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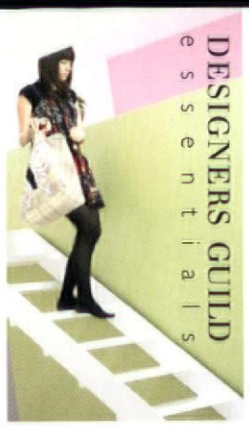

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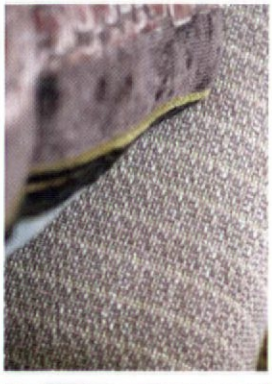

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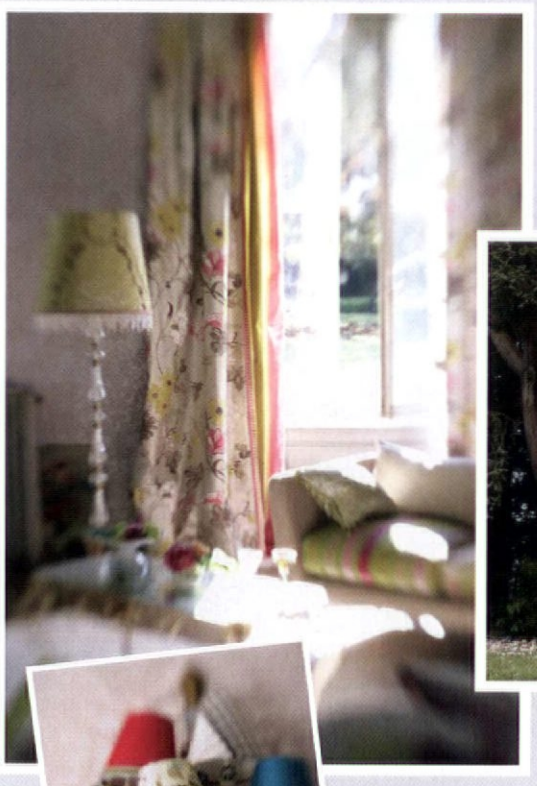

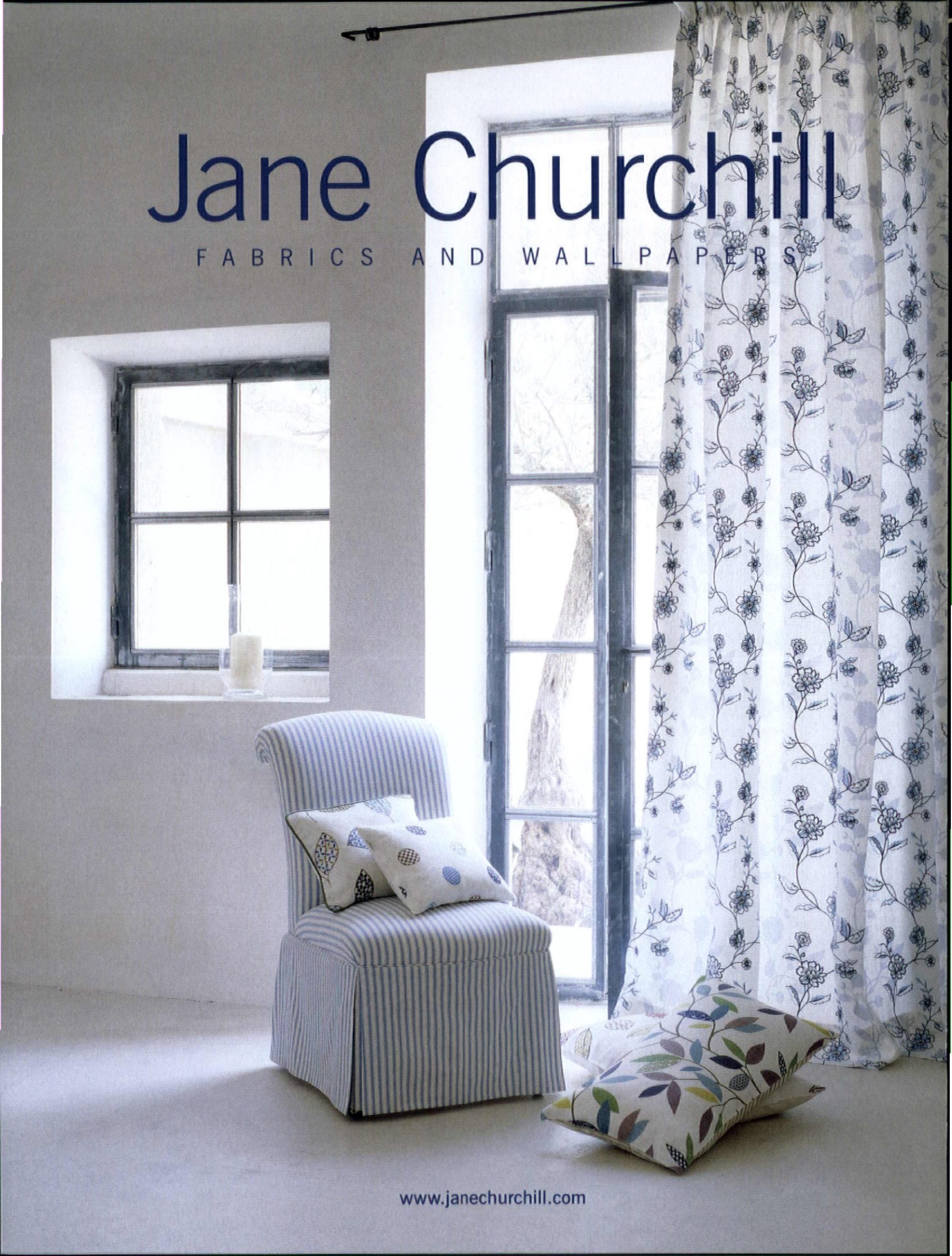
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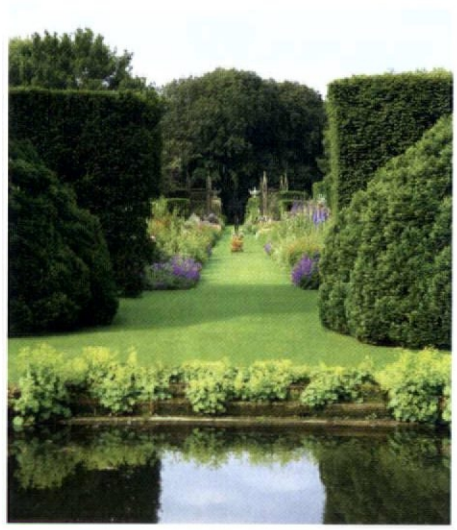
p 19

HOUSE & GARDEN®

p 96–101

p 29–32

p 110–117



Interiors

96 **Belgravia bolt-hole** Their designer worked with an American couple to create a pretty and comfortable London pied-à-terre in a classic English style. By Ysenda Maxtone Graham

102 **From the mind's eye** Hatta Byng visits decorative artist Jorge Estevez in Paris, where he paints in a style which is an expression of his imagination, not a faithful record of the physical world

124 **Degrees of separation** Although the world's just a boat ride away, this holiday house on a Cornish creek offers a glorious sense of isolation. By Dinah Hall

134 **Franco-Indian flair** The owner of this modern *haveli* left her native France to develop her own hand-block-printed fabrics business in India, where she now lives and works. By Henry Wilson

138 **View from the bridge** Clever design underlies both high-tech comfort and the glorious view from a chic houseboat on the Thames. By Becky Pugh

Decoration & merchandise

19 **Decorator's notebook and Swatch** What's new in furniture, fabrics and decorative accessories

29 **Shopping** Olivia Gregory stacks up original table lamps and elegant shades

35 **Outdoor fires** Alexander Breeze prepares for evenings outside with smart braziers and fire bowls

43 **Design ideas** Jennifer Goulding looks at pergolas, arches and arbours, as plant supports and to add focus to the garden

57 **Design ideas** Jennifer Goulding notes Caroline Riddell's wish list for a calm - but indulgent - bathroom

118 **Tulip mania** Wendy Harrop and Gabby Deeming create a pretty, summery look with vivid botanical wallpaper and painted white furniture

144 **Copy that...** Hatta Byng finds ways to recreate the look of houses in this issue

166 **Stockists**

Gardens & garden design

65 **Outside interests** From her traditional shepherd's hut, Clare Foster considers garden visits, design courses and festivals at country houses, castles and palaces, and falls for fashionable, white ragged robin

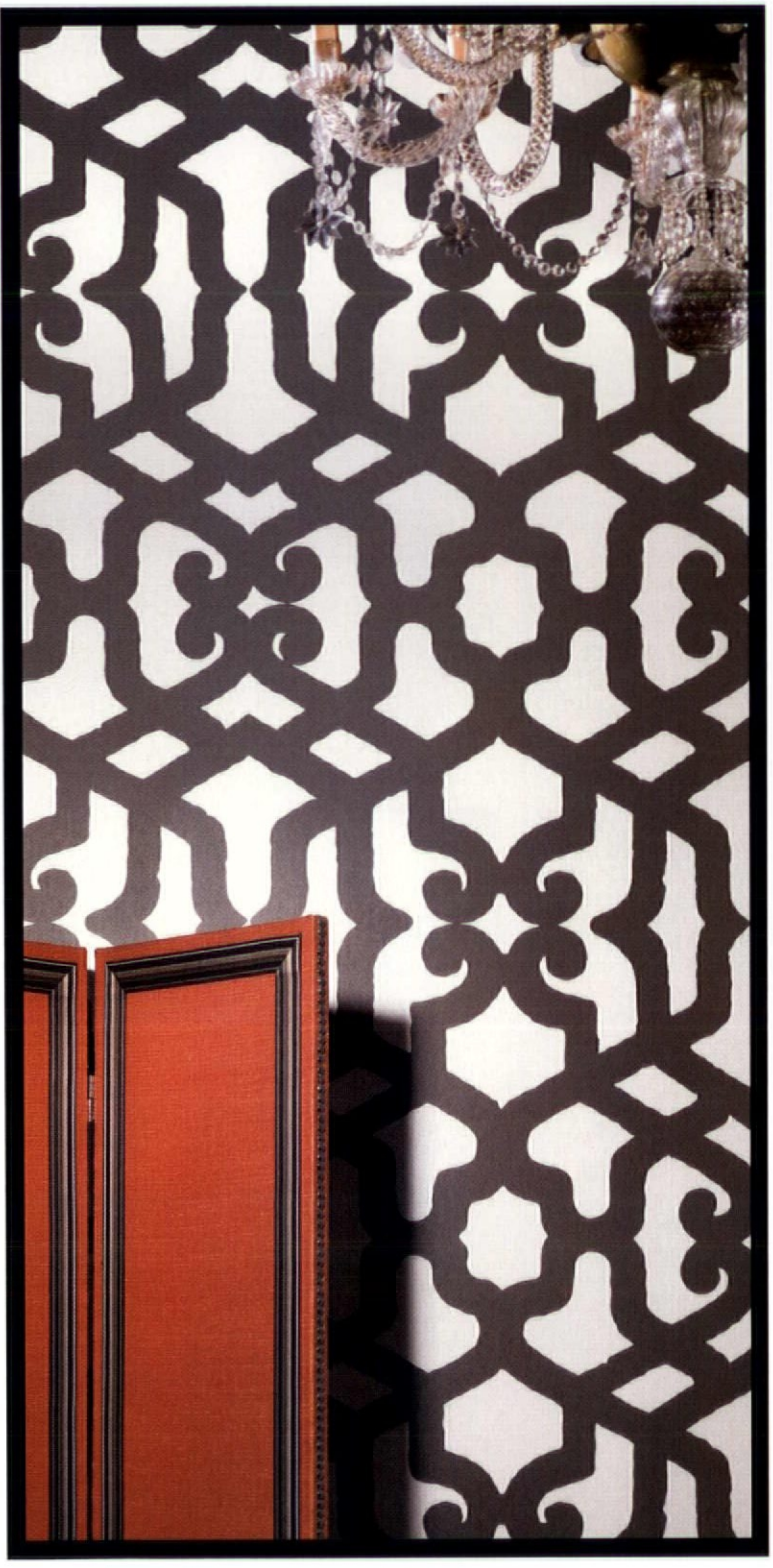
110 **Garden of earthly delights** At Abbots Ripton Hall, the combination of water, fine views, mature trees and ongoing, dedicated maintenance adds up to a perfect English garden. By Ursula Buchan

130 **Top crops - part 5** In her series exploring the history, mythology and cultivation of fruit, Clare Foster considers the strawberry ▷

p 145

On the cover: A pretty, summery look based on a vivid botanical wallpaper, photographed by Jan Baldwin. (For further inspiration, see pages 118-123.) **Cover stories** are highlighted in colour

ph Carlo Ninchi



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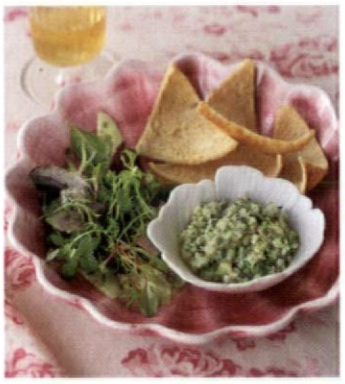
may contents

p 148–152



p 84

Special features

8 **Contributors**

16 **From the editor**

59 **News** Innovations in decoration and design; and Greener living - Cathy Strongman advises on how to find a Green architect

64 **Subscriptions** How to subscribe to *House & Garden*

68 **Stop press** Smart ideas and stylish events. By Petra Kenyon

72 **People - lifestyle** Liz Elliot meets Lord and Lady Camoys, who bought back, and are continuing to restore, their ancestral family home, Stonor Park, in Oxfordshire

83 **People - designer** Henri Fitzwilliam-Lay tells Judith Wilson how she took inspiration from the art collection and personal style of her glamorous client for the design of a bedroom in Holland Park

84 **People - specialist** Jennifer Goulding admires the natural sculptures painstakingly created by former forester John Surplice from found pieces of timber, using a few simple tools

87 **Insight** Celina Fox describes and defends the magnificence of the baroque in a show at the V&A, and reviews other current exhibitions

93 **Places to visit** Roger White is intrigued by the history of the complex, pre-Victorian gardens at Stancombe Park, Gloucestershire

95 **Books** The English countryside's influence on writers and artists; achieving perfect curtains; an account of Sir John Soane's Museum; showcasing the work of interior designer John Minshaw

160 **Travel** A beach holiday on the French Atlantic coast; an eco-friendly, luxury camp in Botswana; learning to sail in Chesapeake Bay

184 **Driving passions** Eco-queen Juliet Kindersley takes Mary Killen for a low-cost, but necessarily short, drive in her G-Wiz electric car

Wine & food

148 **Spring fling** Inspired by pretty, seasonal ingredients, Sybil Kapoor suggests delicious recipes for a fresh, light lunch

154 **Short orders** Marie-Pierre Moine devises a menu for a three-course meal to prepare in advance with the minimum of bother

156 **Taste notes** Innovations, observations and reviews in the world of food and wine. By Kassia St Clair-Rouse and Liz Morcom MW □

CORRECTION Regrettably, on page 134 of the April issue, we printed the wrong telephone number for interior designer Philippa Devas. Her number is 020-7584 9966. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

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HOUSE & GARDEN

Roger Jones
interior designer

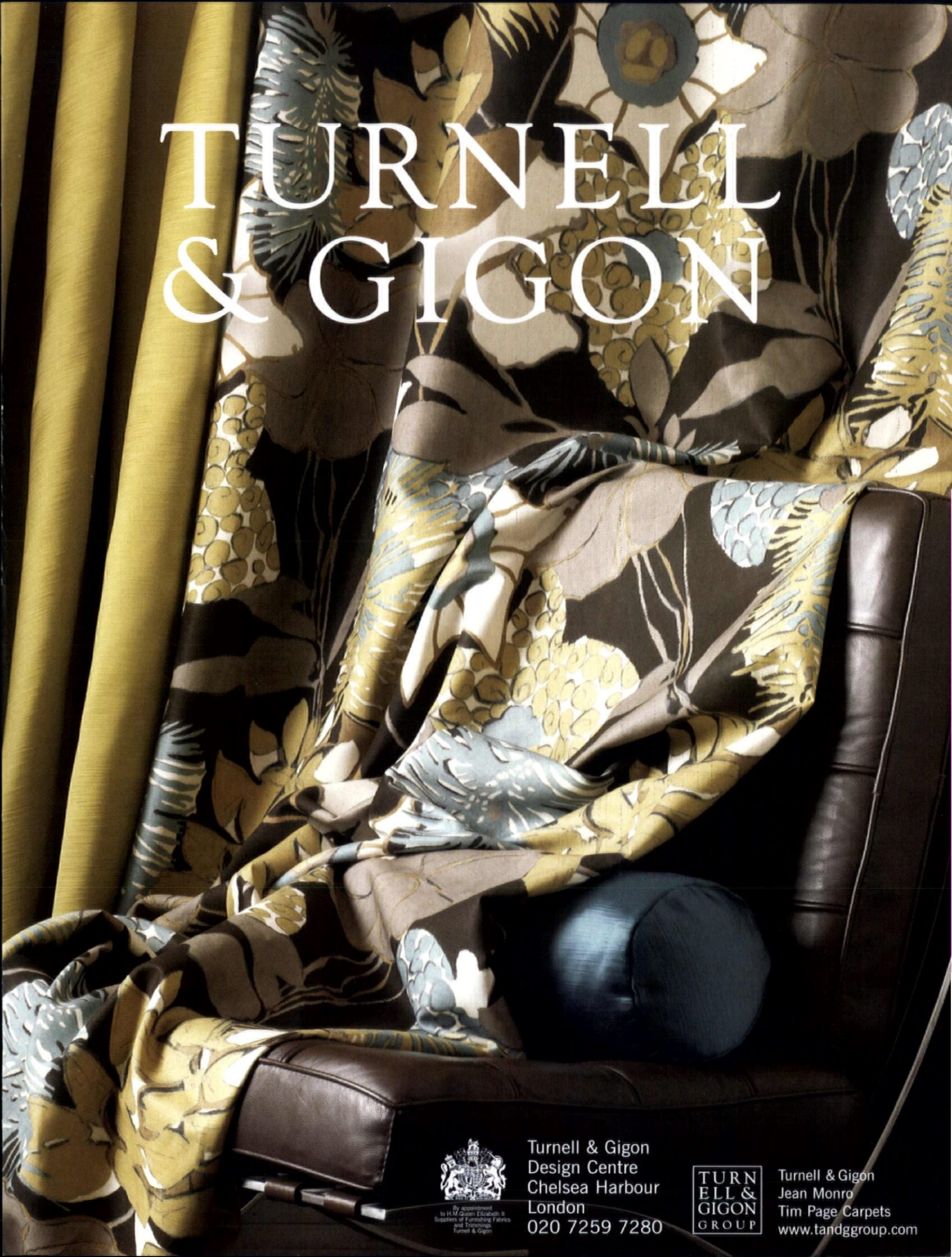
'Architecture and history have always been passions,' says Roger Jones. 'I love working with old houses, bringing them back to life in a way that is sympathetic but also relates to modern living.' In 1994, his enthusiasm for antiquity led Roger – after a career in law – to join Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler, where he took over the running of the antiques department. Although his main responsibility was buying antiques, clients often asked for his advice with their houses – as did the American couple whose Belgravia flat appears on page 96. Roger's main focus with this project was 'to make somewhere where the clients do not spend very much time look lived in and welcoming; my American assistant, Catherine Olasky, was invaluable.' Today, most of Roger's work involves interior decoration; current commissions include large houses in London and Connecticut.

Rachel Warne
photographer

Rachel Warne has been told that her pictures 'make people want to walk through them' – surely the highest praise a garden photographer can hope to receive. Her beautiful pictures of the garden at Abbots Ripton (page 110) are a case in point, although she is modest about her own hand in them: 'If it looks great, it shoots great.' Rachel started shooting gardens in 2005, a career choice she attributes to the photographer Howard Sooley, who shot *House & Garden*'s 'Seasoned performers' series in 2008. 'I was really taken by his Derek Jarman book at university and thought, "I want to do that one day",' she recalls. Other influences include the photographers Francesca Woodman and Sebastião Salgado, and 'beautiful old pictures'. Rachel plans to continue with magazine commissions and develop her commercial work, but hopes, eventually, to 'catch up on some sleep after all those dawn photo shoots'.

