furniture Company



ENGLISH ELEGANCE

Create a relaxed and homely kitchen with a quintessentially British design that balances simple style with elaborate beading. It's available in a range of bespoke colours, too.

Salcombe **dresser** in Anthracite, from £2,200, Burbidge



◀ MODERN CLASSIC

This light and breezy design features a rosy brass metal frame for an elegant twist.

Karla four-door glazed **dresser**, H200xW138xD46cm, £1,613, Maisons du Monde

“WORK OUT WHAT YOU WANT FROM YOUR DRESSER – LOTS OF DESIGN FEATURES OR ADDED EXTRAS, SUCH AS A WINE RACK OR A SHELF TO USE AS EXTRA FOOD-PREP SPACE”



MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Create your ideal bespoke storage solution with the flexibility of free-standing modular pieces that create an illusion of sophisticated, fitted cabinetry. Choose from ready-to-go combinations or pick-and-mix a few coordinating pieces.

Chawton **dresser** in Snow, price on request, Neptune



RUSTIC STATEMENT

Tall and striking, this warm wood, storage-savvy centrepiece features a glass-fronted, two-door cabinet at the top, a wide, shallow shelf and six petite drawers to the mid-section, and a full sideboard as the base.

Provence **dresser**, H212xW155xD45cm, £1,595, Cox & Cox



▲ BLUE BLEND

This considered design balances authentic detailing with an honest, in-frame style, combining classic elegance with a refreshing, contemporary nod.

Somerton **cupboard** in Baltic Green and brushed brass, H226xW200xD60cm, from £6,800, Kitchen Makers

THE CARIBOU

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POLISHED PALETTE

SYRETT, ARTIST AND FOUNDER OF RUNWAY-GALLERY.COM, EXPERIMENTS WITH NAIL VARNISH TO CREATE ABSTRACT STATEMENT ARTWORK

Runway Gallery is the brainchild of Daniel SYRETT, whose own unique work is part of a contemporary range of affordable artwork from celebrated artists, available to buy online. Here, he shares his inspiration and describes his creative process...

The fashion industry provides me with endless inspiration

Having developed a strong background in textiles, design and styling, I moved into the world of fine art 15 years ago. As a designer, I worked four years ahead of production and became adept at forecasting change. Now working as an artist, I have the freedom to be an image-maker in real time. Creating something different and unusual is very important to me.

I like to explore the artistic possibilities of different mediums

Most recently, nail varnish. It's not the easiest medium to work with, but I relish the scientific process. Once the powders have been mixed

into liquid form and you're using them to paint, you have to know how quickly the different pigments move and dry, depending on their density. It's exciting, as you're never sure what the finished result will look like.

I work seasonally, creating two collections a year I'm currently working on my latest, inspired by the exploitation of animals in the name of fashion. I'm experimenting with new mediums including gold leaf and human ivory. My mother kept my baby teeth all these years - I know, weird - so I'm going to grind them up and incorporate them into my pieces in reference to the ivory trade.

People often respond to my work as if they're looking at clouds

Everyone sees something different

and, strangely, men and women will view the same image completely differently. I overheard one couple discussing a painting of mine. He had an affinity with the shapes, as they reminded him of a favourite album cover, while she enjoyed the romantic colour mixes.

My art makes a wonderful statement in a modern country home

The high-shine colours pop beautifully against a neutral background - I like a simple white box frame, so as not to detract from the piece itself. I like to

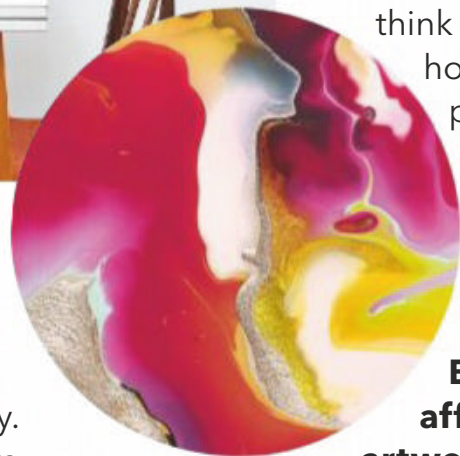
think my art can hold a prominent position in any room, but that might be my ego getting in the way!

Buy stylish, affordable artwork from

SYRETT and other artists at runway-gallery.com



Stella, £250; and, below, *Tank*, £200, both by SYRETT, from Runway Gallery

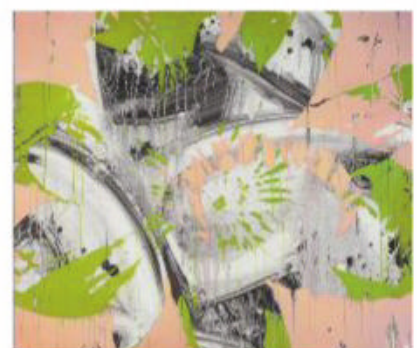


Wallpaper, £200, by SYRETT, available at runway-gallery.com

FEATURE TARA KING ARTWORK STELLA, £250; TANK, £200; WALLPAPER, £200, ALL BY SYRETT, AVAILABLE AT RUNWAY-GALLERY.COM

NEXT MONTH

American artist Jeff Muhs' abstract style shines through in his oil paintings and concrete sculptures.



Painting the structural supports in a darker shade helps define them against the beams



PROJECT PROFILE

Owners Julian and Julie Nicol live here with daughters Jess, 17, and Liv, 15, and their two dogs, Margo and Teddy.

House A five-bedroom, stone barn conversion near Somerton in Somerset.

Project Part of a major conversion project, the open-plan kitchen includes dining, soft seating and a home office.

Kitchen size 10.8x9.1m

Designer Rowena Sim

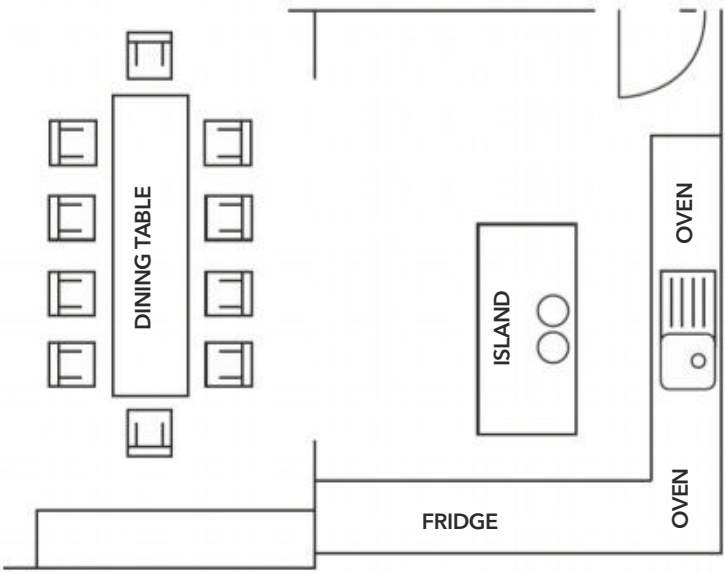
Cabinetry The Hartford collection painted in Thistle and Lithodora (island), by Tom Howley.

Made to MEASURE

THE SEARCH FOR A BETTER-SIZE HOME GAVE THE NICOL FAMILY A CHANCE TO DESIGN A CUSTOM-MADE KITCHEN THAT MAXIMISES EVERY INCH



Pops of blue tie the room scheme together



THE LAYOUT

The L-shape kitchen has an island at its heart, with built-in ovens on the longest run behind. The barn’s structural steel support beams provide a natural stopping point for the kitchen units on the fridge elevation. Office furniture in the same range continues on the other side of the beam - both Julian and Julie work from home. With two sofas, bar stools, two armchairs and a generous dining table, the room is fully equipped with seating for every occasion.



