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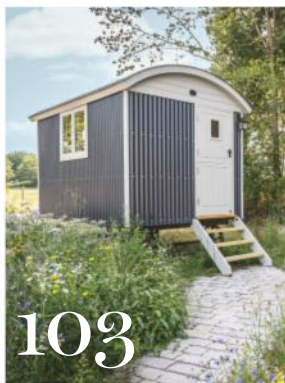
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Things I've seen, done and loved this month...

Mindfulness. It's the word on everyone's lips. It means being conscious of ourselves and of the world around us, taking care to create calm and harmony in a world of noise and chaos.

So, we asked ourselves, what does the mindful country home look like? How can we style feel-good living spaces for a 'greener' way of life using eco-friendly, ethically sourced and low-carbon elements? Take a look at the decorating and design ideas on page 74 and be inspired! We also get clever with natural cleaning (page 92) – who needs harmful chemicals when you can blend herbal oils, salts and store-cupboard staples to create your own household sprays and scrubs? Try them – they really work! Reconnecting with the landscape is good for our souls, too, at this time of year.

If you're seeking solace outside, yurts, treehouses and garden pavilions could be on your wishlist – see page 103 for our favourites.

Or, why not take a gentle walk through a woodland garden filled with nature's beauties – bluebells and camellias – in North Wales (page 122). As poet Max Ehrmann wrote, 'It is a beautiful world.... Be happy.'

Rhoda x

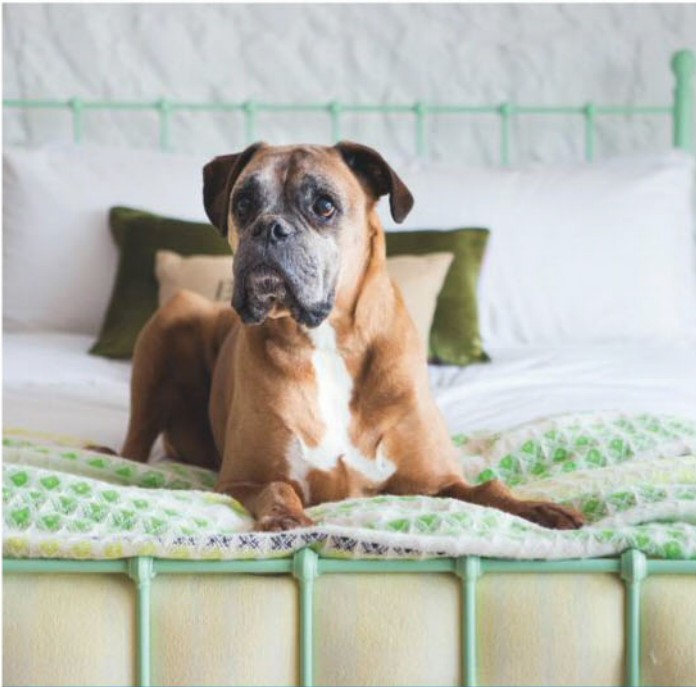
PS... Join Country Homes & Interiors at the Weald of Kent Craft & Design Show at Penshurst Place on 30 April to 2 May 2016.

Get 50% off tickets today – see page 23.

PHOTOGRAPH EVAN SKIAR/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



This month...
We're launching the
**2016 My Country
Business Awards.**
Turn to page 66 to
find out more.



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Things we can't live without MAY



Pottering and potting up in rustic surroundings. Vintage school desks; chair, similar from After Noah. Spade; fork, £65 each; bird nesting pockets, £4.50 each, Baileys. Wire shelf unit, similar from Rockett St George. Trug, similar from Burgon & Ball. Vintage galvanised buckets, similar from Mabel & Rose. Mini lantern, similar from Yellow Sunrise. Black string, similar from Fred Aldous. Coffee pot, £25; wooden string bobbin, £10; seed box, £10; mug, £10.50; seedling tray, £10; watering can, £32, all Garden Trading. Milk bottle, similar from Baileys. Cushion, similar from Garden Trading. Ribbon, from a selection, Jane Means. Wellington boots, from a selection, Hunter. Other items, all stylist's own.



1 Refreshments served on a beautiful tray. Linea wood tray, H3xW36.5xD20.5cm, £40, House of Fraser. **2 A jolly cover-up to keep clothes clean when cooking.** Pea Pod apron, H80xW60cm, £24, Thornback & Peel. **3 Macramé-style plant pot hangers for a retro vibe.** Knotted Interiors mini plant pot hanger, approx H35cm, col Grey, £15, Eleanor Bolton.



Lovely layers to pack for weekend trips. Leather biker jacket, £225; merino wool crew-neck jumper, £65; slim-leg jeans, £80, all Celtic & Co.




PINTEREST
 For more things we
 can't live without,
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Outside entertaining with fresh white linens. Tablecloth, £95; seat pads, £25 each; napkins, £25 for 4; Artisan Stoneware china, from £10 a piece; Stanton cutlery, £95 for 16 pieces; lantern, £60; tealight holders, £18 for 3, all The White Company.



4 Warm wood on pendant lighting. Big Blend hanging pendant lamp, H36x22cm diameter, £115, Cuckooland. **5 Statement pieces featuring natural elements.** Oak side table, H46x60cm diameter, £245, Ines Cole. **6 Plants in pretty pots.** Plant pot, H9.5cm, £3.40, Birdie Fortescue. **7 Measuring with metallics.** Brass measurement spoons, £52, Ferm Living. >>

COUNTRY DAYS



Planning new decorating schemes in a tranquil corner. Highlands armchair in Linamore Charcoal, £1,199; Croft cashmere throw, £250; Wright lamp, £85; Sitting Firm Kennet tray side table, £399; Croft rug, £310, all John Lewis.



8 A colour-dipped board. Pride of Place chopping board, 41.5x25cm, £17.99, T&G Woodware. **9 Packing up provisions in style.** Stig backpack, H38cm, £105, Sandqvist. **10 Rustic lighting for longer evenings in the garden.** Retreat wicker lantern, H40cm, £50, Debenhams. **11 Spontaneous picnicking!** Waterproof picnic blanket, 145x183cm, £99, The British Blanket Company.



12 Doing a spot of weeding. Hand fork and trowel, £32 each, Wood & Meadow. **13 Understated earthenware.** Jug, H11.5cm, £9.25, Pastel Lane. **14 Nature-inspired details on accessories.** Botanical tealight, H12cm, £12 for 3, Next. **15 Fresh bread served in a bamboo basket.** Arriba basket, 30x20.5cm, £6 for 2, Habitat.



Enjoying botanical illustrations on soft furnishings. Botanist embroidered cushion, £14, Sainsbury's.



VIDEO
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colours at
country-days.co.uk

Colour of THE MOMENT

BRING NATURE'S BEAUTY INTO YOUR HOME WITH A PALETTE OF FRESH GREENS. TEAM WITH NATURAL WOOD AND A HINT OF GOLD FOR A SOPHISTICATED COUNTRY SCHEME.



FEATURE HOLLY PHILLIPS (MAIN) SARA BIRD; (MOODBOARD) HOLLY PHILLIPS
PHOTOGRAPHS (MAIN) DAVID BRITTAIN; (MOODBOARD) PIRELLE GÖTTSCHE

(Clockwise, from top left) Gold and glass hanging **frame**, £6, Oliver Bonas. Wooden initial **gift tag**, £1, Clouds & Currents. **Fabric**, Palermo, col Apple, £165 m, Carolina Irving Textiles at Redloh House Fabrics. **Trimmings** (from top), Looped Rouche, £23 m; Nina Campbell Cottage Gimp, £15 m; Nina Campbell Honey Pot Fringe (below threads), £52 m, all Osborne & Little. Majestic **carpet**, col Cirio, £79.99 sq m, Brintons. Muslin **ribbon**, £3.50 (includes spool), Birdie Fortescue. Wooden **spool**, similar from Homestead Store. Slate **tag**, £1.50, The Wedding of My Dreams. Green Country Sprig **wallpaper**, £30 a roll, Next. Oak paddle **board**, £26.95, Dassie. **Fabrics**, Woodland Walk, col Field Green, £46 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. Malmo, col Apple, £39 m; Bilbao, col Gooseberry, £18.50 m, both Villa Nova. Gingham **ribbon**, £2.70 for 3m, Jane Means. **Paint**, Mister Toad, £36 for 2.5L, Earthborn. **Paintbrush**, similar from Wickes. **Flooring**, Isis, col Leaf; Westport, col Lichen, both £125 a linear m, Roger Oates. **Buttons**, **threads**, from a selection, John Lewis.

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Home notes

We want this now...

Who says gadgets can't be gorgeous? Cath Kidston's new range of tech, from portable power packs to selfie sticks, has been given a makeover in the form of the brand's iconic vintage-inspired prints. We love this portable Bluetooth speaker in Little Birds, £89.95 - simply charge it before you leave the house and you can play your favourite songs for eight hours.



Mixing bowls, £15 for 3 assorted; whisk, £6; stacker mugs, £15 for 4; spoon, £6; tea towels, £12.50 for 3 assorted; chair, £175 for 2, all Loft collection, Marks & Spencer.

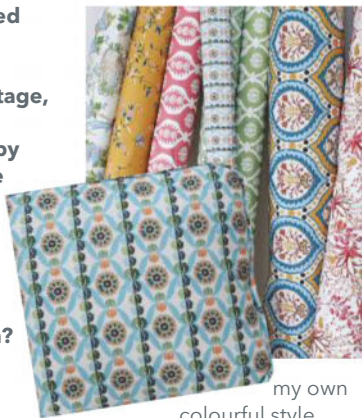


Beautiful homewares...
on-trend colours

OUR FAVOURITE DESIGNER

Charlotte Gaisford

Northumberland-based textile designer Charlotte's signature collection, The Hermitage, features beautiful illustrations inspired by traditional chinoiserie design in bright, bold colours for a fresh, modern twist.



How did you get into surface pattern design?

After I got married, I decided to pursue my passion for design and enroll on to a degree course at the local college. I narrowed my choice down to fine art or textiles - the textiles department was the first to answer my call and before I knew it I had signed up for the next three years! **Tell us a bit about where you're based.** I live in beautiful remote countryside about half an hour from Newcastle. I built my garden studio from scratch - it's a bit chilly in the winter but warms up in no time when I light the log-burning stove.

What inspires you? I love going to museums and exhibitions and observing different shapes and patterns in the objects on show. I also take a lot of inspiration from the past, especially folk art. I bring a lot of these elements into my designs, but also inject

my own colourful style.

Tell us about your latest collection... A friend invited me to The Hermitage, an 18th-century country house on the banks of the River Tyne. It had been in her family for years and she wanted to show me the original handpainted chinoiserie wallpaper hanging in one of the bedrooms. This inspired my own collection, which includes fabrics, £55 m, wallpapers, £120 a roll, and cushions, including Lovely Sophie (above), £55.

Describe your creative style in three words.

Traditional, modern and fresh. **Visit charlottegaisford.co.uk, 01434 689583.**



Pretty in pink... and grey!

Looking to introduce a breath of fresh air into your country decorating scheme this spring? Opt for an on-trend look that echoes Pantone's colours of the year: Rose Quartz and Serenity. Soft and subtle, these shades complement each other beautifully and are ideal for adding understated sophistication to any room. Bring cool blue-grey hues on walls, floors and furniture to life with pastel pink accents or, for a more versatile design statement, display mix-and-match kitchenware in pared-down patterns on tables and open shelves. Team with natural materials, such as wood and muted copper, for a contemporary feel in a country kitchen.

CANOPY CHIC

Add a little drama to your bedroom with this new canopy bed frame from the Wrought Iron & Brass Bed Co. Elsa - named in honour of the family business's pet Labrador! - is handcrafted in a converted barn in rural Norfolk and there are seven colours to choose from, including black (shown), mint green and powder blue. From £670 for a single.



Garden notes

SHADE-LOVING GERANIUM



Deep-maroon late-spring flowers on slender, bobbing stems give the shade-loving perennial *Geranium phaeum* var. *phaeum* 'Samobor' an exotic, brooding presence. Plants will knit together to form lovely soft hummocks and are best trimmed back in mid-summer to encourage a second flush of flowers. You can buy three young plants for £14.50 from Hayloft Plants.

OUR FAVOURITE PLANTSWOMAN

Sarah Raven

For 17 years, the writer, TV presenter, horticulturalist, veg grower and cutting garden expert has been growing and teaching at her garden in Perch Hill, East Sussex, where you can visit, shop and take courses.

What's your stand-out feature at this time of year?

We grow huge drifts of narcissi for picking - scented, multi-headed, long-vase-life varieties and there are armfuls of them - along with hyacinths and early tulips, such as 'Purissima' and 'Exotic Emperor' (above).

What's new in the garden?

We started a rose and herb garden last year. The roses are underplanted with salvias, which help to protect them against fungal disease.

What's your favourite May flower?

The tulip - I love unusual ones such as 'Evergreen'. Carefully chosen, tulips are marvellous in the garden, in pots and in a vase. My all-time favourite is the lily-flowered variety, 'Ballerina'.

What inspires you? I love to travel and find unusual seeds, bulbs or tubers, which I test here. That's what excites me most - waiting to see how they perform and what they mix well with.



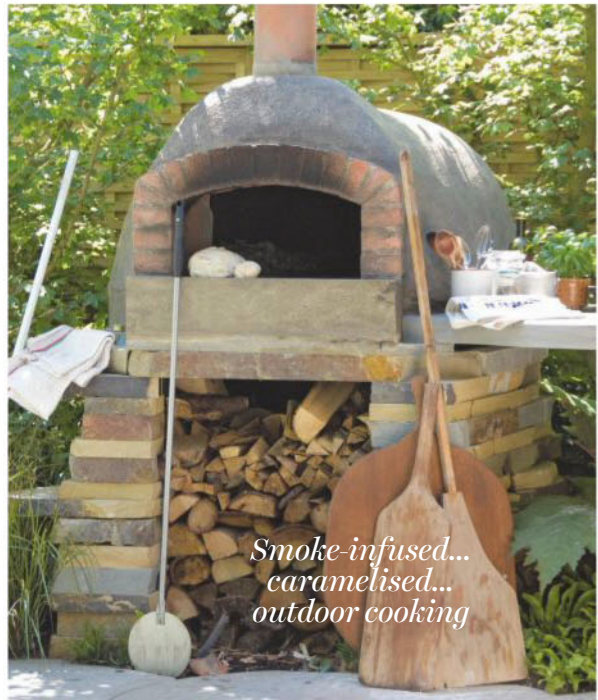
If you could grow just one flower for picking? It would be the cosmos clan, ranging from pure-white 'Purity' to deep-carmine/crimson 'Rubenza'. We're trialling a primrose yellow one this year.

Tell us about your latest book... I've just finished a healthy cookbook. In May we're hosting a healthy cooking weekend, and there are chef-led dinners in our newly converted barn with cooks from Honey & Co, and Tara Wigley from Yotam Ottolenghi's test kitchen.

For details on courses and garden tours, visit sarahraven.com. Sarah's



latest book, **Good Good Food (£25, Bloomsbury) is published in May.**



*Smoke-infused...
caramelised...
outdoor cooking*

Create an outdoor oven

Step away from the barbecue, the wood-fired oven is taking centre stage in the country garden. It is possible to build your own oven and there's plenty in the way of instructions online if you're feeling confident, as well as one-day courses, such as those offered by River Cottage in Devon, £195, Edwards & Eve Cob Building in Norfolk, £120, and Humble by Nature in Monmouthshire, £95. Whichever route you take, think carefully about where your oven will go as it will need plenty of space around it. Alternatively, you can buy off-the-shelf from companies such as Jamie Oliver or Orchard Ovens - expect to pay from as little as a few hundred pounds up to several thousand.

We want this now...



Add a fun element to your garden with this mini bicycle planter. Pop it on the patio and fill to overflowing with a window-box classic such as lobelia. Iron bicycle planter, H24xL33.5xcm, £14.99, Dobbies.



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For Sophie, her kitchen is a place to be inspired, a place where new creations are explored. For her, a messy kitchen is the mark of a good cook.

The Pyrolytic self-cleaning cycle is a high-temperature cleaning function that blasts grease, splatter and spillages into ash, which can then simply be wiped away, leaving Sophie's much used oven looking like new. Allowing Sophie to concentrate on her next culinary creation, not the cleaning.

See how our Slide&Hide® Pyrolytic ovens deal with splatter and spillages at www.neff.co.uk/slideandhide

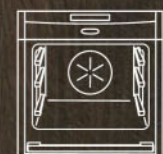
Cooking inspires people. People inspire us.



MESS



HEAT



CLEAN

Food notes



We want this now...

The aroma of a freshly baked loaf is hard to beat, and Real Bread Week (14-22 May) is the annual celebration of all that's good about proper loaves. To find out more, go to realbreadcampaign.org. Mason Cash has everything you'll need, from easy starter kits to terracotta bread forms. And this beautiful stoneware Varsity Bread Store will house your finished loaves in style. £40, John Lewis.

OUR FAVOURITE ARTISAN CHARCUTERIE

Capreolus Fine Foods

Based in Rampisham in West Dorset, David and Karen Richards started their award-winning artisan charcuterie company in 2009. Quality and provenance are of the utmost importance and they source locally reared meat from rare breeds. The mutton salami is perfect for picnics, while the dry-cured smoked maple bacon will add something special to a bank holiday brunch.

What's so special about your charcuterie? We work with local farmers and only use meat of the highest standards. We also develop our own recipes and freshly grind spices and herbs for each batch. Father and son team Robert and Aaron work in the butchery and do most of the curing. Their attention to detail is second to none. **What inspired the name?** Capreolus is from the Latin for roe deer, and one of our first products was smoked venison. **You've won lots of awards. Which one means the most to you?** Maybe the Supreme Champion Product



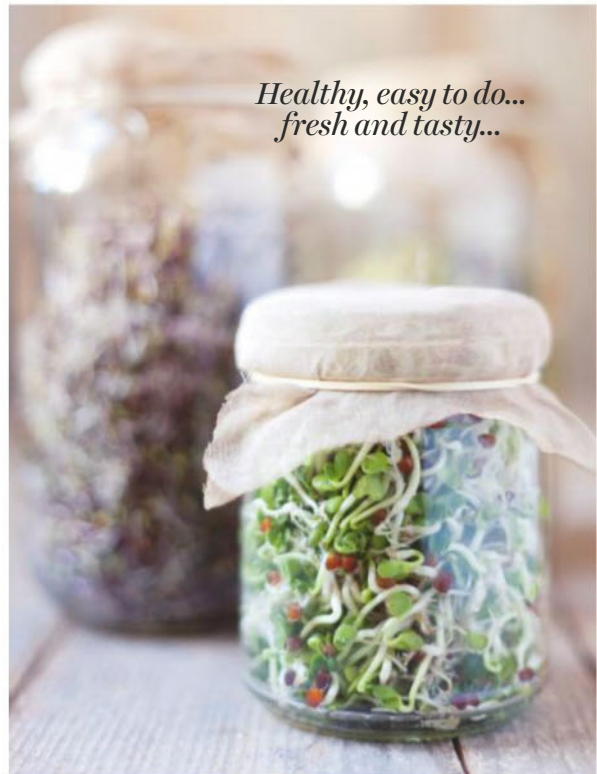
at the 2013 Taste of the West Awards for our Guanciale, which is similar to pancetta.

What's your favourite summer dish? I love sitting outside in the sun with a plate of mixed charcuterie and a tippie. My favourite combos are smoked duck and mango salad with a chilled Palo Cortado sherry and air-dried ham with fresh figs and a glass of champagne.

Any new launches? We've been working on several new recipes including air-dried duck prosciutto. We've also developed a lovely nduja, a fiery hot spreadable salami.



Contact
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Super sprouts

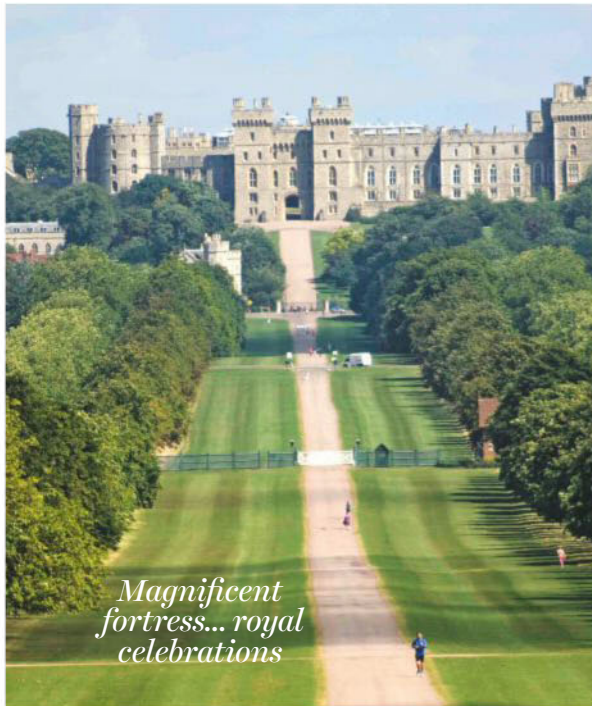
Once seen as a bit alternative, protein-packed sprouted seeds and beans have gone mainstream. Waitrose is now selling packs of Good4U Super Sprouts, a mix of alfalfa, clover, broccoli and radish. To do your own, take a few sterilised jam jars and add a handful of chick peas, lentils, mung beans and so on, keeping each type separate. Don't overfill the jar and cover with fresh cold water. Cover with a muslin cap secured with an elastic band. Leave overnight, then drain water through the muslin by tilting the jar. Refill with fresh water and repeat the process every 12 hours. After a week your sprouts will be ready to add a healthy zip to salads, stir-fries and sandwiches.

Raise a glass

Move over elderflower pressé. Organic Damascene Rose Bubbly is a delicate blend of sweetness and sparkle handmade in small batches on the Luscombe farm in South Devon - and a great non-alcoholic alternative to fizz. Combining Muscat grape juice, rose water and Sicilian lemon with sparkling spring water, it really feels like a celebratory treat, especially when served chilled in a champagne flute. From £1.79 for a 32cl bottle.



Out & about



Magnificent fortress... royal celebrations

The place to go... Windsor

Home to an official residence of the Queen, this picturesque town in Berkshire is ideal for soaking up royal history on the Queen's 90th birthday.

- **Wander** around Windsor Castle, built by William the Conqueror (royalcollection.org.uk).
- **Enjoy** showjumping, carriage driving, dressage and international endurance at the Royal Windsor Horse Show (11-15 May, rwhs.co.uk).
- **Walk** the Long Walk (above) with its ancient oaks and deer lawns (windsorgreatpark.co.uk).
- **Eat** at Gilbey's across the footbridge in Eton (82 High Street, gilbeygroup.com) for modern British food with a French twist, plus tempting wine list.
- **Stay** at The Oakley Court (oakleycourt.co.uk), a lovely hotel just out of town on the Thames.



Enjoy May Day

Visit Hever Castle and Gardens in Kent for a May Day Festival (30 April to 2 May, hevercastle.co.uk) to mark the start of summer. See the crowning of a May Queen, catch a ribbon on the maypole and follow the Green Man's procession with magical May bells to wake up plants for warmer days ahead.