Mark Smith
interior designer

Mark Smith worked in the fashion industry for 12 years, before turning his attention to interior design – 'I realised I was becoming much more interested in the architecture and fittings of the showrooms than the stock.' After training 'mostly on the job' with the likes of William Yeoward and Terence Conran, he set up his own practice in 2000. Key influences on his work include William, 'who taught me so much about working at your maximum capacity', and John Minshaw, 'who is the master of architectural proportion and scale, and taught me a lot'. Mark is self-deprecatory when asked to describe his modus operandi: 'I pick high-quality pieces from various periods, mix them up and hope for the best,' but the results of his work – the houseboat featured on page 138, for example – are testament to its success.



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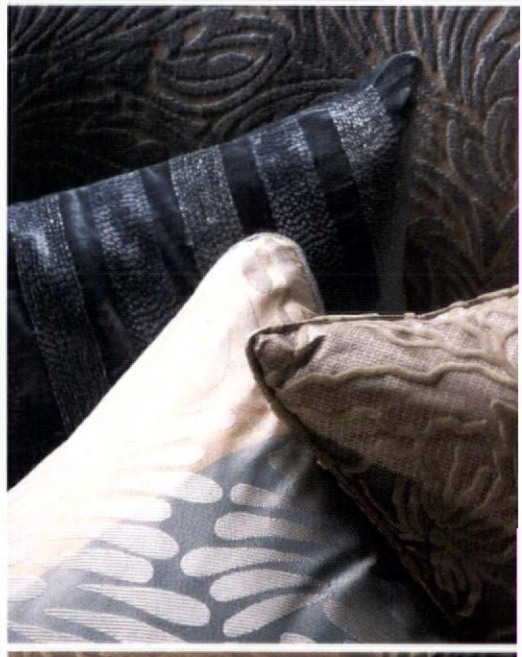

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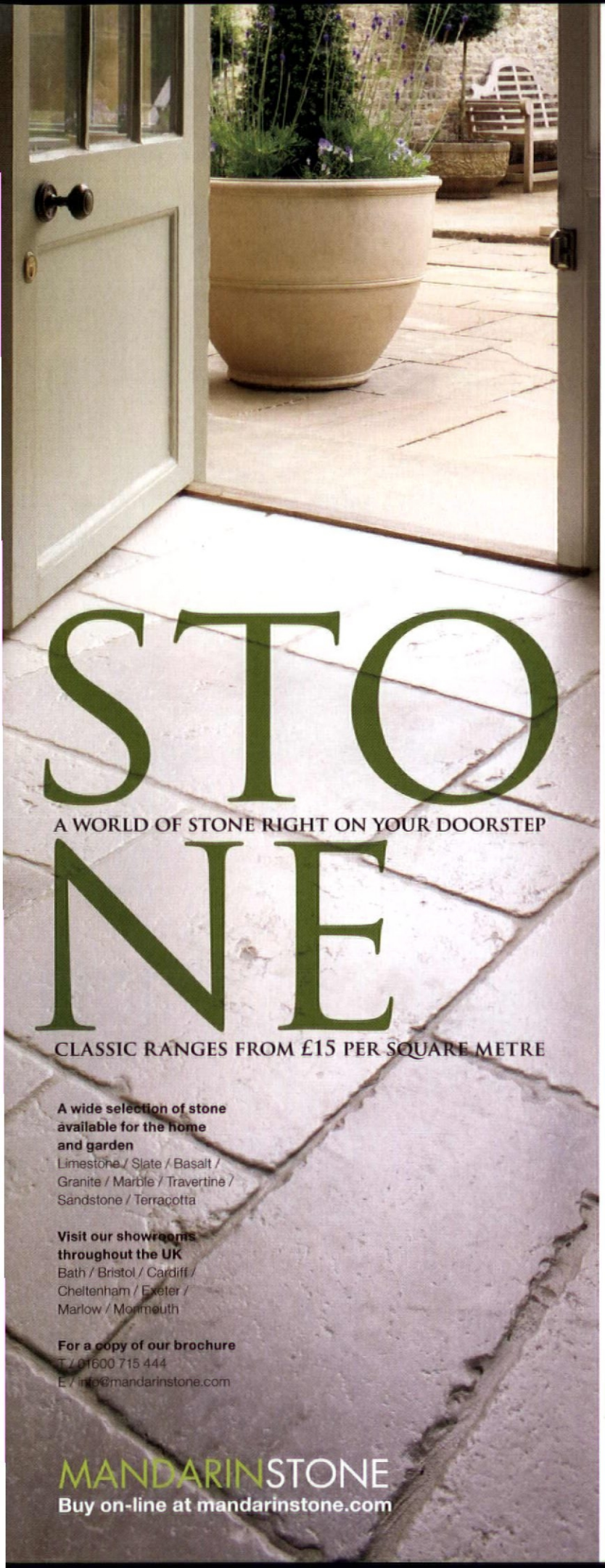

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from the editor

This month's *House & Garden* is overflowing with botanically inspired design

The wallpaper on the cover of this issue is a gorgeous evocation of a flowery meadow. It was first produced in Paris 230 years ago in a factory that was the site of a riot during the economic unrest that preceded, and ultimately triggered, the French Revolution. It is still hand-printed today, but in more peaceable circumstances – its only association with violence being to inspire a violent desire to own it. Suitably enough for a May issue, this month's *House & Garden* is overflowing with botanically inspired design.

In a photograph on page 106, there are three large boards propped against a dining-room wall, dense with delicate flowers inspired by details in Botticelli's *Primavera*. They are the work of Jorge Estevez, a Chilean-born, Paris-based decorative painter who works on a large scale – 'whole walls or vast canvases'. He says: 'Ultimately it is better to decorate and find it is art, than to try to create art and find it is only decoration' – a sentiment that makes a refreshing change from some of the solemn pronouncements to which many more self-regarding artists are inclined.

There is no record of what Botticelli intended to convey in *Primavera*, but we do know that the picture was commissioned by the artist's patron, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, for his Florence town house, possibly to celebrate his marriage. Scholars have made up for this by exhaustive study and interpretation of the painting, including the significance of the huge number of plants and flowers that can be identified. Among them are hellebores, irises, carnations, violets, daisies, plantains and strawberries; the last of these is a Christian symbol of perfect righteousness and spiritual merit.

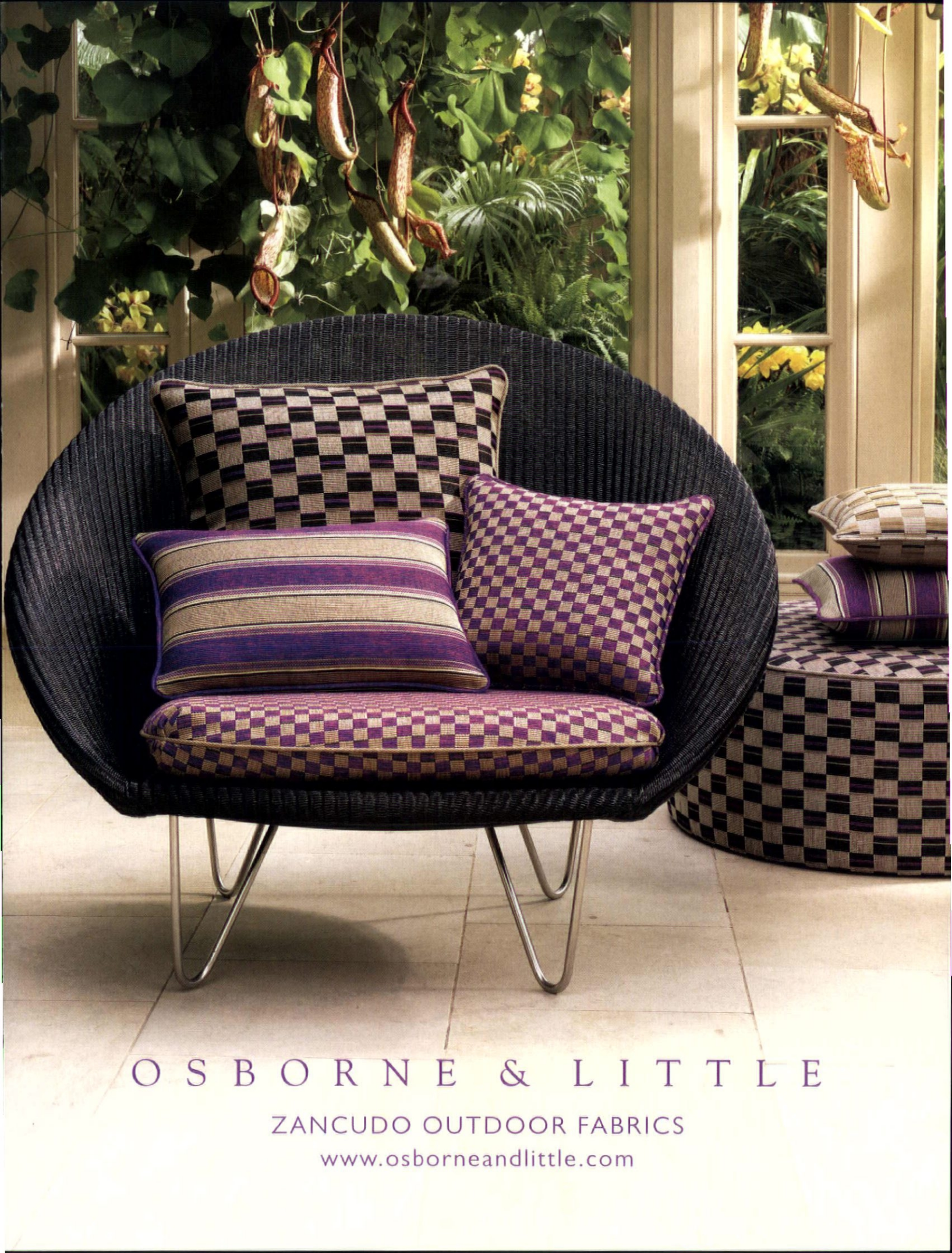
The strawberry is Clare Foster's subject this month in her lovely series exploring the history, mythology and cultivation of fruit (see pages 130 to 133). From this fascinating article I've learnt that the cultivated strawberry is a relative newcomer to Europe, which would explain why the plant that is portrayed in art before the eighteenth century is the little woodland variety that we know as *fraise du bois*. To my mind, these small berries are the most delicious things in the world, and although it is a labour to pick enough for your loved one's lunch, it is well worth it.

The cornflower is another significant plant that abounds in *Primavera*. This delightful flower also occurs frequently in the hand-blocked fabrics that Brigitte Singh designs and prints in her *haveli* workshop-cum-home near the Indian city of Jaipur. Between pages 134 and 137 is an article about Brigitte, her house and her garden, which is spilling over with exuberant colour, and from which she draws inspiration for much of her work. Even the deck of the chic and stylish houseboat featured between pages 138 and 143 is planted with lavender, marguerite and rosemary. Botticelli would have recognised them all □

Susan Crewe

Enduring themes: like Botticelli's *Primavera* in its time, this issue of *House & Garden* presents familiar subjects – many of them, botanical – in fresh new ways

PORTRAIT: JOHN CAREY. ILLUSTRATION: PHIL HANKINSON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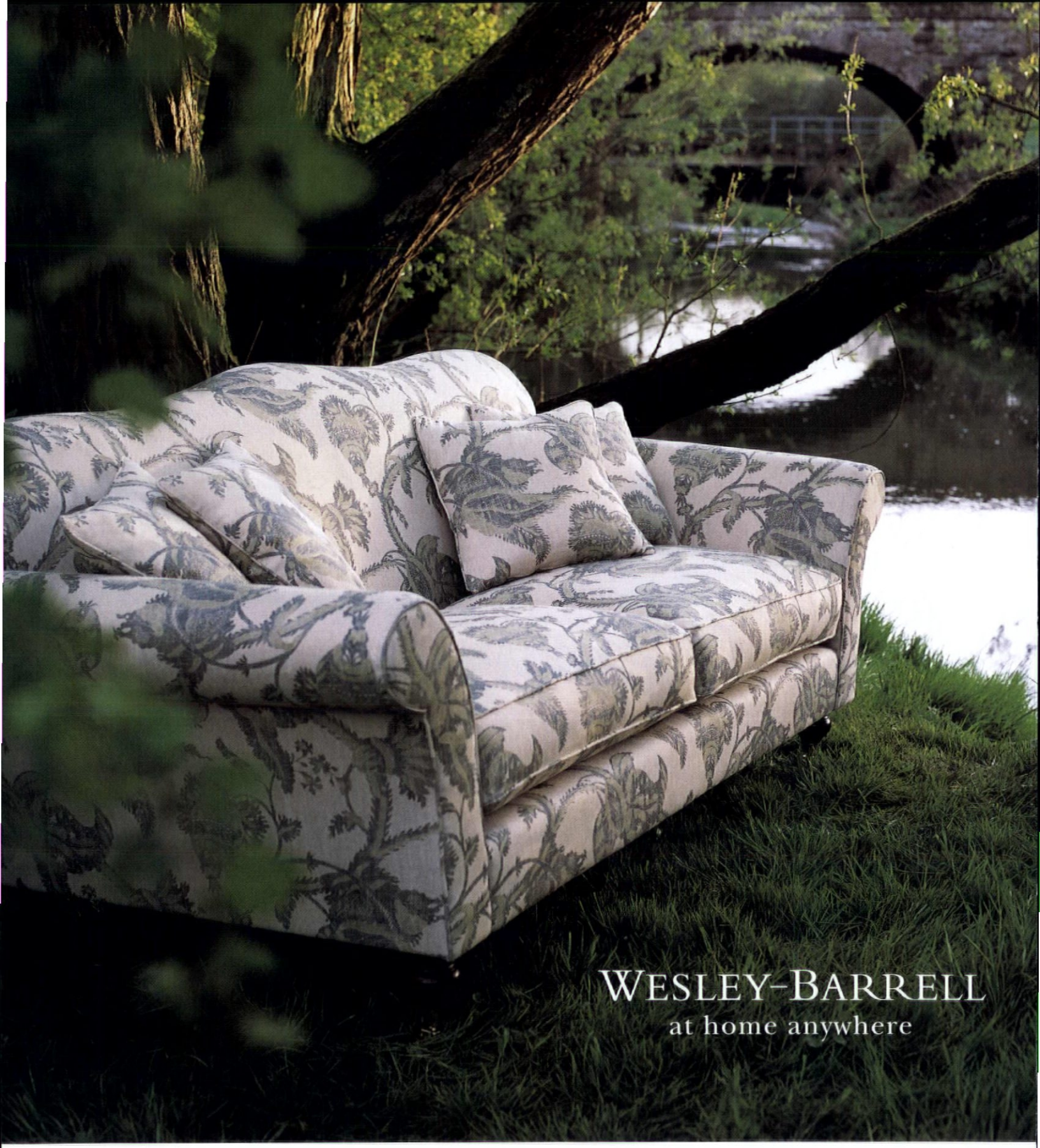

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insider

DECORATOR'S NOTEBOOK

Wendy Harrop searches for the most stylish ideas for the home

1 Hidden Art is showcasing six young designers at this month's Milan Furniture Fair (April 22-27). Helena Jonasson will launch her 'Linie' **cabinet**. Made from white lacquered MDF and plywood, with black edging and steel legs, 67 x 100 x 45cm, it costs about £2,115.

2 Fabrics company Threads has introduced a range of **wallpapers**. Pictured above is 'Botanica', available in seven colourways (here, from top: celery, ebony and silver birch). It is 52cm wide and costs £55 a 10-metre roll, at G P & J Baker.

3 'Caravaggio' steel **table and floor lamps** (white or black gloss) have shades that tilt in any direction. The table lamps, 51.7 x 20cm, cost £293 each; floor lamps, 151.5 x 40cm, £586, at Inform.

4 'Shanti' **linen voile** and 'Pasha' **linen**, 137cm wide, come in 37 colours – from top: 'Pasha' (32), 'Shanti' (32), 'Pasha' (31) and 'Shanti' (31). 'Pasha' costs £25.95 a metre, 'Shanti', £17.60 a metre, at Malabar.

5 The 'Archi' fireside **armchair** is a reissue of a 1955 design by Pierre Paulin. It has a simple metal frame with integrated suspension and removable covers, and is available in 29 different fabrics and hides. It is seen here in 'Divina Melange' (citron), and costs £1,813 as shown, at Ligne Roset. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* ▷

SUDHIR PITHWA

1 This pretty summer **parasol** is trimmed with cotton tassels, glass beads and mother-of-pearl hearts. Its bamboo frame supports a polyester hood and measures 250 x 180cm. It costs £225, at The White Company.
2 The 'Veranda' **daybed**, made of stained pine with a cotton-covered mattress, 201 x 212 x 132cm, costs £549, at Ikea.
3 The 'Chameleon' **stool/side table** in painted metal (red or yellow), 48 x 39cm diameter, costs £75, from BTCbyDESIGN.
4 This printed cotton **bedlinen** is from a range by Calvin Klein. Pictured are, from top: 'Gunmetal' double duvet cover, 200 x 200cm, £231; 'Dove' flat sheet, 240 x 310cm, £103; 'Sculpted Striped' cushion, 30 x 40cm, £60. All by Calvin Klein Home, at selected stores, including Selfridges and Harrods.
5 These bright **scissors**, £25, will be difficult to misplace, and also come in yellow, blue and white – with matching stapler, desk clock and tape dispensers – at Paul Smith.
6 These **bamboo baskets** cost £10 for a set of three, from Bambu Boutique. Handwoven by families in rural villages in Vietnam to help supplement farming income, they measure 8.5 x 15cm, 10 x 19cm and 11.5 x 23cm.
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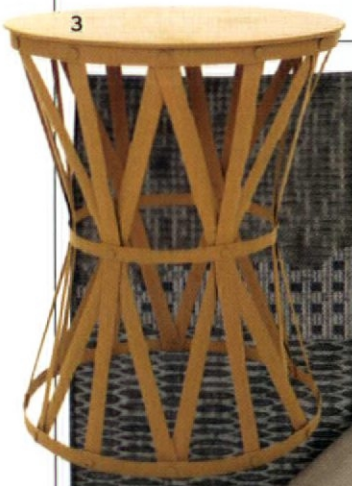
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1 '1001 Nuits' melamine **picnic plates** come in pink (pictured), green or black, and in 15, 19 or 25cm diameter sizes, costing €19, €22 or €27 each, respectively, from Sentou.
2 'Diabolo' is a rise-and-fall **pendant lamp** by Achille Castiglioni (1918-2002) in white, powder-coated aluminium. It measures 256 (fully extended) x 40cm diameter, and costs £395, at The Conran Shop.
3 The 'Crown Flush Fitting' **ceiling light**, 12 x 36cm, is inspired by a Forties reinvention of Empire style. It costs £780 with a nickel finish, or £645 in antique-brass finish, at Hector Finch Lighting.
4 'Star Diamond' is hand-stitched on **linen** by Vanderhurd. From left: 'Medium Star Diamond' (midnight on natural), £260 a square metre; 'Large Star Diamond' (indigo on natural), £216 a square metre; and 'Large Star Diamond with French Knot' (magenta on natural), £285 a square metre. All are available to order through Tissus d'Hélène.
5 The 'Orlando' **seat** by Vittorio Bonacina in white lacquered rattan, 120 x 177 x 88cm, costs £3,419, at Places and Spaces.
6 This witty, ceramic 'Cupcake' **candle** - also available in red, cream or black - 3 x 7cm, costs £5, at Habitat. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* □

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FONDANT FANCIES

Olivia Gregory conjures up a batch of sugar-sweet fabrics and wallcoverings

1 'Misaki' (75934) wallpaper, £38 a 10-metre roll, at Harlequin. **2 'Vaujours'** (02), linen/cotton, £48 a metre, at Osborne & Little. **3 'Willow'** (yellow), linen, by Blithfield & Co, £72 a metre, at Tissus d'Hélène. **4 'Motion'**, silk/linen/acrylic, £113 a metre, at Zimmer + Rohde. **5 'Sahara'**, cotton, by Jim Thompson, £70 a metre, at Fox Linton. **6 'Shantung Calypso'** (grape), silk, £39.07 metre, at Henry Bertrand. **7 'Stars'** (prune), silk, by Manuel Canovas, £55 a metre, at Colefax and Fowler. **8 'Theo'** (purple), silk/cotton/rayon, £79 a metre, at The Silk Gallery. **9 'Tinos'** (taupe), linen/rayon, £117 a metre, at Vaughan. **10 'Scroll Work'** wallpaper (pink, gold, metallic on French white), 92cm wide, by Anya Larkin, £198 a metre, at Donghia. **Buttons**, from 15p each, at Liberty. Antique **French cake moulds**, from £1.50 each, at Artefact. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* ▷