Four ovens provide ample cooking capacity for the couple's dinner parties

Most people don't downsize until their children leave home. But, after rattling around in a nine-bedroom farmhouse for far too long, Julian and Julie Nicol decided it was time to find something more practical for a family of four. 'We stayed for my father who was living with us, but when he passed away we found it far too big for four - not to mention terribly draughty,' says Julian. As the main chef in the family, Julian was also keen to find somewhere with a kitchen that was less remote from the main entertaining spaces. 'When friends came over I could hear the laughter while I was cooking, but I was too far away to join in,' he says.

As luck would have it, the couple found their new home just 350 yards away. 'I'd called a local brickie about doing some repairs on the farmhouse and he asked me to visit him on his current site - a very tumbledown barn practically next door. I didn't even know it was there!' says Julian. 'It was a dream scenario. The planning permission was already approved and we got to choose everything, including the large open-

plan kitchen-living space we'd always wanted.' Julian was set on bespoke cabinetry that would be long-lasting. After trying several companies, all of which 'lacked vision', Julian and Julie came across Tom Howley's Bristol showroom, where designer Rowena Sim quickly translated their ideas. The brief was a modern-classic look that wasn't too fussy, but would still be a comfortable fit with the ancient stone barn. 'Rowena started answering questions we didn't even know we had,' says Julian. 'And when she sent us a video mock-up of the space, we knew she'd nailed it.'

The layout was mainly dictated by the available wall space - there are incredible full-height windows on two sides overlooking the surrounding farmland. However, for Julian, it's the large island that really makes this space special. 'When friends come to dinner I'm part of the conversation now, but the island keeps everyone out of the way when I'm in full flow,' he says. 'It's also brought us together more as a family, quite literally - we all naturally congregate in this one room. And of course, draughts are now a distant memory.'



A water drop patterned tile is a fun touch for a splashback

MADE TO MEASURE

3 CLEVER DESIGN SOLUTIONS

1 SPLASHBACK

The encaustic tile splashback by Ca'Pietra is a real talking point in the kitchen. 'Most of the house is in restful shades of grey,' says Julian. 'So the splashback tiles really shake up the simple cabinetry.' Unlike ceramic or porcelain tiles, encaustics need to be sealed to protect against moisture and stains. You may need to reseal every one to two years, so do check with your supplier. The chalky surface is incredibly tactile and, as each tile is handmade, the results are unique.

2 BOILING TAPS

The couple love their boiling water tap, which has speeded up cooking and drink making. Interestingly, they chose a separate boiling water tap, rather than a three-in-one design that caters for boiling, hot and cold water in the same spout. 'It was primarily a safety concern. As a separate unit, we can tell any younger children that it's off-limits. There is a safety catch but we'd hate for anyone unfamiliar with how it works to get scalded when trying to wash their hands or get a drink,' says Julian.

3 PRACTICAL ISLAND

The island is fully loaded with storage on both sides. Under the breakfast bar, three generous units provide ample space for extra tableware, board games and other paraphernalia that might otherwise clutter the living areas. The size of the island was dictated by the largest single slab of quartz available to them (1.58x3.2m), as Julian and Julie didn't want a join in the surface.



As the taps are in the same finish, they look like a matching set



The stools can be taken away to reveal storage for lesser used items

THE DETAILS

CABINETRY

The Hartford collection **kitchen** in Thistle and Lithodora, with polished chrome **knobs** and **handles**, from £35,000, Tom Howley

SURFACES

Iconic White quartz **worktops**, from £400sq m, Silestone by Cosentino. Splash French Blue encaustic **tiles**, £101.70sq m, Ca'Pietra. Ash Grey floor **tiles**, £65sq m, Somerset Tile

APPLIANCES

RF540ADUX4 **fridge-freezer**, £2,299; OB60SD11PX1 single **ovens**, £1,299 each; OB60SD9PX1 single **oven**, £1,249; OS60NDB1 steam **oven**, £1,599; CI905DTB3 induction **hob**, £1,399; CG301DLPGB1 gas **hob**, £529, all Fisher & Paykel. G4990SCVI **dishwasher**, £1,029, Miele

SINKS & TAPS

Kubus 2.0 bowl undermount **sink**, £609, Franke. Callisto widespread **sink mixer** with C spout in Chrome, £671.40, Perrin & Rowe. PRO3 Nordic round single **boiling tap**, £950, Quooker

ACCESSORIES

Shoreditch **stools** in Harry Cloud Linen, £305 each, Neptune, are similar. Bluebell **sofa**, from £1,460, Sofa.com. Elstead **pendant lights**, £112.78 each, Lighting Direct. **Art**, Trowbridge Gallery



An old laburnum tree stands at the heart of the orchard. Once the fruit trees have stopped flowering, this takes over – its glorious golden flowers a magnet for honeybees

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THE NURTURING GARDEN

*Botanical artist Gael Sellwood – and the local
wildlife – have reaped the benefits of her ‘hands-off’
approach in this conservation garden*



Rhododendron luteum makes a stunning focal point, surrounded by bluebells, *Allium christophii* and the emerging leaves of foxgloves



AT HOME WITH...

Owners Gael and Michael Sellwood and their cocker spaniels, Ruby and Scout.

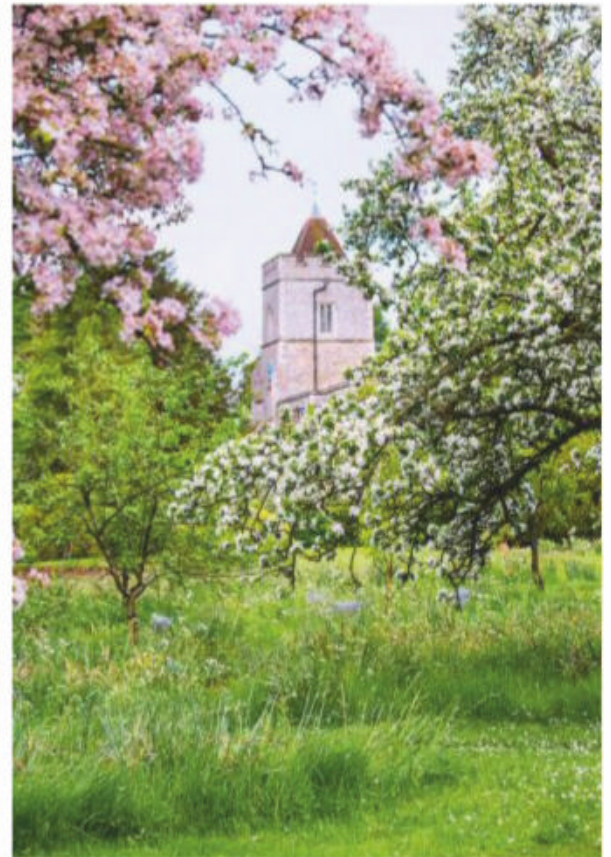
House Grade II-listed thatched house in East Hertfordshire.

Features A 3.5-acre conservation garden on chalky boulder clay. Includes a 1.5-acre garden with an orchard, pond, meadow areas and specimen trees, plus a 2-acre paddock and winter woodland garden.

You'd expect a botanical artist to feel the need to be surrounded by nature, and that's exactly what drew Gael Sellwood and her husband, Michael, to this house and garden in rural Hertfordshire. 'We weren't even looking to move,' says Gael, who first came here on a dull, dark, late-November day in 2007. 'We were in a very lovely thatched cottage nearby but as soon as we saw this place, with the house at the centre of its plot and surrounded by fields and woodlands, we just fell in love with it.' An imposing holly tree 'absolutely laden' with berries seemed like a good omen, as did several other interesting, mature trees around the property – an ancient pear, a lovely mulberry, some ball-clipped topiary and a small orchard to the rear of the house. 'The garden had been laid out in the 1930s and 1940s by a retired army major and it had a sense of being contained, whole and safe. And, as much of it was grass, it wasn't particularly daunting or challenging,' says Gael.