KNOW YOUR COTTAGE PLANTS

Learn about the best summer flowers for a cottage garden at pretty Coton Manor Garden in Coton, Northamptonshire, where garden expert and writer Helen Yemm will enthuse students by highlighting favourite combinations of plants



for sun and shade. Discover which flowers are best for a summer display to give a range of shapes, textures and hues. The course is on Thursday 19 May and costs £85 including lunch. Visit cotonmanor.co.uk.

OUR FAVOURITE SHOP

Scandi Living

Linda Swarbrick's shop in Hindhead, near the gateway to the Surrey Hills, offers gorgeous Scandinavian furniture, furnishings and lifestyle gifts, plus a café with delicious homemade treats.

What inspired you to open?

I'm a Swede who moved to the UK to study in 1996. I got caught up in busy London life, where I met my British husband. When I had my first child, I didn't want to commute to a financial job in London any more. I loved interiors and had dreamed of opening a Scandi-style shop and bringing Swedish interiors over here. I started with the online business and later opened the shop.

How would you describe your shop's style? It's a real mix between modern and traditional in homely, non-fussy styles with a beautiful neutral pallet - completely Scandinavian. Each season I'm excited to see the latest collections and discover new brands. Being surrounded by all these lovely products, textures and colours is an inspiration in itself.

What makes your shop unique? I go with my heart and only choose products



I love. They have to be Scandinavian and work in family homes. We get locals and Scandi lovers who go out of their way to come here.

What's the customer response to Scandi Living?

People appreciate that we're a small, genuinely Scandinavian business, where they can find hand-picked brands in one place. **Tell us about the interior design side.** Our made-to-measure curtain service was such a success that I thought it was time to offer an interior design package. I put my heart and soul into helping people create Scandinavian-style homes. It's so much fun. **Scandi Living, Hindhead Galleries, Tilford Road, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6SF, 01428 608050, scandiliving.com.**



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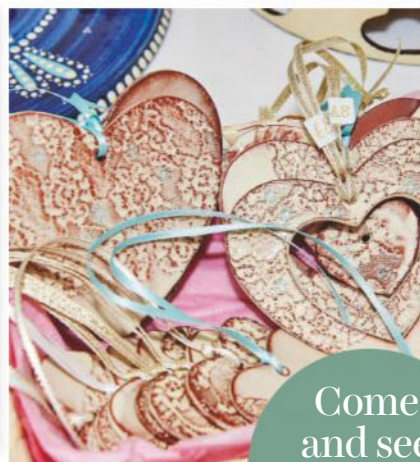
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- Readers of Country Homes & Interiors can enjoy 50% off the general ticket price.
- To take advantage of this offer, visit ichfevents.co.uk, click on 'buy tickets' and enter the promotional code KS16.
- Or call the ticket hotline on 01425 277988 and quote code KS16. Offer is valid until 5pm on Monday 25 April 2016.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Discount only applicable on full-price adult (usual price £10) and senior (usual price £9) tickets. Offer valid for all days of the show. Tickets valid for one day only. Children accompanied by an adult go free. Usual terms of purchase and show entry apply, see website for details. Full details of the show including all features, demonstrations, exhibitors and ticket information are available at ichfevents.co.uk.



Class of its own

HER ARTISTIC FLAIR CAME TO THE FORE WHEN JENNY MORT TRANSFORMED A VICTORIAN SCHOOL INTO A RELAXED HOME



Dining room

A glazed roof covers this impressive space, which links the original headmaster's house to the classrooms. **Chairs**, Laura Ashley. **Vase**, candlesticks, One World Trading Company.

House The schoolhouse sits in the foothills of the beautiful South Downs. >>



Pink and white striped tableware from Oka brings a pop of Jenny's favourite colour to the table.



What makes this house a home...

‘Comfy sofas, log fires, the Aga and luxuriously large spaces for parties, which are often filled with music’



Hallway Moving the stairs created additional space. **Lamp**, India Jane. **Felt hat** (on table), Jenny M London.



Kitchen The units were made by a local builder and designed by Jenny to include a classic butler's sink.





Living area (Also opposite)
A new mezzanine floor divides the larger of the two classrooms into two levels - the top is used as a study. **Sofa**, George Smith. **Coffee table**, Made.com. **Cushions**, Vanessa Arbuthnott. **Console table**, Christie's. **Mirror**, Oka. >>

Kitchen Shaker-style units combine with a mantel over the range cooker and traditional slate flags to create the perfect country kitchen. The distressed woodwork has a base coat in New White by Farrow & Ball with several glazes on top. **Tablecloth**, oilcloth fabric by Cabbages & Roses.



Leaving London (or not!) was the main topic of conversation in the Mort family home in 2003, and one that continued for several months. 'Eventually, I found the perfect country co-ed boarding school for my two children, which brought matters to a head,' says Jenny Mort. 'Even though my oldest child Oliver – then 13 – came kicking and screaming, I was finally persuaded to take the plunge. Lucy, then eight, liked horses, so she was easy.'

Looking for a property to buy within reasonable striking distance of the school she'd already signed up for was not so easy, especially as Jenny, a fashion designer with a reputation for doing things differently, was keen to find an out-of-the-ordinary house.

After months of house-hunting she spotted a Victorian schoolhouse in the foothills of the South Downs. With two large, double-height classrooms joined to a headmaster's house, it offered the potential to create the space Jenny wanted, plus some quirky characteristics and an unusual history that satisfied her wish for something different.

'It was architecturally pretty, but inside it was very run down,' says Jenny. The school closed in 1985 and had remained untouched, with rows of little hand-basins, school bells, hooks and lockers still in place. 'Even more problematic, the headmaster's house had only three bedrooms, so I knew I was going to have to extend,' says Jenny.

She worked with architect Ekkehard Weisner to exploit the double height of the larger of the two classrooms, designing a mezzanine floor linked by a spiral staircase. 'This space became the main living room,' says Jenny. 'The draughty windows were lowered and new ones installed, using the same moulds as the originals, plus I added French doors to provide more light and create a link to the garden.' The open courtyard next to the living room, which was once a children's playground, was glazed to create an unusual conservatory-style dining room.

To remedy the lack of bedrooms, Ekkehard designed a new wing modelled on the style of the headmaster's house. Attached to the opposite end of the house, it provided a new guest annexe accessed by its own stairs and a large country-style kitchen. 'The house feels old throughout despite the new additions,' says Jenny. 'I am so pleased as that was always my intention. Most people can't tell the difference between the old and new, which is most gratifying.'

Friends and visitors also comment on the creative atmosphere that permeates the house and Jenny attributes it to her home-based fashion business. 'My studio is often full of arty young people working on my new ranges,' she says. At the beginning of her career, Jenny cut dress patterns for the legendary Jean Muir and went on to set up her own worldwide fashion business, Jenny M London. This explains the clothes racks bunched up with paper patterns and the racks of velvet jackets and silk dresses spread around the house. These, along with a large sign in the hall, are indicative of Jenny's laid-back approach to life. The sign reads: 'I am disturbed already. Come right in.' No wonder the atmosphere in the rejuvenated schoolhouse feels so happy, friendly and relaxed. »



AT HOME WITH...

Owner Jenny Mort, owner of fashion brand Jenny M London (jennymlondon.com). She has two grown-up children Oliver and Lucy.

House A Grade II-listed Victorian school with two classrooms, attached to a headmaster's house, which was built in 1850 and further extended into a five-bedroom family home in 2004.



TEST 12

GREEN-FINGERED PRINTS



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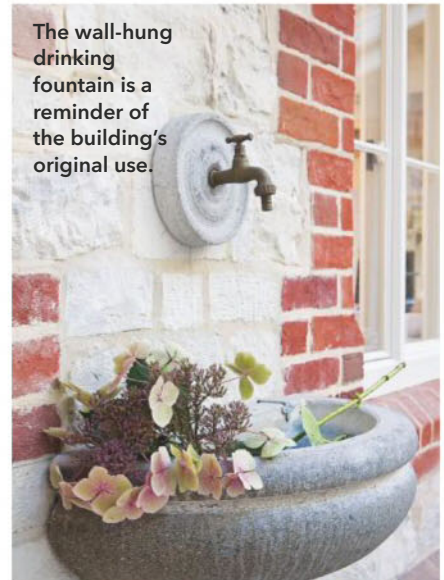
Laundry room (Also below) Jenny calls this her inspirational space and it houses her collection of antique peasant clothing and farmers' smocks.



Jenny's collection of wicker baskets is useful as well as decorative.



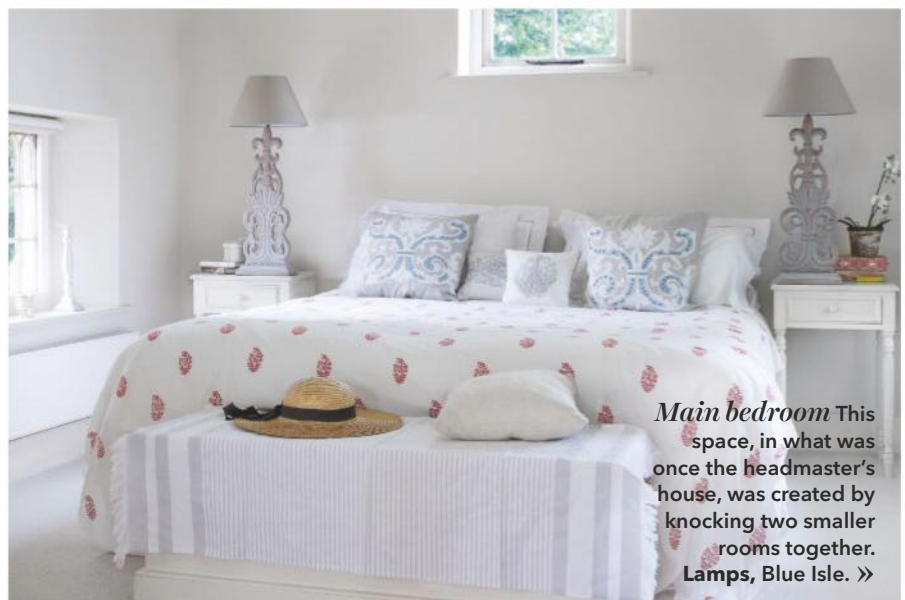
What I love most about living here...
'Being able to walk up on to the Downs and glimpse the sea and the village - it is peaceful and outstandingly beautiful'



The wall-hung drinking fountain is a reminder of the building's original use.



Bathroom The walls and sloping ceiling are painted in Red Earth by Farrow & Ball.



Main bedroom This space, in what was once the headmaster's house, was created by knocking two smaller rooms together. Lamps, Blue Isle. >>

*
**ON MY
DOORSTEP...**

Visit... 'Pallant House Art Gallery (01243 774557, pallant.org.uk) in Chichester. This grand Queen Anne house is host to a wonderful range of art exhibitions.'

Shop at... 'Cowdray House Farm Shop (01730 815152, cowdray.co.uk), near Midhurst, for delicious local produce, unusual home accessories and original presents.'

Go for a meal at... 'The Spread Eagle Hotel (01730 816911, hshotels.co.uk) in Midhurst. The delicious food is served in a traditional dining room with an open fire, silver candlesticks and white linen tablecloths.'

Guest bedroom Brightly coloured cushions that Jenny brought back from a trip to Rajasthan give this room in the eaves a fresh feel. **Throw**, similar from Atlantic Blankets. >>

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Go for stylish storage. Faux Shagreen trunk, H60xW50cm sq, £625, Oka.



Think antiqued details. Mirror, H100xW80cm, £250, Primrose & Plum. Urn lamp, H66cm, £80, The Orchard.



Modern Country Classic

Coffee table

Every living room needs a suitable place to set down drinks and spread out the Sunday papers.

Need to know...

A late arrival to the furniture scene, coffee tables were unknown in period interiors, so any 'antique' ones will have been cut down or had the legs swapped. Nowadays, coffee tables are an essential part of our living rooms and curvy designs are particularly graceful. Check that legs are firmly attached with mortise and tenon joints and get the right size for the room - too large and you'll knock your shins each time you get up.

Where to buy...

- Grange for oak tables in painted and distressed wood finishes.
- Nicky Cornell for walnut or painted finishes.
- Swoon Editions for pared-back, rustic finishes and French style.



Inject some colour. Palau silk cushion cover (left), 51cm sq, £44, Oka. Shalini linen cushion, H35xW45cm, £45, Susie Watson Designs.

Be inspired by Jenny's living room

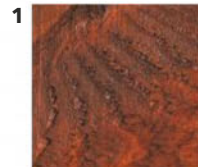


Add elegant lighting. Adèle lantern, H61xW25cm sq, £39.99, Maisons du Monde.



Recline in style. Lockton armchair in Biscay Pearl, H110xW87xD95cm, £1,057, Sofas & Stuff.

FIND THE PERFECT WOODEN BEAM STAIN



1 Antique Teak; **2** Mahogany; **3** Walnut, all £16.99 for 1L, Royal Interior Wood Finish collection, Protek.



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VANESSA SAYCE'S RESTORATION OF A RUN DOWN FARMHOUSE
RESULTED IN A HOME OF RELAXED SOPHISTICATED

House The Grade II-listed Georgian farmhouse stands at the heart of an ancient Somerset village.

Living room Vanessa has created a musical area with her reclaimed piano and a collection of framed sheet music on display. Pitcher, similar from Etsy. >>





AT HOME WITH...

Owners Vanessa Sayce, who owns The Marmalade House, an interiors shop selling handpainted furniture, and also runs paint courses, and her husband, Murray, who works in corporate social responsibility. They have three children, Finn, 15, Zach, 13, and Madi, 12. They moved here in 2005.

House Grade II-listed Georgian farmhouse with Victorian additions and six bedrooms.

Vanessa Sayce and her husband, Murray, were no strangers to renovating houses, having already done up a property in Oxfordshire. So when they decided to move to Somerset in 2005 and saw a run-down but beautiful Georgian farmhouse in a village outside Bath, they didn't hesitate.

'The farmhouse had never been on the market before – there had been tenant farmers living here for 150 years,' says Vanessa. 'We loved it because it was higgledy-piggledy and quirky – there were chickens in the kitchen and animals everywhere! It was like *Cold Comfort Farm*. We could see it was falling down and needed a lot of work, but it had massive potential. We loved the feel of the place – it was ancient and calling out for someone to do it up. It was such a great home to bring up children in because it had lots of space. Amazingly, in one of the tumbledown barns at the back, there was a beautiful Aston Martin that had been in a Bond film!'

The house went to sealed bids. 'We didn't have a survey done as we could see it was falling down!' says Vanessa. 'We realised we would have to do everything and I think the owners went with us because we were quite laid back.'

Once the family moved in they were quickly faced with the full extent of the work ahead. 'Only then did we realise >>

Hallway A Mora clock makes an attractive feature. Vanessa has also created a beautiful vignette with a display of picture frames above an antique chest of drawers (above right and opposite). **Clock**, similar from Swedish Interior Design. **Trug**, similar from Not on the High Street. **Console table**, painted in Coco and Old Ochre, by Annie Sloan. **Walls**, painted in Sand by Paint Library.



What we love most about living here...

'Our house is in an ancient village, close to Bath. There's a great community spirit and lovely countryside nearby'

What makes this house a home...

'We can display all the bits and pieces that give it a sense of comfort and reflect the character of our family'



Kitchen Farmhouse style is given a modern twist with an impressive metal vintage candelabra restored by Vanessa. Units, Old Creamery, painted by Vanessa in James White by Farrow & Ball.



Living room The wooden shutter doors (above left) were found in a reclamation yard and create a striking contrast with the neutral colour scheme. **Sofa, Sofa.com. Walls, painted in Lichen by Laura Ashley.**

that the only thing holding up the wallpaper was the tenant's furniture! The reality of what we'd done sank in and we had mixed emotions. We still thought it had a lovely feel and knew it could eventually be a warm family home, but we had three young children who'd be living in it while the work was done.'

Vanessa and Murray spent most of the first year cleaning the house up. 'It was difficult because Murray was travelling a lot for work. I thought it was a little like living in a derelict place with the children. None of the windows fitted and the house had no heating, so it was a raw experience.'

The couple then had to make a decision whether to tackle the interior of the house or replace the roof. 'We decided to work on the inside first. We thought we could live in one half of the house and then the other while it was done up, but the reality was that the whole house was in disarray.'

The interior took the best part of nine years to complete. 'We did it bit by bit as we went along,' says Vanessa. 'It had to be rewired and replumbed, new heating was put in, walls were lime-plastered, the original coving replaced, new floorboards put down, the flagstones restored, fireplaces unboarded, and a new kitchen and bathrooms installed.'

'Eventually we were forced to redo the roof as it got so bad – it rained into the bathroom at one point. The roof >>



This dining area is the perfect spot to sit on sunny days in the garden.



Main bedroom
Soft greys make for a restful scheme. The chandelier came from France and the bedspread was handmade in French ticking. Walls, painted in Savage Ground by Farrow & Ball.

Bathroom
Travertine tiles add texture to the elegant scheme. Tiles, Mandarin Stone. Bath, similar from Victorian Plumbing. Walls, painted in Aged White by Crown.

took two months to replace and we then had to redecorate the ceilings of three rooms because water had got in.'

When it came to the decor, Vanessa wanted to reflect the age of the house but with light colours and a French feel. She painted most of the furniture herself, using the Annie Sloan paints she stocks. 'I made a series of moodboards so that each of the rooms flowed and used different shades but similar tones throughout the house,' she says. 'I wanted to use historical colours that suited the period of the property, but I was also keen to keep it light because the house originally had grey flagstones and mahogany everywhere. Instead I used pale colours, with darker shades where the rooms were warmer. It's very French in style, but with a twist of modern and warehouse in a classical setting as I like the rawness of the industrial look.'

It has taken 10 years to get the house to where it is today. 'It's an amazing place to live in now, and a wonderful home in which to bring up the children. They've had a *Swallows and Amazons* childhood,' she says. 'We had a vision and we really knew that this house could be something.'

☎ The Marmalade House, 01225 445855, themarmaladehouse.co.uk. Vanessa lets out two rooms at weekends – to book visit roundhillfarmhouse.com. >>



ON OUR DOORSTEP...

Visit... 'Dyrham Park (0117 937 2501, nationaltrust.org.uk/dyrham-park) near Bath, a baroque country house set in an ancient deer park.'

Shop at... 'The Loft (01225 462111, theloftbath.com) in Bath, which sells Scandi homeware and clothes and has a lovely café. The Manor Farm (0117 932 8800, manorfarm-shop.co.uk/farm-shop) in Upton Cheyney sells home-reared meat and local veg.'

Go for a meal at... 'The Old Crown Inn (01225 423032, oldcrownkelston.com) in Kelston. It's been revamped and is really special. It serves good Somerset food and ale.'

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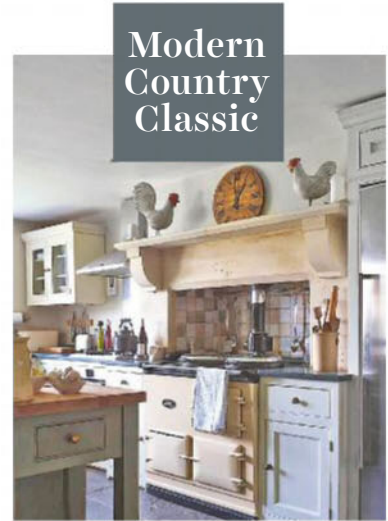
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Choose classic country style. Two-oven 13-amp electric **Aga**, col Cream, H85.1xW98.7xD69.8cm, from £6,995, Aga.



Be natural. Chopping board, £14.99, H&M Home. Wickham candle **chandelier**, H75x69cm diameter, £151, Jim Lawrence.



Modern Country Classic

Kitchen overmantel

Frame a much-loved range cooker with a country-inspired surround.

Need to know...

The one element that definitively characterises a country kitchen is the overmantel. In its most basic form, this is simply a shelf supported by corbels or brackets, easy for a competent DIY-er to fit. The more elaborate styles feature mouldings and corning, and sometimes include handy storage cupboards, shelves or spice drawers on either side. The overmantel can be fixed to an existing chimney breast or built as part of a false one.

Where to buy...

- Neptune for country kitchens that feature overmantels.
- Smallbone of Devizes for a bespoke kitchen including a mantel.
- Wild Goose Carvings for ornate corbels and brackets.



Add bold detail. La Petite Cuisine Patisserie **storage jar**, H27xW18cm, £39.50, Pastel Lane. Färgrik green **plates**, 80p each, Ikea.

Be inspired by Vanessa's country kitchen



For more ideas go to housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors



Gather around. Chichester **six-seater table**, H75xW170xD90cm, £770, Neptune.



Introduce some Gallic charm. French wine château **wall clock**, 36cm diameter, £29.95, Roger Lascelles.

FIND THE PERFECT FLAGSTONE FLOORING



1 Ashton Grey, £54 sq m; **2** Cathedral Black £42 sq m; **3** Hand-aged Verona finish, £34.80, sq m, all Beswick Stone.



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THE QUAIN FACADE OF SUZI COOK'S COTSWOLD COTTAGE
BELIES THE MODERN COUNTRY INTERIOR WITHIN

Cottage Surrounded by leafy trees and garden, this idyllic Cotswold home was formerly two cottages, now knocked into one. >>





*
AT HOME WITH...

Owners Suzi Cook and her husband, Peter, who works in IT for a Dutch publishing firm, who live here with their son Henry, nine, and Griffon Bruxellois Petit Brabançons, Teddy and Robin.

House Two Stonesfield slate 17th-century cottages knocked into one, with five bedrooms. The family moved here in 2007.

‘It looks just like the Hansel and Gretel cottage,’ says Suzi Cook of the enchanting 17th-century Cotswolds home that she and her family live in. Tucked away at the end of a long gravel drive, the cottage has a chocolate-box-pretty exterior with its honey-toned stonework and ceanothus shrubs and old-fashioned roses growing against the walls.

Suzi and her husband, Peter, were living in Oxford at the time they found the property. After living for several years in Paris and Brussels, they had decided to move to the countryside when their son Henry was born. ‘I saw the cottage before Peter and I didn’t think he would like it, but he loved the potential it offered,’ says Suzi.

Although the building was quaint and picturesque, it was very small. ‘We adored the house and the outbuildings that came with it, but hoped to extend, as we wanted to make it into a family home. The garden, in particular, sold it to us. It’s pretty, but manageable, and beautiful bluebells grow here in spring.’

Another advantage was that Suzi knew the area well because she had grown up only a few miles away, and her parents still live nearby.

Once the cottage was theirs, the Cooks applied for planning permission to create an extension, and work began in 2011. ‘We employed an architect, as well as >>

Dining room
A roof lantern ushers in daylight, and when a more intimate feel is wanted during entertaining Suzi closes the pocket doors to keep this space and the living room separate.
Table, chairs, Homes in Heaven. Rug, MB Carpets.

What makes this house a home...

‘Being open plan, every bit of the house is used, and when we unlock the doors in spring the garden almost comes inside’



Kitchen Creamy off-whites keep the look light. **Cabinets**, Cotteswood. **Red splashback**, CN Glass. **Blinds**, bar stools, John Lewis. **Pendant**, Liberty. **Walls**, painted in Acre (76) by Little Greene. **Faux travertine ceramic tiles**, The Terracotta Shop.