PHOTOGRAPHS **EMMA MITCHELL**

1 'Ellora' (02), viscose/silk, by Lorca, £115 a metre, at Osborne & Little. **2 'Firle'** (willow) grasscloth wallcovering, 90cm wide, £149 a 10-metre roll, at Designers Guild. **3 'Maquette'** (limone), silk, £79.18 a metre at Chase Erwin. **4 'Saree Stripe'** (SCH62660), cotton/linen/rayon, by Schumacher, £344.60 a metre, at Turnell & Gigon. **5 'Small Damask'** wallpaper (yellow/white), by Blithfield & Co, £48 a metre, at Tissus d'Hélène. **6 'Milos'** (amethyste), linen, by Manuel Canovas, £69 a metre, at Colefax and Fowler. **7 'Atlantis'** (lilas), linen, by Manuel Canovas, £89 a metre, at Colefax and Fowler. **8 'Les Palmettes'** (lavande), cotton, by Jed Johnson, £152 a metre, at Tissus d'Hélène. **9 'Fanfara'** (titti), silk, by Dedar, £63 a metre, at Fox Linton. **10 'Juicy Jute'** grasscloth (purple passion), 92cm wide, by Phillip Jeffries, £19.98 a metre, at Architectural Textiles. **'Flower' button**, from 15p, at Liberty. Vintage **cake tin**, £12.50, from RE. Vintage **baking trays**, biscuit cutters and **rolling pin**, from £7, at Steptoes Dog. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* □

Alchimie modular sofa/
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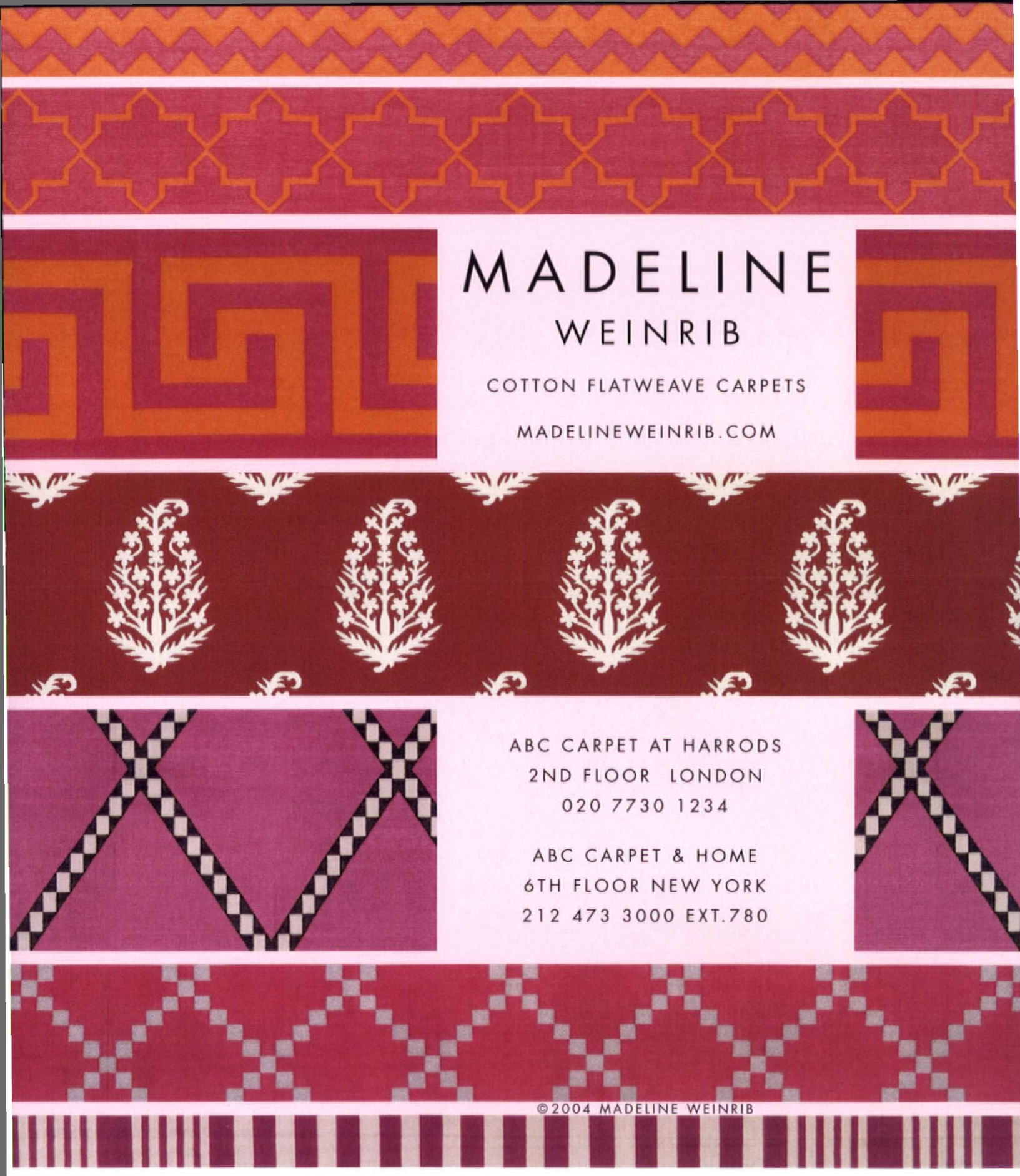
PILES OF STYLE

Olivia Gregory stacks up original table lamps and elegant shades

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT **'Fougère'** bronze lamp (2135BIS), by Charles of Paris, 68cm high, from £5,685, at Bella Figura. **'Emperitor'** bronzed brass lamp, by Gareth Devonald Smith, 59cm high, £2,500 at Veere Grenney Associates. **'Key 1'** hand-forged metal lamp (scratched gold and fired copper), £891; with 'Eye' shade, 50cm diameter, £181.20; both at Porta Romana. **'Constantin'** bronze lamp (gold), 70cm high, £995; with oval shade (celestine champagne), 36cm diameter, £115; both at William Yeoward. **'Rose'** bronzed, cast-iron lamp, by Lieux, 66cm high, £1,350, at Rabih Hage. **'Base'** iron and brass lamp, 39cm high, £265, at Tom Dixon. **'Boat'** Forties, mirror-glass and metal lamp, 75cm high £2,500, at Rogier Antiques. Silk **lampshades** (where unspecified), ready-made and bespoke, from £53 each, all at Porta Romana. Background **paint**, 'New Mauve', £24 for 2.5 litres matt emulsion, at Designers Guild. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* ▷

PHOTOGRAPHS **JAKE CURTIS**

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT **'Harim'** wooden lamp, 61cm high, £110; with silk shade (oyster), 40.7cm diameter, £48; both at Lombok. **'TL0340'** alabaster lamp, 89cm high, £760, at Tindle. **'Antelope'** hand-carved wooden lamp, 49cm high, £118; with card shade, 47cm diameter, £32; both at BTCbyDESIGN. **'Facet'** Murano-glass and brass lamp, by Thomas Pheasant, 70cm high, £2,318.25, at Baker. **'Cockerel'** twentieth-century, metal and Perspex lamp, 69cm high, £2,800 a pair; with silk shade, 32cm wide, £575.75; both at Rogier Antiques. **'Honeycomb'** ceramic lamp (cream), 66cm high, £196, at Casper Slieker. **'Crystal Laurel'** silver-leaf and crystal lamp (752610), by Fine Art Lamps, 81cm high, £1,478, at Rebecca Scott. Silk **lampshades** (where unspecified), ready-made and bespoke, from £53 each, all at Porta Romana. Background **paint**, 'New Mauve', £24 for 2.5 litres matt emulsion, at Designers Guild. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* ▷



020 7730 1234 harrods.com Harrods

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT **'Glass Cylinder'** lamp (polished silver), 76cm high, £725, at Ralph Lauren Home. **Bronze table lamp**, 52cm high, £2,118.30; with silk shade (bronze), 30cm wide, £140.30; both at Ochre. **'Coral'** porcelain lamp, 100cm high, £800, at Tyson. **'Milton'** brass lamp (white), 69cm high, £102, from Jim Lawrence. **'Funli'** alabaster lamp, 80cm high, £860; with tapered silk drum shade (taupe), 43cm diameter, £100; both at Nicholas Haslam. **'Neuchatel'** crystal lamp, 27.3cm high, £514; with 'Bedford' linen drum shade (natural), 35.56cm diameter, £99; both at Vaughan. Nineteenth-century, reclaimed, Brazilian **bell mount lamp** with papier-mâché shade, 69cm high, £485, at Lassco Three Pigeons. Silk **lampshades** (where unspecified), ready-made and bespoke, from £53 each, all at Porta Romana. Background **paint**, 'New Mauve', £24 for 2.5 litres matt emulsion, at Designers Guild. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* □

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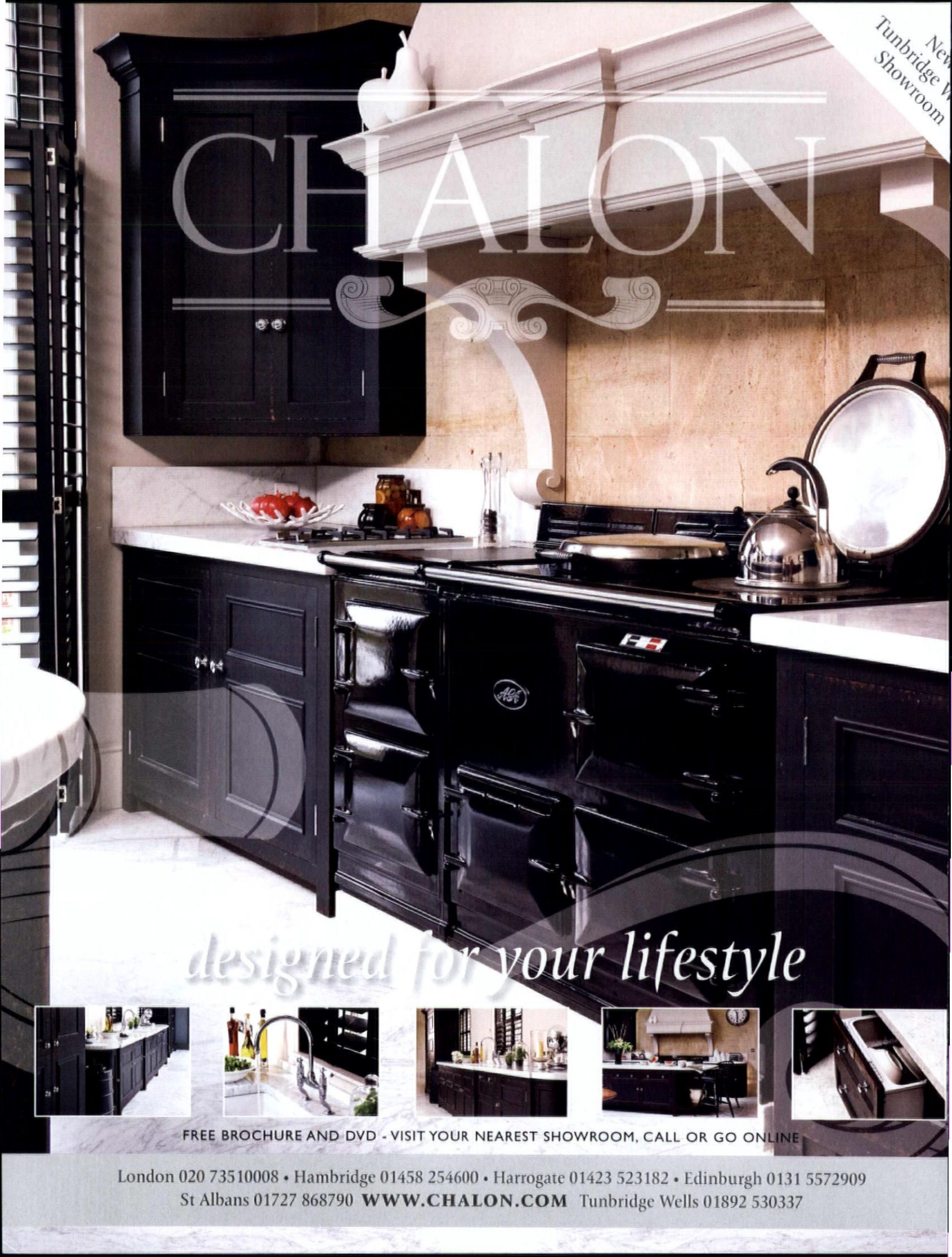

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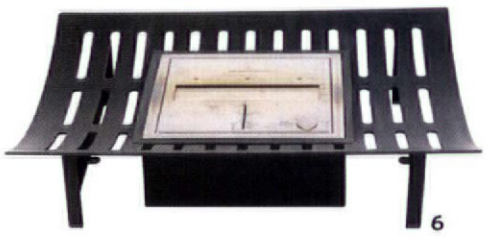
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1 Stainless-steel and painted-aluminium **'Fireplace'**, by Dancook, 50 x 78cm diameter, £166.37, from Lakeland. **2** Oxidised-steel **'Qrater'** (including detachable legs and ash tray, not shown), by Extremis, 25 x 145cm diameter, £1,000, at Few and Far. **3** Iron **'G-Braz'**, 20 x 60cm diameter, £88, from Cox & Cox. **4** Steel **'Fire Bowl'**, 35 x 61cm diameter, £99, at Toast. **5** Oxidised-steel **'Traditional'**, 91 x 72cm diameter, £200, at Petersham Nurseries. **6** Teflon-coated and stainless-steel **'Curved Grate'**, by EcoSmart, 15.5 x 64.6 x 45cm, £2,830, at Go Modern. **7** Stainless-steel **'Fire Pit'**, by Peter Ramminger for WMF, 32 x 45cm diameter, £379, at Harrods. **8** Painted metal **'Pebble'**, 40 x 60cm square, £199.99, at Homebase. **9** Powder-coated steel **'Revolver'**, 45 x 60cm diameter, £160 (includes detachable bamboo lid, not shown), at Heal's. Hardwood logs, £5.49 for 10kg, at Homebase. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* □

PHOTOGRAPHS **TIINA ERAMERI**

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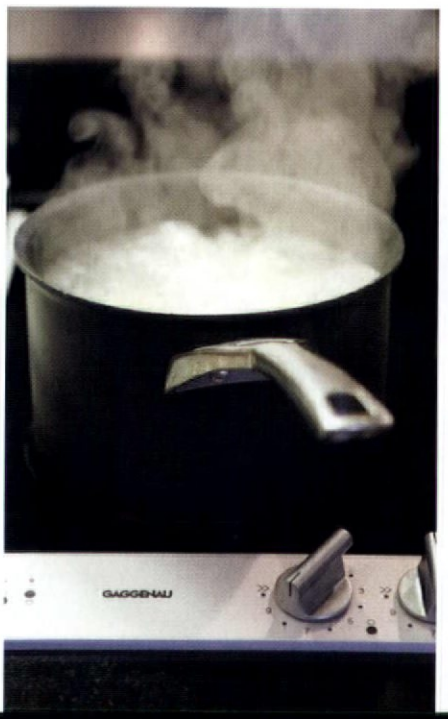

GAGGENAU

Acknowledged as one of the finest chefs in the world, Raymond Blanc demands excellence at his famous two-Michelin star Oxfordshire hotel and restaurant, Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons. From the quality of the ingredients to the tools he uses, he insists on the best.

Sitting alongside the gourmet restaurant is the cookery school, which is open to both novice cooks and experienced chefs wishing to experience some of the Blanc magic. The school runs one-day, two-day and four-day courses where the emphasis is as much on fun as learning.

With a wide range of courses on offer, from traditional bread-making to fish, shellfish and deliciously simple dinner party ideas, the appliances at the school need to be versatile and adaptable. Gaggenau was the chosen name. Raymond Blanc explains: 'I chose Gaggenau ovens and refrigeration for the Raymond Blanc Cookery School because I know I can rely on them. We use them seven days a week and they have many of the features a professional chef needs such as exacting temperature control and 17 cooking functions, enabling you to cook a wide range of foods and get great results every time. For example, the special bottom-heat function means you can cook pastry cases without baking the pastry case blind first. My favourite feature is the baking stone, which creates a wonderful crust on bread. Clients love the appliances too – in just one day's cooking class, the dishes they produce are top class. Gaggenau's appliances are of restaurant grade quality but designed specifically for the domestic kitchen.'

> "I CHOSE GAGGENAU OVENS AND REFRIGERATION FOR THE COOKERY SCHOOL BECAUSE I KNOW I CAN RELY ON THEM

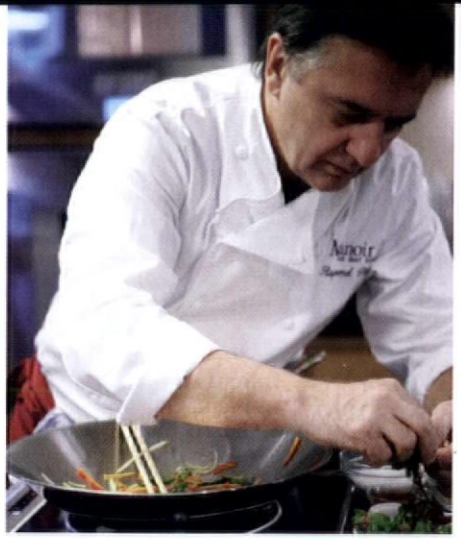
As well as providing a hands-on opportunity to develop their culinary skills, the cookery school also gives students the opportunity to try different cooking styles. For example, the Gaggenau induction hobs can be a real eye-opener for those not familiar with that style of cooking as the instant heat, speed and controllability is a joy. Stir-frying with the Vario Induction wok seems different too – faster and easier. The Combi-steam oven has a temperature range from 30°C to 230°C and five humidity levels so you can cook anything from roasts to delicate fish dishes. It means that something as simple as a roast chicken is taken to new heights with crisp skin and an incredibly moist interior.

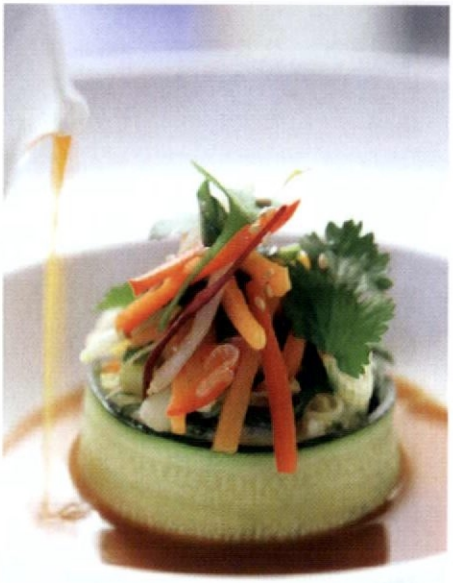
OPPOSITE Raymond Blanc impresses students with some of the culinary magic that has made him one of the world's top chefs while chef Nurdin Topham, who runs the cookery school, shows how to remove flesh from a crab. **THIS PAGE** Raymond Blanc explains the many uses of the Combi-steam oven as well as the baking stone and many other Gaggenau appliances in Le Manoir's Cookery School

At the one-day Taste and Texture course, students learn a variety of fusion-themed dishes, including Crab Tian – 'Probably the lightest fish mousse you will ever taste with a bisque containing neither butter nor cream,' says Raymond Blanc. The day is fast-paced and fun. Chef Nurdin Topham, who runs the cookery school is, like Raymond Blanc, a multi-tasker extraordinaire, offering tips on ingredients and cooking methods while simultaneously stir-frying, chopping, kneading and cracking eggs. It is inspiring to watch and fascinating to hear his culinary tips and new flavour combinations.

You will discover where to buy specialist ingredients and how to store them to obtain the very best flavours and longevity. Here too Gaggenau comes to the fore – its refrigeration appliances chill different foods at different temperatures, with delicate items such as fish and meat stored at 0.5°C to 3°C to prolong their freshness, and of course the wine cabinets with different zones and controlled humidity mean perfect storage for accompanying wines. Interiors are compartmentalised so that your end-of-dinner Stilton won't interfere with your delicate scallops. Its wine cabinet also has two zones so that both white and red wines are always at a perfect drinking temperature.

While the combination of Gaggenau and Raymond Blanc is, undeniably, a gourmet's dream, after attending the cookery school you do get the feeling some of that dream can be yours.