It was also extremely beautiful, as Gael and Michael could only fully appreciate the following spring, when they moved in to find tens of thousands of daffodils lining the drive and under the trees in the orchard. The best was yet to come, however, when just a few weeks later the blossom broke. 'I remember feeling absolute wonder,' says Gael. 'I still do. At around 400 years old, the pear tree is probably one of the oldest in the county – possibly the country – and when covered in blossom it looks as though it has snowed.'

It wasn't only the pear tree that took their breath away. As if overnight, the garden transformed from bare branches to a froth of white and pink, from palest shell to deepest magenta, as the fruit trees – apples, cherries, gages and plums – came into flower. As the bees descended on the blossom, so butterflies, including >



“WHAT WE LOVE MOST IS HOW THE HOUSE IS AT THE VERY CENTRE OF THE GARDEN. IT’S ALL-ENCOMPASSING AND FEELS VERY NURTURING”





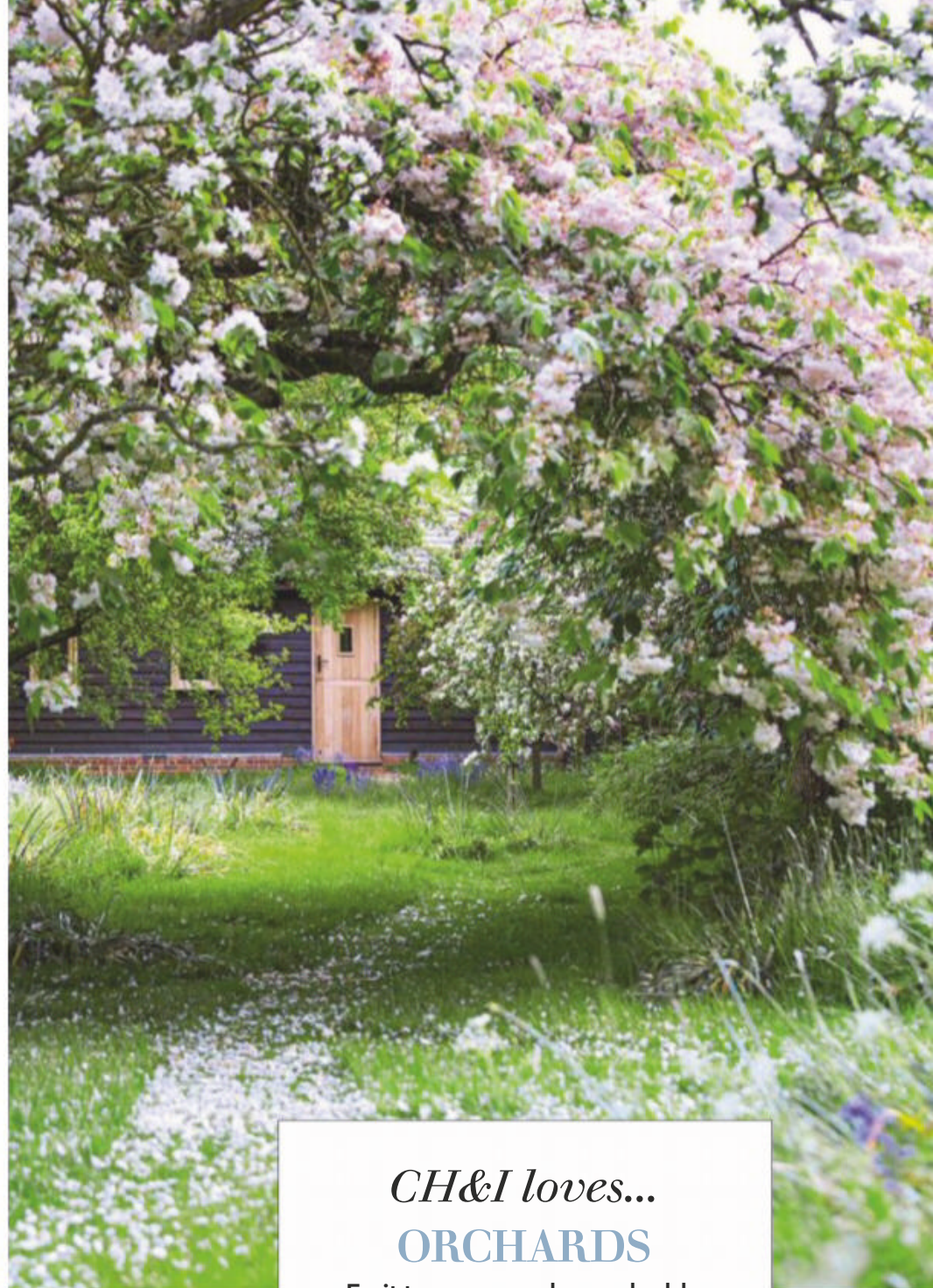
The shepherd's hut was inspired by one of Michael's grandfathers who had a 'living van'. Gael sometimes uses it to paint in

peacocks, commas, orange tips and ringlets, came to feast on the bluebells, cow parsley, stitchwort and stinging nettles that sprung up beneath the trees.

'While I love gardens as an environment, I don't want to spend all my time working in them; I want to be painting,' says Gael. 'When we came here, we realised that by leaving much of the garden relatively wild, we'd end up with far more nature around us.'

Focusing instead on the shapes, colours and textures of trees and shrubs, Gael and Michael have created a 'conservation garden', in which no pesticides or chemicals are used and management is kept to a minimum. They have tried to work with what's there, gently enhancing it in the most natural way possible. A badly positioned and overgrown pond has been re-sited so it can better reflect the sky, and an elderly rhododendron glade, which had become a misshapen mass, has now become a woodland walk complete with silver birches, red-stemmed cornus and snowdrops divided from clumps elsewhere in the garden. Where plants are introduced, they are considered not only for their beauty, but for their role in the larger ecosystem. 'This garden has made me much more aware of the bigger picture and the connectedness of things.'

In this way, blossom and wildflowers provide nectar for the bees and the butterflies, fallen fruit provides food for the insects and the rodents, and they in turn keep the birds and larger mammals well fed. 'Who'd have thought that having apple trees might benefit the owl population?' she says, clearly revelling in the diversity of creatures that have made a home in the garden. These include >



CH&I loves... ORCHARDS

Fruit trees can make a valuable addition to a countryside conservation garden. Here's what to think about...

- Choose varieties with different harvesting times. There are many that ripen from July through to December and, if stored well, they should last almost year round. If you're growing your own fruit, you're reducing food miles, too.
- Growing heritage varieties gives you more options in terms of flavour, appearance and suitability to your growing conditions, and also boosts genetic diversity.
 - Fruit trees are magnets for wildlife. Pollinators love the blossom, the fruits provide food for insects, birds and mammals, and beetles and birds make their homes in the branches.
- Some fruit trees provide food or habitats for threatened species so, by planting them, you can help halt their decline. One example is the lesser spotted woodpecker.
 - While some varieties are self-fertile, be aware that many need a suitable pollination partner.
- Trees are long-lived perennials, so plant with care. They need sun, free-draining, moisture-retentive soil and adequate space.



A table and chairs
under the blossom
make an inviting place
to sit in the orchard

*“This garden provides
a habitat to so many
creatures. I don’t know if
we’re hosting them or if
they’re hosting us, but
we feel very privileged”*



Drifts of bluebells form a haze under a dark-blossomed crab apple

red kites and buzzards, which compete for roosts in the boundary ash; goldfinches, which feast on the thistle heads; and fieldfares and redwings in winter. Rosebay willowherb is lauded for the nectar it provides to bees and moths. If a tree dies, Gael is bereft, but if a branch should fall, she knows the woodpeckers will be happy. 'We have green and spotted varieties nesting here, and when they send out their young, it's like they're sending them to school – a whole lot of trainee woodpeckers whizzing round the garden all yaffling at one another. It's delightful.'