Fresh flowers from the garden make a pretty display at breakfast. White jug, similar from Dibor.

a project manager, who guided us through it all and liaised with the builders, making life much easier,' says Suzi.

While the 10-month long project was taking place, Suzi, Peter and Henry lived partly with Suzi's parents and the rest of the time in Leiden, where Peter works. The extension proved a godsend as it gave the family two more bedrooms and en-suite bathrooms, as well as extra space downstairs comprising a new open-plan area with a kitchen, dining room and living room, plus a utility room and study.

For the kitchen, Suzi and Peter opted to use local firm Cotteswood. 'We had always liked the look of its kitchens, especially the ones with curved cabinets, and we wanted to employ local people if we could. We were keen for our kitchen to look cottagey, but without being twee, so we chose a slightly traditional Shaker style with a contemporary edge.'

Much of the new downstairs area has large windows overlooking the garden. 'We wanted the house to be filled with natural light,' says Suzi. 'Thinking about the holiday cottages we've stayed in and what we liked about them, we tried to translate those elements into our house, so we have windows on either side of the woodburner in the living room to give a view of the garden and we installed a lantern roof in the dining room for extra light. We wanted that area to be open plan but capable of being shut off as well, so pocket doors were added between the dining room and living room.'

At the same time as the extension was being built, Suzi and Peter refurbished the rest of the house, moving the »

Living room

The exposed stone fireplace enjoys views on two sides of the garden, a deliberate design feature of the new extension. Sofas, Tetrad. Cushions, rug, similar from John Lewis.

Main bedroom

A sumptuous scheme creates a hotel-luxe feel. **Design**, Iris Lane Interiors. **Corallo wallpaper**, Cole & Son. **Bedlinen, throw**, The White Company. **Marbree cushions**, Harlequin. **Pendant**, John Lewis. **Cabinets**, Homes In Heaven.

What we love most about living here...

‘Feeling we’re secluded yet we live in a vibrant community, with Woodstock nearby and good links to Oxford and London’



Bathroom

A neutral palette creates a restful scheme. **Vanity, Cotteswood**, painted in Mid Lead Colour (114) by Little Greene. **Bath, tiles, Fired Earth. Lower wall**, painted in Willow III by Paint Library.

stairs around and rewiring, replumbing, replacing the windows, replastering and re-insulating where necessary.

Part of the planning permission involved removing the roof and replacing it with Stonesfield slate where it was extended at the front. Because this slate is expensive, the Cooks were relieved when they were able to use reproduction slate on the extension at the back. ‘We refurbished the old and new together and it’s worked out quite well, as people don’t know where one ends and the other begins,’ says Suzi.

Once the extension was completed, Suzi found herself flagging a bit in terms of the interior and felt she needed some guidance to tackle the decor in the new bedrooms and dining room, so she enlisted the help of her friend Missy Lembke of Iris Lane Interiors. ‘Missy advised us on choices of colour because I’m not brave about it,’ says Suzi. The aim was to achieve a cosy, grown-up look in the main bedroom. ‘We were inspired by the hotel-luxe schemes we’d seen on our travels and wanted to create a sumptuous, cocoon-like mood.’ The dining room, in contrast, has a light and bright feel with a hint of East Coast style.

Now that the renovation is complete, Suzi feels the hard work was worth it to transform the cottage into the perfect family home it is today. ‘We love living here,’ she says. ‘It’s great for Henry to grow up in the countryside, and there are lots of good walks nearby where we can take the dogs. After all the travelling we’ve done, I never expected to end up living in the area where I grew up!’ »



ON OUR DOORSTEP...

Visit... ‘Blenheim Palace (01993 810530, blenheimpalace.com) near Woodstock, which is just down the road.

The baroque palace has beautiful grounds for dog walking and lovely cafés and restaurants, as well as a children’s playground.’

Shop at... ‘Burford Garden Company (01993 823117, burford.co.uk), a fabulous home and garden store.’

Go for a meal at... ‘The Royal Oak (01993 868864, royaloakramsden.com) in Ramsden. It’s a charming 17th-century Cotswold coaching inn with good food and a wonderful wine list.’



EauZone Plus Quintesse - a refreshing solution to fitting a stunning shower in the corner of a bathroom.
Featuring 10mm safety glass and clever patented Non-Slip Hinges.
The epitome of luxury, beautifully designed in the UK.



Mix rough and smooth. Quartzite slate tiles, £88.78 sq m, Topps Tiles. Geo basin, H15.5xW53xD42cm, £475, Fired Earth.



Tap into sleek style. Moto mono basin mixer with side lever, H30xW8.3xD17.6cm, £210, CP Hart.



Modern Country Classic

Contemporary bath

The epitome of laidback glamour, a freestanding bath is a must-have.

Need to know...

Inventive designs including swooping curves, angular or egg shapes make contemporary baths the darlings of modern country aficionados.

For maximum dramatic effect, site the bath in front of a fireplace or window; a double-ended version with centrally placed taps and fittings adds the power of symmetry to the equation. Many contemporary baths are cast from a composite of stone and resin; others are in acrylic - both types are pleasingly warm to the touch.

Where to buy...

- Victoria & Albert for contemporary limestone and resin baths.
- Bathstore for freestanding baths.
- Fired Earth for a wide-rimmed paintable freestanding bath.



Go for a smart look. Chichester double-door washstand with Carrara marble top, col Shale, H87xW124xD56cm, £1,650, Neptune.

Be inspired by Suzi's elegant bathroom



Add ambience. Scroll candle holder, H46cm (tallest), £14.95 for 3, Baytree Interiors. Pillar candles, from £2.50, Marks & Spencer.



For more ideas go to housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors



Hang beautiful art. Turner print, H40.6xW49.9cm, £70 (with frame), John Lewis.

FIND THE PERFECT CALMING GREEN PAINTS



1 Beauvais; **2** Greenstone; **3** Museum, all £42 for 2.5L Marble Matt Emulsion, Mylands.

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LURED JEWELLERY DESIGNER ZANNA RAND BELL
AND HER FAMILY AWAY FROM THE CITY



Kitchen Welsh slate flooring and subtle grey cabinetry create a soothing neutral scheme. Units, painted in Charleston Gray by Farrow & Ball. Curve dining chairs, John Lewis. »



*
AT HOME WITH...

Owner Zanna Rand-Bell, a jewellery designer and founder of Olive Blue. She moved here in 1997 and lives with her children, Tilly, 19, Poppy, 17, Kit, 14, and Ted, 10, and Chocolate Labrador Barney and Ivy the cat.

House A four-bedroom house, dating back to 1700, once used as a blacksmith's forge.

Jewellery designer Zanna Rand-Bell had her eureka moment as she pushed her (then) newborn daughter Tilly along a busy London street. 'I was walking along Putney High Street when I had an overwhelming urge for clean air and open spaces,' she says. 'I realised at that moment that living in the country would be a healthier lifestyle choice.' The noise and pollution prompted Zanna to search for a home in Oxfordshire.

'We looked at so many houses, but this was the property we felt was most suitable,' Zanna says. 'The garden sealed the deal for me, as it was huge compared with the garden at our London house. I loved the thought of filling it with children, dogs and hens, which I have now done.'

With good motorway links to London and easy access into Oxford, she knew the location could not have suited her family better. 'It was virtually in the middle of where both sets of grandparents lived and we'd be able to commute easily back to the city if we needed to, so it seemed just right,' says Zanna.

With a downstairs bathroom and a dated kitchen, the house was in need of modernising. 'The cottage was once a blacksmith's forge and, even though it had been used as a home for many years, it had a strange layout,' Zanna says. 'Access to the first floor was via two sets of stairs at either end of the house, meaning the house had two sections that didn't actually connect.' To make the >>

Kitchen A mix of freestanding and fitted furniture, new and old, gives a relaxed country vibe. **Units**, similar from Harvey Jones. **Table**, The Swan at Tetsworth (Antiques Centre). **Wall clock**, Philippe Starck for Kartell at Chaplins. **Mango wood chopping board**, Avocet tea towel, Presentlocker.com.

What makes this house a home...

'It's a random mix of bits collected over the years and furniture handed down from various family members'

Snug A 1970s bucket chair by the staircase adds a retro touch to this space, which is both minimalist and rustic. Bought locally by Zanna for a bargain £20, it's one of her favourite pieces. **Cushion**, Niki Jones. **Natural flooring**, Alternative Flooring.

COTSWOLD HOUSE



Living room
Elegant fabrics and a perspex table set against a Cotswold stone backdrop give a modern country feel. **Sofa**, similar from John Lewis. **Table**, similar from Habitat.

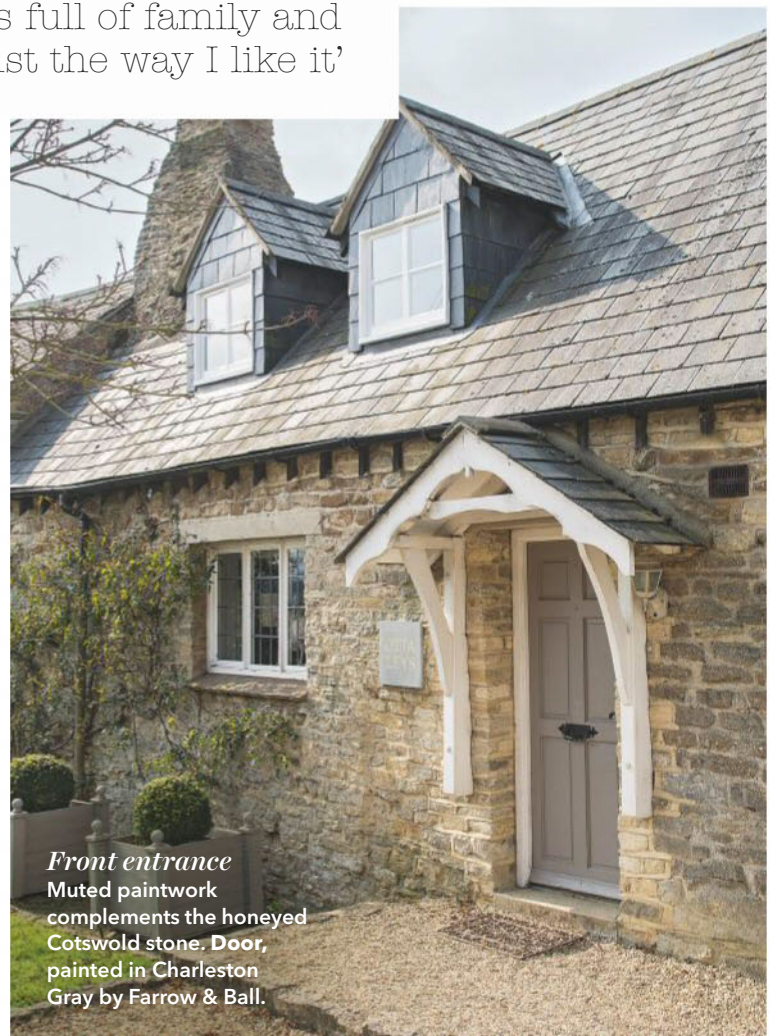
What I love most about living here...

‘Experiencing clean air and space. The house is also always full of family and animals, which is just the way I like it’



Conservatory

This space is ideal for homework, paperwork or just relaxing. Bold wallpaper adds crisp contrast. **Wallpaper**, Cow Parsley by Cole & Son.



Front entrance

Muted paintwork complements the honeyed Cotswold stone. **Door**, painted in Charleston Gray by Farrow & Ball.



Main bedroom

A neutral palette creates a relaxed feel, while the vintage-style eiderdown adds a feminine touch. **Eiderdown**, The Old Pill Factory. **Headboard**, painted in Cornforth White; **walls**, painted in Strong White, both by Farrow & Ball. **Bookcase**, Ikea.

house work better, walls were knocked down to reunite the two ends of the house, the floor plan was reconfigured, an en-suite bathroom was added off the main bedroom and another upstairs bathroom was added between the children's bedrooms, giving a more practical layout. The original downstairs bathroom off the hallway was remodelled to provide a shower and cloakroom.

Decorating the rest of cottage, however, took place much more gradually and has changed over the years to suit the needs of a growing family. 'It was the opposite of a quick fix,' says Zanna. 'Because the look has evolved so slowly, I never think of my home as being remotely "designed", just a mix of what makes me happy.'

Fifteen years ago Zanna added a conservatory, which was used initially as a playroom and now works better as a spot for homework since the children have grown and their needs have changed. More recently, a utility room was built at the rear end of the kitchen.

The overall feel is very relaxed. Thanks to a clever mix of old and new, where cool Swedish design meets family heirlooms, as well as the use of very contemporary pieces of furniture and artwork, the cottage has a timeless feel.

'I prefer a relaxed, easy-to-look-after style, with not too many straight lines,' says Zanna. 'It's important to me that the house feels comfortable, and that family and friends feel at ease here. I'm not a fan of clutter but >>



Zanna's jewellery, available at her company, Olive Blue, is inspired by colours of the Middle and Far East. Each piece is created from semi-precious gems and metals.



*

ON MY DOORSTEP...

Visit... 'The Milk Shed (01869 351387, themilkshedstore.co.uk) in Weston-on-the-Green. It's a great place to meet friends for lunch.'

Shop at... 'Sandy Lane Farm (01844 279269, sandylanefarm.net) in Tiddington. It's small, family run and always has a good selection of organic produce. They run a Thursday market selling vegetables and free-range meat - all good-quality food. I have been buying fresh produce there for years.'

Go for a meal at... 'Oli's Thai restaurant (01865 790223, olisthai.com) in Oxford because of its delicious food and very reasonable prices. It has an informal and friendly atmosphere, good service and I always feel I've eaten an authentic Thai dish.'

I have always had a thing about collecting chairs.' Zanna's creative skills are evident in every room of her Cotswold house, where skilfully combined bold colours and pattern prevail, set against muted Scandinavian-inspired shades.

Zanna studied woven textile design at university and her previous home had a loom that took up most of her dining room. 'I used to make commissioned pieces but felt I needed a change, and moving here gave me that opportunity,' says Zanna. The move was the fresh start she needed to embark on a business that would allow her to work from home and care for the children.

'I have always been interested in colour and texture, and have travelled extensively,' she says. 'I visited Jaipur in India and became fascinated by gemstones.' For the past five years, Zanna has been running her own jewellery design business. 'My workspace is at the back of the house facing the garden. With lots of natural light it's a perfect place to sit and design,' she says.

In stark contrast to city living, village life has given Zanna and her children the safe and healthier lifestyle she craved all those years ago. 'It's reassuring to feel able to allow the children to explore the countryside around here,' say Zanna. 'I have always felt at ease with our surroundings and the friendly people we have met since living here. I love my home - it's sometimes chaotic, but always my sanctuary.' »

En suite bathroom

This monochrome scheme creates a striking contrast to Zanna's bedroom. Wallpapering the ceiling as well as the walls makes the room seem larger. Similar wallpaper, Promenade D Automne, Brunschwig & Fils. French soap, The Old Pill Factory.



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Flirt with florals. Pink and Yellow Roses print, 61x46cm, £31.99, Art.co.uk. Elisha quilt, 243x264cm, £129, Marquis & Dawe.



Shine a light. Elliot task lamp, col Ivory, H80xW17.6xD42cm, £65, John Lewis.



Modern Country Classic

Painted headboard

Add a support you can rely on when sitting up in bed with a good book.

Need to know...

A painted finish brings contemporary appeal to that country favourite, the wooden headboard. Fit a slatted headboard in white to wake up a coastal theme, add elegance with a painted surround enclosing cane-work or oak panels, or bring in softness with padded fabric panels selected to suit your theme. Part and parcel of most bedsteads, a wooden headboard can also be bought separately, giving a standard divan bed a far more substantial look.

Where to buy...

- **Maison** for a Gustavian-style painted headboard.
- **Neptune** for a painted headboard with fabric panels.
- **Willis & Gambier** for painted slatted or solid headboards.



Pull up a seat. Eames-style dining chair, H81.1xW47xD53.1cm, £49, Danetti.

Be inspired by
Zanna's eclectic bedroom



Add pattern. Life & Eternity fabric, £46 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. Velvet cushion, 43cm sq, £28, Jasper Conran at Debenhams.

For more ideas go to housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors



Soften corners with a round edges. Componibili storage unit, H40x32cm diameter, £71, Kartell at Houseology.

FIND THE PERFECT

SISAL CARPET



1 Herringbone Oatmeal, £56 sq m; **2** Small Bouclé Classics Bronze, £42 sq m; **3** Aztec Alabaster, £100 sq m, all Crucial Trading.

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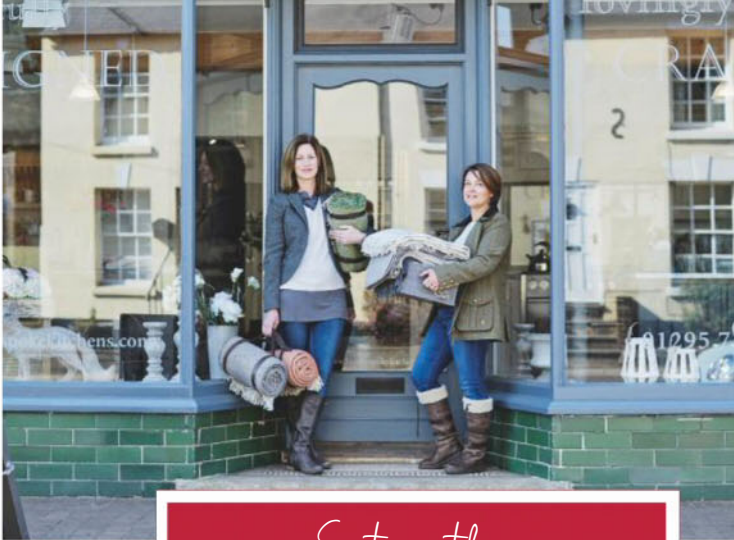
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2016
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Have you set up a small country business? Or perhaps you have a great idea you'd like to get off the ground? If so, now is your chance to enter the Country Homes & Interiors My Country Business Awards 2016 in association with Notonthehighstreet.com. Six entrepreneurs will win a money-can't-buy package of advice and support from the UK's most talented business advisers and owners.

The My Country Business Awards are celebrating their

seventh fantastic year and aim to promote and empower country-based start-ups. Setting up your own business is no mean feat – you need to find the funds, write a business plan, buy a domain name, learn the finer points of marketing through social media, ensure your company complies with current legislation, and much more. Finding the right people to guide you through this process is crucial, so enter now and take the next step on your journey to success. Good luck!



The Awards categories are...

Notonthehighstreet.com Emerging Creative Talent Award

Have you graduated or left training within the past two years? We're looking for a new creative talent who makes things that we'd like to sell – from art and jewellery to homewares and food.

Home Accessory Crafters and Makers

This category recognises nearly everything that goes in the home. From unique door-stoppers to stunning cushions, we love it all! Craft is a vast category focusing on textiles, ceramic, wood, glass and more. If you make it by hand, we'd love to see it.

Fabric, Furniture and Wallpaper Designers

If you're creating the key pieces that decorate and furnish the surfaces and rooms in our homes, this one's for you.

Retailers

Retailers are companies selling multiple brands. If you're a bricks-and-mortar store or an online platform, we'd love to see the work you do.

Food Producers

If you can eat it, we want to know about it! From baked goods to jams, beverages to pâtés, we'd love to taste your wares and learn about your brand.

Hospitality and Leisure

This category celebrates everything from B&Bs, hotels and campsites through to pubs and restaurants.



To enter

Visit housetohome.co.uk/business for more details of this competition, as well as an entry form for you to complete and return by the closing date of **Friday 10 June 2016**.

The incredible prizes

The 2016 winners will receive an invaluable package of mentoring, as well as promotion in **Country Homes & Interiors**. Starting up your own business can often be a daunting experience, but our expert panel of Awards mentors (meet them over the page) will guide and support the winners, allowing them to learn new skills and perspectives, while also providing priceless advice and insight. The package includes:

- * Three mentoring sessions with one of our leading industry category partners.
- * Coverage in the My Country Business Awards 2016 winners feature in **Country Homes & Interiors**.
- * Coverage in a **Country Days** blog feature.

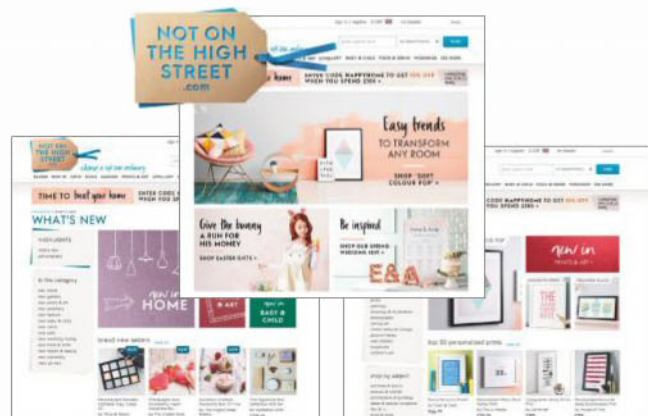
Why Notonthehighstreet.com is supporting My Country Business Awards 2016

Notonthehighstreet.com is the leading curated online marketplace, connecting the best small creative businesses with the world. The marketplace has gained the trust and loyalty of its customers by offering an alternative to the High Street: a curated product selection with unique designs and quality craftsmanship, plus inspiring stories from the designers and artisans themselves.

Many of the 5,000 small businesses supported by Notonthehighstreet.com are based in rural communities

located throughout the UK. Notonthehighstreet.com is changing the face of UK enterprise by supporting growing small businesses and offering an alternative route to market for designer-makers.

The support of small creative businesses at the core of Notonthehighstreet.com means it is the perfect sponsor for the **Country Homes & Interiors My Country Business Awards**, which are dedicated to empowering the best country-based British entrepreneurs.



Category judges and mentors

AWARD WINNERS WILL EACH RECEIVE THREE MENTORING SESSIONS WITH ONE OF OUR LEADING INDUSTRY CATEGORY PARTNERS



Emerging Creative Talent Award
Sally Bendelow,
 Creative Product Director,
 Notonthehighstreet.com

A curator of design-led products for over 20 years with brands such as Next, Heal's and M&S, Sally is also a Liveryman of the Furniture Guild (one of 39 women out of 450), and works with universities to help graduates into full-time jobs.



Home Accessory Crafters and Makers
Sophie Allport, Founder and Owner, Sophie Allport

Sophie started her British family business in 2007. She designs and produces fine bone china, kitchen textiles, tinware, melamine, stationery and other homewares inspired by her love of nature and the countryside.



Fabric, Furniture and Wallpaper Designers
Melanie Adams,
 Founder and Buyer,
 Wallpaperdirect

Mel is responsible for creating the home to more than 12,000 wallpaper designs and over 100 brands. Wallpaperdirect is the one-stop shop for wallcoverings and home accessories online.



Retailers
Anna Rigby,
 Head of Buying, Home,
 John Lewis

A Partner with John Lewis, Britain's leading omnichannel retailer, for 35 years, Anna can share her extensive knowledge and expertise in developing Home and Fashion products, bringing them to market and maximising every sales opportunity.



Food Producers
Dan Rusga, Marketing Director, Yeo Valley

Established in 1961, this family-run dairy produces tasty, 100% organic products from its award-winning British Friesian cows and other local organic dairy farms. Dan specialises in promoting and marketing this award-winning brand.