CHEF'S CHOICE

■ The Combi-Steam Oven can cook almost anything, from rice to roasts, vegetables to puddings and breads. You can also reheat and refresh food, returning it to its original condition. It is perfect for quick defrosting, dough proving, blanching, skinning, yoghurt preparation and even sterilising. Steaming also retains the vital elements (nutrients, colour, shape and flavour) and you can open the door during cooking to add additional food. Another plus is that sweet and savoury foods can be cooked at the same time.

■ The Baking Stone has its own heating element and is perfect for making bread or pizza.

■ Induction cooking gives precise heat where you need it and is as quick and easy as using gas, with no excess heat or waste of energy. Cleaning the hob is much easier too.

■ With Gaggenau you can combine different cooktops – induction, glass ceramic or gas – for perfect flexibility in your cooking.

CRAB TIAN

For the mousse

50g scallop flesh, hand dived
1 egg yolk
4g sea salt
60g double cream
1g cayenne pepper
100g brown crab meat, drained and chopped (if needed)
200g white crab meat
8g ginger *brunoise* (finely diced) blanched & refreshed 3 times
10g coriander leaves julienne
2g cayenne pepper

For lining the tian moulds

4 courgette ribbons, sliced 1mm thick lengthways, blanched in boiling water for 10 seconds, cooled in ice water and drained.

Method

For lining and filling the tian moulds:

■ In the food processor, purée the scallop, egg and salt for 30 seconds, add the cream, cayenne and continue for another 30 seconds until smooth.

Transfer to a clean bowl over ice, fold in the crab meats followed by the ginger *brunoise*, coriander, cayenne pepper and lemon juice.

Lightly butter your pastry rings and line with one whole courgette ribbon. Trim the edges so it fits perfectly.

Fill with the mousse mixture and place on a steamer tray in the fridge until needed.

To serve

Cook the tians in the Combi-steam oven at 100°C and 100% humidity (or steamer) for 7 minutes, insert a small knife in the middle and test the temperature on your top lip to ensure it is cooked through. The tians are delicious served in a bowl on some wilted spinach or garden greens surrounded by a bisque. Garnish with a picked leaf of coriander and a drizzle of your best olive oil.

For information on Gaggenau appliances, please call 0844-892 8988, or visit www.gaggenau.co.uk. Alternatively, visit the Gaggenau showroom at 40 Wigmore Street, London W1, where demonstrations are held regularly (bookable in advance). To view full recipes of all the dishes featured here, please visit www.gaggenau.com/GB_en/cooking/recipe-home.do and select Raymond Blanc. For information on cookery courses visit www.manoir.com. For details of how to win a cookery course at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, see page 37 in this month's Hotels by Design supplement

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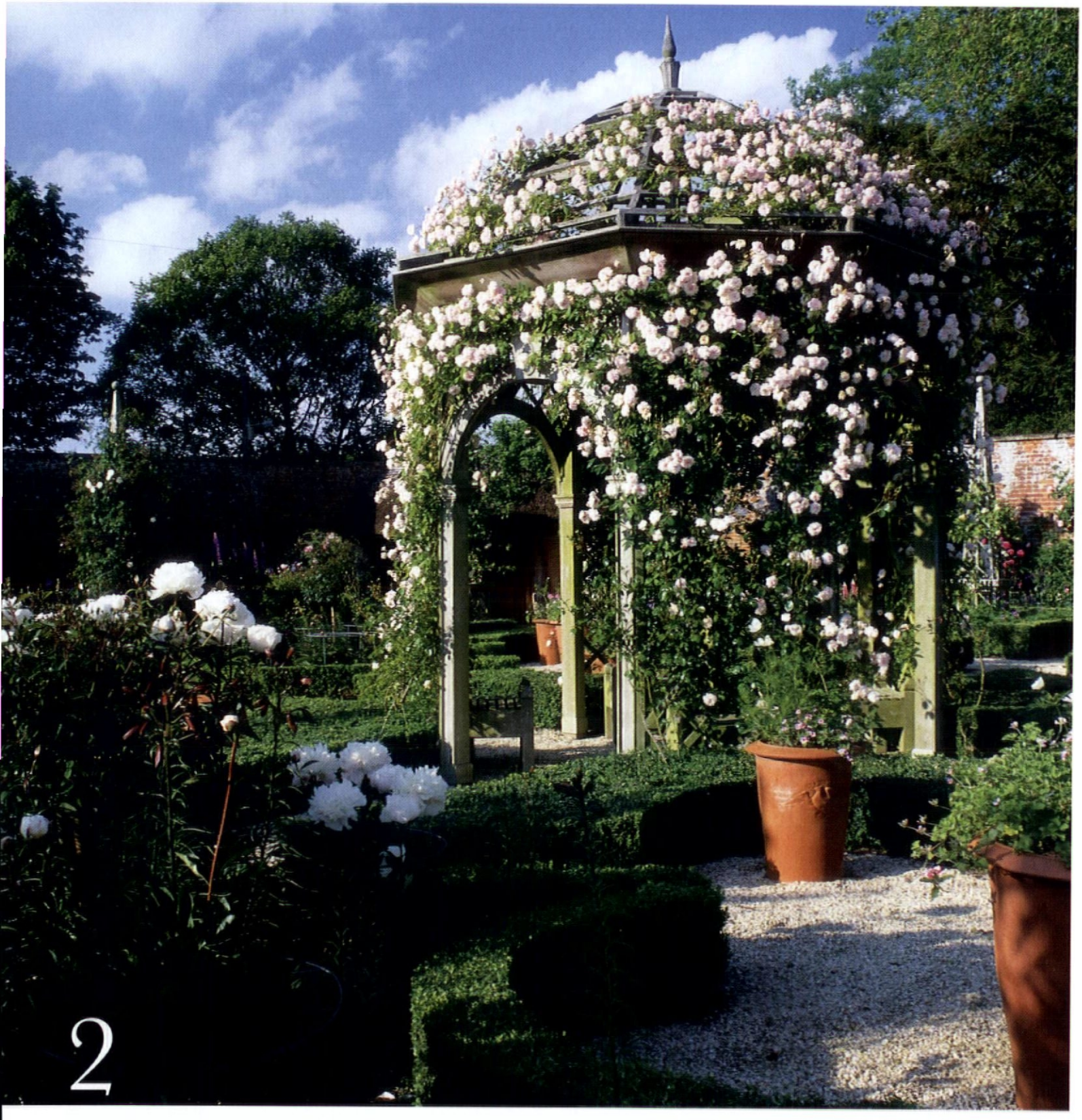
DESIGN IDEAS

pergolas, arbours & plant supports

Framework structures and plant supports provide focus, define boundaries and walkways, and add visual interest. Here and on the following pages, **Jennifer Goulding** looks at how to use them to best effect in both modern and traditional gardens

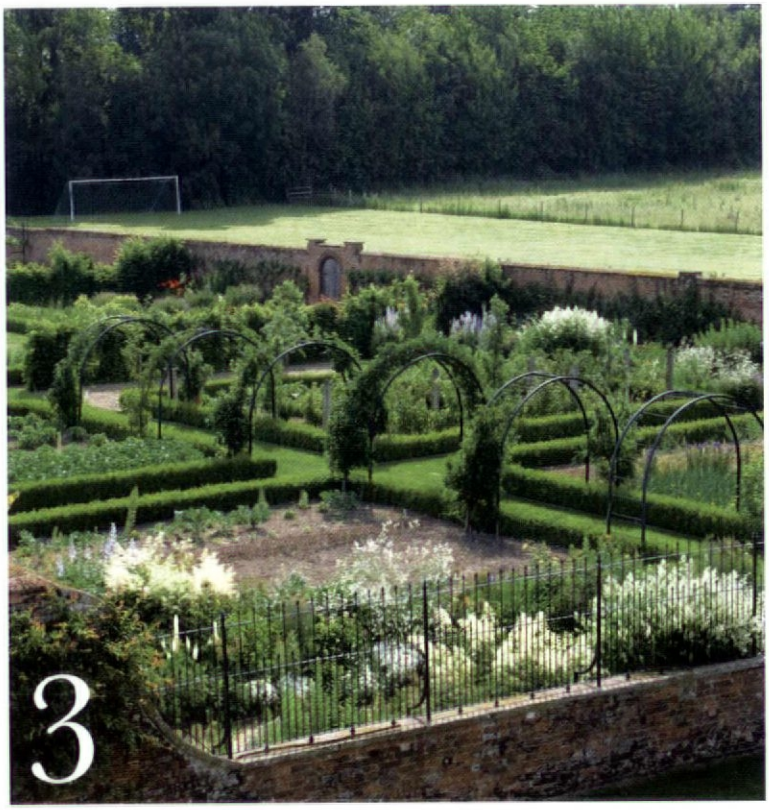
1 A weathered wooden arbour, trained with white roses, complements the stone wall behind it, and provides shade over a pretty, painted metal bench. ▷

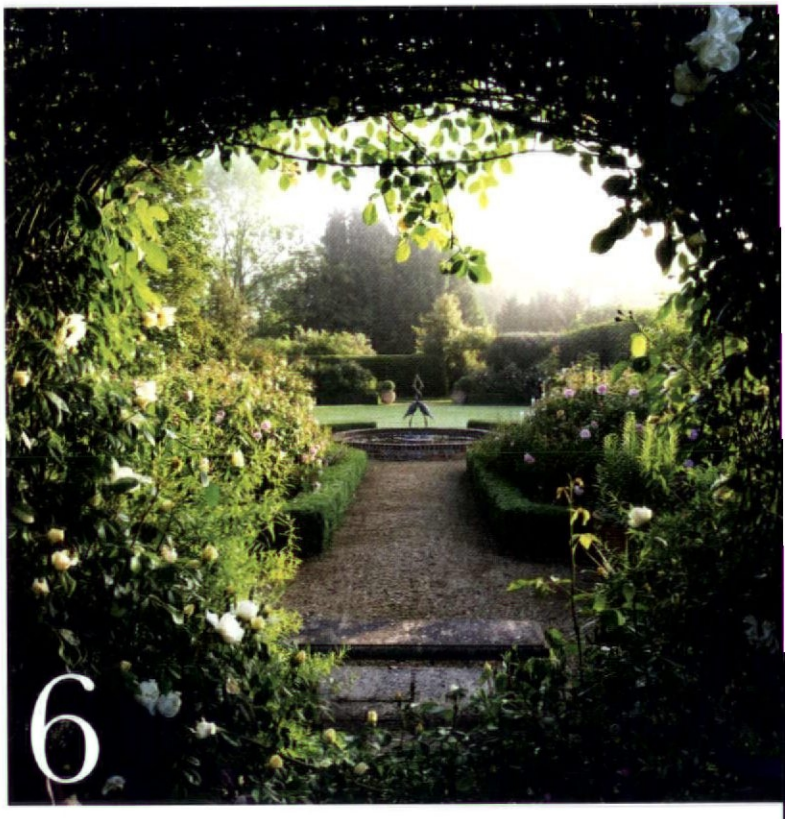
PHOTOGRAPH: DEREK HARRIS/THE GARDEN COLLECTION



2 This old-fashioned arbour, covered in *Rosa* 'New Dawn' and *R.* 'Awakening', provides a romantic, quintessentially English focal point in a garden designed by Julian and Isabel Bannerman. 3 In the walled kitchen garden at Holme Hale Hall, Norfolk, reconfigured by Arne Maynard, arches trained with apple cordons bring height and interest to the vegetable beds. 4 This garden in the Loire Valley, designed by Paris architects Sonia Lesot and Patrice Taravella, has a rustic pergola supporting

PHOTOGRAPH: JERRY HARPUR





grapevines growing in wicker containers, and a matching, built-in circular seat. 5 At Bryan's Ground, Herefordshire, which has been redesigned by owners David Wheeler and Simon Dorrell – founders and editors of garden journal *Hortus* – a series of wooden obelisks enclosing yew trees sets a striking winter scene. 6 A moon gate covered in *Rosa* 'City of York' frames a view of a water-lily pond and heron sculpture in the Mariners Garden in Berkshire, designed by owner Fenja Anderson. ▷

PHOTOGRAPHS: © DE VIRIEU/INSIDE/PHOTOZEST; NICOLA BROWNE; SABINA RÜBER; CLIVE NICHOLS

7 Clematis varieties trained up a series of wooden posts joined with rope provide an informal boundary to a paved area in an Oxfordshire garden designed by Jinny Blom. 8 Inspired by a visit to Bodnant Garden in Wales, this wooden arbour, covered in scented roses, in a small New York garden cocoons its owner from the bustle of city life. 9 In the garden created by Green by Design for Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2003, the pergola is painted a bold purple to match the lavender and agapanthus beneath. ▷

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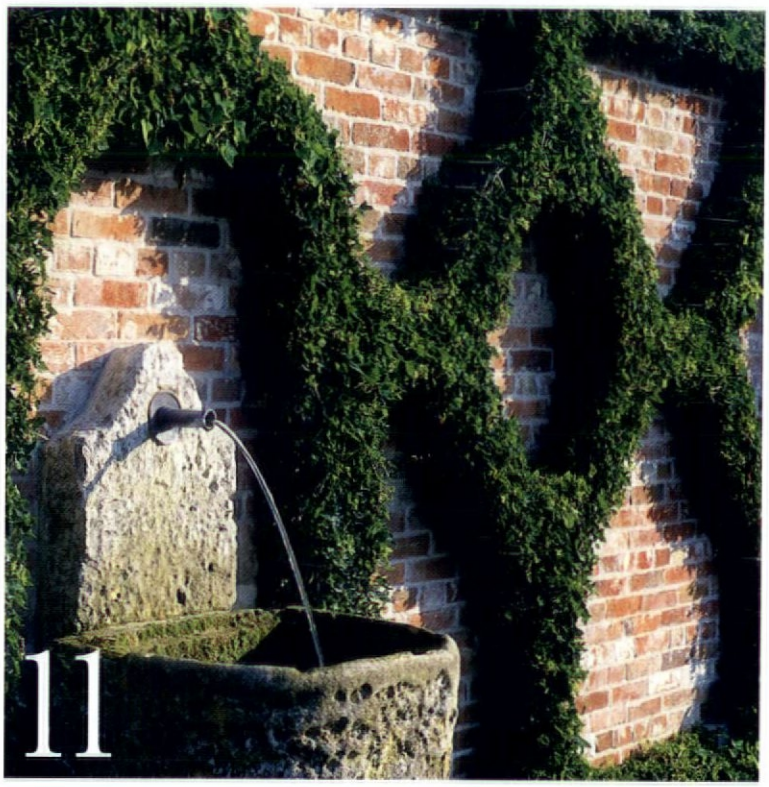

10 Ulf Nordfjell's modern interpretation of the traditional rose garden in the Garden Society of Gothenburg includes a steel pergola with clean, spare lines. **11** On a north-facing wall, in a Wiltshire garden designed by Julian and Isabel Bannerman, ivy trained on a wire framework creates a symmetrical arrangement of dark green foliage – a satisfying contrast to the red bricks – which lasts throughout the year. **12** At Daylesford House in Gloucestershire, a formal pergola covered in *Rosa* 'Sander's White' and *R.* 'Adelaide d'Orleans' is an elegant way to link separate areas of the garden. **13** These large wooden obelisks bring drama to the gardens of Dunrobin Castle in Scotland. The strong lines of the structures offer an appealing contrast to the loose shapes of the climbing roses. ▷

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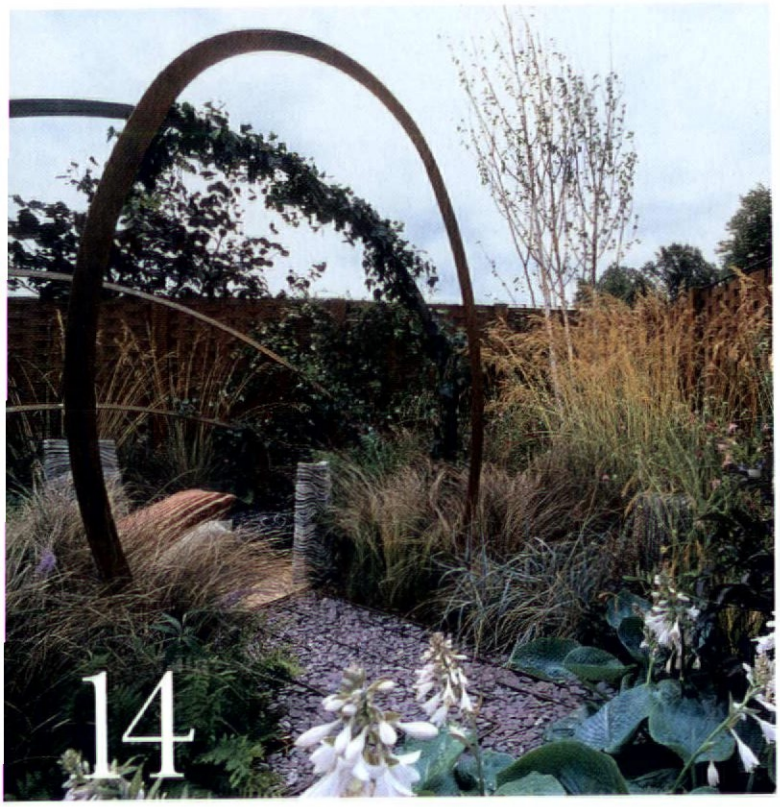
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14 This garden, which Paul Hensey created for Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2005, has a spare, rusted-steel pergola that suits the informal planting of grasses, shrubs and hostas. **15** Snaking through the gardens at Paleis Het Loo in the Netherlands, this intricate pergola is trained with foliage to create a tunnel bathed in green light. **16** This metal arch supporting wisteria, in a Herefordshire garden designed by William Woodhouse, draws the eye with its unusual, almond shape, which is echoed in the simpler arch beyond. ▷

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17 In her garden at Perch Hill Farm, East Sussex, Sarah Raven has trained sweet peas up a simple framework of hazel sticks, creating a scented pergola to the gate.

Useful contacts

Garden designers

Arne Maynard 020-7689 8100; www.arne-maynard.com

Jinny Blom 020-7253 2100; www.jinnyblom.com

Julian and Isabel Bannerman www.bannermandesign.com

Paul Hensey, Elysium Garden and Landscape Design 01200-442547; www.elysiumdesign.uk.com

Sarah Raven 0845-050 4849; www.perchhill.co.uk

Ulf Nordfjell 00-46-86 15 63 53

Suppliers

Anthony de Grey 020-7738 8866; www.anthonydegrey.com

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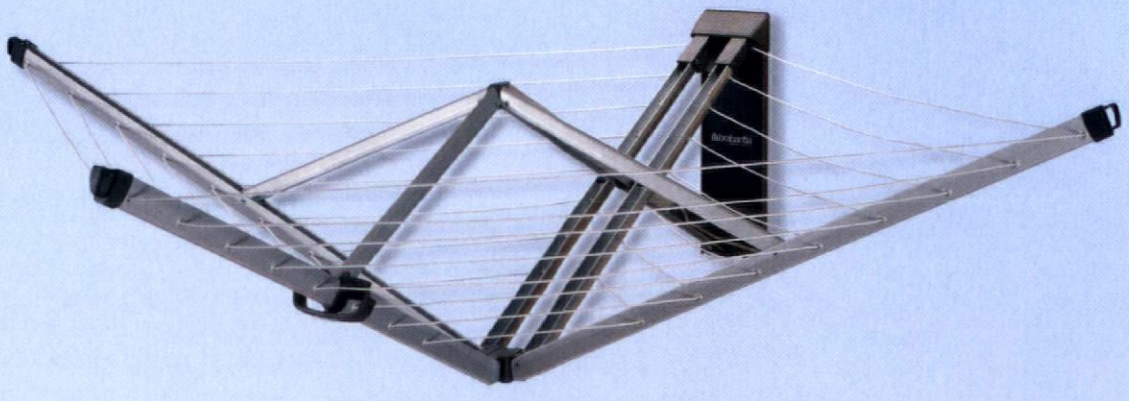

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WISH LIST *Bathrooms*

Continuing the series in which designers reveal to **Jennifer Goulding** their tips for a stylish and workable kitchen or bathroom, **Caroline Riddell** suggests a calm – but indulgent – bathroom

1 Curtains I would use linen embellished with rows of ladder stitch, 140cm wide, £79 a metre, at Volga Linen (0844-499 1609; www.volgalinen.co.uk), for the curtains. They would have a shallow French pleat and hang on a nickel pole. This would soften the windows and offer some privacy, but still allow light to flood the room.

2 Lighting Aside from the shaving/vanity mirror, which should have integrated lighting – West One Bathrooms (020-7584 7002; www.westonebathrooms.co.uk) is a good source – bathroom lighting should be as gentle as possible. I like these vintage wall lights in brass with crystal rods, 56 x 20 x 13cm, £2,750 a pair, at Valerie Wade (020-7225 1414; www.valeriewade.com).