Badgers, rabbits and deer are slightly less welcome visitors, but Gael takes the view that 'it's easier to share'. Metal fencing or chicken wire provide a degree of protection to her 'special plants', including the roses, irises and hydrangeas that she loves to paint. Gael chooses to see the positives: 'If we can just relax a bit more, the benefits are massive. We gain time because there's less hands-on gardening to do; the animals and insects have more food and habitats to choose from; psychologically it feels better – and it's still lovely to look at. It's the ultimate non-gardeners' garden.'

Twelve years since moving in, Gael still looks forward to the blossom each spring, but each season has its charms, from the flowering of the privet in summer to the apricot-coloured bullace plums, which hang like baubles in the hedgerows in autumn, and the tree silhouettes – and the wonderfully berried holly – in winter. 'I look out on the garden, and every single day it lifts my heart,' she says.

Gael's book, *The Measure of the Year* (Mascot Media, £25), can be bought at gaelsellwood.co.uk.

ON OUR DOORSTEP...

Visit... Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Cambridge, 01223 336265 (botanic.cam.ac.uk). 'A beautiful garden in which wildlife is allowed to coexist with the plants. It's very accessible, with a lot of planting and design ideas.'

Go for a meal at... The Black Horse, Brent Pelham, 01279 778925 (blackhorsebrentpelham.co.uk). 'An archetypal country pub – the kind you dream of ending up at after a long walk.'

Shop at... Cambridge Contemporary Art, 01223 324222 (cambridgegallery.co.uk). 'I come here for my fix. I have exhibited my own work there in the past.'



1



2



3



4

Gael's spring favourites

1 The black lily magnolia (*Magnolia liliiflora* 'Nigra') is actually deep red.

2 This silvery dead-nettle (*Lamium maculatum*) is good for pollinators.

3 *Malus* (apple) blossom is pretty with its blush-tinged petals and golden stamens.

4 *Rhododendron luteum*'s pale yellow flowers are highly fragrant.

5 Tiny violas are ideal for pots where they can be lifted up to eye level.

6 Gael loves the delicacy of ferns, which she plants in pots and in the woodland.

7 Iris 'Langport Wren' is a favourite of Gael's to paint for its deep purple colour.

8 Evergreen *Euphorbia characias* adds a shot of lime green to the borders in spring.



5



6



7



8



CLOCKWISE, FROM THIS PHOTO Chester snuggler, from £1,800; Swedish console, from £480; Serpentine headboard, from £227.50



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Making bespoke style affordable, The Dormy House gives its customers the opportunity to pick upholstery fabrics from an extensive range of leading fabric houses, as well as choose from a variety of paint and hardware finishes when purchasing its furniture. Better still, the family-run company is a UK-based business that custom designs all of its pieces, so while you're making the most of this special discount, you can rest assured you're investing in British quality.

HOW TO REDEEM

This offer is exclusive and allows readers of *Country Homes & Interiors* to enjoy a 20% discount on the entire range at The Dormy House online (thedormyhouse.com). To order online enter the code **CHIOFFER20** at the checkout; or, if you're ordering by phone, call **01264 365808** and quote **CHIOFFER20** before you place your order.



***TERMS AND CONDITIONS** THIS DISCOUNT IS AVAILABLE FROM 10 FEBRUARY 2020 TO 25 MAY 2020 ACROSS ALL PRODUCTS ONLINE. THERE IS NO CASH ALTERNATIVE IN WHOLE OR PART. THIS OFFER CANNOT BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR DISCOUNT. DELIVERY CHARGES ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE OFFER. FURNITURE MADE TO A BESPOKE SIZE IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ANY DISCOUNT. PREVIOUS PURCHASES ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THIS OFFER. THE DORMY HOUSE WILL COLLECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION TO PROCESS YOUR ORDER ONLY.



**TIMELESS
TUSCAN**

Heritage Terracini
Duchess cube
planter, H45x
W45xD45cm,
£56, Round Wood



ELEGANT ORB

Grigio globe
planter in rusty
iron concrete,
H32xDia40cm,
£99, Hortology



FLUTED PATINA

Large zinc **planter**,
H49xDia44cm, £180 for
set of three, Cox & Cox



MINIMAL DESIGN

Brockwell **planters**,
from £25 each,
Garden Trading



**DARING
DISPLAY**

Zinc galvanised
flared square
planter in Teal,
H90cm, £69.99,
Primrose

Naturally stylish OUTDOOR PLANTERS



MOTTLED EFFECT

Verdigris low
metal **planter**,
H25xDia49cm,
£44.99, Crocus



NATIVE TIMBER

Hexagonal mega
planter, H76x
W94xL110cm,
£300, Fat Leaf



RUSTIC CLAY

Florence **pots** in
Washed Terracotta/
Warm Grey, from
£16 each, Patch

Did you know?

IT'S WORTH PICKING YOUR PLANTER TO MATCH ITS SITUATION. CLAY POTS WILL DRY OUT UNLESS EXPOSED, WHILE METAL CONTAINERS BECOME VERY HOT IN SUMMER, SO SUIT SHADY SPOTS

Live Life Well

HEALTH, HAPPINESS, FASHION, TRAVEL, PETS, PASTIMES
AND OTHER THINGS TO MAKE LIFE LOVELY

WHAT TO PICK, SEE & DO

Pick... pussy willow and arrange the stems into an Easter display.

Listen... for the call of the cuckoo, traditionally the first sign of spring, and jingle the coins in your pocket - drawing the bird's attention to money is thought to bring riches!

Discover... how cheese is made at Quicke's Farm in Devon, 24 April, £35 including a tour, tasting and lunch (quickes.co.uk).

Celebrate... Easter at Brogdale Farm in Kent, 10-12 April, £8.50 (brogdalecollections.org).

Channel simple woodland style with leafy greenery and seasonal stems turned into rustic spring wreaths



MORAL FIBRE

Ethical clothing brand Izzy Lane creates knitwear using wool from its own flock of sheep – all of which were once destined for the abattoir and now live out their lives in the Yorkshire Dales. Sweater, from £145

INDULGE IN ME TIME

Apothecary brand Yellow Gorse – named after the bushes growing profusely in the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset where the brand is based – produces therapeutic products. From bath salts and body balms to diffusers and candles, they are all made by hand in small batches using only natural, ethically sourced ingredients. Prices start at £2.95 for a tea tree and peppermint pumice foot scrub.



NATIONAL TREASURES

The National Trust is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year with an exclusive collection inspired by the oak leaf carved into the first property acquired by the charity in 1896. The range includes this tote bag, £15, and these key rings, £4 each.

3 ways to... create a capsule wardrobe

CUT BACK Twice a year, go through your clothes, reorganise and consider what you haven't been wearing at all. Worn out? Too small? Get rid!

SEPARATE SEASONS Free up space by storing winter clothes away for next year.

STAY STYLISH Discover your personal style so you spend less on fast fashion and invest in higher-quality pieces that last.

FEELING INSPIRED? For more tips, read *Minimal: How to Simplify Your Life and Live Sustainably* (£12.99, Ebury Press) by influencer Madeleine Olivia.



BREATHE DEEP

Whether at home, in the office or on holiday, enjoy the benefits of aromatherapy with this portable aroma diffuser, £39.95 from Muji. Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery, there's no need for sockets.



LEAD THE WAY

Why buy your pooch a new lead when you can make your own? This cute kit from Dorset-based pet brand The Dandy Dog Company contains all you need for a bespoke design – block-printed fabrics, embellishments, a suede tassel and more. From £10 for the smallest size.