Hospitality and Leisure
Lucy Lomas,
 Business Director,
 River Cottage HQ

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage HQ is an award-winning Cookery and Chefs' School hosting a range of dining experiences, festivals, fairs and weddings. Lucy's background is in PR and marketing in the food, drink and live entertainment sectors.



Country Homes & Interiors
Rhoda Parry, Editor

Rhoda leads this multi-media brand dedicated to modern country life and style. She is the driving force behind the highly successful My Country Business Awards, which she launched in 2010, and is passionate about supporting country-based entrepreneurs.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS Six winners will receive three mentoring sessions each, plus coverage in a Country Homes & Interiors issue and in a Country Days blog feature, both during autumn 2016. Winners will be selected by the Editor of Country Homes & Interiors and a panel of expert judges. The decision of the judges is final and binding and no correspondence will be entered into. Winners will be notified by email. Award is as stated, is not transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash. Entry available to UK and ROI residents over the age of 18. Excludes employees of Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, their families, agents or anyone else connected with the competition. Awards close for entries at midnight on Friday 10 June 2016. If the winner cannot be contacted and/or is unable to comply with these terms and conditions, the promoter reserves the right to offer the prize to the runner up selected by the same judges. Failure to respond and/or provide an address and meet the terms of the awards may lead to forfeiture of the prize. The winner agrees to the use of his or her name, photograph and disclosure of country of residence and will co operate with any other reasonable request by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, relating to any post winning publicity. Entry into the awards is deemed acceptance of these terms and conditions. No responsibility can be accepted for entries that are incomplete, damaged, defaced or not received for any reason. The promoter is Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.

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ENTREPRENEURS FROM LAST YEAR ARE SUCCEEDING
AND PROGRESSING IN THEIR AMAZING VENTURES...

BRITISH WOOL AWARD FOR EMERGING TALENT USING BRITISH WOOL

KHARIS LEGGATE, Home is an Island

Kharis weaves cushions and blankets by hand in Shetland wool.



Judges were impressed by the beautiful colours and textures, and how they capture the mood of the Shetland landscape.

What did winning mean to you? It gave me the confidence to believe that Home is an Island could be successful.

How have you developed the brand? I've focused on 'behind-the-scenes', making sure the business represents what I want it to: local production, sustainability and promoting British wool.

What's your long-term goal? I'm planning to develop upholstery fabric ranges through 2016.

How helpful was the support you got from winning? The British Wool Marketing Board was incredible and Campaign for Wool director Bridgette Kelly helped me with my business plan.

Home is an Island, 07885 499986, homeisanisland.co.uk.



INTERIORS

ZOE GLENCROSS, Zoe Glencross Fabric & Home

The beautiful fabrics that Zoe creates combine illustrations with stripes and are inspired by the views from her Cheshire barn home.



What did winning mean to you? I have loved interior design for many years and so felt especially privileged to win in the interiors category. It gave my brand a great kick start.

How have you developed the brand? I've just launched ready-made linen lampshades and new woven plain linens in shades of grey that co-ordinate with my Meadowlands Collection.

What's your long-term goal? I'm planning to launch new collections each year and grow the business to be able to offer customers ready-made products as well as fabric by the metre online.

How helpful was the support you got from winning? The mentoring sessions are a inspired idea. Having an industry-relevant mentor when you have a new business is a blessing. I have had great advice and clear guidance from fabric designer Susie Watson, who couldn't have been more positive.

Zoe Glencross Fabric & Home, 07530 741812, zoeglencross.com.



FOOD

SARAH HUGHES, Eat My Flowers

Working from the family farm in North Wales, Sarah grows



edible flowers and creates crystallised flowers and lollipops with flowers in them. The judges loved the fact that Sarah grows the flowers herself.

What did winning mean to you? It was such an honour and gave us all such a morale boost. We also saw an increase in sales from coverage in Country Homes & Interiors.

How have you developed the brand? We've increased our wedding customers and developed our events catering and hotel customers. After exhibiting at the Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2015, we've also increased our export business.

What's your long-term goal? To continue to increase our exports, especially with international weddings.

How helpful was the support you got from winning? It was a real bonus to be mentored by the marketing team at Yeo Valley. They were really helpful in offering advice and this made winning the award even more valuable to us.

Eat My Flowers, 01490 412039, eatmyflowers.co.uk. »



CRAFT

SIAN O'DOHERTY

Inspired by the romantic Pembrokeshire landscape where she lives, Sian creates beautiful knitted designs



for the home, including cushions and blankets, as well as accessories, such as scarves, hats and gloves. She has developed her own interpretation of traditional Welsh patterns and the judges were impressed by the colour palettes and beautiful patterns, concluding that her designs were a modern twist on the traditional.

What did winning mean to you? It meant a lot and is such a reward after all the work that has gone into developing the business and the collection. It can be hard striking out on your own and staying motivated, but the award reaffirmed that I was heading in the right direction and encouraged me to achieve my goals.

How have you developed the brand? Since winning the award I've created a new range of lampshades and blankets, which I launched at the Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair and Made By Hand craft fair last winter. I was delighted by the response they received.

What's your long-term goal? To have an established textile business on our smallholding, where we keep 12 alpacas, using their raw fleece and running bespoke workshops.

How helpful was the support you got from winning? It's been great working with Etsy. The marketing of my business and product designs via Country Homes & Interiors has been fantastic and has increased my sales and traffic to my website significantly.

Sian O'Doherty, sianodoherty.co.uk.



RETAIL & SERVICES

CLAIRE GOLDWELL, Plain Useful

Based in Yorkshire, Claire sells a curated collection of traditional kitchen utensils, cleaning brushes and gardening and laundry products. The judges loved her range, which taps into the utility chic trend and the fact that she is making the everyday both beautiful and affordable.



What did winning mean to you? My perfect customer is someone who loves Country Homes & Interiors - I've been reading it for years so it was natural to pitch the business at that readership. There are moments of self-doubt when running an online business, so to be selected as an award winner by a panel of prominent industry champions was a huge confidence boost.

How have you developed the brand? My main focus has been to get more feedback from customers on the product range so that I can be confident in the direction I take, and also to increase awareness of the website.

What's your long-term goal? To become the 'go to' place for high-quality brushes and household products and to maintain and build on our reputation for excellent service.

How helpful was the support you got from winning? The team from Heal's were very supportive with their advice. They gave me a pop-up shop in store in February - an amazing opportunity.

Plain Useful, 01484 680073, plainuseful.com.



HOSPITALITY & LEISURE

KESRI SMOLAS, Drover's Rest

Kesri's boutique glamping holidays, run with husband Paul from a 16th-century farm, aim to



reconnect guests to nature and the simpler things in life. The judges were excited by the idea of roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-involved holidays.

What did winning mean to you? We are so proud of what we have set up and this has given us the motivation and inspiration to be even better. It has endorsed us and recognised that people love what we are doing.

How have you developed the brand? Drover's Rest started in its first season by bringing families to our wonderfully quirky space where they could experience hands-on farm living. In 2016 we are extending our brand to offer Adults Well-Being Breaks (packages will include accommodation, wholesome natural food, pilates, meditation and walking the old drovers' routes) together with our farm activities. In addition, we are offering custom-made Well-Being Corporate Breaks. We are also adding a forest and foraging school, as well as developing our vegetable garden to create meals using our organic produce.

What's your long-term goal? To be known as THE place to come to recharge and enjoy rural life or the great British countryside at its best.

How helpful was the support you got from winning? To have people who have been successful in your field inspiring you to build your business is incredible. Alastair Sawday and Canopy & Stars have been wonderful mentors. I have so many ideas to put into practice.

Drover's Rest, 01497 831215, droversrest.co.uk.



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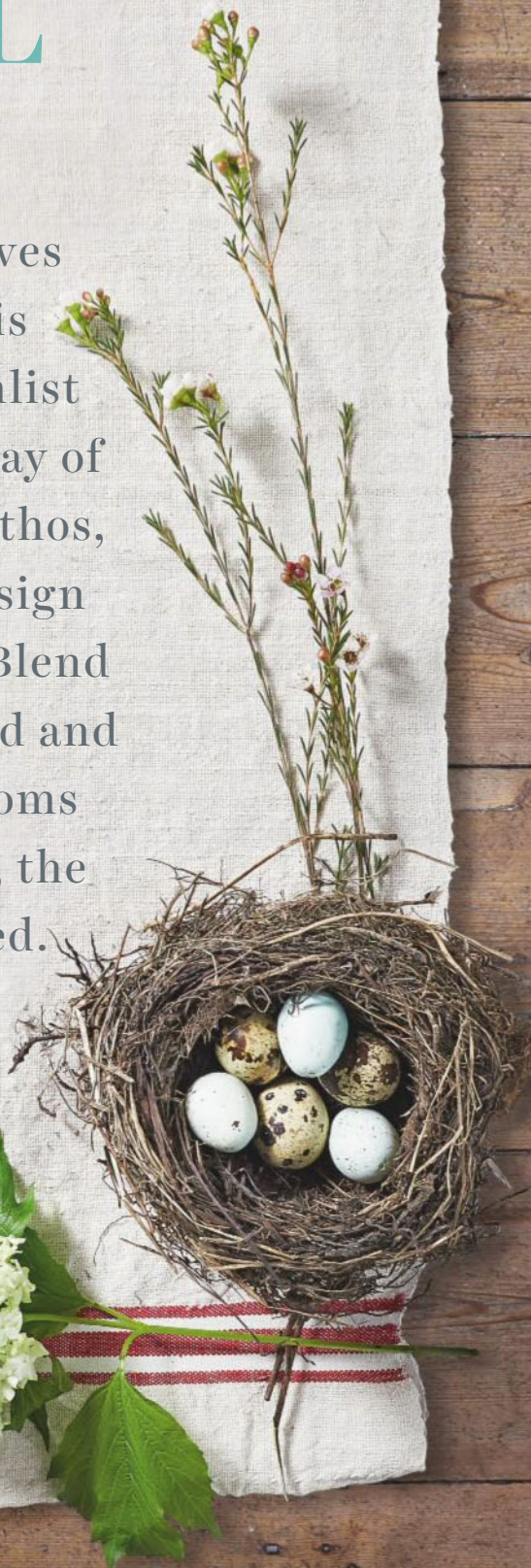
Plunging your hands into rich compost can relieve stress in a matter of minutes. Start by potting a few plants – we've got deliveries up to 5 times a week. Before you know it, your head will be clear, and you'll have forgotten what was bothering you in the first place.

● HOMEBASE

●●● Life Improvement

Tune into the MINDFUL HOME

Taking good care of ourselves and the world around us is high on our living-well wishlist right now. Bring a greener way of living into your decorating ethos, too, with these feel-good design ideas for the country home. Blend eco-friendly, ethically sourced and low-carbon elements for rooms that celebrate the beautiful, the balanced and the contented.



Look for a reclaimed table

Highlight the quality, heritage and handsome features of reclaimed timber with a dining table made from salvaged wood. Add upcycled chairs, vintage accessories and re-vamped Mason jar lighting. See page 82 for details. >>





Upcycle rustic storage

Make a shelf unit from wooden crates and paint in spring shades of eco-friendly paint. See page 82 for details.



Shop on home turf

A country staple and mainstay of the living room, this classic sofa is handmade in Britain and the process carbon calculated throughout. See page 82 for details. >>



Choose organic accessories

Arrange natural skincare products, candles and organic cotton towels on reclaimed wood shelves. See page 82 for details.



Sleep like a dream

Rest assured that these beautiful bedroom buys have been created by makers with a conscience: the reclaimed wood bed and revamped stool are softened by luxurious natural linen sheets and the room lit by a reclaimed wood lamp, while accessories such as baskets and picture frames are sourced through fair trade. See page 82 for details. »

*Enjoy the beauty of
recycled glass*

**Choose old bottle candleholders
and recycled-glass vases,
jugs and goblets.
See page 82 for details.**



Repurpose preloved furniture

**Give a tea trolley a new life as a potting bench and reinvent a chopping paddle as a noticeboard.
See page 82 for details. »**



All the details: PRODUCTS AND PRICES



Pages 74-75



(Opener) Vintage linen **tea towel**, similar from Beyond France.

LOOK FOR A RECLAIMED TABLE Reclaimed wood rustic **dining table**, from £920, Home Barn. Green recycled wood and metal **chairs**, £205 each, Out There Interiors. **Cushion** (on green chair), from a selection, Magpie Living. Vintage red T2 Tolix **chair**, £40, The French House. **Cushion** (on red chair), from £38, Sarah Moore Barn Sales. (On table) **Runner**, Worthing Stripe Sage, £29.50 m, Ian Mankin. The Living Lounge green recycled glass bottle **lantern**, £28, Not on the High Street. Vintage French enamel **jug**, £35, Home Barn. **Vase**, from a selection, Nkuku. Recycled glass **windlight** (used as vase), £12, Baileys.

Vintage linen **tea towel**, £18; enamel **mugs**, £5 each, all Sarah Moore Home. Tall French canning **jar**, £22, Home Barn. London Pottery Company **teapot**, £16.50, Tesco. Mason Jar **pendant lights**, £65 each, House Junkie. Original vintage botanical **wallchart**, £28, Sarah Moore Home. **Curtain**, made from Duck Egg Dot linen tablecloth, from £110 for 140x180cm, The Linen Works. (On window sill) vintage Winsor & Newton powder paint **tins**, £22 each, Home Barn. Juno Dove Grey **rug**, 300x250cm, £765; Provence Dormouse **bag**, £45, both Weaver Green. Reclaimed wood magazine **box**, £70, Ian Mankin. Other items, stylist's own.

Pages 76-77



UPCYCLE RUSTIC STORAGE Woodland Chorus **wallpaper**, 215706, £58 a roll, Sanderson. Pinner **sideboard** (just seen), £795, Heal's. **Jug**, similar from John Lewis. Knagglig pine **boxes**, from £5 each, Ikea. **Paint** (clockwise from top left), Gregory's Den, £30.50 for 750ml eggshell, Earthborn. Hazy Shade of Winter, £25.50 for 1L eggshell, Paint the Town Green. Shallows, £30.50 for 750ml eggshell, Earthborn. In the Clouds, £25.50 for 1L eggshell, Paint the Town Green. (In boxes, top row) Victorian aqua **bottles**, £25 for 5, Home Barn. (Bottom row, from left) Victorian aqua **bottles**, £25 for 5; recycled wine bottle **vase**, from £7; ceramic ginger **pot**, £15, all Home Barn. Other items, stylist's own.

bottles, £25 for 5, Home Barn. Vintage fabric **purse**, from a selection, Sarah Moore Home. Dansi recycled glass **goblet**, £5.95, Nkuku. **Basket**, £29, Olli Ella. Alwinton Snuggler **sofa** in Walloon Red Stripe, £1,435, Sofas & Stuff. Red lambswool **throw**, £130, Inchyra. **Cushions** (from left): 1 British Wool Skye, col Aqua, £49.95, Bronte by Moon. 2 Simple Ticking, col Brick, £46 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. 3 Vintage floral **bolster**, from £38, Sarah Moore Barn Sales. 4 Pretty Maids, £48 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. Large Smoke and Cornflower **rug**, £388, Vanessa Arbuthnott. Hewn **stool**, £180, Sebastian Cox. Glass **vases**, £9 each, Home Barn. (On shelf) Red enamel **bowls**, £39 for 4, Falcon. Baloo **vase**, £29.95 for 4, Nkuku. Framed **butterfly**, £50, Home Barn. Vintage Carnations **print**, £7, The Ok Corral. Baloo **vase**, £29.95 for 4, Nkuku. Vintage enamel **coffee pot**, £12, The Ok Corral. Antique bird **bookplate**, £12.50 for 5, Magpie Living. Vintage French glass canning **jar**, £22, Home Barn. Baloo **vase**, £29.95 for 4, Nkuku. Other items, stylist's own.

SHOP ON HOME TURF Woodland Chorus **wallpaper**, 215706, £58 a roll, Sanderson. Jute **carpet**, JT900, Herringbone Natural, £39 sq m, Crucial Trading. **Curtain**, Pretty Maids, £48 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. Vintage hardware shop **chest of drawers**, £325; Victorian aqua

Pages 78-79



CHOOSE ORGANIC ACCESSORIES Beech **wallpaper**, £56.40 m, Lewis & Wood. High Five **shelf unit**, £495, Loaf. (On top shelf) Pine Needle & Juniper Classic **candle**, £26.50, Nathalie Bond Organics. Fig **bath soak**, £12.50 for 500ml, Baileys. Fabric **corsage**, £14.50, Sarah Moore Home. Falcon **beaker**, £7, Heal's. The Living Lounge bamboo **toothbrushes**, £8.50 for 3, Not on the High Street. Wallpaper-wrapped **soap**, from £5, Sarah Moore Home. Glass **vase**, £9, Home Barn. (On lower shelf) Recycled glass bud **vase**, £14.50 for 2, Cox & Cox. Vintage **lavender sachets**, £15 for 3; wallpaper-wrapped **soaps**, from £5 each, all Sarah Moore Home. Lavender and Chamomile **skin balm**, £15.50 for 60ml; Rose Geranium and Patchouli **body oil**, £21.50 for 100ml, both Nathalie Bond Organics. Organic terry cotton **hand towels**, £9.90 each, Greenfibres.

SLEEP LIKE A DREAM Beech **wallpaper**, £56.40 m, Lewis & Wood. Knotted **plant pot hanger**, £38, Eleanor Bolton. Reclaimed wood Cape Town **frames**, from £25 each, Luma. Mint Belly **basket**, £29, Olli Ella. Reclaimed wood **stool** with painted legs, £130, An Artful Life. Natural wood **lamp**, £135; **vase**, from a selection, both Nkuku. Vintage rose **tin**, £5, The Ok Corral. Kingsize Woody storage **bed**, £945, Loaf. Double **duvet cover**, col Moustier Duck Egg, £1170; Oxford **pillowcases**, £37.50 each; double flat **sheet**, col Parisian Blue, £115, all The Linen Works. **Cushions** (from left): 1 Linen Grain Sack, col Red, £65, Pale & Interesting. 2 Vintage Cream Floral, £58, Magpie Living. 3 Speedwell, col Sage, £60 m, Inchyra. Sandwich **ottoman** in Thatch House fabric, £475, Loaf. Natural Belly **basket**, £29, Olli Ella. **Cushion**, Speedwell, as above. Sisal Big Boucle Accents **rug** with cotton border, £259.80, Crucial Trading.

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ENJOY THE BEAUTY OF RECYCLED GLASS

Recycled glass **tumbler**, £7.50; recycled glass water **jug**, £22, both Sparrow and Co. Dansi recycled glass **goblet**, £5.95, Nkuku. Rewined soy wax **candle**, £24.17, Home Barn. The Living Lounge handmade coloured **glass**, £18.50 for 4, Not on the High Street. Baloo **vase**, £29.95 for 4; Timah **bottle**, £19.95, both Nkuku. Vintage linen **tea towel**, £18, Sarah Moore Home.

REPURPOSE PRELOVED FURNITURE

Pot and tray, £18 for 3 pots, Garden Trading. Vintage **apple crate**, £30; 1940s Elwell **spade**, £35; painted **watering can**, £39, all Mabel & Rose. The Postman Always Rings Twice **trolley**, £250, Refunk'd. (On trolley) Large botanical wire **bird cage**, £25, Magpie Living. Green **seeds box**, £6, Garden Trading. Orange jute string, from **allotment kit** including pine seed tray, dibber, sacks, coir starter pots, labels and 2 seed packets, £28, Hen & Hammock. Reclaimed wood

trug, £15; Sophie Conran **trowel**; **hand fork**, £18 each, all The Orchard. Faux **peony stem**, £9, Magpie Living. Vintage clip-top **jars**, from a selection, Home Barn. Sophie Conran Gubbins **pot** (just seen), 24 for 9 pots in a tray; Sophie Conran Raspberry indoor **watering can**, £18, all The Orchard. **Ladybird nest**, £11.50, Hen & Hammock. Vintage **blackboard**, £48, Home Barn. (On wall) Vintage **wallpaper**, £15 for 12 A4 sheets, Sarah Moore Home. **Bunting** made from vintage French seed packets, £7 for 24, Simply French Vintage. Vintage French wooden **trug** (under trolley); vintage flower **bucket**, both from a selection, Mabel & Rose. Vintage bamboo **chair**, £85, An Artful Life. Red enamel **mugs**, £5 each, Sarah Moore Home. Recycled wool **picnic blanket**, £20; Folder Panama **hat**, £49, both Hen & Hammock. Gardeners **cushion**, col red, £38, Random Retail. Floral **cushion**, col Framboise/Ivory, £40, Inchyra. Provence Lichen **rug**, 240x70cm, £99, Weaver Green. Other items, stylist's own.

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DRESSMAKING, CALLIGRAPHY AND PAPER FOLDING ARE THE HOT PASTIMES THIS SPRING. HERE'S THE KIT YOU'LL NEED



A sewing room of your own

Create a dressmaker's corner and an at-home haberdasher's, stocked with essential tools and accessories so you can run up pretty frocks and skirts.

Elmsman **desk**, £645, Loaf. **JL110 sewing machine**, £89, John Lewis. Cath Kidston Limited Edition Country Check **mannequin**, £275, Grace & Favour Home. (On mannequin) La Petite Rose mini **tape measure**, £2.95, Dotcomgiftshop. **Floral bias binding**, 25mm, 70p for 50cm; **wooden spools**, £2.95 each, all The Makery. Pom pom belly **basket**, £35, Olli Ella. **Fabric bolts** (in basket), Lapland Stripe, col Dove/Saffron/Charcoal, £55 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. Hermitage Birds B; Lovely Sophie; Bertie Pink, all £55 m, Charlotte Gaisford. (On desk, from left) Rose geometric bud **vase**, £12.95, Mia Fleur. Vintage crafts jam jar **sewing kit**, £6.95, Dotcomgiftshop. **Dressmaking scissors**, £12, John Lewis. **Box files**, £26.50 each, The Dorny House. (On box files) Rustic craft compartment wood **sewing box**, £12.95; **Fabric buttons**, £3.95 for 6, both Dotcomgiftshop. Floral bias tape; spool, both as before. Habotai silk **ribbon**, col Blush, £12 for 3m, Lancaster & Cornish. Sew Happy **ribbon**, £3 for 3m, Lovely Jubbly Designs at Not on the High Street. Antique floral lace **ribbons**, cols Aqua, Cream, Lilac, each £4.50 for 3m, Pipii. (In box) Gutermann **threads**, from £2 each, £9 for 500m, The Makery. Stork **embroidery scissors**, £4.95, Dotcomgiftshop. (On box) **Dressmaking pattern**, £14; Polka and Lace **bias binding**, 70p for 50cm; **crocheted lace** on wooden spool, £5.95 for 3m, all The Makery. Habotai **ribbon**, col Lilac, as before. Gumdrops **garland**, £19.50, Olli Ella. **Floral sewing print**, £13.95, Kelly Connor Designs. Alpaca **yarns**, from £12 for 50g, Toft Shop. (On machine) April Showers **fabric**, £22.50 m, Liberty. Organic cotton **thread**, col Light Blue, £3.25 for 100m, Lancaster & Cornish.