3 Bath A bath should be generously proportioned. This 'Chateau Super Size' double-ended bath, 61 x 195 x 95cm, £2,102.20, at Lefroy Brooks (01992-708316; www.lefroybrooks.com), is the ideal size, and has a pleasing, curved shape.

4 Walls My choice would be marble panelling up to the dado; above it, 'Cornforth White' Modern Emulsion (suitable for bathrooms), £30.50 for 2.5 litres, at Farrow & Ball (01202-876141; www.farrow-ball.com) – a subtle grey, which perfectly complements the marble.

5 Flooring I would have large, rectangular tiles of heavily veined, honed Arabascato marble, from £155.25 a square metre, at Limestone Gallery (020-7735 8555; www.limestonegallery.co.uk), with underfloor heating. I love the classic, clean look of this marble.

6 Rug 'Zig Zag' (pink and white) silk dhurrie rug, £1,080 a square metre, at Vanderhurd (020-7313 5400; www.vanderhurdstudio.com). Regardless of underfloor heating, I still want the wonderful texture of this rug underfoot.

7 Furniture 'Bunny' sofa, 75.5 x 213.5 x 87cm, £4,900, at Soane (020-7730 6405; www.soane.co.uk), covered in 'Chaulnes' (groseille), mohair velvet, 130cm wide, £266.80 a metre, at Lelièvre (020-7352 4798; www.lelievre.co.uk). Space allowing, this sofa would bring an extra level of comfort and luxury to a bathroom □

Caroline Riddell Interiors: 020-8743 4817

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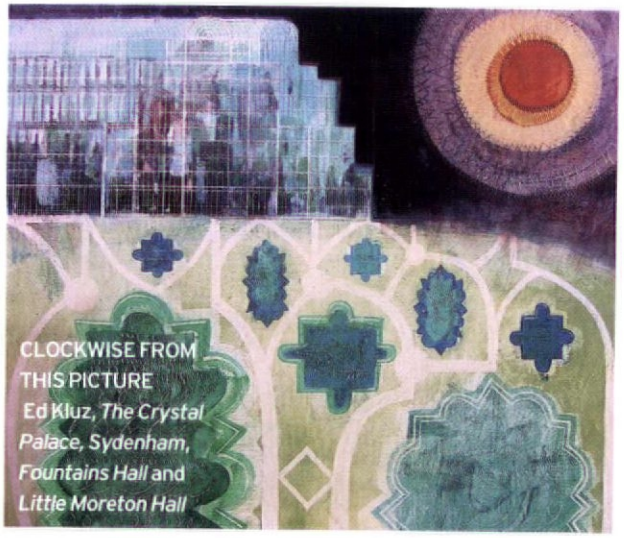
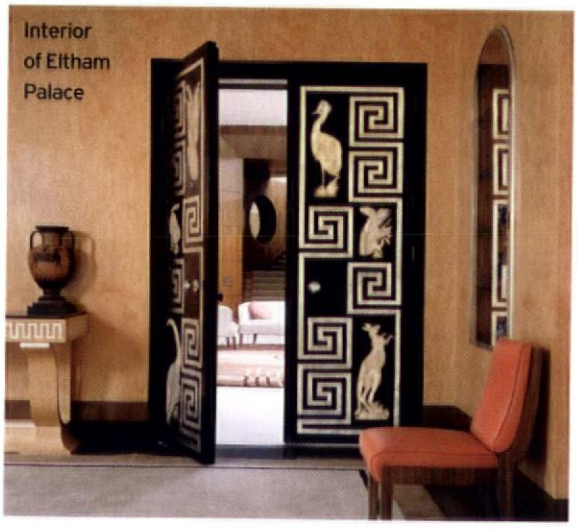


CLOCKWISE FROM THIS PICTURE Ed Kluz, *The Crystal Palace, Sydenham, Fountains Hall* and *Little Moreton Hall*

News

By Jessica Doyle

Potterton Books in London is holding a 'bookshop exhibition' of works by Yorkshire artist **Ed Kluz** *from May 15 to 31. Kluz's work is informed by the past, in particular historic houses and gardens. 'Great edifices have always conveyed a sense of power, which fails to dwindle with the passing centuries,' he explains. His works, which he creates using traditional materials such as egg tempera and gessoed oak panels, will be placed throughout the shop. Limited-edition prints, paintings and collages will be available for sale. Potterton Books, 93 Lower Sloane Street, SW1: 020-7730 4235; www.pottertonbookslondon.co.uk*



Interior of Eltham Palace

▲ English Heritage's annual Art Deco Fair will take place on May 10 at Eltham Palace in Greenwich. On display will be a selection of glamorous offerings from specialist dealers, including furniture, textiles, ceramics, glassware and lighting. The fair will be held in the Great Hall, the only surviving part of the original Tudor palace. Tickets cost £9.50, or are free to English Heritage members. *For more information, call 020-8294 2548*

'Anne' console table, £8,500

◀ Urban Field is a selling exhibition of inventive furniture by Gareth Neal at Contemporary Applied Arts. Gareth has honed an original style by splicing traditional and modern designs, carving from blocks of timber with a computer and by hand. He claims his aim is 'to twist the normal and shuffle the ordered', adding, 'only at certain angles is the historical object within revealed.' *Contemporary Applied Arts, 2 Percy Street, W1: 020-7436 2344; www.caa.org.uk*

WEBWATCH *FINDING A CRAFTSMAN*

www.artworkersguild.org is the website of The Art Workers Guild, a society established in 1884 with the aim of creating contact between people from different artistic professions. Its members represent a wide range of disciplines, from blacksmiths and cabinetmakers to mosaic artists and quilt makers. The site's innovative 'find a member' page is in the form of a 'word cloud' of popular search terms – simply click on a category, such as 'portrait painter', to be directed to a list of specialists.

The website of the Guild of Master Craftsmen, www.findacraftsman.com, provides a useful database of its current members – input your postcode and the service you are looking for, and you will be provided with a list of up to six companies in your area. The website is not particularly creative – and you have to enter your contact details before you receive those of the companies on your shortlist – but it is straightforward and easy to use. ▷

ENGLISH HERITAGE: FORSYTH/CHAPMAN/JF DIGITAL 2007

The Crafts Council is relaunching **Collect** *this May at the Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York's HQ, King's Road, SW3. Over 300 makers will be represented at the show, and, in an initiative to encourage visitors to begin collecting contemporary craft, there will be a 'treasury' of pieces by makers including Junko Mori and Angela Jarman on a smaller scale than their usual work. Collect will take place from May 15 to 17; admission costs £15, or £20 for a three-day pass. For details and opening times, call 020-7806 2500, or visit www.craftscouncil.org.uk*

Junko Mori, *Silver Organism: Nigella*, 2008

◀ A bursary scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund is offering trainees of all ages the chance to learn a traditional skill, such as drystone walling, thatching, frieze restoration or gilding. With the aim of preventing such skills from dying out – and thus facilitating the restoration and maintenance of historic buildings – the scheme offers on-the-job training, lasting from three days to four years. Salisbury-based thatcher Adam Nash (www.adamnashthatcher.co.uk) has recently taken on an apprentice, Will Ford, whom he found through the scheme. 'I want to see traditional buildings stay as they are, or be restored to what they should be,' Will explains. 'When you finish a job, you can stand back, look at it, and think, "I've done that." To me, that's the best reward.' *To find out more about the scheme, call 020-7591 6042, or visit www.hlf.org.uk/hlfbursaries*

Cranborne Manor

▲ One of the highlights of the spring lecture season at the Summerleaze Gallery in East Knoyle, Wiltshire, is Dorset Manor Houses (June 15, 11.30am). This illustrated talk is the result of seven years of research by Una Russell and Audrey Grindrod, and will cover 74 houses, including Mapperton, Athelhampton and Cranborne. Along with the houses' physical transformations, the talk will focus on the personal stories of the families that have lived in them, with the odd whiff of scandal provided by tales of illicit affairs, contested wills, and even murder. Tickets cost £18, or £26 with lunch. *To book, call 01747-830790, or visit www.summerleazegallery.co.uk*

The Courtauld Gallery's current show is dedicated to its most prized pieces of Renaissance furniture – a pair of wedding chests made in Florence in 1472. For the first time, the entire commission will be reconstructed – including details such as a record titled 'My expenses when I took my wife home' – to show the chests in their original context. With their painted decorations, they were intended to entertain and instruct the bride and groom. 'The tales they tell are often quite gruesome,' says curator Caroline Campbell; 'they're about love and marriage – but not as we think of it today.' *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence is at the Courtauld Gallery, Somerset House, Strand, WC2 (020-7848 2526; www.courtauld.ac.uk) until May 17; admission, £5* □

COURTESY CLAIRE BECK AT ADRIAN SASSOON, © JUNKO MORI; © 2009 PHOTOLIBRARY.COM; © DOVECOTE PRESS; RICHARD VALENCIA PHOTOGRAPHY

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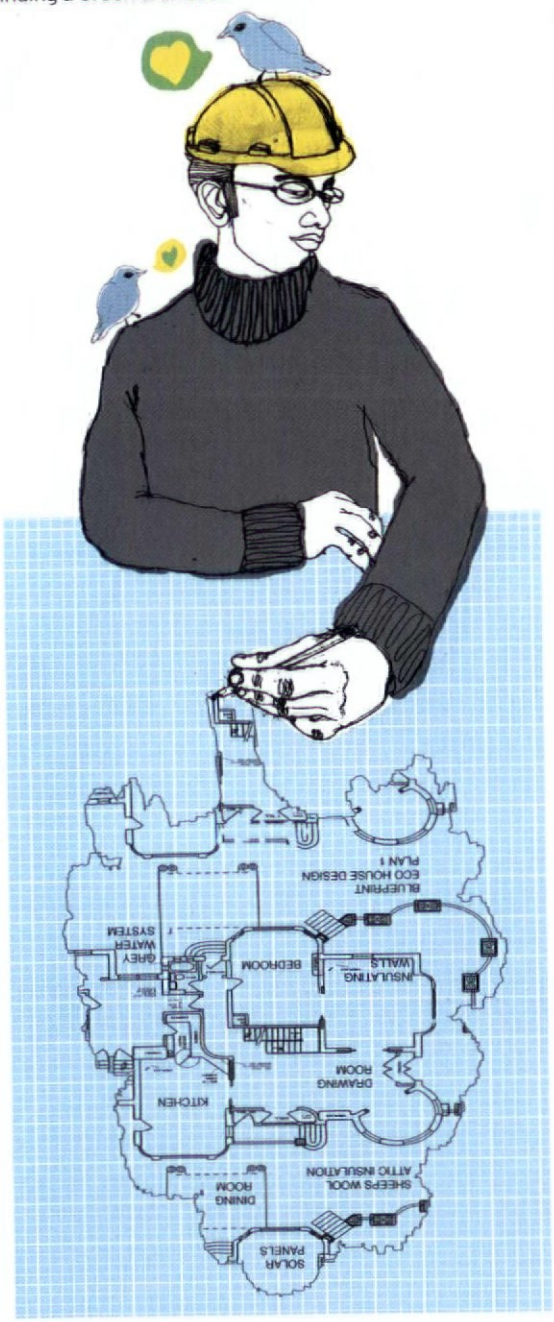
SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Cathy Strongman investigates the best methods of finding and commissioning an architect proficient in eco-friendly design

Whether you plan to build a snazzy new eco home, or simply wish to give your house a Green makeover, finding an architect who is proficient in sustainable design will be central to the success of your project. Not only will a Green-minded architect be able to guide you through the fundamentals of building a water-efficient and energy-efficient home, they will also be knowledgeable about unconventional building materials and the latest eco gadgetry. Furthermore, they can steer you through the maze of government legislation and building regulations, and will be able to recommend trusted contractors who can build to these standards. So how does one go about finding a Green architect?



Britain has no official form of recognition for Green architects, but two organisations have sprung up to fill this vacuum. The Association of Environment Conscious Building (AECB) (0845-456 9773; www.aecb.net) was established in 1989 and has been growing by 10 to 15 per cent every year. 'We now have over 1,500 members, including students, sole practitioners, large architectural firms and landscape architects, as well as other building professionals, all of whom have demonstrated their commitment by subscribing to our aims,' says co-founder Sally Hall. 'People can use our free, online search facility, look at examples of architects' work and note contacts from award-winning projects.' You can also search on The Green Register (0117-377 3490; www.greenregister.org.uk), which was launched by architect Lucy Pedler in 2000, and now has over 600 members – 50 per cent of whom are architects. To join, members must attend an intense two-day training course in sustainable design.

Although not geared specifically towards a Green clientele, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) (020-7307 3700; www.architecture.com) has a free search facility. If you stipulate sustainability as one of your search criteria, you can view examples of architects' work, along with a list of any awards they have won. 'You can search over the phone, via letter or e-mail, or online,' says Richard Brindley, executive director of professional services. 'We have 4,000 members across the UK and we'll help you whittle that down to five.' Selecting a chartered RIBA member comes with additional advantages, including a guarantee that their qualifications have been checked and that they have professional indemnity insurance.

Once you have a shortlist, contact the architects and ask to see previous examples of their work. 'Most will have clients who are happy to show you their home or talk on the phone; I recommend speaking to at least three,' says Sally. If you are prepared to take a leap of faith with an architect who is just starting to build sustainably, check the general quality of their work. 'In this situation, it's their commitment to the environment and to sticking to the budget and time frame that you need to be sure of,' says Lucy.

Most architects will be happy to meet and discuss initial designs free of charge. Ask not only about the design of the building, but also about their broader approach. Do they source materials responsibly, for example, and will they instigate an effective waste-management system? 'The more prior research you can do, the better,' confirms Sally. 'It means you can make a more informed choice of architect, help steer design decisions, and you will also be better equipped to keep track of progress on site.'

The good news is that finding a Green architect is getting easier – in a recent Autodesk survey, 88 per cent of UK architects agreed that they should practise sustainable design wherever possible. 'The legislation is ratcheting up and client demand for Green architecture is on the increase,' says Richard Brindley. 'At some point in the future all architects will have to design sustainably.'

Green screen

According to a 2006 survey carried out by Google, the average person living in the UK spends around 148 minutes a day – that's 37 days a year – watching television. Take into account the fact that most households have multiple televisions and we're talking about a serious energy-guzzling habit. When buying a television, go for an LCD rather than a plasma screen; according to *Which?*, plasma televisions use 50 per cent more energy, on average, than similar-sized LCD ones. Remember: the smaller the screen, the less power it uses. On average, a 26-inch LCD screen uses less than 90 watts of power when switched on, and costs £20 a year to run. A 40-inch LCD screen uses twice the power and costs twice as much to run. The Energy Saving Trust (0800-512012; www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) also recommends buying an integrated digital television (IDTV), which receives a digital signal without the need for a set-top box, saving roughly 20kg of CO_2 – and £7 – a year. Two of the best 'eco' televisions on the market are the Philips 'Eco' (model 42PFL5603D) – a 42-inch, flat-panel LCD packed with power-saving features; and Sharp's 19-inch LCD (model LC19D1EBK) with integrated Freeview digital tuner. The Sharp model is produced in a carbon-neutral factory and is made entirely of recyclable parts. Sharp has also just developed the world's first solar-powered LCD television, so watch this space □

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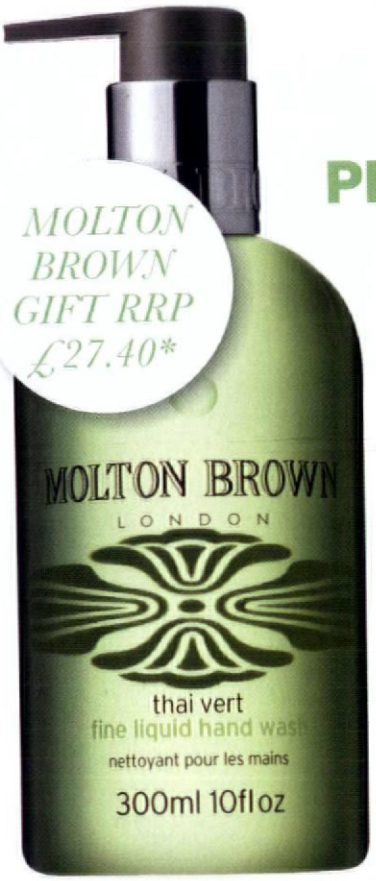

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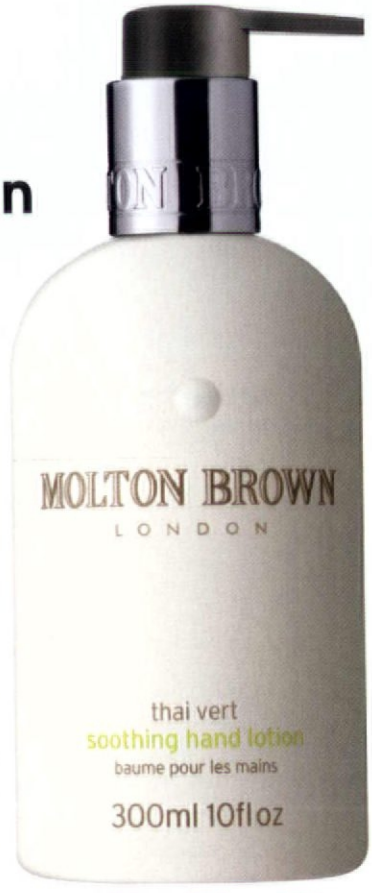

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By Clare Foster

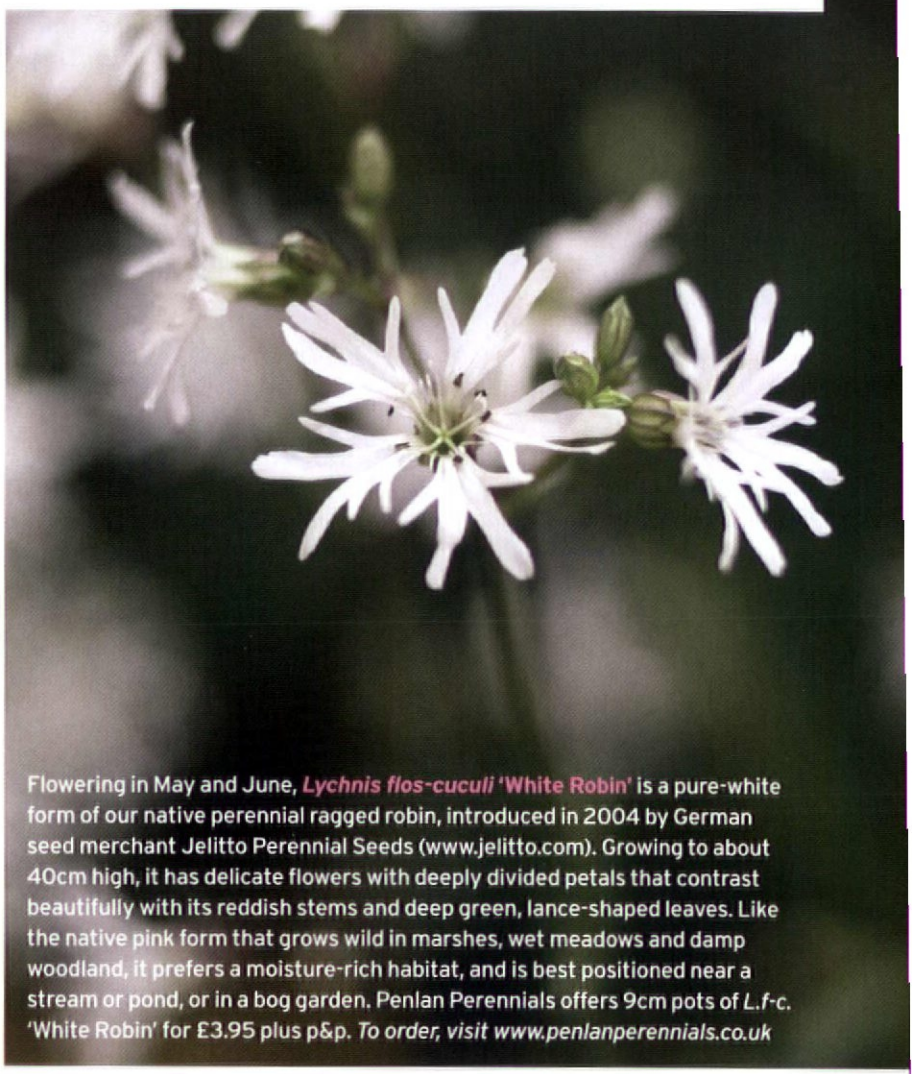
Outside interests

The KLC School of Design now runs its garden-design courses from Hampton Court Palace. The workshops and lectures take place in a private apartment overlooking the formal gardens; the practical elements, in the recently restored twentieth-century gardens. The variety of courses includes the part-time Diploma in Garden Design, and Certificate in Designing with Plants – both are available in the open-learning scheme for home study. There are also day workshops, including Drawing Plants and Flowers (May 8) and The Secrets of Successful Border Planting (June 12), both of which cost £137.50. For more details, call 020-7376 3377, or visit www.klc.co.uk

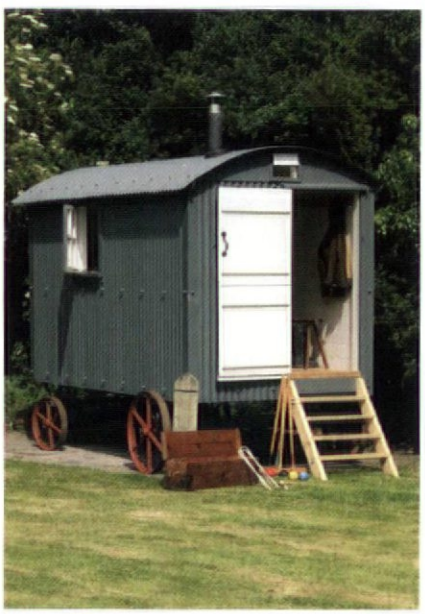
▼ An exhibition at the Garden Museum this May will display watercolours from the recently published *Highgrove Florilegium* – a unique and extravagant two-volume publication containing botanical prints depicting plants found in the gardens at Highgrove. In an edition of 175, each signed by the Prince of Wales, the florilegium has more than 120 original prints by leading international artists, and costs £10,950 from Addison Publications (www.addisonpublications.com). The exhibition runs from May 12 to July 12 at the Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road, SE1 (www.museumgardenhistory.org).