3 of the best... gardening journals

Cultivate and plan all year round



PERSONAL TOUCH

This pretty little planner can be personalised with the recipient's name for an ideal gift. Choose between hardback or softback options. The Gardener notebook, from £16.99, Papier



HUNG UP

One for the wall, this stylish organiser features beautiful illustrations that double up as pretty artwork. Keep a month-by-month seed-sowing chart and a wish list of garden buys. Garden planner, £12, Etsy



SET YOUR GOALS

Spanning five years, this is the ideal companion for dedicated gardeners. With sections for monthly jobs, harvesting dates and endless notes. The Five Year Garden Planner, from £45, Fraser & Parsley

THAT'S A WRAP

Did you know cling film is a prime culprit when it comes to polluting our oceans and waterways? Ditch it altogether in favour of Amber & Bumble's beeswax wrap, a sustainable alternative for keeping food fresh that is as pretty as it is eco-friendly. £14 for pack of three, White Space Home

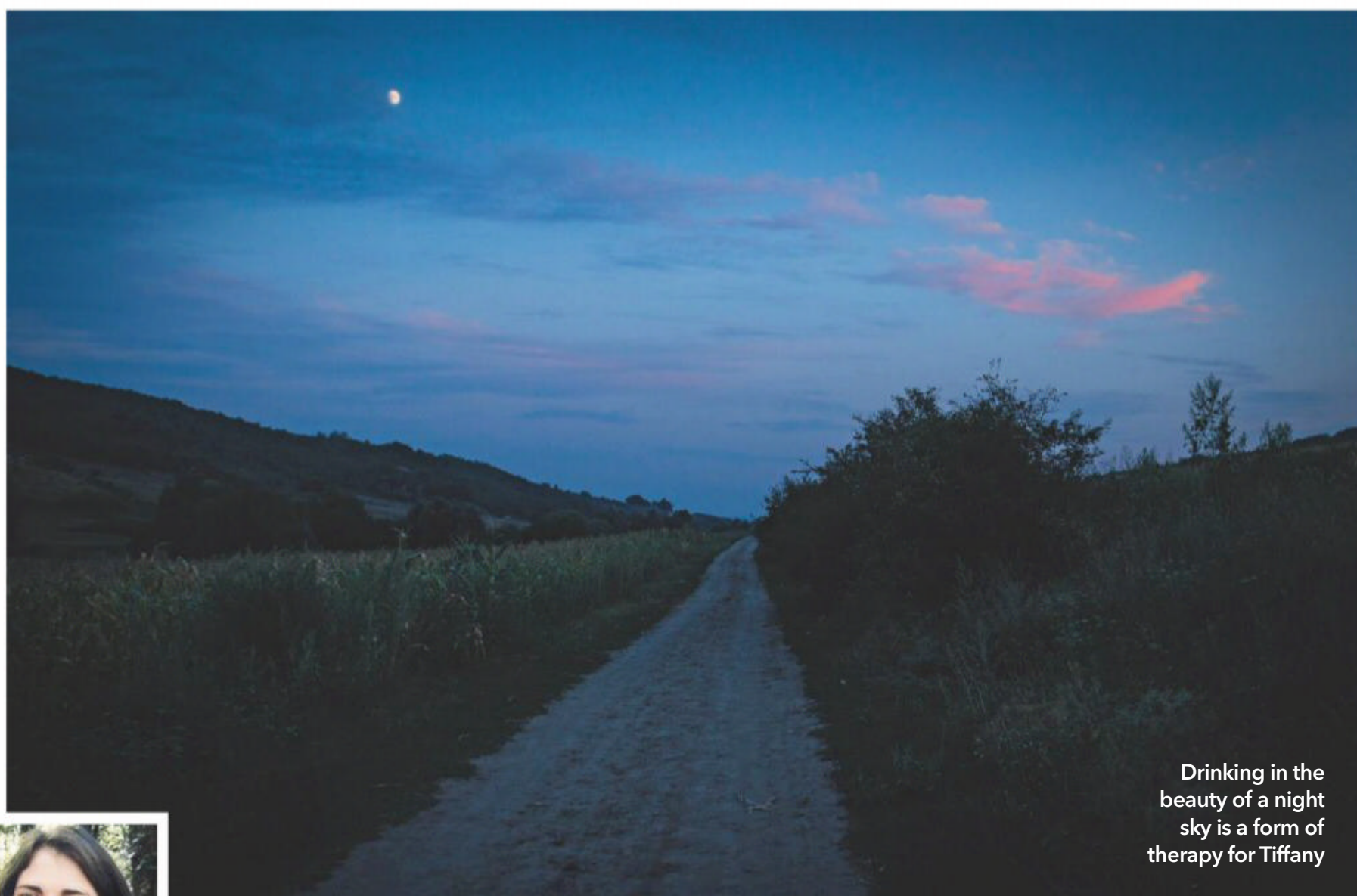


MUD PLAY

Indulge your little one's love of nature with Scandiborn's outdoor play collection. This stylish design in FSC-certified wood features shelves to store woodland finds, holders for shrubs and a built-in planter. Mud pie kitchen, £249.95, Scandiborn



FEATURE TARAKING



Drinking in the beauty of a night sky is a form of therapy for Tiffany



MY COUNTRY PASSION *Night-walking*

Writer and illustrator Tiffany Francis-Baker lives with her husband in Hampshire near the South Downs, one of four International Dark Sky Reserves in the UK. Exploring outdoors after nightfall is her favourite way to reconnect with nature

In our world of electricity and blue screens, being outdoors in darkness may seem like a thing of the past, but the night is an important part of our circadian rhythm. It can transform a familiar place into something new - a hidden world waiting to be discovered.

One evening, I looked out of the window to see the sun setting and the stars beginning to emerge, and decided I wasn't ready for bed yet. I hopped into my car and drove to Butser Hill near my house, one of the highest and darkest points in the South Downs, an International Dark Sky Reserve. From shadowy silhouettes of nearby trees to twinkling stars and the rustling of wildlife in the grass, I spent hours taking in every detail of the

nightscape surrounding me. From that moment I was hooked.

Exploring nature after dark is a form of therapy for me. When I look up at the night sky, I feel wonderfully insignificant in our vast universe, and my problems even more so. Having said that, I do value a good night's sleep, so it isn't something I do every night! Sometimes my husband and I just sit in the garden with a cup of tea and listen to the tawny owls nearby.

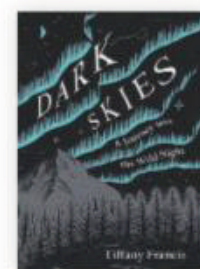
On a typical nocturnal outing, I'll take a fully charged phone and torch as well as snacks and a Thermos. It's a good idea to visit the same place in the daylight first to familiarise yourself with the area, and always tell someone where you're going and what time you plan to be back. I like to consider myself a rational person,

but my primitive side will still kick in from time to time and I find myself getting spooked by strange noises or shadows... it's all part of the fun!

I recommend visiting the website darkskiesnationalparks.org.uk for details on upcoming Dark Skies festivals. These are great ways to learn more about astronomy and nocturnal wildlife, as well as meeting fellow nyctophiles! This month I'll be looking out for the Pink Moon (12 April) - it isn't actually pink, but it's a beautiful sight nonetheless!

Read this...

Discover more of Tiffany's after-dark tales in her book, *Dark Skies* (£16.99, Bloomsbury Wildlife)



**GREAT VALUE
HOLIDAYS BY RAIL**
**6 DAYS
FROM £549^{PP}**

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- Fully escorted by a UK Tour Manager from start to finish
- All rail and coach travel throughout your tour
- 5 nights' hotel accommodation with breakfast and dinner each day

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Journey through some of Wales' most beautiful countryside on the Ffestiniog Mountain Railway
- Delight in the heritage of the Llangollen Steam Railway
- Journey on the Welsh Highland Railway
- Discover imposing Caernarfon Castle
- Travel on a traditional horse-drawn boat on the Llangollen Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

RAILWAYS OF WALES

Explore the rugged mountains and winding waterways of North Wales. Enjoy picturesque journeys aboard historic steam trains and admire delightful towns and ancient history on this Welsh adventure.