1 Store sewing essentials in time-honoured style. Sewing Stuff basket, £25, John Lewis.

2 Stitch with a smile. Sew Happy ribbon, £3 for 3m, Lovely Jubbly Designs.

3, 14 Choose fresh floral prints. Fabric quarters, from £3.75 each, The Makery.

4 Snip threads with a touch of nostalgia. Vintage Crafts stork scissors, £4.95, Dotcomgiftshop.

5 Size it up. Grosgrain Centimetres tape measure ribbon, 75p m, Pocket & Pin.

6 Button it up. Wooden button, £8, Toft Shop.

7 Bind decorative edges. Floral bias binding, 70p for 50cm; Wooden spool, £2.95; Crocheted lace on wooden spool, £5.95, all The Makery.

8 Stack and store. Vintage floral suitcases, £19.95 for set of 3, Pipii.

9 Knit one, purl one. MillaMia soft merino wool yarn, £5.50 for 50g; Addi bamboo knitting needles, from £8.27 for 2, both Love Knitting.

10 Cut through fabric effortlessly. Dressmaking scissors, £12, John Lewis.

11 Create a new addition for your wardrobe. Colette dressmaking pattern, £14, The Makery.

12 Read up on handy tips from the experts. Makery Sewing, £20 (includes 1m fabric), The Makery.

13 Pretty up your sewing kit. Macaron tape measure, £6.95, The Makery.

15 Let's chalk! Tape measure and tailor's chalks set, £5.95, The Makery.

16 Tie up loose ends. Bamboo silk natural-dyed ribbon, col Ivory Quartz, £12 for 3m, Lancaster & Cornish. Polka and lace bias binding, 70p for 50cm, The Makery.

17, 18 Box clever. Wooden sewing box, £29.99; Knitting needle storage box, £8.99, both John Lewis.

19, 20 Fashion a retro classic and follow your heart. Vogue Vintage Women's dress sewing pattern, from a selection; East of India button heart kit, £15, both John Lewis.

21 Run up spring-fresh fabric. April Showers Tana Lawn fabric, £22.50 m, Liberty.

22 Be on the button. Pick and Mix buttons, £6.95 for 50, The Makery.

23 Aim for a perfect fit. La Petite Rose mini tape measure, £2.95 for 150cm, Dotcomgiftshop.

24 Wind up your bobbin. Gutermann thread, from £2; twine, £2.95 for 40m, all The Makery.

25 Get crafty with decorative ribbon. Grosgrain Inches tape measure ribbon, 75p m, Pocket & Pin. >>

The art of lovely lettering

This desk, with its on-trend mix-and-match painted drawers, is the perfect place to try your hand at modern calligraphy. Use the drawers for special writing papers and journals.

Bertie wooden **desk**, £350; **Hanging frame**, £10; Gold ampersand alphabet **letter**, £10, all Oliver Bonas. Oh Happy Days **card** (in hanging frame), £2.50, Letterbox Lane at Not on the High Street. Printed **paper ball** decoration, £3.95, Rastall & Daughters. (On desk, from top left) Floral alphabet initial **print**, £20 including frame, More Than Words at Not on the High Street. Inspiration **journals**, £21 each, Kikki.K. Geometric ball **candle**, £2.95, Mia Fleur. Hot Pink **ink**, £4.90; Blackwing **pencil**, £2.50, both Quill London. Feather **quill pen**, £5, The Gorgeous Company. Personalised alphabet letter initial **jars**, £8 each, JG Artwork at Not on the High Street. La Petite Rose **colouring pencils**, £2.95 for 36 pencils and holder, Dotcomgiftshop. Gold numbered **bulldog clips**, £8.50 for 10, Papermash. Wood **clipboard**, £10, Kikki.K. Calligraphy **greetings cards**, £2.50 each; Botanical **notelet**, £6 for 10; Hello May **print**, from £35, all Cheryl Rawlings. Knoppang **frame**, £4, Ikea. Betsy **pencil holder**, £19.95; Kate Spade New York gold ballpoint **pen set**, £21.95, both Liberty. Daler Rowney gold paint **brushes**, £5 for 6, Hobbycraft. (In shelves) **Journal**, as before. Violet social **stationery**, £21.50 for box of 12 notes, Ohh Deer. Rainbow pastel **paper**, £4.79 for 60 A4 sheets, Hobbycraft. Floral watercolour **envelope liners**, £25 for 10 A4 sheets; Calligraphy **envelope**, £4, all Gemma Milly. **Exercise book**, £2.95, Ohh Deer. (In book) Work sheet, £24 (part of Modern **calligraphy starter kit**); Oblique **pen holder**, £2.90, all Quill London. Caran d'Ache rose gold ballpoint **pen**, £35, Papermash. Alphabet **notebook**, £3.50, Letterbox Lane at Not on the High Street.





1 Delight recipients with painterly stationery.

Floral watercolour envelope liners; calligraphy address envelope, both as before, Gemma Milly.

2, 14 Organise projects. Raindrops document wallet, £4.50 for 10; Get Organised wooden in-tray, £8, both Paperchase.

3 Stash bits and bobs in style. Metal storage drawer, £5.95, Dotcomgiftshop.

4 Add detail to plain gift tags. Native Chevron Arrow flexi clear stamp, £10.50, Little Stamp Store at Not on the High Street.

5, 10 Stock up on craft room essentials. Large gold paper clips, £5 for 30, Papermash. Pastel wash brush, £2.95, Berylune at Not on the High Street.

6 Make a statement with typography. Letter print, £6, Made by Aiza at Not on the High Street.

7, 8, 16 Spread the word with handwritten notes and lovely modern calligraphy.

Feather quill pen, £5, The Gorgeous Company. Alphabet calligraphy print, from £35; Little Things Make Big Hearts Sing card, £2.50, both Cheryl Rawlings.

9, 19, 20 Put a stamp on it with colourful inks. With Love stamp (handle side shown), £8; Allium stamp (stamped on card), £4; Coloured inkpads, £2 each, all The English Stamp Company.

11, 21 Master the calligrapher's art. Personalised modern calligraphy pen, £17; Luggage tags and calligraphy pen set, £39, both Calligraphy for Weddings at Not on the High Street.

12 Relax and unwind with colour therapy. Traditional wooden school colouring set, £3.95 (with ruler lid), Dotcomgiftshop.

13 Set your creative side free.

The Liberty Colouring Book, £9.99, Liberty.

15 Practice makes perfect. Exercise book, £2.95, Ohh Deer.

17 Add a vibrant splash to arty lettering. Hot Pink ink, £4.90, Quill London.

18 Wrap and label with pastels. Gift tag, £1, Ikea.

22 Keep papers neat. Get Organised jars of clips and pins (not seen), £8 for 3, Paperchase.

23 Experiment with geometric designs. Triangle rubber stamp, £6, Little Stamp Store at Not on the High Street.

24 Paint your own masterpiece. Daler Rowney gold paint brushes, £4 for 5, Hobbycraft.

25 Personalise stationery. Alphabet rubber stamp set, £19.95, Berylune. >>

The beautiful possibilities of paper

Learn origami, cover boxes and make envelopes with the prettiest papers, tapes and kits.

Elmsman **desk**, £645, Loaf. Dinton **chair**, £175 for 2, Marks & Spencer. Floral paper **fan**, £6.95, Rastall & Daughters. Be Crafty **postcard**, £2.50, Cheryl Rawlings. **Origami butterflies**, £4.50 for 5, Lavender Home. (On branch) **Origami diamonds**, from £4.50 each, Origami Est. (On desk, from left) Bowsley **jug**, £16, Neptune. Pastel **tape**, £3.50 for 4, Ikea. Geometric **pen pot**, £4.50, Karenza & Co. Urban Outfitters Work Hard, Play Hard **pencil set**, £10 for 10 pencils and pale green box; Black Zig Zag **ruler**, £4.95, both Ohh Deer. Origami **paper rose**, £24.50, The Origami Boutique. **Box file**, £29.50, The Dormy House. (On box) **Noticeboard**, £16, Next. Pastel

striped washi **tape**, £3.25 for 3, Pipii. **Flowerball**, £25, Origami Est. Gift **ribbon**, £1.25 for 3, Ikea. (On board) Queen of Crafts **card**, £2.50, Louise and Lygo. DIY patterned **envelope liners**, £25 for 10 A4 sheets, Lucy Says I Do at Not on the High Street. **Origami heart**, £45 for 12, The Origami Boutique. **Scissors**, £7.50, Kikki.K. **Cake stand**, £88; **Paper ball**, £22 (part of Mint and Peach Paper Ball Collection), both Peach Blossom. **Origami decorations**, from £4.50, Origami Est. Hostfint gift boxes, £12 for 7 (6 shown), Ikea. Floral DIY pillow **gift boxes**, from £1.75 (includes twine and tags), Create Yourself Designs at Not on the High Street. **Paper stars**, £15 for 24, Origami Est. **Pastel paper**, £4.79 for 60 A4 sheets, Hobbycraft. (On chair) Small white paper **pom pom**, £4, Peach Blossom.





FEATURE HOLLY PHILLIPS PHOTOGRAPHS MARK SCOTT

- 1 Create bespoke designs with cute patterns.** Crafting paper, £15 for 12 assorted rolls, Berylune.
- 2, 6, 7 Stick it together with charming tape.** Brass scissors, £12.95; Pastel tape set, £13.75; Floral fabric tape, £3.95, all Rastall & Daughters.
- 3 Pencils fit for purpose!** Urban Outfitters Work Hard, Play Hard pencils, £10 (part of set), Ohh Deer.
- 4, 9, 12 Find your way to paper-crafting heaven!** Map diamond, £14.50; Paper rose, £24.50; Hearts, £45 for 12, all The Origami Boutique.
- 5 Tie and twirl.** Gift ribbon, £1.25 for 3, Ikea.
- 8 DIY paper diamond.** Wooden template kit, £17,

- Bonnie and Bell at Not on the High Street.
- 10 Keep a supply of pens to hand.** Geometric pen pot, £4.50, Karenza & Co.
- 11 Become a paper artist.** *Paper Only* by Claire Heafford and Louise Hall, £16.99, Berylune.
- 13 Fold it!** Badger Origami Notepaper Set, £9.50 for 10 sheets and envelopes, Rastall & Daughters.
- 14 Try the art of paper quilling.** Quilling template board, £5, Hobbycraft.
- 15, 16 Be inspired by unique origami creations.** Little Stars, £15 for 24; Flowerball, £25, all Origami Est.

- 17, 18 Hang delicate creations.** Decadent Decs Oasis honeycomb, £6 for 3 sizes and pastel colours; Mini Circle paper garland, £4, both Talking Tables.
- 19, 20 Jazz up everyday stationery.** DIY patterned envelope liners, £25, as before (find template and instructions at lucysaysido.com/diy-envelope-liners). Envelopes, similar from Hobbycraft. Small iron scissors, £2.95, Dotcomgiftshop.
- 21 Say it with flowers.** Floral paper fan, £6.95, Rastall & Daughters.
- 22 Make the little things matter.** Mini envelopes, £2.50 for 5, Berylune.

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blended spray at its
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Herbal cleansing spray

Style tip

Add petals and herbs to the mix for extra colour, scent and decoration. >>



Brightening bombs

Style tip

No lemons? Use limes or grapefruit, which have similar bleaching and cleaning credentials.



Lemon and salt scrub

Style tip

Use also as a general room spray or give a little spritz to coats to keep them smelling fresh. >>



Linen water



VIDEO

Watch our 'Modern Country Makes' videos at country-days.co.uk

How to MAKE THEM YOURSELF

Herbal cleansing spray

Using a sterilised jar, blend together the following essential oils: 10 drops of clove, 10 drops of lemon, 5 drops of cinnamon, 5 drops of eucalyptus and 2 drops of rosemary. Add 8 drops of the oil blend to 250ml witch hazel distillate and decant into a bottle fitted with a spray nozzle. Make a label by printing out or writing direct on to pretty paper or card. To protect the label, cover with clear sticky-backed plastic cut to the same size. Stick the label on to the surface of the bottle with clear-drying adhesive (try UHU All-Purpose Solvent-Free Adhesive, £3 for 32ml, Hobbycraft). To use, simply spray on to a surface and wipe clean. Keep out of direct light when not in use.



Band **board**, £24.99, Sophie Conran at T&G Woodware. **Beaker**, £3.30; **pipette**, £3 for 6; **essential oils**; **witch hazel distillate**, from a selection, all Amphora Aromatics. Screw-top **Kilner jar**, £6.99 for 3, Lakeland. **Spray nozzle**, for similar try Ebay or Etsy. Patterned **paper** and clear **sticky-backed plastic**, from a selection, Hobbycraft.

Brightening bombs

These small, scented descaling shapes fizz up to freshen sinks, baths and toilets. Wearing rubber gloves, measure 300g bicarbonate of soda and 100g citric acid into a bowl. Carefully add 10ml of your chosen essential oils and stir with your hand to incorporate. The mix should hold together when squeezed – if it's too dry, add a couple of sprays of distilled water. Push the mix into silicone moulds and allow to dry out. When ready, push the shapes out of the moulds and store in sealed moisture-resistant jars. Add a decorative label – we printed out a ticker-tape label and mounted it on to pretty paper. Cover the label with clear sticky-backed plastic and stick to the jar with adhesive as described, left.



Eddingtons silicone heart **moulds**, £5.50 for 12, Amazon. Hemsma **jar**, £12; ribbed **jar**, from a selection, both Ikea. Arles stripe **tea towel**, £14, The Linen Works. Green **tea towel**, from a selection, Beetroot Press.

Lemon and salt scrub

This is such a simple idea, but it works very well. Lemons have a natural bleaching agent and when combined with grainy rock salt, they shift and lift grime and stains – with the added bonus of leaving a lovely subtle scent. Particularly useful for keeping wood chopping boards at their best, simply place a little rock salt on the board and rub into the surface with the cut end of half a lemon. Squeeze the lemon while rubbing to moisten the salt as you scrub – this will add extra bleaching power as you work into the wood. Finally, give the chopping board surface a good scrub with a natural brush, rinse with warm water and allow to dry.



Band **board** with handle, £24.99, Sophie Conran at T&G Woodware. Pride of Place **egg cup**, £3.99; Pride of Place **lemon juicer**, £14.99, both T&G Woodware. Ceramic Measure Cup **pot**, col Dove Grey, £22.50; hand-carved mango wood **utensil set**, £29.50 for 5 assorted pieces, Pastel Lane. Brush and other items, stylist's own.

Linen water

Scented water for linens and laundry is so easy to make and can make a real difference to your ironing when spritzed on to clothes. To make 180ml of linen water, mix 30ml vodka and 150ml distilled water and add 12-18 drops of your chosen essential oil. We like lavender essential oil, but you could try lemon, grapefruit or orange for an uplifting scent or chamomile for its relaxing qualities. Decant the linen water into a stoppered bottle or a bottle with a spray nozzle for immediate use. If you want to make a large batch as a gift idea, the basic recipe is 1:5 vodka to water, with 2-3 drops of essential oil to every 30ml of liquid. Finally, add a decorative label as described, above left.



Korke **bottle** with stopper, £2.25, Ikea. Corked **bottle**, £5, Sainsbury's. Scented **lavender bundles**, £16 for 3 in Natural or Blue, Jim Lawrence. **Pegs**, similar from Labour and Wait. Other items, stylist's own.

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Matt Emulsion.

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‘THE PERFECT LIFE IS LIVING IN THE COUNTRY BUT WITH ACCESS TO TOWN’

Designer Emma Bridgewater

After graduating from university in 1981 with a degree in English, Emma Bridgewater was looking for an outlet for her creativity. She started working for quirky knitwear company Muir & Osborne, a very positive experience that gave her an insight into what it would be like to run her own business.

The idea for her British ceramics company came when she wanted to give her mother a teacup and saucer, but couldn't find anything she liked. She realised she wanted to make colourful and relaxed china that was fun to use. At 25, this was the catalyst for starting up her spongeware pottery company, based in pottery capital Stoke-on-Trent, that is now a global household name and has a turnover of £15 million.

With the recent publication of her new book, *Pattern*, we went to Oxfordshire to find out more about Emma's life in the country...

TELL US A BIT ABOUT HOME... We moved to the village of Bampton four years ago. We were lucky as we'd been waiting for a house to come up here. It's an eccentric property, which hasn't been touched for 30 years. There's a rundown barn, outbuildings and land stretching down to the river, and it's

now our home, studio and office combined. When I first saw it, I thought it was a place with magic that would be exciting to restore, but a big project as the house was a tip. We currently live in the barn and are planning what we are going to do with the main house.

WHO LIVES HERE WITH YOU? My husband Matthew [Rice, who heads up the business] and our four children – Lizzie, 26, Kitty, 25, Margaret, 18, Michael, 15 – come and go. My mother-in-law lives in the cottage in the garden. We have a huge collection of poultry, four lovely Herefords, a dog called Otter and a cat called Aslan, who comes along with us for walks as if she were a dog!

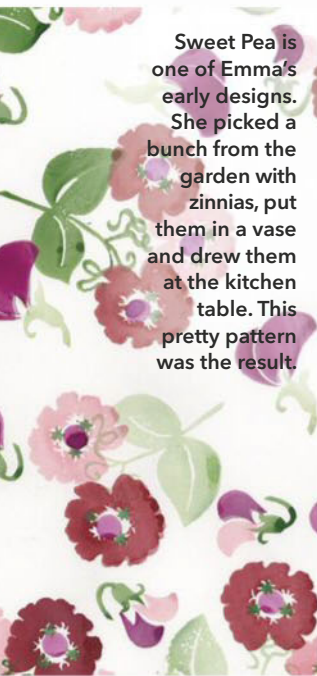
HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN A COUNTRY GIRL AT HEART? I grew up in a village called Bassingbourn on the Cambridgeshire/Hertfordshire border. I remember the sound of planes taking off from the airfield and spending time at the kitchen table peeling, coring and slicing apples. When I was seven, we moved to Oxford. I loved picnicking in the meadows and swimming in the Cherwell.

HOW DOES YOUR LANDSCAPE INSPIRE YOU? When we design, we look to the >>

A recurring motif in her designs, bantams have a special place in Emma's heart as she grew up with them.



Crammed with china, Emma's dresser is constantly evolving as she adds to it or tweaks the display.



Sweet Pea is one of Emma's early designs. She picked a bunch from the garden with zinnias, put them in a vase and drew them at the kitchen table. This pretty pattern was the result.



Emma's property is dotted with rustic outbuildings.



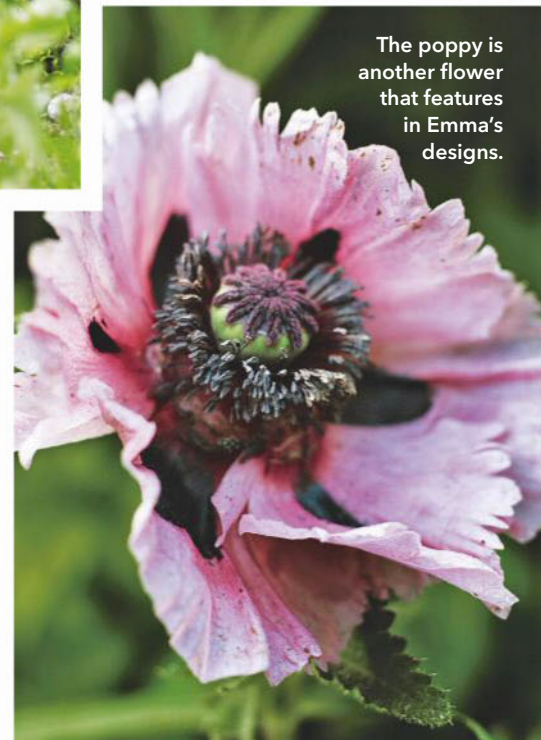
Boiled bungalow cake - Emma's mother used to make this for her children to tuck into after school.



Otter finds something of interest in the garden. Black Labradors are another design inspiration.



A selection of Emma's popular designs including Auricula plate, Viola jug (left) and Striped Tulip jug (right).



The poppy is another flower that features in Emma's designs.



The flourishing kitchen garden at Emma's Oxfordshire home.



Resident turkeys scratch at Matt's feet. He oversees the kitchen garden, which keeps the family in fresh produce.

I couldn't live without...
**'ROSE GERANIUM OR STEPHANOTIS
BATH OIL BY FLORIS, A STETSON AND
MY GEORGETTE HEYER NOVELS'**



Trifle with rose petals (ideally from the 'heavenly smelling' *Rosa pimpinellifolia* 'William III') is a family favourite in summer.



Emma's designs, including this tea towel, a re-working of her Utensils range, and tablecloth (right) often celebrate the everyday.





FEATURE SARAH WILSON PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

English countryside for inspiration – the birds and flowers in particular. We have planted hundreds of trees since moving here and put in lots of hedges. There are many remarkable landscapes within walking distance – meadows and woods teeming with wildlife. This all feeds back into our work.

WHAT GETS YOU OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING? A cup of tea! I like a blend of Ceylon, Lapsang and Earl Grey that I buy at the covered market in Oxford. Sometimes I add a Yorkshire teabag if I need an extra lift. At the moment I'm drinking it out of our Wallflower design.

WHAT'S BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR CAREER SO FAR? I am most proud of what we have achieved in Stoke on Trent, employing local people and helping to regenerate the pottery industry there. We have given something valuable back to the community. Our Victorian factory employs 250 people and produces more than 25,000 pieces of hand-decorated pottery every week.

LIKE COUNTRY HOMES & INTERIORS, YOU RECENTLY CELEBRATED YOUR 30TH YEAR IN BUSINESS. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF YOUR SUCCESS?

Our designs. My new book, *Pattern*, covers a selection of them, but it is by no means exhaustive. In planning this book, I looked back over the company's history of design – cataloguing our archive can only be described as a work in progress at the moment.

WHICH EMMA BRIDGEWATER DESIGN IS YOUR FAVOURITE? I'm very fond of Toast & Marmalade and Oranges & Lemons. I also like a funny little pattern from way back called Bird & Worm.

WHAT OTHER CERAMICS ARE ON YOUR DRESSER? Our shelves are laden with pottery, including a huge collection of coffee pots. Favourites include the Stoke companies Minton, Myott and Meakin.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN THE UK COUNTRYSIDE? I love the North Norfolk coast, particularly North Walsham, where we lived for a while in a draughty old

EMMA'S COUNTRY VIBE

How will you be spending the May Bank Holiday? Church crawling! Exploring local churches is something my mother used to do and it's a tradition I've continued with Matt. Churches are such a part of the English landscape.

What do you love most about this time of year? Watching the kingfishers and mayflies on the river.

What's your favourite early-summer dessert? Trifle with rose petals – you can find the recipe in my new book.

rectory. I am always happy when images of Norfolk's beaches and marshes come to my mind. I have a little burst of happiness when I think of seaside holidays – coastal themes have given us lots of design material, too.

IT'S TIME TO KICK BACK – HOW DOES YOUR PERFECT WEEKEND SHAPE UP?

If the weather is warm, we pack a picnic and head down through the water meadows to the river for a swim. I really love this time of year. We make a frittata with some of our surplus eggs, pick salad from the garden (Matt has polytunnels so we have early yields) and add some mayonnaise and roast chicken to the basket. I make a simple pud of freshly picked elderflowers and gooseberries.