Dahlia 'Bishop of Llandaff' by Yvonne Glenister Hammond, a print from the two-volume *Highgrove Florilegium*

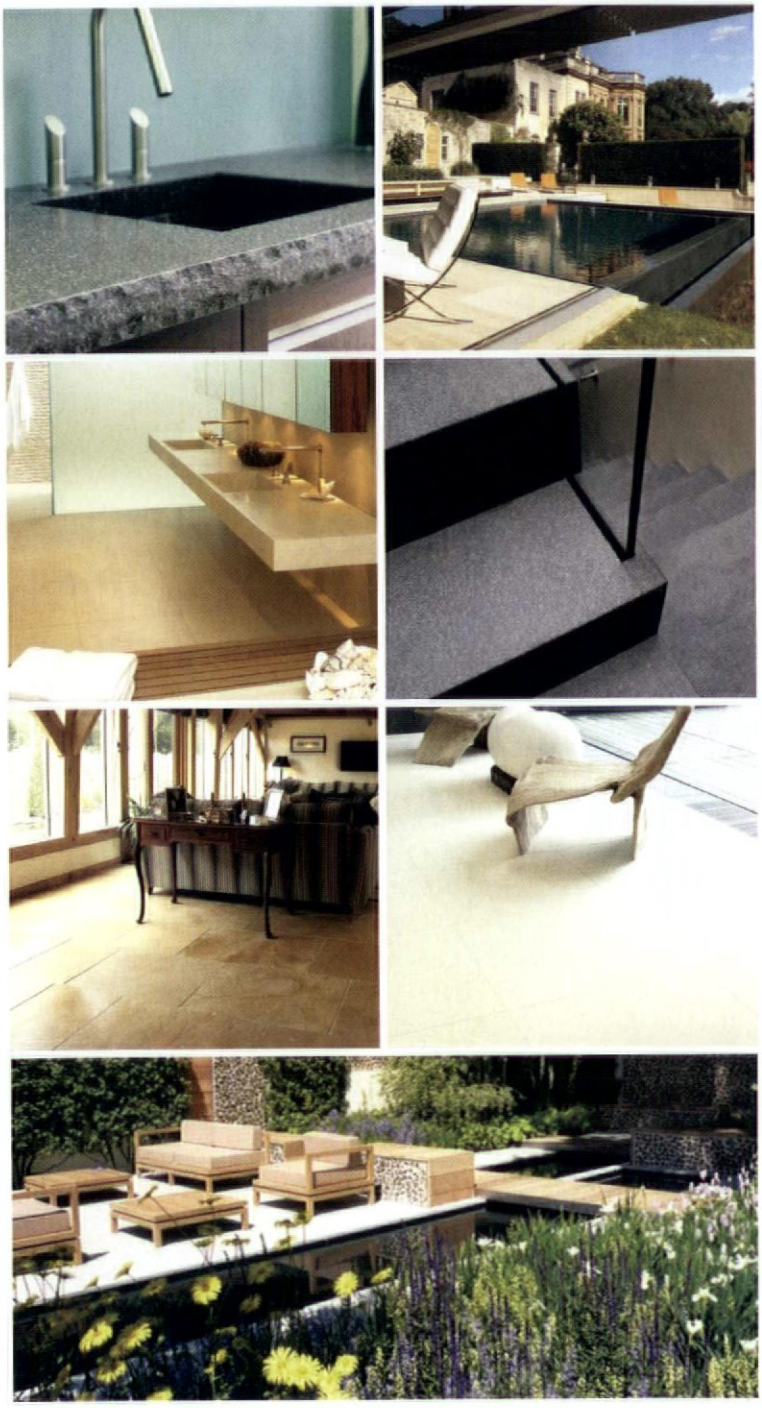
ANNAÏCK GUITTENY



Flowering in May and June, ***Lychnis flos-cuculi* 'White Robin'** is a pure-white form of our native perennial ragged robin, introduced in 2004 by German seed merchant Jelitto Perennial Seeds (www.jelitto.com). Growing to about 40cm high, it has delicate flowers with deeply divided petals that contrast beautifully with its reddish stems and deep green, lance-shaped leaves. Like the native pink form that grows wild in marshes, wet meadows and damp woodland, it prefers a moisture-rich habitat, and is best positioned near a stream or pond, or in a bog garden. Penlan Perennials offers 9cm pots of *L.f-c.* 'White Robin' for £3.95 plus p&p. *To order, visit www.penlanperennials.co.uk*



◀ This rustic, romantic shepherd's hut is the perfect garden hideaway, and can be used as a shed, a summer house or even a garden office. Handmade in Kent by Court and Hunt (www.courtandhunt.co.uk), the huts are constructed from locally sourced, environmentally sustainable materials to an original nineteenth-century design. Inside, they are finished with tongue-and-groove cladding, oak floors and a variety of optional extras including daybeds and bespoke, Shaker-style furniture. The huts are fully insulated with an innovative product called Eco-Wool, made from recycled plastic bottles, and for extra winter warmth they can also be fitted with wood-burning stoves. Prices start from £7,750. *Call Court and Hunt on 01304-617282* ▷



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▼ These attractive wire cloches are new this season. Ideal for protecting seedlings or larger plants, they are handmade in tough galvanised wire, and, although lightweight, they can be stabilised by burying the base in the soil. Measuring 50cm high by 50cm wide, they cost £70 each, but *House & Garden* readers can buy one for £65, or two or more for £55 each, at The Town Garden, 1 North Parade Avenue, Oxford (www.thetowngarden.com).

The Holker Garden Festival runs from May 29 to 31, with guest Monty Don making a special appearance on Saturday, May 30. The annual festival at the Holker Estate in Cumbria is a unique event attracting high-quality exhibitors, displaying plants, flowers, arts and crafts, and local food. Visitors to the festival should also take time to wander around the lovely gardens, with their formal parterres and woodland walks, to view the ever-expanding collection of rare and exotic plants. *Holker Estate, Cark-in-Cartmel, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria: www.holker.co.uk*

▲ After a three-year restoration project, the Elizabethan gardens at Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire are due to reopen on May 2. Lost for centuries, the gardens were created by Elizabeth I's favourite, Robert Dudley, in the sixteenth century, and, thanks to a detailed eye-witness account written in 1575, they have been recreated almost exactly as they would have originally appeared. The restored gardens incorporate elaborate carved arbours, a bejewelled aviary, colourful planting, and a magnificent marble fountain. *For opening times, visit the English Heritage website, www.english-heritage.org.uk* □

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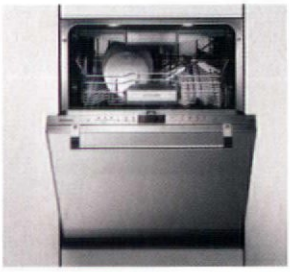
'David' (DX 2156/05), a silk damask by Decortex, is 148cm wide, and costs £198 a metre. For stockists, contact Turnell & Gigon (020-7259 7280; www.tandggroup.com)

Stop press

By Petra Kenyon

The design for the **'Hanging Lighthouse Lantern'** by Charles Edwards was taken from a Thirties, French, antique lantern. It is shown in cast brass, with a pewter finish, and frosted glass, but is also available in a wide variety of other finishes. It measures 58 x 35 x 32.5cm, weighs 8kg, and costs £2,507 as shown. *Charles Edwards, 582 King's Road, SW6: 020-7736 8490; www.charlesedwards.com*

April sees the opening of the third London showroom for luxury kitchen designers **Bulthaup**. The 280-square-metre showroom will display the company's stunning designs – including the 'B2', pictured here – over two floors, offering inspiration and ideas for large and small kitchens. *Bulthaup, 145-149 Lower Richmond Road, SW14: 01865-426990; www.kitchenarchitecture.co.uk*



▲ The new 'Vario DF460/461' fully integrated dishwasher by **Gaggenau** is energy efficient, with the fastest wash-and-dry programme available at 50°C, and a low-temperature drying function. It measures 86.5 x 60cm, is available with a stainless-steel or an aluminium-backed glass door, and costs around £1,200. *For stockists, call 08448-929026, or visit www.gaggenau.com*

▼ Alitex's **National Trust greenhouses** have proved so popular that the company has added a new model, the 'Mottisfont', to the range. Named after the National Trust's Mottisfont Abbey Garden, the greenhouse has a central porch, a steeply pitched roof with ornate ridge and cast-iron vents, and profiled glazing bars. It is made from powder-coated aluminium, measures four metres long, and costs from £12,750. *For further details, call 01730-826900, or visit www.alitex.co.uk*

'Love' (19379/392), seen reflected, made up as a blind, is from the Etamine Amour/Emotion collection by Zimmer + Rohde. It is made of polyester, is 140cm wide, and costs £75 a metre. For stockists, call 020-7351 7115, or visit www.zimmer-rohde.com

SUDHIR PITHWA

AN EVENING WITH WILLIAM YEOWARD

William Yeoward invites House & Garden readers to join him in his King's Road store for an evening of design and shopping on Wednesday, June 24, 6.30–8.30pm. The event marks the launch of William's range of loose covers in cotton-linen checks, to fit his most popular chairs and sofas. During the evening William will chat informally about design and colour, and will offer thrifty tips. He will also talk about his new collections of fabrics, furniture and glass, and sign copies of his books. There will be summer tables laid with the latest William Yeoward crystal, and a draw for a William Yeoward prize worth £1,000. Tickets cost £20 each, including drinks and canapés, and a gorgeous William Yeoward gift bag. To book, send a cheque, payable to 'William Yeoward', along with your name and address, to Julia Griffith-Jones, William Yeoward Event, House & Garden, Vogue House, Hanover Square, London W1S 1JU ▷

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HOUSE & GARDEN DESIGN DAY AT DESIGN CENTRE CHELSEA HARBOUR

Meet (above, from left) Rose Uniacke, Anton Mosimann, David Linley, Jinny Blom and Nikki Tibbles at ***House & Garden*'s Design Day at Design Centre Chelsea Harbour**, SW10, on Thursday, June 11, 10am–4pm. The day is intended to inspire and inform, with talks and demonstrations. David Linley, founder of Linley, will discuss the use of furniture and accessories in interiors; chef and author Anton Mosimann will give a cookery demonstration showing how to create some of his signature dishes; florist Nikki Tibbles of Wild at Heart will show how to arrange English garden flowers; garden designer Jinny Blom will talk about colour in gardens; and interior designer Rose Uniacke will talk about mixing classical and modern designs. Design Centre Chelsea Harbour (left) showcases the latest international collections of fabrics, wallcoverings, furniture, lighting, accessories, kitchens, outdoor living, tiles and carpets. Readers attending the event will be given a VIP card, entitling them to selected discounts, and there will be the chance to win £2,000 of interior-design products in a Design Trail. Tickets cost £15 each, and include a glass of Champagne. *To book, send a cheque, payable to 'House & Garden', along with your name and address, to Julia Griffith-Jones, House & Garden Design Day, House & Garden, Vogue House, Hanover Square, London W1S 1JU. For further enquiries, call the House & Garden events line on 020-7409 2609*

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READERS' SPA DAY

House & Garden readers are invited to a special spa day with Villeroy & Boch at The Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Hampshire, on Thursday, May 21, 10am-4pm. The stunning spa, which is an hour south-west of London, is a stylish, modern retreat where you can relax, or take advantage of fitness and leisure facilities. Each guest will receive a one-hour ESPA treatment, with the option of either a facial or full-body massage, and have full use of the spa facilities, which include a 20-metre indoor pool, an outdoor pool and relaxation area, a state-of-the-art Technogym fitness centre and a Zen studio. The event is being held in association with Villeroy & Boch, whose team will be on hand to advise on bathroom and wellness solutions for the home. During the day there will be the chance to win a Villeroy & Boch 'Oberon' bath with Whisper Whirlpool, worth £2,500, or a 'Flow' tableware set worth £600. Tickets, which are limited to 30 readers, cost £85 per person, including coffee and a light lunch. *To book, send a cheque, made payable to 'House & Garden', with your name, address and telephone number, to Julia Griffith-Jones, Villeroy & Boch Event, House & Garden, Vogue House, Hanover Square, London W1S 1JU* □

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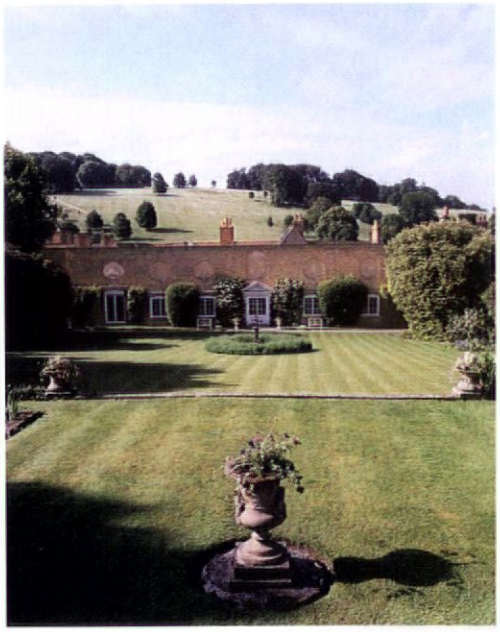

LIFESTYLE

Liz Elliot meets **Lord and Lady Camoys**, who in 1978 bought back Stonor Park – their then empty, ancestral home in Oxfordshire – and witnesses their continuing programme of restoration of the house and its park

Stonor Park sits hidden in the sheltering fold of a beech-covered valley, five miles from Henley-on-Thames. For more than 850 years, the house, now surrounded by walled gardens and a deer park, belonged to the great Catholic family of Stonor. It is now home to Thomas, 7th Lord Camoys, a direct descendant of Sir John de Stonore, who, in the reign of Edward III, enlarged the chapel. It is one of only three places in the country where Mass has been celebrated without interruption since medieval times. This proud history might have drawn to a close when, in 1975–6, the house and all its contents were put up for sale; however, Thomas and his wife, Beth, felt compelled to secure the empty house, and, in order to finance the repairs and running costs, opened it to the public for the first time.

Stonor Park is a wonderful melange of styles: the original twelfth-century, flint, stone and chalk hall and chapel were followed, in the fourteenth-century, by a larger hall and further, timber ranges, as well as an east wing joining the house to the chapel. In the sixteenth century, Sir Francis Stonor brought some conformity to the assorted buildings by adding a ground-floor passage with a gallery and erecting a brick ▷

OPPOSITE Lord and Lady Camoys in the drawing room at Stonor, beneath a late-seventeenth-century topographical painting of the house. THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Stonor sits in the shelter of a valley in the Chilterns; Lord Camoys and landscape architect John Phibbs discuss the planting of the park. A view looking south over the house. Lady Camoys views Stonor's parklands from the window of the blue dining room

PHOTOGRAPHS **RORY CARNEGIE**

frontage to create the present, E-shape, Tudor plan. Until the Reformation, the family prospered; they were knighted in battle, married into fortunes and, with their aptitude for high office, their lands increased substantially.

In 1534, Henry VIII declared the Act of Supremacy, appointing himself 'the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England'. The Stonors remained true to the 'old religion', recognising only the Pope as head of the church. As recusants, they refused to swear the Oath of Supremacy and, as a consequence, were ostracised from court, fined substantial sums, and had much of their land confiscated.

Almost 50 years later, during the reign of Elizabeth I, Walter Stonor's widow, Cecily, sheltered a Jesuit priest named Edmund Campion at Stonor. Concealed in the attic of the house, he secretly printed 400 copies of his text, *Decem Rationes* (*Ten Reasons*), which encouraged Catholics to resist Protestantism. When it was deposited at the university church in Oxford, it electrified Catholics everywhere, beginning a new wave of secret conversions. Edmund Campion was arrested, imprisoned and tortured in the Tower of London; he was tried, and found guilty of treason, for which he was hanged, drawn and quartered. He never renounced his faith, and was canonised in 1970. Over the next century and a half, Stonor remained a centre for Catholic thought and writing, many examples of which remain in the library today.

In 1829, the Catholic Emancipation Act brought an end to the Stonors' isolation, and ▷

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Lady Camoys leaves to attend the opening of an exhibition, at Kensington Palace, of the fiftieth anniversary of the last court presentations. Lady Camoys and her daughter, Alina Barrowcliff, discuss planting in the garden. In contrast with the brick and flint of the original buildings, the chapel bell tower is constructed entirely of brick. Lady Camoys (then Elisabeth Hyde Parker) at a debutante ball with her brother in 1958 – her dress is on show at the Kensington Palace exhibition. Members of Her Majesty's Staghounds assemble at Stonor in 1873

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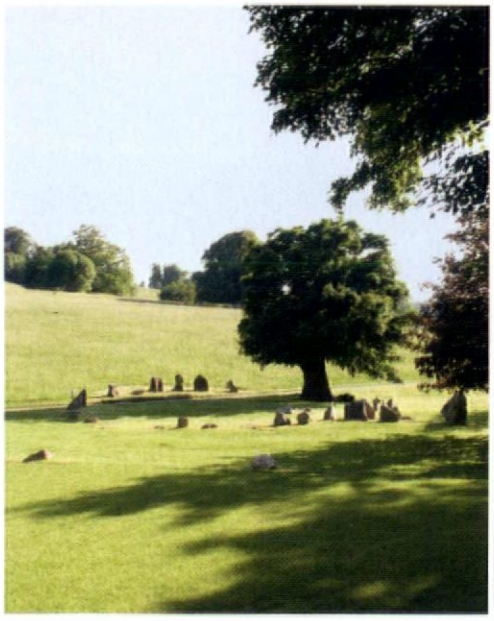

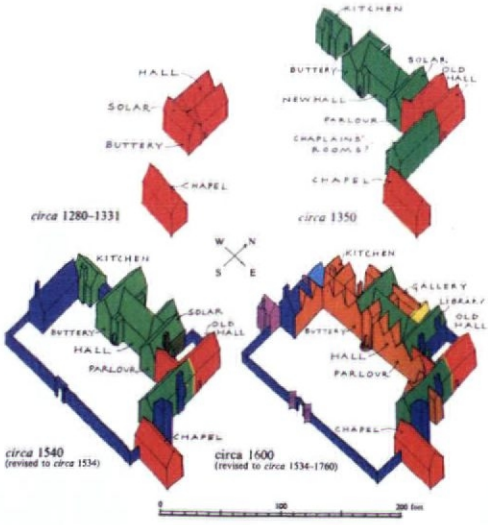

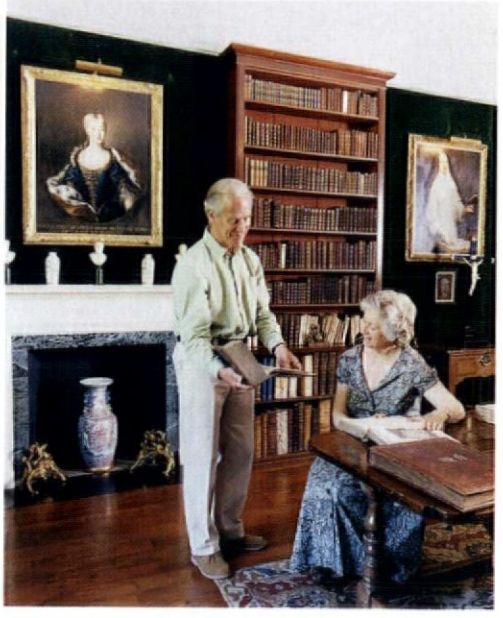

Thomas Stonor entered parliament as a Whig; he was instrumental in the building of schools, and co-founded the Henley Royal Regatta. In 1839, the House of Lords Privileges Committee recognised him as heir to the Barony of Camoys, which had been in abeyance for over 400 years. For 32 years, he acted as Lord in Waiting to Queen Victoria.