Day 1. Llandudno

Today you arrive in the town of Llandudno, where you meet your Tour Manager at your hotel for the next five nights. The town offers a perfect base for your explorations. Modern Llandudno retains its Victorian splendour and natural beauty but also offers a host of entertainments for visitors including both a tramway and a cable car to the summit of Great Orme as well as museums, public gardens and traditional seaside amusements.

Day 2. Portmeirion

Today, enjoy an excursion on the steam-hauled* Ffestiniog Railway, a narrow-gauge heritage railway in Snowdonia National Park. You travel through the beautiful scenery to Porthmadog. From here it's on to Portmeirion, famous for its unique Italianate architectural influences, where you have free time. You may wish to visit the central piazza or Battery Square.

Day 3. Llangollen

Board the Llangollen Steam Railway^ travelling through some of the most beautiful scenery in the UK and along the banks of the River Dee to the town of Corwen. After some free time for lunch, enjoy a wonderful horse-drawn boat trip along the Llangollen canal.

Day 4. Llandudno

Your day is free, perhaps to explore Llandudno. Llandudno's historic highlights can be easily explored on foot, and a dedicated town trail provides a recommended route which begins at the town's library and takes in notable features, including several of Llandudno's churches, the promenade, the railway station, the pier and two of the town's public gardens.

Day 5. Caernarfon

A full-day excursion by coach takes you through some of the most dramatic mountain scenery in Britain to Caernarfon for a guided tour of Caernarfon Castle. Continue with a journey on the Welsh Highland Railway^, a narrow-gauge line running along the foothills of the Snowdonia Mountain range, to Beddgelert. There is time to explore this pretty village before returning to Llandudno.

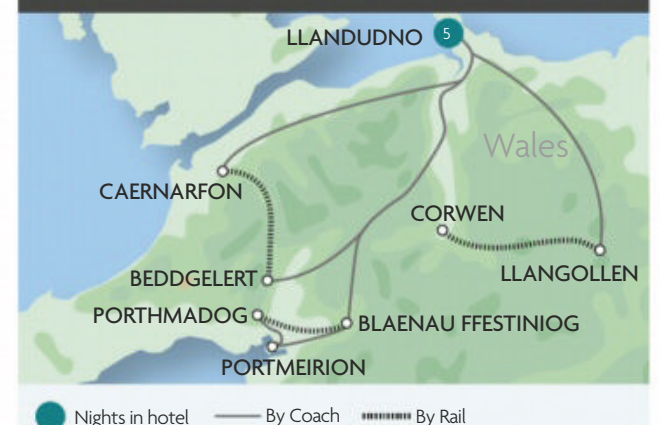
Day 6. Llandudno

After breakfast, your tour concludes and you are free to depart at your leisure. Alternatively, why not explore a little more of this wonderful area before heading home?

^Journeys are steam-hauled wherever possible.

The itinerary order may differ dependent on departure. Please call for more details.

ROUTE



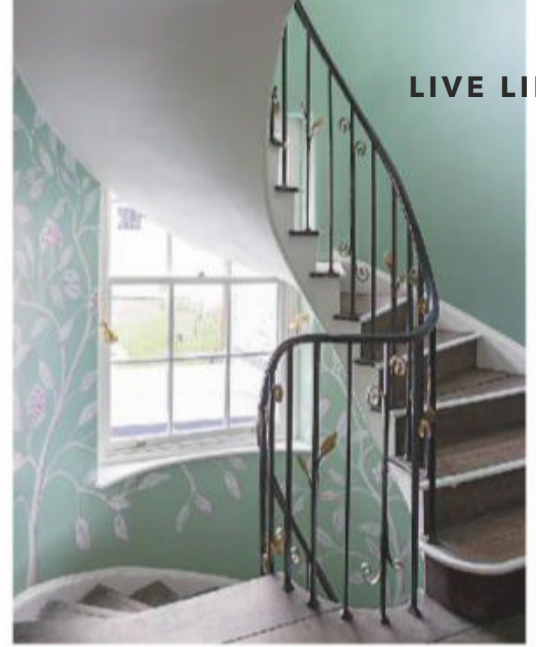
DEPARTURES AND PRICES

2020

24 May 20	£619	26 Jul 20	£599
1, 8 Jun 20	£629	3, 16 Aug 20	£599
14 Jun 20	Sold out	30 Aug 20	£629
22 Jun 20	£629	6, 13 Sep 20	£649
29 Jun 20	£649	27 Sep 20	£629
5, 12 Jul 20	£649	4 Oct 20	£599
20 Jul 20	£629	12 Oct 20	£549

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feefo  ★★★★★
As of 7th February 2020



LIVE LIFE WELL

Rooms in the main house are Georgian in style, painted in soothing spring shades



A WEEKEND AWAY AT Number One Bruton

A HIGH-STREET HAVEN IN ONE OF SOMERSET'S PRETTIEST TOWNS

With its gorgeous landscape, chocolate-box towns and outstanding local produce, the West Country is always a lovely choice for a country escape. The latest boutique bolthole to make its home there is Number One Bruton, a small hotel and farm-to-table restaurant, providing rural charm with a superb pedigree in both its cooking and decor.

DESIGN DREAM

Owners Claudia Waddams and Aled Rees worked tirelessly to restore the original medieval house and its Georgian and Victorian

additions. The result is a warren of connected forges, cottages and grander attachments, where every nook and cranny has been lovingly restored or its worn beauty saved and left to shine. Interiors are an assemblage of all the finest classics of English country house taste. Howard-style sofas in petrol blue wool sit atop faded antique Persian carpets. There are Suzani wall hangings and a colour scheme that ranges from pea green to palest ivory. Perhaps most remarkable of all is the small, enclosed courtyard garden and its arbour, a veritable work of art overseen by gardening royalty, Penelope Hobhouse.

FOOD FORWARD

Over in the hotel's restaurant, Osip, chef Merlin Labron-Johnson, formerly of London's Michelin

starred Portland, is cooking up a storm with the county's bounty of meat, fruit, and vegetables. The team works with a group of Somerset farmers, growers, hunters and foragers to create menus that reflect principles of sustainability and seasonality. Expect to find smoked cheddar puffs, wild duck in honey and chestnut pumpkin soup.

SMALL TOWN

If you can tear yourself away from the hotel's gourmet gastronomy and comfortable surrounds, Bruton has a world of culture and recreation – from art galleries and boutiques to cider farms and hiking trails. You might just find your relaxing weekend ends up action packed...

Rooms start at £130 a night. Number One Bruton, 1 High St, Bruton BA10 0AB, numberonebruton.com



While you're there...

MESSUMS WILTSHIRE

This contemporary art gallery sits inside an ancient Tithe Barn and showcases work by leading contemporary artists including painters, ceramicists, and sculptors. There's also a cafe.

GARDEN MUSEUM

Nearby cider farm and hotel The Newt has recently opened its impressive interactive garden museum. Discover a history of horticulture and take a virtual tour of the gardens of Lake Como.

WESTCOMBE DAIRY

Need a souvenir or two for the folks at home? Head to this traditional dairy to pick up unpasteurised Cheddars and crumbly Caerphilly, all made in its dedicated cheese aging room.

AWARD-WINNING RIVER CRUISES

On the Rhine, Danube, Moselle, Main, Rhône, Douro, Seine, Saône or Dutch waterways

Riviera Travel's award-winning river cruises include everything you need for an exceptional experience. Cruise Europe's most beautiful waterways aboard the finest ships, featuring superb dining on board and spacious suites and cabins – many with a French balcony for unrivalled views. Choose from 15 fascinating river cruises that take you to the iconic highlights as well as lesser-known gems in destinations such as Cologne, Trier, Koblenz, Heidelberg, Strasbourg, Basel, Lucerne, Douro Valley, Vienna, Budapest, Amsterdam, Avignon, Arles, Bruges, Paris or Rouen.