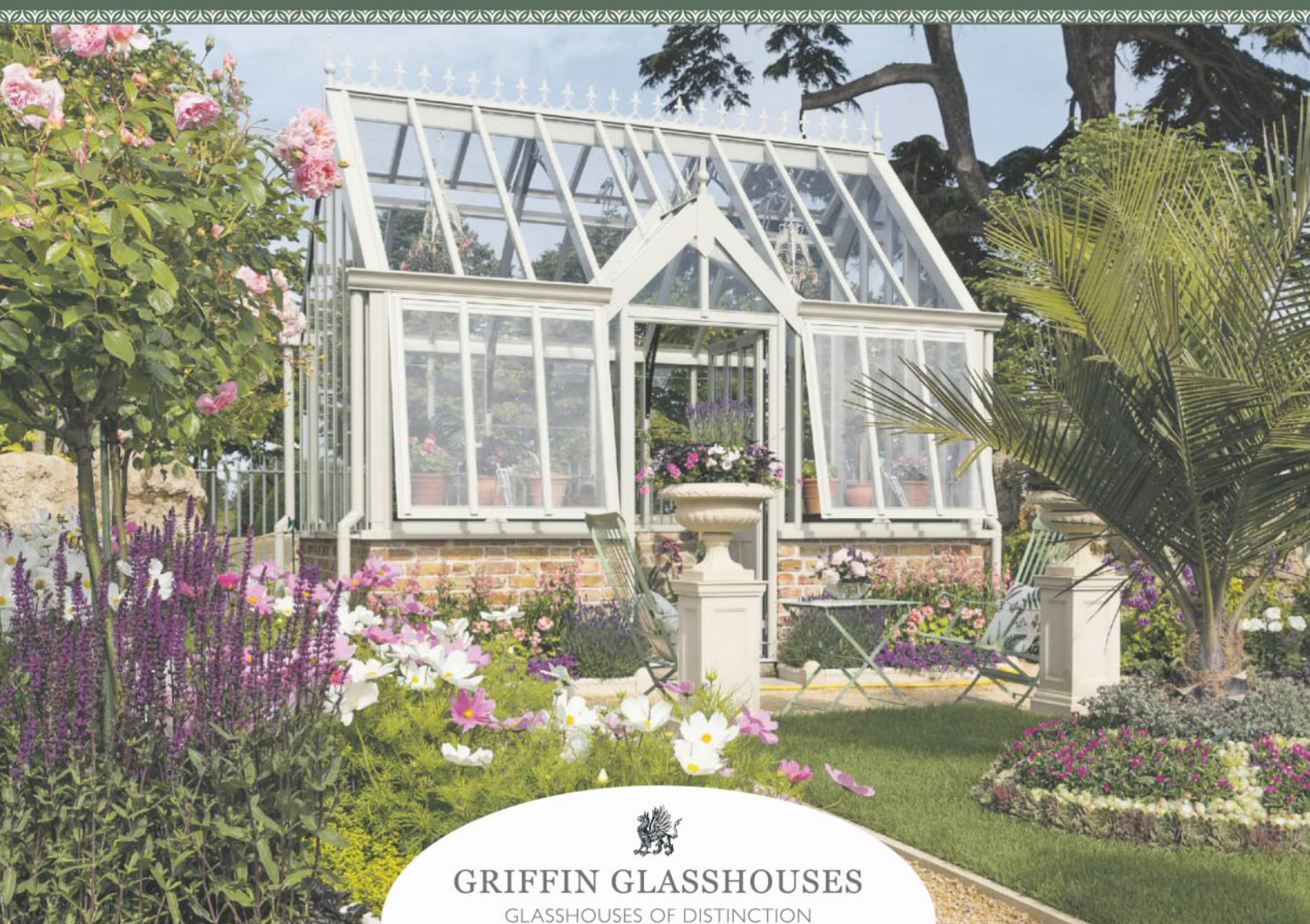
YOU LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE – DO YOU GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL AFFAIRS?

We are firm believers in supporting local business and getting involved in village life. We shop in the village as opposed to the nearest supermarket. There's a van that sells excellent fish, and newspapers are available first thing in the morning from a caravan.

WE'RE COMING TO YOUR VILLAGE – WHAT SHOULDN'T WE MISS? A meal at Biztro in Bampton for modern British cuisine sourced locally. Kelmscott Manor, the country home of William Morris, is about three miles up river. We walk there along the river path.

Emma Bridgewater, 01782 407733, emmabridgewater.co.uk. Emma's new book, Pattern, is published by Saltyard Books, £25.

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PROJECTS, PLANS *and dreams*

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EVER NEED FOR THE PERFECT COUNTRY HOME



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Garden buildings
with country style

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Spring-fresh
shutters and blinds

Page 114
Statement
showerheads»

Amazing garden retreats for work, rest and play

FROM BOHEMIAN YURTS TO WOW-FACTOR TREEHOUSES, OUTDOOR BUILDINGS HAVE NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD. RECONNECT WITH NATURE, CREATE A GUEST ANNEXE OR WORK FROM HOME IN SPACES THAT ARE TRULY INSPIRING

1 Natural escape

This super-stylish garden shelter was designed with the Norwegian philosophy of 'friluftsliv', or outdoor life, in mind. 'The design evokes memories of fun family weekends spent relaxing among the trees, toasting marshmallows on the bonfire and snuggling up in a cosy cabin in the woods,' says award-winning garden designer Victoria Wade. The living roof, built-in seating and blackened wood give this pavilion a contemporary edge for a modern country garden.

Bespoke garden **pavilions**, from £5,000, Victoria Wade Landscapes.





Lisbon log cabin, from £7,835 for an 8x4m structure, Lugarde.

2 All season summerhouse

A summerhouse is a perennial favourite and sizes range from tiny pergolas to expansive log cabins in FSC-certified northern European pine such as the Lisbon from Lugarde, making it easy to find the right one for your garden. Extras, including insulation, lighting and power supply, can transform a standard garden escape into a home office, guest room or even a gym.



Yurt, from £2,900 for a 3.65m version, Avalon Yurts.

3 Under canvas

Made of heavy-duty canvas and felting over a bentwood frame, the traditional Mongolian yurt has become a favourite in country gardens with those who want a festival vibe close to home – you can even add a log burner to up the comfort factor. Avalon Yurts owner Joel Cusden says, 'A yurt is likely to last 10 to 20 years if looked after properly.'

4 Cook's cabin

The British weather and barbecues aren't always the happiest companions, so if you love outdoor-style cooking or simply like to snuggle up around the fire on colder evenings, consider investing in an Arctic cabin. Each cabin comes complete with a central table fitted with a barbecue grill, and sizes range from small, which seats 10 and sleeps three, to an impressive 17sq m, which can seat 25 – plenty of space for gathering the tribe together. »



Barbecue cabin, from £6,750, Arctic Cabins.

Tip Go to uniquesleeps.co.uk and think about staying in a yurt, hut, geodome or similar before you actually buy one, 'experiencing all the allure of outdoor life, while maintaining a certain level of luxury', according to site owner Kate Paulwell.

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Sofa Workshop head office: 2nd floor, Mill Pool House, Mill Lane, Godalming, GU7 1EY.

5 Shepherd's delight

'Originally made from whatever was to hand, a shepherd's hut had a stove in one corner and a window on each side for watching the flock,' says William Vickery of Blackdown Shepherd Huts. Today, things are more polished and you can expect high-quality materials, and a say in everything from exterior paint colours to a luxury interior. For a cheaper version, look out for self-build options or reconditioned originals.

Heritage **hut**, from £18,650, Blackdown Shepherd Huts. >>



Country best OUTDOOR COMFORTS



SMALL HEATER

Add a rustic mini woodburner for some comforting warmth.

- **The Hobbit stove** H46xW31xD28cm, £475, Salamander Stoves.



TOUGH CHOICE

Stand up to muddy feet with woven plastic flooring.

- **Brita Sweden Plastmattor** rug, from £60, Royal Design.



LIGHT SOLUTION

Brighten spaces with a portable lantern.

- **Suboos Ultimate Rechargeable LED lantern**, £29.97, Amazon.



Pods, from £18,000, Archipod.

6 Contemporary pod

The working day takes on a whole new feel when your home office is a pod in the garden. Chris Sneesby, Director, Archipod, based his design on what a good outdoor work space should be: bright, warm, cheerful and comfortable to use. 'We also wanted the structure to look as natural and sculptural as possible,' says Chris. Outside, it's rustic, but inside has the smart, high-spec look that you'd want in a permanent office or studio.



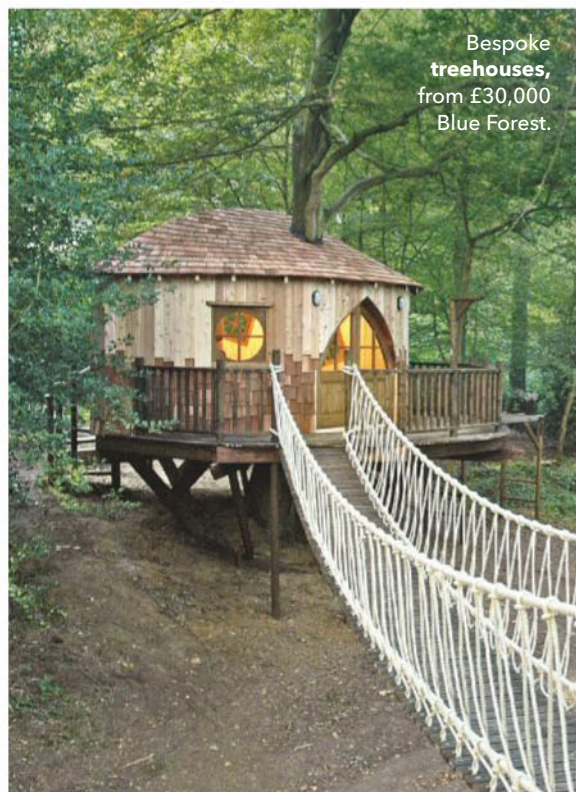
Cabins, from £35,000, Plankbridge.

7 Ranch style

The new Plankbridge cabin has a Wild West look and offers plenty of living space inside. Larger than a shepherd's hut and clad in English Western Red Cedar, it's ideal if you own a field and want to create an annexe, guest suite or bolthole for any time of year. As Richard Lee, co-founder, Plankbridge, says, 'a footprint wider than 2.55 metres or longer than 7.5 metres is enough for a shower, bedroom, kitchen and living area'.

8 Treehouse

'People love treehouses because they remember the fun they had in them as children,' says Catherine Hills, Sales and Marketing Assistant, Blue Forest. 'Being among the branches has a unique feel.' They're a practical solution for larger gardens, transforming little-used shady areas such as woodlands into an accessible and fun space that the whole family will enjoy. Don't worry if you don't have a suitable tree in your garden because a house built on stilts can still catapult you straight up into the canopy.



Bespoke treehouses, from £30,000 Blue Forest.

Country style need-to-know

- **PLAN PERFECTLY** Unless you're planning to use it for business purposes or it includes sleeping accommodation, most outbuildings under 2.5 metres tall will be covered by permitted development and won't require planning permission, but always check with your local authority, especially if you live in a conservation area. You can find more advice at iobuild.co.uk and at planningportal.gov.uk.
- **CREATE YEAR-ROUND COMFORT** First and foremost, choose a building that's big enough and bright enough for its purpose. Proper insulation with a material such as Rockwool will ensure it's warm in winter and not too hot in summer. Many outbuildings come supplied with electricity and lighting. If not, have an electrician install a power source from the house.
- **WORK YOUR BUDGET** If bespoke craftsmanship is beyond your means, you can still get great results from off-the-peg/self-build companies, such as Dunster House.

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1 Versatile shutters

Though tier-on-tier shutters look smart all year round, they really come into their own during sunny spells, since the top and bottom sections can be opened and closed independently during the day to follow the sun as it tracks across the sky, or to enjoy a sunset. When making your choice, bear in mind that this style has more solid sections than full-height shutters, and so is less streamlined in looks.

Tier-on-tier MDF shutters, H230xW110cm, col Pearl, £413, The Shutter Store.



Asprey roller blind, W60x120cm drop, col Silver, £165, Appeal.

2 Subtle pattern

'With their simple design, roller blinds can be regarded as a blank canvas for your creativity,' says Ruth Newman, Design Consultant, Appeal. 'Available in many colours, in plain or patterned designs, they can make a bold statement or bring subtle style to your interior scheme. The Asprey design of scrolling leaves and flowers, in neutral shades, teams beautifully with limed wood furniture, creating a calm country scheme.'



Swedish blind in Pantry Antique, W150x200cm drop, £193.23, Clover & Thorne.

3 Scandi style

'Swedish blinds are charming in their simplicity,' says Samantha Baker, Design Adviser, Clover & Thorne. 'Because the blind rolls up revealing its reverse you can team together two fabrics, such as a patterned face with a plain back, or two patterns.' Swedish blinds with ties rather than cords are most successful where they won't need to be rolled up or let down often.

4 Half and half

'Café-style shutters, which cover just the lower part of the window, are a brilliant way to retain complete privacy, but keep your room feeling open and spacious,' says Mark Carter, Director, Shutterly Fabulous. 'Tilting the slats at an angle will give you instant privacy, which is useful if you're close to a road or are overlooked, and since the upper portion of the window is left open, maximum light can flood into the space.' >>



Café shutters, H87.5xW82cm, painted in Wild Water 2 by Dulux, £229.60, Shutterly Fabulous.

Tip

A made-to-measure shutter can turn an unusual window into a special feature. Bespoke designs allow for tapered shapes, curves, triangles, or a fanlight. The louvres still open and close, and a fanlight shutter can be hinged to flip down for cleaning.



Skye **roof blind** in blackout fabric, W55x118cm drop, col Karo, £51, The Fabric Box.

5 Loft extension solution

'Skye roof blinds are designed for optimum light control and heat efficiency, with an aluminium fascia and side channels that work, with blackout fabric, to block out the light effectively,' says Nichola McFall, Brand Manager, The Fabric Box. 'Apart from ready-made blackout designs, blinds can be made to measure in any of our fabrics.'



Roman blind in Toile Cherry, W80x120cm drop, £169, Hillarys.

6 Classic Roman

'A French-style toile print brings a touch of luxury to these kitchen Roman blinds,' says Sarah Quilliam, Head of Product Design, Hillarys. 'The key is to use pattern sparingly with white or cream as the base colour. These blinds have a standard lining, but we also offer interlined blinds, which have a subtle padded effect that's great for lightweight fabrics, and blackout linings.'

7 Direct the light

'Good shading for a home-office window is essential,' says Murray Clark, Director, The Shutter Store. 'Shutter slats can be angled to optimise natural light while preventing screen glare, or closed to block out distractions. Our colour match service allows you to choose any shade you like. White is a perennial favourite, but colourful shutters are increasingly popular.'



Phoenix wood **shutters**, H150xW85cm, painted in Caribbean Dawn 1 by Dulux, £276, The Shutter Store.

Country-style need-to-know

- **CONSIDER CORD-FREE OPTIONS** Appeal's Ultra system opens and closes blinds using a remote control, a timer, or a sensor that triggers when it detects morning light or when the room is too warm. Instead of mains electricity its power comes from a battery that only needs charging once a year, or can be topped up by a solar panel if you have one.
- **TRY BEFORE YOU BUY** Hillarys' new in-home visualisation app allows customers to see how blinds and curtains will look at their windows using a snap of the room. An adviser from Hillarys visits your home, and you can then picture the blinds against the existing decor, trying out styles and colours before making a final decision.
- **THINK BIG** If opening up the back of your house with glazing has resulted in too much light flooding in, tracked shutters are a beautiful solution. Suitable for both French windows and sliding doors, they sit on a track, gliding smoothly open and closed, concertina-style.

FEATURE CAROLINE RODRIGUES

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1

BEST FOR...
Saving water
CP Hart, £460

Featuring 'AirPower' technology, this Hansgrohe Raindance 240 Air Overhead Ecosmart showerhead (diameter 240mm) promises to reduce the amount of water used by sucking in air, which is mixed with the water. This has the effect of creating droplets that are plumper, lighter and softer, promoting a sense of well-being while you shower.



2

BEST FOR...
A splash of colour
The Water Monopoly, £438

A breath of fresh air after years of all-chrome bathroom fittings, this Rockwell showerhead (diameter 97mm) with wall-mounted shower arm in country blue with a hint of 1950s styling is a refreshing alternative. Team it with matching colourful shower controls. Also available in green, grey, lilac, orange, matt black, white and chrome.



3

BEST FOR...
Rainfall effect

West One Bathrooms, £869

If you want to add spa-style luxury to an updated country bathroom, a shower that creates the sensation of being under a rain cloud is the ultimate indulgence. The Dornbracht MEM ceiling-mounted rain shower (300x240mm) comes in platinum, platinum matte, a pink gold 'Cyprum' hue, as well as the chrome finish shown. It also includes a descaling system.



4

BEST FOR...
Artisan looks
Waterworks, £1,769

While bearing all the hallmarks of a traditional showering set-up, this Henry Gooseneck wall-mounted showerhead (diameter 200mm) is given a modern twist with its sinuously curvy arm. Unlacquered brass lends rustic credentials, or there are 12 other finishes to choose from, including copper, nickel and gold.



5

BEST FOR...
Spray patterns
Matki, £183.60

Select a spray pattern to suit your mood from the three on offer with this chrome-plated brass Swadling Invincible Titan shower rose (diameter 75mm). An adjustable arm lets you direct the water to your liking. Nickel and gold finishes are also available and its crosshead tap shape matches the shower valve control.

Country style need-to-know

• **CONSIDER PRACTICALITIES**

It might be seductively glamorous, but an overhead shower isn't the most practical for hair washing or showering children unless a hand shower is added. Choose a separate one, or opt for the combined version with a fixed head and a hand shower on a riser rail.

• **GEN UP ON THE LATEST SPECIAL FEATURES**

Luxurious effects turn a shower into a fabulous boutique hotel experience. Showerheads with LED lights in blue, white, red and green create mood and atmosphere, and waterfall functions let the water flow dramatically. Find examples at Crosswater, 0345 873 8840, crosswater.co.uk.

• **CHECK WATER PRESSURE**

When selecting a powerful or a rain-type shower, check that your hot water system can cope with the demand for a high volume of water. The spray can get everywhere, so fit a panel in a fully tanked wet room to protect some areas, or go the traditional route and fit an enclosure.

FEATURE CAROLINE RODRIGUES



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LIGHT AND AIRY SHAKER STYLE

A KITCHEN FIT FOR ENTERTAINING IS ONE THING, BUT CLAIRE BARHAM NEEDED HERS TO BE VERSATILE ENOUGH TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HER NEW BUSINESS, TOO...

Open-end units were designed specially to break up the look of the large island and are a nod to the typically freestanding style of Victorian kitchen furniture.



PROJECT PROFILE

Owner Claire Barham, who is the owner of Green Apron Cookery School and Catering Company (01206 890387).

House A five-bedroom Victorian house built in 1870 in Coggeshall, Essex. It was built by an Inge-Glas factory owner, but divided into three in the 1960s; Claire has the middle house.

The project The timber-framed garden room was built to house the new kitchen by Westbury Garden Rooms. There is a vaulted room next to the new kitchen, which Claire uses as a larder.

Kitchen size 8x4m.

Designer Carissa Snelling-Doe, Nicholas Anthony.

Cabinetry Bespoke in-frame Shaker-style oak cabinetry, painted in Hessian, from the Traditional collection, Nicholas Anthony. >>



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Open shelving on one side of the island gives Claire space to store ready-prepared dishes when she is demonstrating during her cookery classes.

With plans to leave her job in London, Claire Barham was on the lookout for a property where she could realise her dream of setting up a cookery school and catering business from home. 'I wanted a house with an outbuilding but fell in love with this place and decided to build a garden room for the new kitchen,' she says.

Claire approached Westbury to create the extension and they recommended Carissa Snelling-Doe, design consultant at Nicholas Anthony, to design the kitchen. 'I wanted a painted Shaker style, so was a little unsure when I first visited the Nicholas Anthony showroom because it's ultra-modern. However, they also have beautiful classic kitchens and Carissa understood exactly what I wanted. The company's service was great and Carissa also advised on oven models and even helped pick tiles and pendants.'

The design had to accommodate the needs of the cookery school and catering business, as well as look part of

Claire's living space. 'I wanted a relaxed look, not a restaurant kitchen,' she says. 'It had to be in keeping with the style of the house but not fussy, and I didn't want high-tech gadgets or fancy ovens – most people don't have them in their own kitchens, and they need to be confident that they can recreate my dishes.'

Claire's main concern was how to fit eight to 10 people working in the kitchen simultaneously. 'I wanted a communal cooking area and that's where the idea of the big island came from,' she says. 'Carissa suggested the domino hobs at the corners so everyone has a zone to cook on. I demonstrate at the range oven and there's open shelving on the island so I can have prepped dishes ready to show. I'm so pleased with how practical the kitchen is and enjoy working in it. The colours look amazing and it's great being able to see out into the garden. It's the perfect balance between my business and my own kitchen.' >>

THE DESIGN SOLUTIONS



Claire's kitchen is highly practical as well as being full of warmth and charm.

1 MULTI TASKING ISLAND

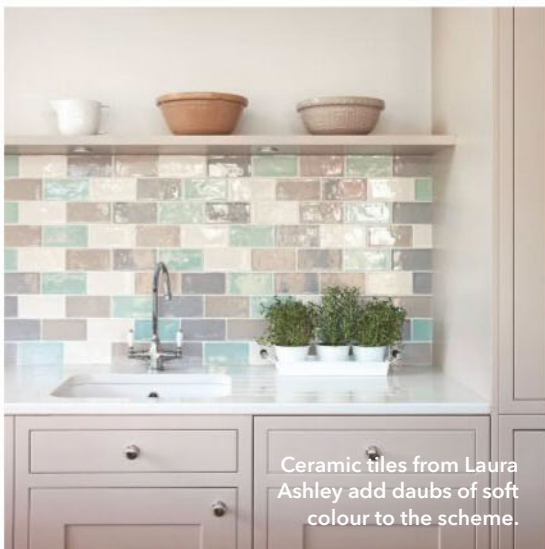
'Claire wanted to seat four people on one side with 10 around altogether,' explains Carissa Snelling-Doe of Nicholas Anthony. 'It's nearly 3.5 metres long and can all be used as prep space. Claire stands on one side to do her demonstrations with open shelving below for her "here's-one-I-made-earlier" dishes. We installed two two-zone induction hobs on the corners of the island so that many people can cook at once. The worktop is part wood, which is good for dough-making, and part white stone, which is more practical for pans.'



A huge fridge-freezer allows Claire to stock up for her cookery school courses.

2 A MIX OF STORAGE SOLUTIONS

'We settled on open shelving and cupboards,' says Carissa. 'People often opt for drawers in their kitchens, but as Claire has catering equipment she needed the height of a cupboard. The double fridge-freezer is surrounded by two large larders as well as a wide cupboard above. There are pan drawers on the island and floor cupboards along the back wall, plus open shelving so that regularly used items are within easy reach. The size of the oven and fridge is helpful for large trays when catering.'