The next 150 years saw better days return to Stonor but, in the Seventies, due to high taxes and low agricultural rents, Thomas's father, who had worked tirelessly to maintain the house, was forced to put the house up for sale shortly before his death. The contents, save for a number of portraits and family papers, were sold by separate auction. For two years the house stood empty while various offers of purchase came to nothing. Although the lawns were mown, the gardens and the surrounding parklands became neglected: the future of the house looked bleak.

'The chapel was still in constant use and open to the public for Mass each weekend,' explains Lord Camoys. 'There was thought of turning the house into an antiques centre but perhaps the proximity of the chapel put off other potential buyers.'

By now, Thomas was living happily, with his wife and four children, in Suffolk, and had a demanding career in banking. The prospect of buying, restoring and furnishing Stonor Park was daunting – it had, after all, defeated his father; the only solution was to complete the repairs, refurnish the house and open Stonor to the public. Thomas's great advantage, and one that he credits, today, as the reason for the eventual success of bringing the house back to life, was his wife, Beth. Having been born in Melford Hall in Suffolk, before it became a National Trust property, she had assisted her mother in saving the family home by opening it to the public; as a result, she was unfazed by the prospect of taking on Stonor. 'I realised that Thomas ▷

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A circle of standing stones surrounds a sycamore tree in the park. Lady Camoys with Sue Gill, the administrator, in the shop at Stonor. Lord Camoys inspects a rowing shell at the River and Rowing Museum, Henley, with Paul Mainds, trustee and chief executive. Lady Camoys, who is president of the Henley Decorative and Fine Arts Society, talks to its chairman, Michael Carlton, in the library. Lord Camoys at work in his study. A diagram shows the main architectural changes that Stonor has undergone in the 850 years of its history

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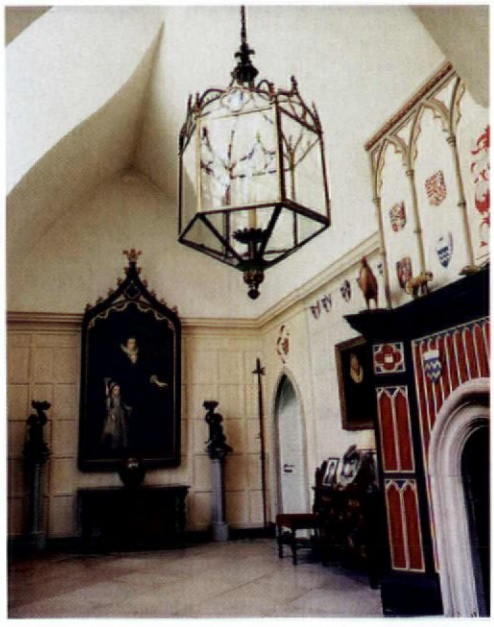

BOTH PAGES The different dates of the building are reflected in the interiors – including the hall (opposite top left), which was Gothicised in 1757, and comfortable Regency study (opposite centre left) – and magnificent furniture such as the William and Mary four-poster bed (main picture), hung with original crewel work. Lord Camoys has a collection of modern porcelain (opposite centre right), acquired during his travels in Japan and Korea. By contrast, the Madonna and Child group is eighteenth century. The dining room (opposite bottom) features wallpaper by Defours depicting views of famous buildings in Paris. A spare bedroom (below) contains some of the Venetian furniture that Lord Camoys inherited from his cousin, Francis

would not be happy unless we tried,' she explains.

In 1978, they purchased Stonor Park on the open market, put it in trust for their son, William, and set about the task of making the house fit for public display. They had purchased four pieces of furniture from the auction of the house's contents, and the problem of furnishing the empty interiors was further mitigated when Thomas inherited a glorious collection of seventeenth-century Italian furniture, pictures, and rugs from his cousin, Francis Stonor.

'On the day we moved in, a large banner had been hung over the door reading "Welcome home",' says Beth. 'The villagers and many of the people who had worked for my father-in-law were determined to celebrate our return, which was wonderful.'

When Thomas and Beth finally opened the house, 1,000 visitors came through the doors on the first day. It became apparent just how much ▷

Lord Camoys talks to Alina Barrowcliff in the chapel (above left), which is one of only three places in England where Mass has been celebrated continuously since medieval times. Lady Camoys sits on the steps of the chapel (top right), beside a group of reliefs carved by Polish prisoners of war and donated to the chapel by Graham Greene. A painting of the 40 Catholic martyrs (canonised in 1970), by Daphne Pollen (1904–1986), now hangs in the room used by Edmund Campion in the sixteenth century (above)

Stonor meant to people when family and friends, wishing to lend or donate furniture, tapestries or pictures once connected to the house, began to appear. So many family portraits have been returned that the distinguished family line can now be traced through art as well as literature.

Over the past 30 years, much work has gone into improving and maintaining the gardens and parkland. In the mid eighteenth century, Charles Stonor, having undertaken his grand tour in the company of Robert Adam, decided to Gothicise the house and chapel; he also cleared the hill opposite the house, which until then had been entirely wooded. In 2008, Thomas replanted part of the park around 14 eighteenth-century viewing points identified by landscape architect John Phibbs. The gardens, very definitely Beth's fiefdom, have been extended and replanted; roses now bloom throughout the summer.

A number of stewards, some of whom have been involved with Stonor since the Seventies, assist with the opening of the house, which, each year, hosts a crafts fair, a rally for VW owners, and two concerts in the park complete with Spitfire fly-past. Stonor no longer has its own priest, but Mass is celebrated each Sunday as well as on holy days.

Following the family tradition, Thomas, Lord Camoys, became Lord Chamberlain, and finally, permanent Lord in Waiting in 2000. He is a steward of Henley Royal Regatta and president of the River and Rowing Museum. His words, when asked to advise those with the odds stacked against them, are perhaps most telling of his outlook: 'Don't give up, and work hard,' he says, a sentiment that must, surely, have passed down through the ages □

Stonor Park: 01491-638587; www.stonor.com
Events at Stonor in 2009: VW Owners' Rally, May 31; Concert with Jools Holland, August 7; Classic Concert in the Park, August 8; Chilterns Craft Fair, August 28–31

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Designer profile Henri Fitzwilliam-Lay

For this bedroom of a nineteenth-century house in Holland Park, interior designer Henri Fitzwilliam-Lay took inspiration from the art collection and personal style of her glamorous client. **By Judith Wilson**

Henri Fitzwilliam-Lay grew up in the States, and came to decorating via an unusual route. She began as a stylist in New York in the Nineties, working for Bergdorf Goodman, and followed this with stints as a fashion stylist for *Elle* magazine and art director at Bloomingdale's. After she came to the UK in 2000, she renovated first her own home, then friends' houses, and that net slowly widened into a thriving interiors business. Henri set up her own company in 2003, and remains the sole designer, so clients get her undivided attention: current projects include a house in Wimbledon and an apartment in Queen's Gate. She lives in Kensington with her husband, Hugh, their four children, aged 11, 9, 7 and 2, and Boots, the dog.

'I was hired by my client to do the "bones" of this nineteenth-century house in Holland Park, so that she could move in swiftly, but I've now completed phase two of the decoration. The house needed complete refurbishment. The proportions are great, with tall ceilings and wide landings, so I advised my clients to do little structurally. I come from New York, where most people have high-rise, box-shaped apartments, so found it inspirational to work with pretty architectural detailing. In the main bedroom, we removed one door on to the landing, and now the room is accessed via a "suite" of dressing room and bathroom. I liked the idea of creating a private capsule.

'My client is wonderful to work with because she "gets" my ideas immediately. I like to take decorative cues from the client, and this lady is very glamorous. She and her husband had a collection of artwork that needed to be incorporated, too. For example, the line drawing is a piece by my client's grandmother, and the artwork of pressed waxflowers by José Maria Sicilia – which I had reframed in white – was the starting point for a subtle colour scheme.

'Bedrooms should feel cosy, so I lined the walls in a grass cloth from Bruno Triplet, and laid a neutral Wool Classics carpet. I also aim for an element of fantasy: I showed my client photographs of David Hicks-style four-poster beds, and she loved the grandeur. The bed is not a four-poster; the pelmet and drapes are suspended from the ceiling. I like to mix furniture periods. The low, elegant window seat, a vintage piece upholstered in velvet by Abbott & Boyd, is from Revival Upholstery. The bedside tables – lacquered Biedermeier-style commodes from Birgit Israel – are teamed with nineteenth-century mirrors and Sixties lamps from the Pruskin Gallery.

'A bedroom is a private space, so I've been a little indulgent. We tried out dressing tables, but finally I chose these Seventies, mirror-glass, chrome and brass cabinets, from Talisman. They are glamorous and wall-mounted, so solve the problem of an uneven floor. I bought the standard lamp because I loved its fine linen lampshade with a silk edge – it looks like a skirt. The Curtis Jere sculpture is a Sixties find, also from Talisman. I am attracted to mid-twentieth-century pieces, because they remind me of houses from my childhood. I also love to watch old movies for inspiration. Whether it's a scene from an Alfred Hitchcock film, or simply a Grace Kelly moment, I'll find fresh ideas to take me in a new direction' □

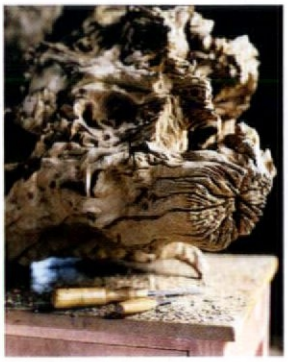
Henri Fitzwilliam-Lay: 07968-948053; www.henrifitzwilliamlay.com

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Interiors by Henri (pictured) combine traditional and modern elements, infused with luxury. The curtains and bed hangings are in 'Pure Platinum' silk, from Bruno Triplet. A reframed artwork of waxflowers inspired the subtle colour scheme

PHOTOGRAPHS **JAKE CURTIS**

Specialist profile John Surplice

John Surplice creates beautiful, sculptural works from found pieces of wood, using minimal tools and a keen eye for the beauty of natural forms. By Jennifer Goulding



'I uncover stunning natural sculptures,' says John Surplice, who gouges out the decayed matter from found pieces of tree root or trunk to reveal the intricate shapes of the sound wood beneath. Like his work, John is difficult to categorise; he does not see himself as an artist or craftsman, but as nature's helper. 'They are lovely forms before I work on them; I just bring out the detail,' he says, modestly. In fact, 'bringing out the detail' requires tremendous skill, but even his champion – the designer Jeremy Pitts – admits, 'the line between John's hand and nature is impossible to discern.'

John lives in a cottage on the edge of the Mottisfont Estate, a National Trust property in Hampshire, where he worked as a forester for 34 years until his retirement in 2004. His workshop is a small shed in the back garden, which resounds with baroque music (John's other passion) while he works, utterly absorbed, from dawn until dusk. 'I become one with the piece: nothing else matters; I forget the worries of the world,' he says. 'The only time I get fed up is when I have to stop to eat.'

It is since his retirement that this hobby of 20 years has developed into a full-time occupation. 'I have always been fascinated by natural forms; I have collected pieces of roots and decayed wood for a long time, but I have never had enough time to work on them until now.' You suspect that not even Jane, his long-suffering wife, could have guessed just how much time he wanted to invest. 'I do try to keep up with the boring things, like mowing the lawn,' he protests.

John's equipment consists of a wire brush, a collection of knives and gouges in various sizes, and a paring tool, adapted from an old file, to tackle very fine fissures in the wood. He prepares a new piece of wood by first removing the loose and decayed matter with the wire brush, then cutting, from the top downwards, in a spiralling movement. 'It is tempting to jump over the difficult bits, but I would always be going back and forth,' he says. Instead, he sculpts out each area fully, before moving on to the next. It is a painstaking process, which can take up to 18 months to complete. 'You have to stop at exactly the right moment, before any of the sound wood is damaged. That is why it takes such a great deal of time,' he explains.

ABOVE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT John is pictured in his small shed workshop with his latest piece, a huge yew tree root. Other recent sculptures have been carved from found pieces of oak, using a small number of simple tools. BELOW John sculpts each area of the wood fully before moving on to the next

He regularly exhibits his pieces at fairs – 'I love people looking at them' – but, until now, has not sold any. 'I have never been particularly interested in making money from them, and I would be useless at it. If Jeremy had not come along, I wouldn't have thought about turning it into a business.'

Jeremy first saw John's sculptures at the Weald WoodFair in East Sussex. 'His work is beautiful and unique – as far as I know, there is no one else who sculpts wood by hand in this way. They are pieces that I think work very well in industrial and domestic interiors. I want to help John to reach the right audience, and sell his pieces for a price that reflects the skill and time that goes into them.'

Initially, Jeremy plans to show John's latest piece, a magnificent yew tree root (pictured), at exclusive hairdressers, 4th Floor in central London, which exhibits art and is frequented by people from the media and design industries. 'It is a bit of a secret – more like a gallery than a hairdressers,' says Jeremy. 'I think it will expose John's work to an interesting audience.'

John is excited about these developments. 'Since I turned 70, I have started to worry about what will happen to these pieces of wood when I kick the bucket. I want them to be in places where lots of people can enjoy them.' His attitude is genuinely altruistic and without ego. When he says, 'I cannot imagine how a soul could not be moved by them,' he is not congratulating himself, he is simply admiring nature □

John Surplice, through Jeremy Pitts: info@jeremypitts.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHS **JONATHAN GREGSON**

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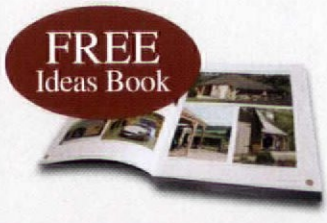

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INSIGHT

Power and glory

Celina Fox describes and defends the magnificence of the baroque style in a show at the V&A and, overleaf, reviews other, current exhibitions

For critics brought up on the rational orders of classicism, the baroque style was an aberration. In its lavish use of precious materials, it was associated with degenerate luxury. In its dependence on spectacle and illusion, it evoked the cheap tricks of the theatre. As the style of choice of the papal court, militant Jesuits and absolute monarchs, it was denounced by bourgeois Protestants as being aesthetically worthless and morally corrupt.

Yet how can you not love the baroque? It gave Rome the face of festive splendour which it has never lost. It provided the city with its fountains, welcoming a public utility with a riot of gods and tritons, transforming humble water pipes into the great rivers of the world. The undulating forms of baroque palaces and churches embrace piazzas with inventive swagger. Within darkly gleaming interiors, saints and princes levitate and swoon in death-defying scenarios which triumph over temporal reality. Unlike neoclassicism, baroque is never boring. It invites the spectator to participate in the exploration of space. It makes authority palatable through allegorical references and trompe-l'oeil effects.

The challenge for the V&A is to recreate this wow factor in its baroque exhibition for an audience more than familiar with visual spectacle and less than impressed by hierarchical, patriarchal societies. The origins of baroque go back to the mid sixteenth century, when the Counter-Reformation sought to defeat the forces of Protestantism, not least by increasing the appeal of Catholicism for lay people. The role of art was recognised as a means of conveying religious teaching with clarity and vigour, and as an emotional stimulus to piety. The Jesuits and other missionary orders used art to proselytise in the churches and colleges they built from Potosi to Goa, which were richly adorned with the spoils of colonisation. A succession of popes in the first half of the seventeenth century – Urban VIII (1623–44), Innocent X (1644–55) and Alexander VII (1655–67) – pursued energetic policies of artistic patronage, further propelled by the motives of princely display and family aggrandisement.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) served them all, imposing his vision on the whole epoch as a true polymath – painter, sculptor, architect, stage designer, composer, dramatist. His greatest achievements are inextricably part of the fabric of Rome, but the V&A's exhibition contains ▷

Filippo Lauri and Filippo Gagliardi, *Carousel in the Courtyard of Palazzo Barberini in Honour of Queen Christina of Sweden*, 1656–59

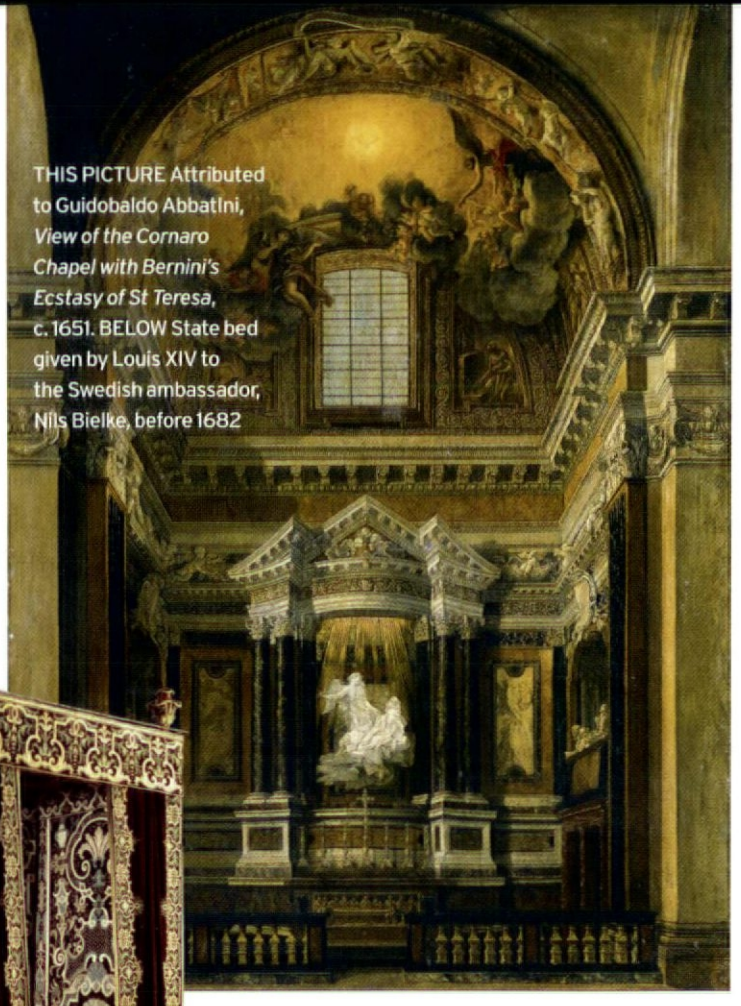
PHOTOGRAPH: MUSEO DI ROMA

terracotta models of some of his major works, marble and bronze portrait busts, and design drawings. A seventeenth-century painting of the Cornaro Chapel in Santa Maria della Vittoria conveys something of the psycho-physical drama of his *Ecstasy of St Teresa*. Through her seemingly tangible reality, the beholder is stimulated – like the members of the Cornaro family ranged in side boxes – actively to participate in the saint's visionary state of mind: we too have a supra-natural experience.

The equally brilliant architect Francesco Borromini (1599–1667), a stone-carver and builder by training, provided the full-scale drawings and technical know-how for the completion of Bernini's great *baldacchino* or canopy in St Peter's, held aloft on twisted bronze columns adorned with gilded laurel leaves, frolicking cherubs and bees – the Barberini emblem. Bernini and Borromini also worked together on the Barberini palace, the power base of Urban VIII and his notoriously rapacious family. In 1633–9, Pietro da Cortona decorated the ceiling of the *gran salone* with a triumph of *quadratura* painting – the technique of creating an illusionistic architecture through geometrical calculation and perspectival foreshortening – celebrating the divinely ordained glories of Urban's reign.