Cruise includes:

- Spacious and beautifully appointed suites or cabins with hotel-style beds, en-suite bathrooms and river views
- Exceptional cuisine with full board throughout
- Extensive and fully inclusive touring programmes
- Return flights from a choice of regional airports or standard class reserved seat on Eurostar from London St Pancras
- Return rail connections on selected dates and cruises from over 50 regional stations (supplements may apply)
- The services of our experienced cruise director and concierge



Cruise destination	Departure dates	Duration	From
Rhine Cruise to Switzerland	from May to October 2020	8 days	£1,549pp
Rhine & Moselle	from April to October 2020	8 days	£1,199pp
Rhine, Strasbourg & Heidelberg	from April to October 2020	8 days	£1,199pp
The Blue Danube	from April to October 2020	8 days	£1,449pp
Vienna, Bohemia & Treasures of the Danube	from July to September 2020	8 days	£1,599pp
Cruise the Heart of Europe	from May to October 2020	15 days	£2,999pp
Burgundy, the River Rhône & Provence	from April to October 2020	8 days	£1,199pp
Amsterdam, Kinderdijk & the Dutch Bulbfields	in April 2020	5 days	£1,199pp
Bruges, Medieval Flanders, Amsterdam & the Dutch Bulbfields	in April 2020	8 days	£1,699pp
The Seine, Paris & Normandy	from April to October 2020	8 days	£1,799pp
The Douro, Porto & Salamanca	from March to November 2020	8 days	£1,449pp
Medieval Germany	from May to September 2020	8 days	£1,899pp
Budapest to The Black Sea – Gems of Eastern Europe	from April to October 2020	15 days	£3,049pp
The Danube's Imperial Cities & Yuletide Markets	December 2020	6 days	£899pp
Enchanting Rhine & Yuletide Markets	December 2020	5 days	£699pp
Christmas on the Blue Danube	December 2020	8 days	£1,899pp
Christmas on the Rhine	December 2020	8 days	£1,799pp
New Year on the Blue Danube	December 2020	6 days	£1,399pp
New Year on the Rhine	December 2020	6 days	£1,299pp

To book or request a brochure, call 01283 523454 or visit cohriviera.co.uk

TERMS & CONDITIONS: *Available on selected dates and cruises, see website for full terms and conditions. Additional entrance costs may apply. Prices are per person, based on two sharing and subject to finite availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Offer operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Travel Ltd, ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, a company wholly independent of Country Homes & Interiors, published by TI Media Limited. Prices correct at time of going to print.

COOKS' NOTES



Butter me up

Add extra flavour to your meals with the divine offerings from new brand, Sublime. Developed out of a desire to accent food, rather than drown it as sauces can be prone to do, these flavoured butters are the ideal accompaniment to steak, pasta, roasted veg and even just a hunk of toasted sourdough. There are three currently available: Chimichurri, Truffle, Parmesan & Black Pepper and Garlic, Rosemary & Mint, but more are planned in the not-so-distant future. £3.95 for 90g. To find your local stockist check out sublimebutter.com



3 OF THE BEST... EASTER EGGS

With the Easter Bunny due to hop into our gardens soon, we've put in our requests for one of these pretty chocolate treats...



BLOOMING LOVELY

Go the artisan route with The Spring Bloom - pink-coloured white chocolate hand-finished with silver lustre and a floral scene. £30, Bettys

CITRUS FRESH

If you want a petite but tasty treat, try the Spring Lemon egg, made from creamy white chocolate and zesty lemon. £3, Waitrose & Partners



GORGEOUS GARDEN

Perfect for the gardener in your life, this egg features a Hugo Guinness design and three packs of seeds: borage, blue cornflower and calendula. £30, Daylesford



EVERYDAY ELEGANCE

National treasure Mary Berry is bringing her classic English style to our tables. The Signature Collection, a sophisticated and classic range, offers sweet detailing and refined shapes, but doesn't forget the importance of practicality – so each piece is dishwasher and microwave safe. Spanning tableware, cutlery, linens and teatime elements, this timeless collection brings a tasteful and beautiful addition to the everyday. From £9.95 for a cup and saucer set, John Lewis & Partners

Mixed for your convenience

A mere seven years ago, Cambridge Distillery was housed in the founders' living room, making it the world's smallest distillery. Now, it has been named the world's most innovative distillery. And just to prove it, the Grantchester-based company has created a premium ready-to-serve Gin & Tonic in a 75cl champagne bottle, comprised of its own Dry Gin and its new Cambridge Distillery Tonic, both featuring botanicals, such as lemon verbena, grown in nearby meadows. Just the ticket for when you're having a drinks party. £19.99, cambridgedistillery.co.uk





Lay the table with soft
linens and seasonal
blooms to welcome
in spring



Springtime INVITATION

UPDATE YOUR EASTER MENU WITH
THIS FRESH, SEASONAL FEAST THAT'S
BURSTING WITH FLAVOUR

SHERRY COSMOPOLITAN

SERVES 6

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 350ml cranberry juice | Juice of 2 limes, plus |
| 60ml fino sherry | 1 cut into 6 wedges |
| 225ml vodka | 6-7 ice cubes |
| 225ml Cointreau | Crushed ice |

1 Combine the cranberry juice, sherry, vodka and Cointreau in a large jug. Squeeze in the lime juice and stir well. Add the ice cubes and set aside until the ice has melted. Keep chilled until ready to serve.

2 Half fill six glasses with crushed ice. Pour in the chilled cocktail and add a lime wedge to each. Give each glass a gentle stir and serve.

PADRON PEPPERS WITH SPICED ALMONDS

These effortless nibbles have just the right amount of salt and spiciness to awaken everyone's appetite for cocktails

SERVES 6

200g Marcona almonds	½tsp dried chilli flakes
½tsp Maldon sea salt, plus extra for sprinkling	1½tbsp clear honey
1tsp fennel seeds	1tbsp olive oil
	240g Padrón peppers

1 Prepare the almonds in advance. Preheat the oven to 180C/Gas 4. Place the nuts on an oven tray lined with greaseproof paper and roast for 10 mins, stirring halfway through. Sprinkle over the salt, fennel seeds and chilli flakes, then roast for 5 mins more or until the almonds are golden and the aroma of the spices has been released. Stir through the honey. Leave to cool.

2 Just before serving, heat the oil in a frying pan over a high heat until almost smoking. Add the peppers and fry for 2-4 mins, until the skins are charred. Sprinkle with salt and serve alongside the almonds in a bowl.

HAKE AND CLAMS IN PARSLEY AND WINE SAUCE

The meaty texture and mild flavour of hake makes it perfect for this version of a Basque classic. You could use cod, haddock or even monkfish, if preferred

SERVES 6

3tbsp olive oil	250ml good-quality fish stock
6 hake fillets	400g clams
Salt and black pepper	3tbsp finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 garlic cloves, crushed	1 small lemon, sliced
1tbsp plain flour	
200ml dry white wine	

1 Preheat the oven to 160C/Gas 3. Heat 2tbsp of the oil in a large ovenproof pan over a high heat. Season the hake fillets with salt and pepper and add to the pan, skin-side down. Cook for 2-3 mins, until the skin is crisp, then set aside on a plate skin-side up.

2 Wipe clean the pan with kitchen paper and reduce the heat to medium-low. Add the remaining 1tbsp oil and the garlic and fry for a few seconds to release the garlic's aroma. Stir in the flour, mixing well to combine, then slowly pour in the wine and fish stock, stirring as you go for a smooth sauce.

3 Bring the sauce to a boil, then tip in the clams and simmer for 1 min. Add the parsley and stir well to combine, then taste the sauce and add more seasoning if necessary.