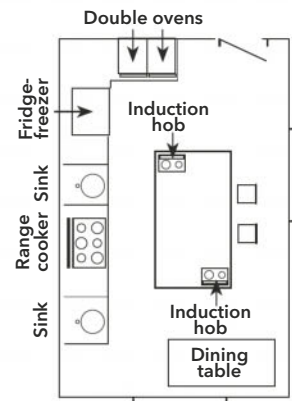
Ceramic tiles from Laura Ashley add daubs of soft colour to the scheme.

3 SHAKER STYLE IN TONAL SHADES

'Claire wanted a modern approach to the kitchen design, but one that would fit with the Victorian house,' says Carissa. 'She liked the style of Shaker doors and picked shiny knobs to give a contemporary edge. The feel was to be fresh yet homely and timeless, so we chose muted colours, then livened up the scheme with a splash of peppermint in the tiles. We wanted to have a bit of fun with them, as the rest of the room is fairly neutral. They look handmade so they also add a rustic note, which stops the kitchen looking too modern.'

The layout

As the room was to be used as a cookery school as well as Claire's own kitchen, a big fridge, a large table and a spacious island for demonstrations were necessities. She also needed enough equipment and workspace so that people could cook in pairs.



The details

CABINETRY

Bespoke in-frame Shaker-style oak **cabinets**, painted in Hessian, from the Traditional collection, around £32,000, Nicholas Anthony.

SURFACES

Engineered wood **flooring**, £42.95sq m, Brooks Bros. Laura Ashley Artisan ceramic **tiles**, £12.99 for 22, Homebase. Caesarstone composite quartz **worktop**, col Frosty Carrina, from £1,142sq m; Spekva Bavarian Wild wood **worktop**, from £413 linear m, both Nicholas Anthony

APPLIANCES

Blanco **extractor**, £404; Siemens double **ovens**, £1,221 each; Britannia range **cooker**, £2,279; Siemens integrated **dishwasher**, £813; Fisher & Paykel **fridge freezer**, £1,824; Siemens **hobs**, £657 each, all Nicholas Anthony.

SINK AND TAP

Villeroy & Boch ceramic undermount **sink**, £428; Franke Venician mixer **taps**, £291 each, all Nicholas Anthony.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Butler pendant **lights**, £101.60 each, Jim Lawrence. Hartford **table**, £425, Next. KitchenAid Artisan **mixer**, £429, Debenhams.

FEATURE SALLY NARRAWAY PHOTOGRAPHS DARREN CHUNG

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Woodland wonder

CHRISTOPHER AND JANEY McLAREN'S WELSH GARDEN DAZZLES
THE SENSES WITH COLOUR AND SCENT THROUGHOUT SPRING



The magical view down into the wooded Dell sweeps past mature oaks, magnolias and carpets of bluebells and starry white greater stitchwort (also opposite). »



The view from the house takes in a circular pond, framed by clipped *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula' and purple acers. The walled garden is visible beyond.



AT HOME WITH...

Owners Christopher and Janey McLaren.

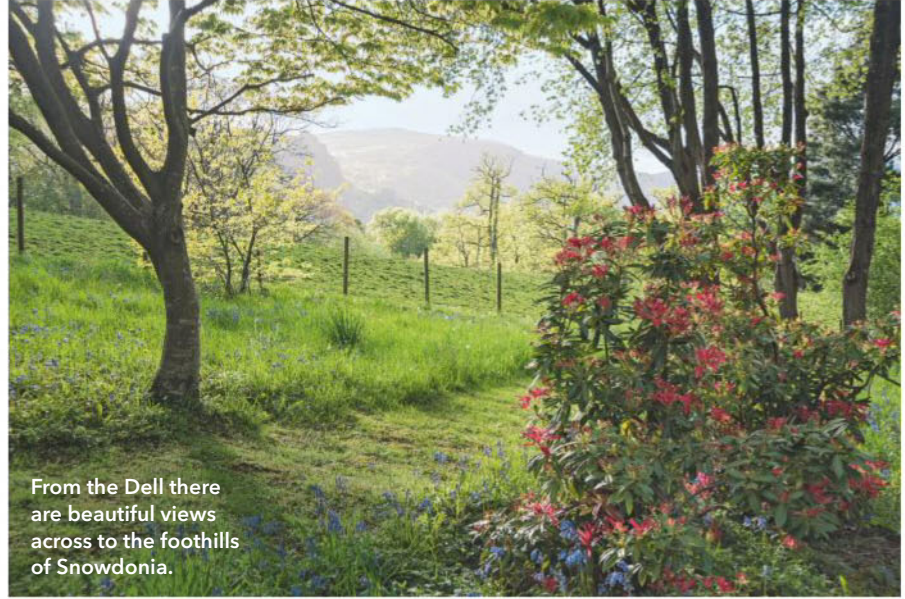
House Grade I-listed with an early-16th-century Hall House at its centre, plus later additions.

Garden Ten acres of acid, heavy clay soil; lightly formal around the house with lawns, a walled garden and ponds; the Dell and Glade woodland gardens are full of choice trees and shrubs.

When Janey McLaren married her husband Christopher in 1973, she became part of a gardening dynasty with its roots deep in the soil of north Wales. 'At first I felt overwhelmed because I knew nothing about gardening, and when they talked about plants all the names were in Latin,' she says, laughing. Janey was determined to become involved, though, and today the glorious gardens at Maenan Hall, near Llanrwst, are the creation of several members of the McLaren family, Janey included.

Christopher's childhood playground was Bodnant, close to Maenan. This vast, spectacular garden, now owned by the National Trust, was created largely by his father, Henry McLaren, 2nd Baron Aberconway, including its show-stopping sequence of terraces, which he designed at the age of just 26. The family supported plant-hunting expeditions to China and South America in the early 20th century, and took part each year in the Royal Horticultural Society's spring show at which competition between the great private gardens, such as Bodnant, Exbury and Caerhays, was fierce. 'I became interested in rhododendrons in my teenage years,' says Christopher, 'and helped with the setting up and labelling for the spring shows.'

Henry McLaren bought Maenan Hall in 1945. It was virtually derelict with no garden, but surrounded by 10 acres of sloping ground edged with mature native woodland with wonderful views over the Conwy Valley and the foothills of Snowdonia. 'My father planted a few trees and shrubs, bird cherries and tulip trees »

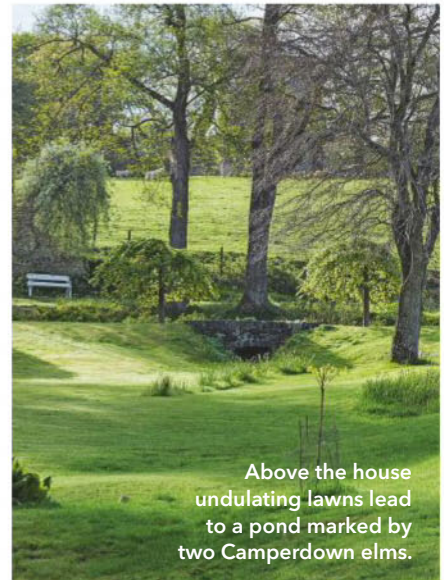


From the Dell there are beautiful views across to the foothills of Snowdonia.



What makes this garden so special...

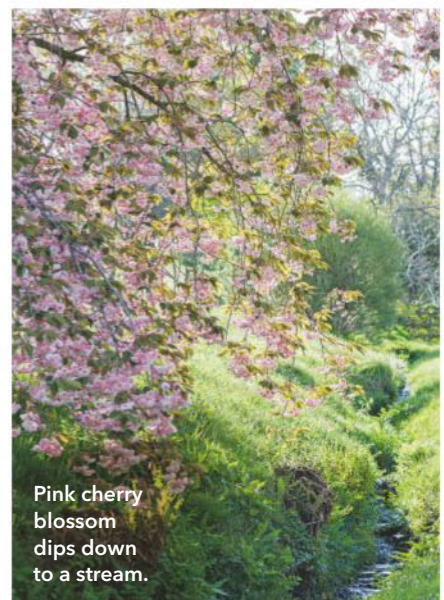
‘The wonderful setting combined with a plant collection that reflects the horticultural passions of the McLaren family’



Above the house undulating lawns lead to a pond marked by two Camperdown elms.



Stands of *Gunnera manicata*, dwarfed by a magnificent dawn redwood, border a stream that runs through the Dell.



Pink cherry blossom dips down to a stream.



Naturalised camassias overlook another of the garden's three pools, this one fringed with weeping willows.

near the house, rhododendrons and dawn redwoods in the Dell, and put up the walls to create a walled garden.' Christopher and his mother, Christabel, moved into the renovated hall after Henry's death in 1953 and, in the years following, Christabel continued work on the upper garden, laying out lawns, stone terraces and yew hedges around the house, and planting the walled garden.

The Dell, a small wooded valley lying below the main garden, with streams running through it and a dramatic rocky outcrop on one side, became Christopher's project. 'The rhododendrons that my father planted had become swamped with brambles, so after clearing them I started to replant with the aim of creating a beautiful garden in the McLaren tradition, based on trees and shrubs.' In the early 1960s, a new area was added, which was planted with azaleas, especially the old and rare Ghents, Mollis and Rustica Flore Pleno groups.

From early spring, a sequence of dazzling floral displays unfolds in the Dell. It begins with deciduous magnolias and camellias in March through to April, when the *Prunus x yedoensis* shimmers above a carpet of bluebells. Then in May rhododendrons, pieris and azaleas take over, followed by laburnums, embotriums and hydrangeas that bloom on into summer. For Janey, the Dell is 'one of the most beautiful places on earth'.

Criss-crossed with paths, the Dell is also awash in spring with wild flowers. As well as bluebells, there are starry white stitchwort and pink campion among acid-green ferns. There are gorgeous »

Modern Country Classic

Dells

You may not have a wooded valley in your garden, but the feel of a dell can be created even in a small hollow.

Need to know...

- Check your soil pH. Woodland garden shrubs love acid soil.
- Choose predominantly deciduous trees and shrubs that allow spring flowers to thrive before their leaves appear and shade out the ground.
- Use acers and pieris for colourful foliage, as well as flowering shrubs such as rhododendrons and azaleas.
- Introduce wild flowers such as bluebells, red campion, celandines and stitchwort.
- Allow mosses and ivies and don't be too tidy - a dell should have a natural, slightly wild feel.
- Mulch trees and shrubs every March with a thick layer of organic matter.

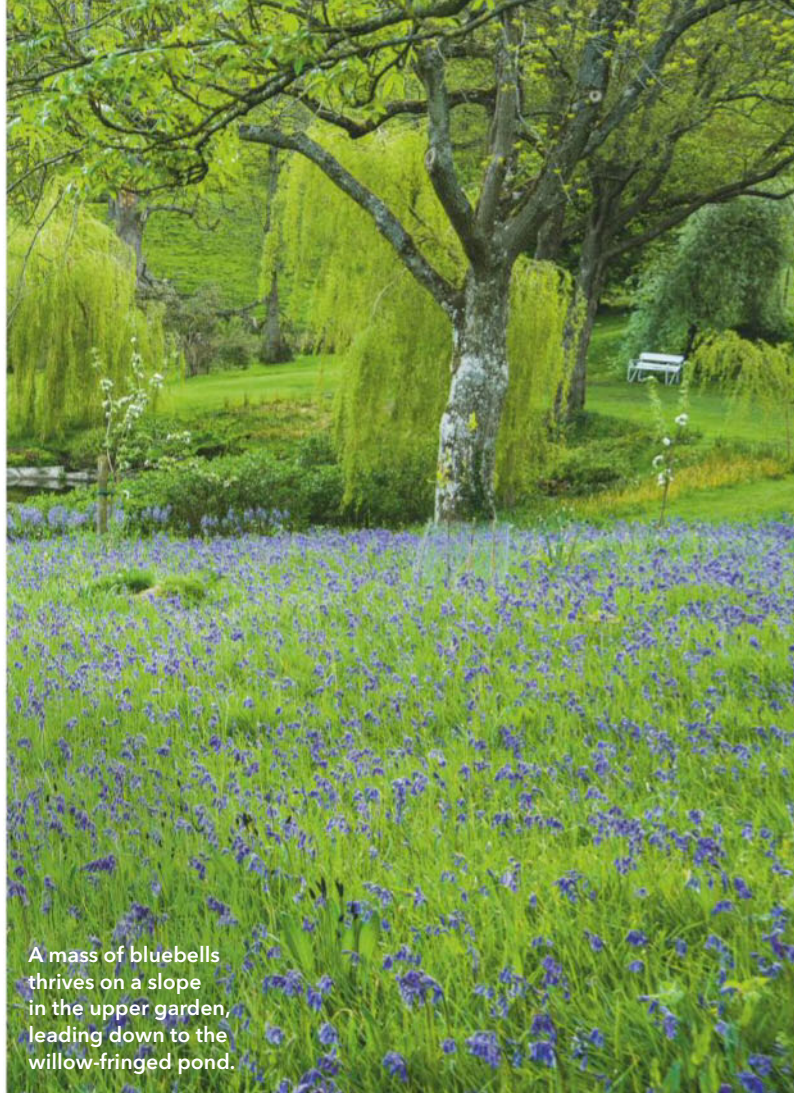
What we love most about this garden...

*'The moment Rhododendron 'Loderi King George' flowers
in the Dell – the scent is overwhelming'*

Pieris and rhododendrons
add to the colourful
tapestry of this beautiful
woodland glade.



Rhododendron
'Clotted Cream'
x 'Isabella' puts
on a pretty display.



A mass of bluebells
thrives on a slope
in the upper garden,
leading down to the
willow-fringed pond.



ON OUR DOORSTEP...

Visit... 'Gwydir Castle and gardens (01492 641687, gwydircastle.co.uk) in Llanrwst. It's a beautiful Tudor house, reputedly one of the most haunted in Wales.'

Shop at... Bodnant Garden Centre (01492 650501, bodnant-plants.co.uk/garden-centre) in Tal-y-Cafn, where you'll find high-quality trees and shrubs, some propagated from stock plants at Bodnant Garden, suited to the conditions of the area.'

Go for a meal at... 'Hayloft Restaurant, also in Tal-y-Cafn (01492 651102, bodnant-welshfood.co.uk/hayloft-restaurant), for fine food made using local produce in a centre devoted to celebrating Welsh food and drink.'

foliage effects, too, such as the intense red leaves of *Pieris formosa* var. *forrestii* 'Wakehurst' contrasting with its racemes of white bell-like flowers and the lavender blue colour wash from the bluebells at its feet.

While the Dell is in full spate, the formal garden around the house is waking more quietly, though sharply cut weeping pears (*Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula'), deep purple acers, *Cornus* 'Eddie's White Wonder' festooned with white bracts and *Cercis siliquastrum* (the Judas tree) covered with intense magenta-coloured pea-like flowers provide bold shapes and colour.

In spite of her trepidation, Janey was passionate about the garden from the start and was keen to play her part in it, particularly in creating the Glade, a pretty area at the bottom of the drive opposite the Dell. She has also introduced more herbaceous planting and summer-flowering shrubs. The walled garden is full of roses now, while white *Potentilla fruticosa* 'Abbotswood' frames a fountain on the terrace for months on end.

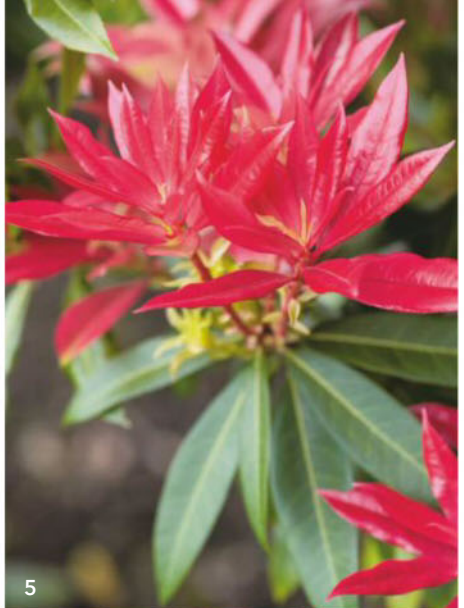
Though steeped in history, Maenan is not stuck in the past. 'The garden changes all the time,' says Christopher. 'We replace plants that have outgrown their space, and we're leaving some areas of grass longer, too, to encourage wild flowers.' He fondly describes Maenan as 'the cadet branch of Bodnant', and perhaps it once was a horticultural trainee, but it long since graduated with flying colours.

📍 Maenan Hall, Maenan, Llanrwst, Gwynedd LL26 0UL, opens for the National Gardens Scheme on 24 April and 14 August, ngs.org.uk.



Christopher and Janey's spring beauties

- 1** *Rosa xanthina* 'Canary Bird' has fragrant single yellow flowers.
- 2** *Embothrium coccineum* var. *lanceolatum* 'Norquinco Valley' is a bright South American shrub.
- 3** Camassias love the damp, heavy soils at Maenan and will naturalise.
- 4** *Enkianthus campanulatus* bears clusters of rosy pink flowers in spring.
- 5** *Pieris formosa* var. *forrestii* 'Wakehurst' has vivid red new leaves.
- 6** *Rhododendron* 'Norma' is a deciduous fragrant azalea.
- 7** *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum* 'Mariesii' has pretty white lacecaps.
- 8** *Rhododendron* 'Loderi King George': pink buds open to big scented blooms.



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- 4 *Delphinium* 'Pacific Giants'. H150cm, spread 75cm.
- 5 *Dianthus* 'Ever-blooming Mixed' (Hardy). H60cm, spread 40cm.
- 6 *Digitalis* 'Dalmatian Mixed'. H50cm, spread 40cm.
- 7 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Pink Parasol'. H90-120cm, spread 45-60cm
- 8 *Erigeron karvinskianus* 'Stallone'. H30cm, spread 100cm.
- 9 *Geum* 'Blazing Sunset'. H60cm, spread 60cm.
- 10 *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote'. H60cm, spread 75cm.
- 11 *Scabiosa* 'Blue Jeans'. H45cm, spread 45cm.
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<i>Erigeron karvinskianus</i> 'Stallone' x 6	TCK69170	£5.99		
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10 WAYS TO

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1 Swot up on chicken keeping



Want to know what it's like to raise your own flock? These chicken-keeping bloggers share their experiences...

Thegardensmallholder.wordpress.com

Bedfordshire-based Karen rescues ex-battery chickens, offering them a loving free-range 'retirement' in her garden. Her charming posts reveal all you need to know about keeping hens happy, from healthy treats to dust baths!

kitchen-garden-hens.co.uk

Apart from this inspirational blog,

Francine has written 13 books on the subject of keeping chickens. She shares her 30 years' experience of raising free-range flocks, as well as seasonal recipes and gardening advice.

Thechickenstreet.wordpress.com Poultry enthusiasts Andy and Jill work with chickens on a daily basis, raising flocks to sell on to new owners. We love their light-hearted yet informative posts; browse breed briefs, topical articles, product reviews and much more.

2 TREAT YOUR DOG TO A CLEVER DRYING COAT

Wrap up your pooch after wet, muddy walks in this snug-as-a-bug Country Collection coat from Ruff and Tumble. Made from absorbent cotton towelling, which dries damp fur in no time at all, with faux leather trim, it comes with its own towelling storage bag. Available in three colours including Bottle Green, shown, and fives sizes, from £43.



Bloom Print top, £45; skinny jeans, £65, both Crew Clothing Company.

3 Pick florals for May Day

Shades of crisp white teamed with navy blue are a big feature in floral fashion designs this season. Pair a pretty ditsy print blouse with soft denim jeans for a smart/casual twist on this classic colour combination.

4 COLLECT A CUTE MINIATURE FOREST

These rustic tree ornaments are hand-turned on a lathe in rural West Sussex at the Forge Creative workshop by designers Josh Kennard and Oli Milne. Made from offcuts of locally sourced woods, each piece is naturally unique. Available in a range of shapes, they measure 6-14cm and cost from £12 each, Forge Creative. >>





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5 Plant by the moon

THE ANCIENT PRACTICE OF MOON GARDENING WAS THOUGHT TO HELP PLANTS GROW. JOIN THE CONTEMPORARY GARDENERS GIVING IT A GO...

Familiarise yourself with the moon's cycle. It lasts 29 and a half days on average and can be divided into four phases; new moon, first quarter, full moon and last quarter.

Sow above-ground fruit and vegetables, such as spinach, broccoli and tomatoes during the new moon and first quarter periods, considered particularly fertile and wet.

Plant root crops such as carrots, onions and potatoes just after the

full moon, a time when soil is moisture-rich.

Read the signs – some believe specific plants flourish when the moon passes through certain constellations. The seeds of annual plants apparently do best under Water signs, such as Pisces, but root crops thrive when the moon is in an Earth sign, such as Taurus.

Take a break from planting during the last quarter. Find a lunar gardening calendar at lunarium.co.uk.

6 Cleanse beautifully

USE A GENTLE FACIAL CLEANSER MADE FROM SOOTHING NATURAL INGREDIENTS

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- Active Manuka honey, rich in anti-ageing antioxidants, naturally hydrates skin in this mild foaming gel. Natural Being Manuka Cleanser, £13 for 100ml, My Pure.
- Rose and linden blossom essential oils soften while radish root extract defends from pollutants. Linden Blossom Face Creme Cleanser, £22 for 112ml, John Masters Organics.



7 Revive a country tradition

On May Days past, people used to leave baskets of flowers or sweet treats at the doors of friends and neighbours.

The trick was not to be caught in the act – if you didn't get away before the front door opened, you could only escape after giving the recipient a kiss...



8 Be a cloud gazer

Is it a dog? Is it a rabbit? Cloud watching is a relaxing pastime for lazy spring days. Download the CloudSpotter app, £2.49, Cloud Appreciation Ltd, to discover beautiful imagery and explanations of 40 cloud species and light phenomena, from rainbows to the rare asperitas - said to resemble upside-down mountains.



9 Buy British ROBERTS RADIO

In 1940, just eight years after founding Roberts Radio, owner Harry Roberts received a letter telling him that Queen Elizabeth (the late Queen Mother) had just bought one of his latest designs from Harrods in London, and the company now holds Royal Warrants from both the present Queen and the Prince of Wales' households. To combine the latest in sound technology and style, the company recently collaborated with Liberty. Three heritage prints from the Flowers of Liberty range (including Betsy, shown, £225, Liberty) currently bloom on the classic Revival radio. First launched in the 1950s, the retro shape was originally inspired by a handbag. >>

10 *Head for a cottage hideaway*

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And the food? Rustle up home-cooked meals yourself or take a drive to nearby Watergate Bay, well known for surfing, to try the menu at Jamie Oliver's Fifteen restaurant.

Any activities? Catch the spring sunshine in the landscaped garden and enjoy the handmade tree swing.

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The Potting Shed, 01637 881183, uniquehomestays.com.



HEX COTTAGE, SUFFOLK

We love it because...

This woodland cottage on the Wilderness Reserve, near Saxmundham, is perfect for a pair of eco-loving romantics.

What is the accommodation like?

Candles light the way in this electricity-free bolt-hole, which has a wood-fired range. There's a canopy over the kingsize bed and a roll-top tub in the bathroom.

And the food? Estate chefs are available to create your dream meal.

Any activities? Stroll around the 4,500-acre



estate. Or take it easy with a glass of fizz and a hot-tub soak at the estate's manor house.

How much? From £250 a night. Sleeps two.

Hex Cottage, 020 7484 5700, wildernessreserve.com/hexcottage.

LITTLE QUEBB COTTAGES, HEREFORDSHIRE

We love them because...

Guests can choose from a cottage or barn in a cobbled courtyard at this 15th-century farm near the Welsh border.

What is the accommodation like?

The rooms are spacious and have welcoming farmhouse features such as timber beams and lofty windows.

And the food? Cook for yourselves or dine out at nearby Ludlow, a haven for foodies.

Any activities? Children will love the farm's dogs, hens and miniature pigs. Head

further afield to browse around the renowned bookshops in Hay-on-Wye or, if you are feeling more energetic, take the family canoeing, horseriding or cycling.

How much? From £82 a night. Sleeps 4-5.

Little Quebb Cottages, 01544 327121, sawdays.co.uk.



FEATURE TARA KING, COLUMBA COLIVET ILLUSTRATION ANGELA MCKAY PHOTOGRAPHS (MOON) AMANA IMAGES INC./ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (FLOWERS) GETTY IMAGES/EYE EM, (CLEANERS) RHAPSODY, (THE POTTING SHED) UNIQUE HOME STAYS, TILE, FROM A SELECTION, FIRED EARTH.



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Fresh red
RHUBARB

Unsure what to do with that clump of rhubarb growing in your garden? We've taken this country classic, known for its tangy flavour, and given it a cosmopolitan twist. Granita, tarts, doughnuts and savoury suggestions are here to inspire you.»



Rhubarb and
ginger tart

Rhubarb know-how

Maincrop rhubarb is available from now until around June. It is a deeper red colour (often shot through with green) than the paler pink forced varieties that are cultivated indoors under pots and in season in February.

The flavour of maincrop rhubarb is sharper and the stems much chunkier than those of its slender cousin. Always look for plump, firm stems and perky leaves. Store rhubarb in the fridge with the leaves attached until you need it, and use within a couple of days, discarding the leaves.

All rhubarb needs to be cooked with plenty of sugar. It goes well with strawberries and raspberries, apples and pears, as well as sweet spices such as vanilla, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg and ginger. In savoury dishes, it combines well with duck, lamb, mackerel, pork or salmon, in a sauce or chutney, either on its own or with added juniper, orange or rosemary.



Poached rhubarb



Rhubarb, lime and
mint granita »

RHUBARB AND GINGER TART

A layer of rhubarb tops a creamy ginger filling piled into a sweet, nutty pastry case.

SERVES 8-10

25g blanched hazelnuts
125g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
75g chilled unsalted butter
4 tbsp golden caster sugar
1 medium free-range egg yolk

For the filling

800g rhubarb, cut into 2cm pieces
150g light muscovado sugar
200g full-fat cream cheese
3 pieces stem ginger (from a jar)

1 To make the pastry, whizz the hazelnuts in a food processor to the consistency of ground almonds. Add the flour and butter, cut into small pieces, and process until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Briefly blend in the sugar. Add the egg yolk and 2 tsp cold water and blend to a smooth dough. Wrap and chill for 30 minutes.

2 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 6. Thinly roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface and use to line a 24cm loose-based tart tin with a depth of 2.5cm. Trim off the excess pastry and prick the base with a fork. Line the base with baking parchment and fill with baking beans. Bake blind for 15 minutes then remove the beans and paper and bake for a further 10 minutes until the pastry is cooked through. Leave to cool.

3 Put the rhubarb in a saucepan with 125g of the sugar and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved and the juices are starting to run. Increase the heat a little and continue to cook until the rhubarb is just tender. Lift out half the rhubarb pieces and continue to cook the remainder for a further 6-8 minutes to make a thick pulp with the consistency of chutney. Combine with the rhubarb chunks and leave to cool.

4 Beat the cream cheese and remaining sugar together in a bowl. Grate in the ginger and mix well. Chill until needed.

5 To avoid soggy pastry, make both fillings ahead, but assemble the tart only when ready to serve. Spread the ginger filling on the base and top with the rhubarb. Serve with cream.

POACHED RHUBARB

This classic easy dessert works well with ice cream, custard, cream or yogurt.

SERVES 6

175g caster sugar
30g fresh root ginger, grated
¼ tsp ground cardamom
700g chunky rhubarb, cut into 2cm pieces

Put the sugar, ginger and cardamom in a wide, shallow saucepan with 50ml water and heat gently until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a low simmer and add the rhubarb. Cook gently for about 3-5 minutes until the rhubarb is almost tender, but retaining its shape. It will soften more as it cools in the liquid. Serve warm.

RHUBARB, LIME AND MINT GRANITA

Icier than sorbet, this is a great summer refresher to have in the freezer for hot days.

SERVES 4-6

8-10 long sprigs of mint
900g rhubarb, roughly chopped
200g caster sugar
4 tbsp freshly squeezed lime juice

1 Put the mint, stalks and all, in a large pan and add the rhubarb and 200ml water. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer gently for about 10 minutes until soft and pulpy.

2 Place a sieve over a large bowl, and push the pulp through the mesh with the back of a spoon to extract as much juice as possible.

3 While the liquid is still very hot, stir in the sugar. When that's completely dissolved, add the lime juice and turn the mixture into a lidded freezer container. Leave until cold.

4 Freeze for 2-3 hours until a thick slushy layer is forming around the sides of the container. Mash well with a fork to break up the ice crystals, stirring them into the centre. Return to the freezer for a further 2 hours or until more slush and ice is forming. Mash and re-freeze, mashing and re-freezing once or twice more at 30-minute intervals until the mixture is evenly frozen. To serve, break up with a fork, aiming for a slushy texture rather than rock solid, and spoon into glasses. >>

Garlic and
rosemary pork
with rhubarb
pickle





Rhubarb doughnuts

GARLIC AND ROSEMARY PORK WITH RHUBARB PICKLE

The tangy pickle counteracts the richness of pork.

SERVES 4

For the pickle

450g rhubarb
15 juniper berries and 2 tsp yellow mustard seeds
200ml red wine vinegar
100g caster sugar

For the pork

2 tsp finely chopped rosemary
1 garlic clove, crushed
3 tbsp olive oil
4 pork chops

1 Sterilise a 500ml preserving jar. Cut rhubarb into lengths that stand almost up to the rim of the jar. Bring a pan of water to the boil and blanch the rhubarb for 1 minute. Drain well, rinse in cold water and pack upright into the jar.
2 Rinse out pan and add the juniper, mustard, vinegar and sugar. Bring to a gentle simmer, stirring often until the sugar has dissolved. Leave to cool then cover rhubarb with the syrup. Cover with the lid and store in a cool place for several days before serving (up to 3 months).
3 Combine the rosemary, garlic, olive oil and a little seasoning in a small bowl and spread over both sides of the chops. Preheat the grill and cook the pork for 6-8 minutes on each side until cooked through. Serve with the pickle.

RHUBARB DOUGHNUTS

Try one of these airy homemade doughnuts and you'll never want to buy one again.

MAKES 12

400g strong white bread flour, plus extra for dusting
¼ tsp salt
75g caster sugar
15g fresh yeast or 2 tsp easy-blend dried yeast
1 medium free-range egg, beaten

100ml hand-hot milk
50g unsalted butter, melted
5 tbsp homemade rhubarb and raspberry jam (see recipe, page 147) or try Fortnum & Mason Raspberry & Rhubarb Preserve, £5.25 for 300g
100g caster sugar mixed with ½ tsp ground cinnamon, to finish
Vegetable oil, for frying

1 Put the flour, salt and sugar in a bowl and crumble in the fresh yeast or sprinkle in the easy-blend dried. Add the egg, milk and butter and mix with a round-bladed knife to make a dough. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead for 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. (Alternatively, knead the dough in a free-standing mixer for 5 minutes using a dough hook attachment.) Transfer to a clean bowl, cover with clingfilm and leave in a warm place for about 1 hour until the dough has doubled in size.

2 Turn the dough out onto the surface and cut into 12 even-sized pieces. Shape each into a ball and space them well apart on 2 baking sheets lined with baking parchment. Leave to rise for about 30 minutes until they are once again doubled in size.

3 Put the jam in a large disposable piping bag or use a sheet of baking parchment rolled into a cone. Cut off the tip. Place the cinnamon sugar on a plate.

4 In a large saucepan or deep-sided frying pan, heat a 5cm depth of oil to a temperature of 190°C or until a cube of bread browns in 30 seconds. Fry the doughnuts, a few at a time, until puffed and golden. Using a slotted spoon, lift out and drain the doughnuts and transfer each batch to a plate lined with kitchen paper while you cook the remainder. Turn down the heat if doughnuts start to brown too quickly.

5 While the doughnuts are still hot, use a small knife to make a small cut in the side of each one and squeeze in a little of the jam. Roll the doughnuts in the cinnamon sugar and serve as soon as possible. >>

Goat's cheese
salad with rhubarb
and walnuts



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GOAT'S CHEESE SALAD WITH RHUBARB AND WALNUTS

Roasting rhubarb brings out its flavour beautifully while retaining texture, and the juices add zing to a salad dressing for creamy goat's cheese.

SERVES 2

200g rhubarb, cut into 3cm lengths

2 tbsp clear honey

1 tbsp light muscovado sugar

40g walnut halves

6 slices grainy baguette

170g goat's cheese, such as Capricorn Somerset, cut into 6 slices

For the dressing

1 tbsp clear honey

1 small garlic clove, crushed

4 tbsp walnut oil

1 tbsp red or white wine vinegar

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

100g mixed salad leaves, to serve

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/Fan 200°C/Gas 7. Line a large baking sheet with a sheet of baking parchment, folding a rim around the edges to contain any juices that run. Mix the rhubarb in a bowl with the honey and sugar. Tip out onto one half of the baking sheet and spread out slightly. Scatter the nuts down the centre of the baking sheet, leaving the other half of the baking sheet empty for now.

2 Cook for 5 minutes until the rhubarb is beginning to soften. Arrange the baguette slices on the empty half of the baking sheet and top with the cheese. Return to the oven for a further 7-10 minutes, until the cheese has softened and the rhubarb is tender.

3 Meanwhile, combine all the dressing ingredients in a bowl. Scatter the salad leaves on serving plates and top with the goat's cheese, baguette, walnuts and rhubarb. Tip any rhubarb juices into the dressing and whisk briefly to mix. Pour over the salad and serve.



RHUBARB AND RASPBERRY JAM

This soft-set preserve is easy to make in small batches, and is perfect in cakes and doughnuts.

MAKES 900G

500g rhubarb, cut into 2cm lengths

3 tbsp lemon juice

400g jam sugar

300g raspberries

1 Put the rhubarb and lemon juice in a large pan and heat gently, stirring frequently until the rhubarb starts to soften, about 5 minutes.

2 Add the sugar and raspberries to the pan and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to the boil and boil rapidly for around 10 minutes or until softly set. To test for a set, place a teaspoonful of the jam on a saucer and chill for a couple of minutes in the freezer. The surface of the jam should just wrinkle when pushed with the finger. If it hasn't set, cook for a few minutes longer and try again.

3 Ladle into sterilised jam jars or screw- or clip-topped preserving jars. Cover with waxed discs and cellophane circles or lids. Label and store in a cool place. Keeps for up to 6 months.

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ON SALE 28 APRIL



‘MY ETHOS IS AN INSPIRATIONAL SHOP FULL OF LOVELY THINGS’

Interiors shopkeeper Caroline Ivory

Opening my home accessories shop, Ivory&Pitch, was a huge leap of faith,’ says interior designer Caroline Ivory, who had previously spent many years putting her stamp on homes across the south of England. ‘I learned about project management from the grass roots up while working with architects and tradespeople on projects from single homes to large property developments,’ she says. ‘It gave me practical experience and a powerful insight into the issues involved in creating homes.’

Her eye for colour and design had inspired her to launch her own interior design business 20 years ago. ‘I always found it flattering when people admired my interiors, asking where I bought unusual pieces and wanting to emulate my look,’ says Caroline. ‘I’ve had a lifelong passion for good design and believe in buying objects that look great and will last.’

Not one for high-street shopping, Caroline prefers to go the extra mile to track down quirky, unusual pieces that

inject depth and interest to help create homes brimming with personality.

When, in 2010, her marriage broke down, Caroline decided it was time to channel this flair for sourcing ‘must-have’ objects into a new beginning. ‘For a long while, friends had been urging me to sell my finds,’ she says. ‘At the time I needed a home for me and my sons – Henry, who is now 21, and Isaac, who’s 14. When I heard that a shop with adjoining accommodation in the village of Westbourne in West Sussex was up for sale, everything fell into place.’

Initially, Caroline thought the shop would simply be a base from where she could sell her homewares while continuing to concentrate on her interior design business. ‘Buying the shop and accommodation while in the middle of a divorce wasn’t straightforward,’ she says. ‘I didn’t want to take on a mortgage as I had no idea how much I’d be earning every month so I used a lump sum settlement to buy and refurbish the property. I also had to take into account issues such as >>

Ivory & Pitch



Caroline outside her bustling homewares shop in Westbourne, West Sussex.

What I love most...

'EMPOWERING PEOPLE WITH THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO TACKLE THEIR OWN CREATIVE PROJECTS'

insurance for mixed-use premises and how finances are structured for a live/work situation in a part-commercial building.'

Caroline forged ahead and transformed the slightly dowdy secondhand furniture and bric-a-brac shop into a smart new store, reflecting the understated mix of modern country and urban style that has become her trademark.

'I loved the traditional shop front and the old-fashioned simplicity of the bare wooden floorboards,' says Caroline. 'My plan was to have a bell on a large counter and solid industrial pendant lights. I knew a neutral backdrop would work well to showcase different patterns, textures and pops of colour. In addition, I worked

closely with a good friend to establish a solid brand identity and create a website.'

Before the property changed hands, Caroline had spotted several pots of Annie Sloan Chalk Paint in a corner. 'When the previous owner suggested I contact Annie to ask about taking over as a stockist, I phoned immediately. After a lengthy conversation with Annie about my background, philosophy for the shop and my plan for moving forward, I was appointed,' she says.

In September 2011, the doors of Ivory&Pitch opened and, as its reputation grew, customers began flocking from far and wide. 'I was running the shop on a shoestring,' says Caroline. 'For the first few months, I used my credit card to finance the cash flow, which was pretty tight. To supply the shop, I sold a lot of my own antiques and made bespoke cushions.'

While sales for Caroline's handpicked stock went from strength to strength, so too did demand for Annie Sloan paint. 'The Chalk Paint range requires little preparation and can be used on almost any surface, indoors and out. Drying time is quick, which means a piece can be painted in the morning, waxed and back in place by tea time,' says Caroline.

Caroline visited Annie's headquarters to be trained to teach people to use the products effectively. Then in December 2011, she held her first furniture painting workshop at the Ivory&Pitch premises, and now hosts at least two a month.

'I didn't set out with a major game plan – the business has evolved naturally over time and I've run with it. The key is to keep a close eye on the market to provide my customers with items I know they'll love,' says Caroline. 'Opening the shop has been an incredible journey – one that's definitely surpassed all my expectations.'

📍 **Ivory&Pitch, 6 The Grove, Westbourne, West Sussex PO10 8UJ, 01243 377813, ivoryandpitch.co.uk. >>**



Caroline enjoys the hands-on approach of her furniture painting workshops.



Ivory&Pitch is an Aladdin's cave of eclectic finds, from Bluebellgray cushions to vintage grain sacks.



The Annie Sloan Chalk Paint range.



At Caroline's paint workshops you'll learn how to use the paints and understand ageing, texturing and distressing techniques.



ON MY DOORSTEP...

Visit... 'Stansted Park House & Gardens (023 9241 2265, stanstedpark.co.uk) near Chichester. It is an idyllic setting and offers so much including the fabulous Pavilion Tearoom, a garden centre and a farm shop full of quality local supplies.'

Shop at... 'All About Tea at the Portsmouth Tea Factory (023 9275 0122, allabouttea.co.uk) in Southsea. For a tea-drinker like me, it is a terrific discovery. They are tea merchants and they buy from all the main tea-producing regions. You can enjoy a cuppa and a cake in their tearoom.'

Go for a meal at... 'The White Hart (01730 825124, the-whitehart.co.uk) in South Harting. The fine old village pub with its inglenook fireplace and beams has been beautifully designed.'

The bluebell woods at nearby West Stoke are a magical place for Caroline to enjoy a spring stroll with Jack Russell sisters Scarlet and Tess.



Small business advice

HOW TO GET YOUR BUSINESS OFF TO A SOUND FINANCIAL START

Follow our guide to making the right decisions for your enterprise



There's no doubt that living above the shop has been very successful for Caroline Ivory, giving her the flexibility to run her home accessories business, Ivory&Pitch, alongside bringing up her sons.

However, before you rush to follow in Caroline's footsteps, her accountants, James and Jane Cable of Cable Financial Directions in the nearby village of West Stoke, stress the importance of planning financially first. Here are their top tips:

Start by deciding how you're going to trade. 'Entrepreneurs are often so excited about opening the doors to their first customers, they often don't think about the right vehicle to trade with - by which I mean a limited company, partnership or sole trader,' says Jane. 'Nine times out of 10, a company will be the best option but it's essential to consult an accountant who knows your individual circumstances because other business structures can initially be better tax-wise, especially if you envisage losses in the early years.'

Find a trusted adviser. 'It's so important to have someone you can turn to and who understands your motivation, as well as tax law. It is best to find someone by recommendation if possible. 'James and I have known

Caroline for almost 20 years,' says Jane, 'but, if you don't have any contacts, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (icaew.com) runs a Business Advice Scheme where a suitably qualified accountant will give you a free consultation. Don't be afraid to meet more than one accountant - sometimes you have to kiss a lot of frogs to find a prince!'

Work out the financial relationship between your home and your business. 'Rule number one is never to buy your property through a company - it's a compliance nightmare and, with more expensive properties, could cost you a great deal in tax.

'Buy the property yourself, then clearly delineate the business area. Sometimes it won't be immediately clear cut. For example, in Caroline's case, the kitchen has business and personal use but, at the end of the day, the business would be able to function without it, whereas the home couldn't, so you just have to use your common sense.

'The first reason this is important is due to rates. The commercial area will be subject to business rates but, at the time of writing, most small businesses get 100% relief.

'The second reason is for capital gains tax when you eventually decide

to sell the property. Any increase in value in the residential part is free of tax for as long as it remains your main residence, but not so any gains on the business part. Because of this, you will need to be able to show the split that you started with.

'If you buy the business from an established trader, you may well be buying fixtures and fittings in the commercial part of the building. It is also important from a tax point of view to split these out and buy them separately. This is yet another reason why you need to have your accountant on board early in the process.

'Finally, you'll need to make the decision about whether to charge your fledgling business rent and how to split costs such as utilities. A purist would advise getting two meters for utilities, but commercial supplies are often more expensive and carry a higher rate of VAT. The rent issue doesn't arise if you are sole trading but, with a company, it's using an asset that belongs to you, and rent can form part of a tax-efficient remuneration package.'

Ultimately, each business will have different needs so it is definitely worth seeking advice right from the start to help steer you on the path to success.

☎ For more information, contact Jane Cable at Cable Financial Directions, 07748 986619.

The one lesson I've learned...

'IT'S ESSENTIAL TO LEARN ALL ABOUT THE NEEDS AND WANTS OF YOUR CUSTOMERS, SO YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY'LL BE LOOKING FOR'

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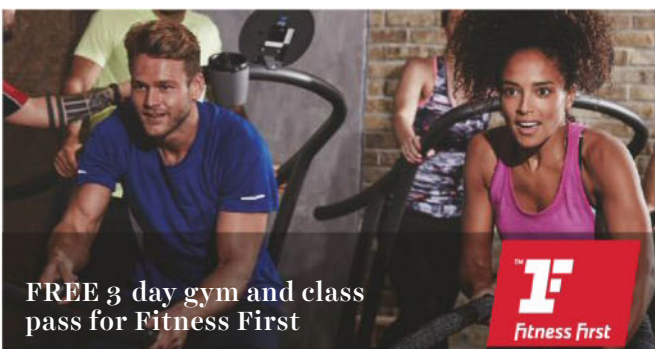
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Alice Vinten "I started a Writers Bureau course just over a year ago. I have now had four non-fiction books traditionally published and found myself the perfect agent who will be helping me get my fiction out there soon! Thanks very much Writers Bureau!"

George Stewart "The course is everything it says on the tin, excellent! I have wanted to write for years, and this course helped me turn my scribbles into something much more professional. I am delighted that my writing is being published and I am actually being paid. All thanks to the Comprehensive Creative Writing course."



Hannah Evans "I've been published in The Guardian and Good Life earning £400. And now I've got my first book published by Bloomsbury called MOB Rule: Lessons Learned by a Mother of Boys. The Writers Bureau course provided me with structure, stopped my procrastination but most importantly it provided the impetus to try something different."

YES! Please send me free details on how to become a successful, freelance writer.

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‘BOWOOD IS ONE OF CAPABILITY BROWN’S PUREST DESIGNS’

Lord Lansdowne

Every morning I walk my dogs, Tulip, Maud and Berry, exactly the same way through the gardens at Bowood come rain or shine. Except it’s never really the same, which is the wonderful thing about nature. At this time of year, if I’m up early I hear the dawn chorus, which lasts for half an hour, all the birds talking to each other, celebrating being alive and all the excitement spring brings. As I walk round the lake I see kingfishers and little dippers, all sorts of ducks including mandarins, and herons waiting patiently, while buzzards and kites wheel overhead in the sky. I also love this walk in winter, when there might be a degree of frost or even sometimes snow; the view can be starlit and I see fallow deer quite close up, skitting past nervously in the dark when they sense the dogs. My walk takes about 45 minutes.



If there has been a lot of rain, the thunderous roar of the water in the cascade is quite something as it drops 30 feet onto rocks. Then I go up to the arboretum, which has trees dating back to Capability Brown’s early work at Bowood in 1763. Every generation of the family has added to this over the years. In spring, there is a sense of excitement in the arboretum. One minute the sculpted branches are starkly naked, then suddenly they seem to be adorned with wonderfully exotic new clothes as the

buds unfurl. We get the same sense of excitement from mid October to mid November, when the arboretum is ablaze with the rich colours of autumn.

My daily walk is a treat for both myself and the dogs.

It’s my time for thinking, and I love being able to get matters quietly into perspective. It sets me up for the rest of the day, before I head to the estate office where I’m anchored until late afternoon.

There are so many wonderful views at Bowood, but it’s rhododendrons that are my real passion. If I can spend Saturday working in our 70-acre rhododendron garden, then my week is complete. We are constantly developing new planted areas and walks; my favourite view of all is a particular area of woodland that has an extraordinary range of plants, starting with a covering of bluebells, then a riot of rhododendrons and magnolias. It’s breathtaking. The first two weeks of May are the time to see the rhododendron garden.

We are celebrating the Year of the English Garden and the tercentenary of Capability Brown, who was involved with 235 gardens in total. We’ve managed to respect his vision and retain the purity of his design, enhancing it as much as we can along the way. I’m very lucky to be part of this legacy; the gardens at Bowood are very special indeed.

**Bowood Gardens, Derry Hill, Calne, Wiltshire
SN11 0LZ, 01249 812102, bowood.org.**

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