4 Return the hake to the pan, submerging the fish in the sauce, but leaving the skin uncovered. Top



PADRON PEPPERS WITH SPICED ALMONDS

each fillet with a slice of lemon. Put them in the oven and bake for 8-10 mins, until the hake is cooked through and the clams have opened. Serve immediately with lots of good bread to soak up the juices. Discard any clams that haven't opened.

GRIDDLED ASPARAGUS WITH HERB AND PICKLED RED ONION SALAD

This vibrant dish is delicious with the fish, or makes for a fantastic starter on its own

SERVES 6

1 red onion, thinly sliced	to drizzle
Salt and black pepper	Handful fresh parsley leaves
Juice of 1 lemon	20g fresh dill, sprigs only
2tbsp olive oil, plus extra	600g asparagus

1 To make the salad, toss the onion with ½tsp salt and pour over the lemon juice. Leave to stand for 15 mins, until the onions have turned a vivid pink colour, then drain. Stir through the olive oil and herbs, then season with salt and black pepper to taste.

2 Heat a large griddle pan until smoking hot, then dry-griddle the asparagus spears on both sides until nicely marked and just tender, about 3-4 mins in total. As soon as they're ready, place them on a serving plate, season with salt and pepper and drizzle with some olive oil. Scatter over the herb and pickled red onion salad and serve.



**GRIDDLED
ASPARAGUS WITH
HERB AND PICKLED
RED ONION SALAD**



HAKE AND CLAMS
IN PARSLEY AND
WINE SAUCE



**LAVENDER AND VANILLA
CUSTARD WITH RHUBARB**
SERVES 6

- | | |
|--|---|
| 700g rhubarb, cut into
3cm pieces | 5tbsp double cream |
| 240g caster sugar | ½tsp culinary lavender
flowers |
| Grated zest and juice
of ½ orange | ¼tsp vanilla extract |
| 550ml full-fat milk | 1 egg, plus 4 egg yolks |
| | Icing sugar, to serve |

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Mix the rhubarb, 150g of the caster sugar, the orange zest and juice in an ovenproof dish and bake for 16-18 mins, until the rhubarb starts to soften. Set aside to cool, then strain. Reduce the oven temperature to 160C/Gas 3.

2 Heat the milk and cream with the lavender and vanilla over a low heat until almost boiling, then set aside for 5 mins. Whisk the egg, yolks and remaining sugar in a bowl, then pour in the milk mixture. Mix well, then strain into a jug.

3 Place six 150ml ramekins in a roasting tray. Divide the rhubarb between them and pour in the custard. Fill the tray with boiling water so it comes halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake for 30 mins until just set, but with a slight wobble. Remove from the oven and leave to cool. Dust with icing sugar.

FULLY ESCORTED TOURS



Lake Como, St Moritz & the Bernina Express

Selected departures from April to October 2020.

8 days from only £819pp.

Price includes: Take a lake cruise to beautiful Bellagio on Lake Como ✱ Enjoy a full-day visit to the chic resort of St Moritz, including a journey on the Bernina Express ✱

Discover Bergamo, northern Italy's most enchanting medieval town, on a guided tour ✱ Follow in the footsteps of the 'Grand Tour' with a visit to Lake Maggiore and the town of Stresa ✱ Visit Lugano, an elegant Swiss lakeside town with Italian influences ✱ Return flights from a selection of regional airports, plus all transfers ✱ Seven nights in a choice of three and four-star accommodation, with breakfast and dinner* ✱ The services of an experienced and insightful tour manager



Lake Garda, Venice & Verona

Selected departures from April to October 2020.

8 days half-board from only £699pp.

Price includes: Enjoy a full day exploring beautiful Lake Garda, both on land and by boat ✱ Explore Venice on a tour with a local guide – choose between the 'classic' and 'undiscovered' tours ✱ Walk into history among the Roman ruins of Verona, guided by a local expert – choose between the 'classic' and 'undiscovered' tours ✱ See the breathtaking alpine scenery of the Dolomites on a full-day tour ✱ Enjoy two free days to explore further or relax ✱ Visit a local vineyard, with a guided tour of the cellars and a tasting of the superb wines ✱ Return flights from a selection of regional airports, plus all transfers ✱ Seven nights in three- to four-star superior accommodation, with breakfast and dinner ✱ The services of an experienced and insightful tour manager



Pompeii, Capri & the Bay of Naples

Selected departures from March to November 2020.

8 days from only £729pp.

Price includes: Explore the amazingly preserved Roman town of Herculaneum with an expert local guide ✱ Take a boat trip to the stunning island of Capri, with the opportunity to visit the Blue Grotto ✱ Discover the mysteries of Pompeii on a guided tour ✱ Spend a full day touring the breathtaking Amalfi coast, with a visit to charming hilltop Ravello ✱ Stay in elegant Sorrento and enjoy a walking tour of this stylish resort ✱ Enjoy a walking tour of Naples old town with a local guide ✱ Return flights from a selection of regional airports, plus all hotel transfers ✱ Seven nights in a choice of three- to four-star superior accommodation, plus breakfast and dinner** ✱ The services of an experienced and insightful tour manager



Puglia, Lecce & Vieste – Undiscovered Italy

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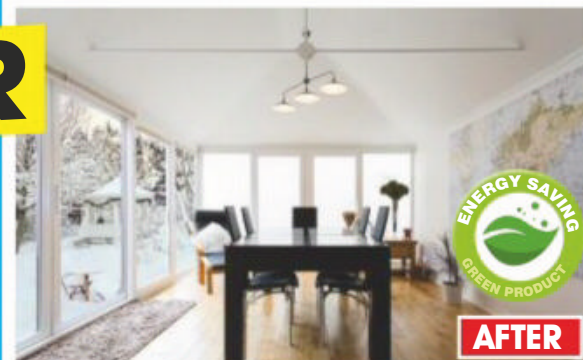
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MY FAVOURITE VIEW... *Slad Valley, Gloucestershire*

For pottery designer Emma Bridgewater, there are few places more inviting and idyllic than her late sister's farm with its views over Slad Valley

Fennells Farm, the headquarters of Giffords Circus, sits on an escarpment above Gloucester and has the most beautiful views in all directions. Facing westwards you look out across the Severn to the Forest of Dean, Wales and beyond, then when you spin around to the north you look across the steep valley to picturesque Slad.

There's something about seeing everything laid out before you that just beckons you to get out and explore. The valley down to Slad is a particularly exciting bit of the Cotswolds for me; it feels like a proper working rural village. I love walking down the steep hill, onto The Vatch and then to The Woolpack pub for a ginger beer shandy and a sausage roll, which is a nice reward!

My sister Nell, who tragically passed away from breast cancer

recently, had lived at Fennells Farm for some time, and it will continue to be Circus HQ and where the tour begins and finishes its season. Being in that space, of course, has huge associations with my darling sister, who was an inspiring force of life. She decided 20 years ago that circus was not going to be allowed to just trickle away into something that nobody ever went to and so she started reimagining it. Now, people say, 'Oh, it's what the circus used to be like!' But it's not: it's what Nell thought the circus should be like. They do everything in a considered but relaxed way, and my family get excited about the circus each year.

Slad is known for being where Laurie Lee grew up and where the book *Cider With Rosie* is set. I first read that novel when I was about

11 or 12 and his descriptions of the countryside plunge you into a compelling world, now lost to time.

I would go mad if I couldn't spend a lot of time outdoors and feel lucky that so much of my life has been spent exploring the countryside. Increasingly, it seems children are being brought up without enough exposure to rural life. What you don't know, you can't love, and what you don't love you won't have an interest in looking after, so I think it's important that these depictions of the countryside don't fall by the wayside.

Look out for Emma Bridgewater's spring collection, including the Easter and Mother's Day ranges, emmabridgewater.co.uk Giffords Circus 2020 Tour, *The Hooley*, runs 9 April-27 September. giffordscircus.com

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