A picture of the extravagant carousel staged in the Barberini palace courtyard in February 1656 for Christina of Sweden gives some idea of the queen's reception in Rome following her abdication and conversion to Catholicism. Her love of theatrical performance, ballet and music is typical of the baroque age and their manifestations were not of course confined to Rome. Theatres were built in princely residences throughout Europe and amply endowed with scenery, props and costumes to divert bored courtiers. Elaborate stage sets have been borrowed for the show from the Schwarzenberg castle of Český Krumlov in the Czech Republic.

As temporal monarchs ruled by divine right, their images projected God-given authority, dignity and grandeur, boosting competing claims for power in the religious and dynastic wars which raged across seventeenth-century Europe. In Hyacinthe Rigaud's famous portrait of Louis XIV, the ageing king is all but engulfed in his voluminous robes of state, which merge into the lavish backdrop of swagged silks and marble columns. Though Bernini's plans for the Louvre were too grandiose even for Louis, his own architects Le Vau and Le Nôtre proved perfectly capable of building and landscaping Versailles in the baroque mode. As the model for so many palaces throughout Europe, it serves as the centrepiece of the exhibition, its enfilades designed to mirror the etiquette of the court and its elaborate rituals, and precedence according to rank. Diplomatic gifts were conferred on favoured allies, such as the majestic state bed presented by Louis to the Swedish ambassador, loaned from Stockholm for the exhibition.



THIS PICTURE Attributed to Guidobaldo Abbatini, *View of the Cornaro Chapel with Bernini's Ecstasy of St Teresa*, c.1651. BELOW State bed given by Louis XIV to the Swedish ambassador, Nils Bielke, before 1682

The role of art was recognised as a means of conveying religious teaching with clarity and vigour

Aristocrats were also expected to indulge in conspicuous consumption, the display of luxury being a mark of nobility. Successful military commanders were rewarded with palaces in the baroque style, notably the Duke of Marlborough, for whom John Vanbrugh designed Blenheim Palace. Baroque was not confined to Catholic countries even if its most spectacular manifestations are to be found there. In Britain, Wren, Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor and Gibbs – who was taught by Bernini's pupil, Carlo Fontana – can all be seen as baroque architects, and we benefited enormously from the own goal scored by Louis XIV when in 1685 he revoked the Edict of Nantes, thus dispersing the finest Huguenot goldsmiths, and other craftsmen working in the baroque style, throughout Protestant Europe.

'Baroque 1620–1800: Style in the Age of Magnificence' is at the V&A from April 4 to July 19

Friends and family

LEFT John Constable, *Maria Bicknell*, 1816. THIS PICTURE *Maria with two of her children*, c.1820

It is always refreshing to view an artist, whose work we feel we know, from an unexpected angle. The exhibition of Constable's portraits at the National Portrait Gallery sheds light on the painter's family, friends and social circle for, like his landscapes, they express his clarity of observation and truthful response. Most touching are the depictions of Constable's wife, Maria Bicknell, dating from their courtship and the early years of their marriage. Two months before the wedding in October 1816 he wrote to her, 'I am sitting before your portrait which... is so extremely like that I can hardly help going up to it. I never had an idea before the real pleasure that a portrait could offer.' *Constable Portraits: The Painter and His Circle is at the National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, WC2 (020-7306 0055; www.npg.org.uk) until June 14, sponsored by British Land* ▷

PHOTOGRAPHS: STAATLICHES MUSEUM SCHWERIN, KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN, SCHLÖSSER UND GÄRTEN, THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, STOCKHOLM; © TATE, LONDON 2009

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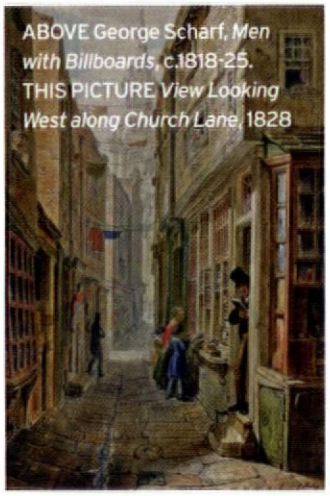


ABOVE George Scharf, *Men with Billboards*, c.1818-25. THIS PICTURE *View Looking West along Church Lane*, 1828

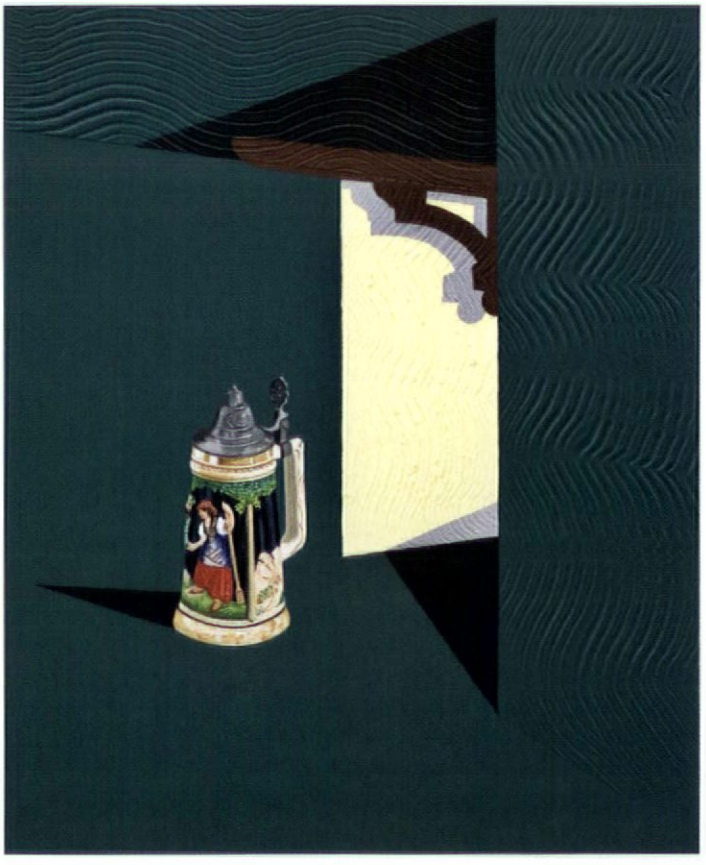
Chronicles of the commonplace

When Thames Water replaced the water mains in my street last year, I thought of George Scharf (1788-1860) who, 175 years ago, recorded their installation. A selection of Scharf's drawings from the British Museum is now on show at Sir John Soane's Museum. Born in Bavaria, the artist settled in London after the Napoleonic Wars and, although he earned a meagre living as a portraitist and printmaker, his greatest passion was to roam the streets capturing ordinary life. It was the age of improvement when major public works - including Soane's Bank of England and Smirke's British Museum - were under construction. Scharf accurately recorded their progress but enlivened the architecture with delightful details of curious crowds, confirming that human nature does not change very much. Moreover, Scharf's Londoners seem as inundated with advertising gimmicks as Londoners today. *George Scharf: From Regency Street to Modern Metropolis is at Sir John Soane's Museum, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2 (020-7405 2107; www.soane.org) until June 6*

Unknown artist, *Diana and Actaeon*, c.1650

Mythic muse

Diana was no slouch when it came to punishing men. Following an accidental sighting of the goddess bathing with her nymphs, the noble hunter Actaeon was transformed into a stag which was then hunted down and killed by his own hounds. This unedifying tale, as recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, has nevertheless proved to be a potent source of inspiration for artists, from Titian and Rubens to Rodin and Picasso. A selection of these works is now on display until May 31 at Compton Verney, Warwickshire (01926-645500; www.comptonverney.org.uk) in Fatal Attraction: Diana and Actaeon - The Forbidden Gaze.



Cultural commentator

The reputation of Patrick Caulfield (1936-2005) deserves to be perpetuated, not least on account of his unrivalled sense of colour and design, often used in a deadpan way to comment on fashions in interior decoration in the second half of the twentieth century. Pallant House Gallery's retrospective includes the artist's working drawings, bold screen prints, and studies for murals and tapestries. *Patrick Caulfield is at Pallant House Gallery, 9 North Pallant, Chichester (01243-774557; www.pallant.org.uk) until June 14* □

LEFT Patrick Caulfield, *Kellerbar*, 1997. BELOW *Reserved Table*, 2000

PHOTOGRAPHS: © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM; MUSEUM FÜR KUNST UND GEWERBE HAMBURG; © THE ESTATE OF PATRICK CAULFIELD

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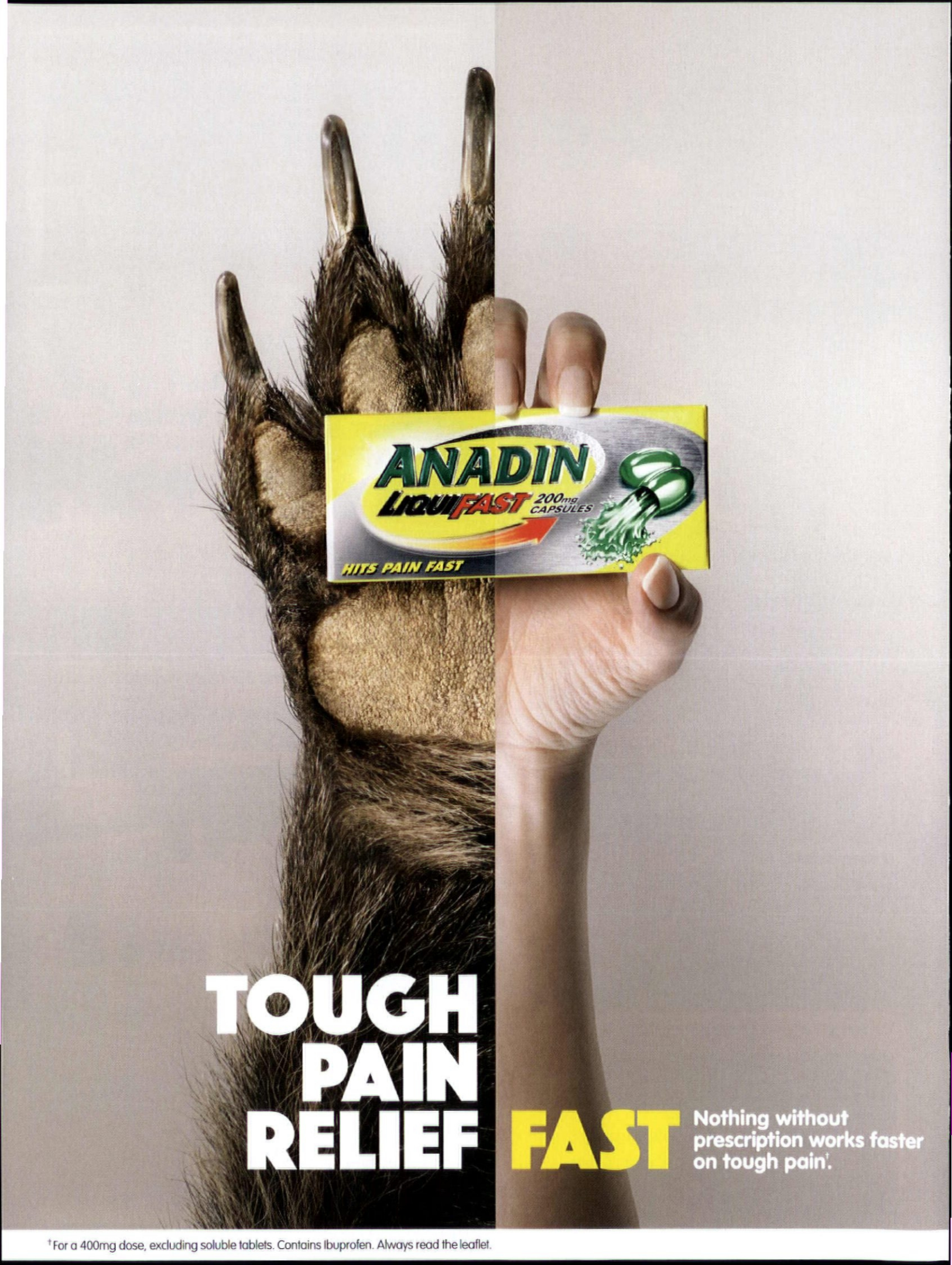

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Stancombe Park, Gloucestershire

Roger White is intrigued by the history of the complex, pre-Victorian gardens at Stancombe Park

For the past two centuries or so, most garden designers have placed their primary emphasis on flowers; for the pre-Victorians, however, gardens were predominantly green and the emphasis was on structure, usually articulated with the help of a varied repertoire of pavilions and follies. We all know about Stowe, Stourhead and the other masterpieces of the genre, but my own favourite is much less celebrated and visited – and, for my tastes, more intriguing. The visitor arriving at Stancombe Park in the Cotswolds sees a boxy classical house of 1811, set in a belvedere position that commands an idyllic panorama of valley, woods and hills. In front of the house is a charming formal flower garden, created in recent decades, but from here there is no hint of Stancombe's naughty secret.

A path hugs the curve of the hillside as it starts to descend, gently at first, then plunging via steep, narrow flights of stone steps into the depths of the valley. Spring water channelled through runnels gurgles and tinkles, and the vegetation closes in as you enter the first of a number of mysterious, arched apertures. A statue of a giant snarling dog looms disconcertingly at the entrance to gloomy brick passages; suddenly, a slit-shaped opening offers a hint of watery expanse beyond. To the left, the tunnel leads quickly into a vine-hung iron pergola that follows one edge of a large, broadening lake. To the right, steps climb out into the light and on to a long, straight terrace. Here, the vista passes through another pergola to terminate at an urn set in front of a large keyhole-shaped opening.

In fact, this area could be described as a tiny piazza, with an alcove to the right formed of the jawbones of a whale that was stranded in the nearby River Severn; behind is an icehouse, and opposite, a tapered stone doorway of Egyptian profile. The keyhole arch leads into another section of tunnel and out along a path tightly framed by clipped, castellated box hedges. Now you see two further lakeside structures, a boathouse on the water's edge and a classical temple set at the head of a flight of steps, while beyond the hedge is a tiny cottage orné. Completing the circuit, you arrive at two summer houses with fronts of latticed lead and glass, framing a tiered Coade-stone fountain.

Here is an essentially simple concept, a circuit round an artificial lake, yet worked up with an ingenuity and intricacy bordering on genius. To whom do we owe its creation? The story – which I am determined to believe – is that an early-nineteenth-century owner, the Reverend David Edwards, married the wealthy but very fat Miss Purnell. In order to be able to pursue a liaison with a beautiful gypsy girl he created a secret garden out of sight of the house, kept safe from wifely visits by its steep access and narrow passages. Is there an underlying programme – that of Cerberus guarding the entrance to Hades, with the lake doing duty as the River Styx and the temple as the Elysian Fields of extramarital sex? Is there, indeed, a sexual symbolism to the way the path recurrently plunges through keyhole apertures? We shall probably never know, but in the meantime speculation makes a visit to Stancombe even more fun □

The modern formal garden aligns axially on the house (above left and top right). A keyhole arch (centre) is one of the garden's visual tricks. A man-made lake (bottom right) forms the centrepiece of the 'secret' garden

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROGER WHITE; NIC BARLOW

Where & when Stancombe Park is reached off B4060, 1 mile north of the village of North Nibley. It can be visited by appointment with Gerda Barlow, Stancombe Park, Dursley, Gloucestershire (01453-542815). To rent the lakeside temple, which sleeps two, contact Rural Retreats (01386-701177; www.ruralretreats.co.uk).

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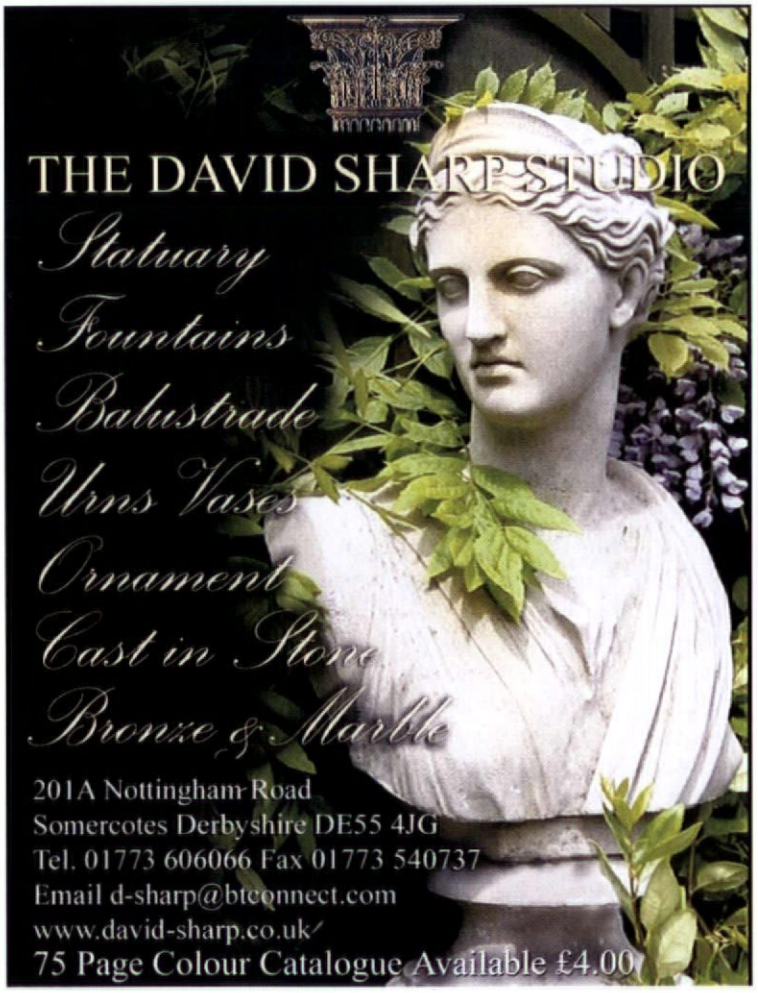

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Words and Pictures

Noteworthy publications, chosen by **Anna Rose Hughes**

English Journeys *(Penguin Press, £4.99)*

The English countryside has long been a source of inspiration for artists and writers. *English Journeys*, a new series from Penguin Press, presents a range of classic writing and poetry – by such writers as Francis Kilvert (*A Wiltshire Diary*), Richard Jeffries (*Walks in the Wheat Fields*), Gerturde Jekyll, James Lees-Milne, Vita Sackville-West, Simon Jenkins, Henry James and Celia Fiennes – chosen for capturing the essence of the pastoral idyll. *The Beauties of a Cottage Garden* contains extracts from Jekyll's book of 1899, *Wood and Garden*. Jekyll is still widely renowned for her personal, practical attitude to gardening, and this charming compilation is typical of her subtle approach. Appreciating the power of nature – 'a subtle chemist' – she advocates an appreciation of 'beauty for beauty's sake'. The choice of gardens illustrates the importance of the particular size of a space, which 'should fit its master or his tastes just as his clothes do'; the glorious colours and scents of flowers; the past epidemic of bedding, 'so cheap of mental effort'; the difficulties of wild gardening; the frustrations and delights of weeding; and the importance of keeping the working parts of a garden properly oiled, 'to avoid disastrous friction'. Examples from Jekyll's own and other, favourite gardens are scattered throughout, while the whole encourages a love of gardening – 'a seed that, once sown, never dies'. **ARH**

H&G readers can buy a copy of any of the books in the English Journeys series for £4.49 each (inc p&p) by calling 08700-707717 and quoting 'EJ/H&G'

John Minshaw Designs **Celina Fox** *(Frances Lincoln, £45)*

The most interesting interiors are often the most private, and the only hope the outside world has of seeing them is in print. Welcome, then, to a publication that showcases the work of John Minshaw, one of Britain's most accomplished, yet least self-promoting, current designers. The two things that come across especially clearly in the book are Minshaw's refined, classically informed vision and his ability to think three-dimensionally – a talent not possessed by every designer, alas – which together account for his success in realising the sort of interiors that depend on a sound understanding of space and its manipulation. Minshaw believes in getting the bones of a house right – as well as state-of-the-art technical elements – before tackling the furnishings; and he is one of the few practitioners who can instil within a traditional building a look that is modern and pared down while remaining sympathetic to the original architecture, and often incorporates antique pieces. His love of clean, simple lines is apparent in his own designs for furniture, some of which feature in the projects shown in this handsome volume. One slight pity in it is that the captions are so distanced from the main body of illustrations. **Leonie Highton**

H&G readers can buy a copy for £36 (inc p&p) by calling 01235-827702 and quoting '46HGJM'

Perfect Curtains **Stephanie Hoppen** *(Jacqui Small, £30)*

Choosing curtains can leave even the most confident designer in a tangle of indecision. Featuring up-to-date, smart and stylish window dressings from homes all over the world, Stephanie Hoppen has put together a comprehensive and inspirational manual as a guide through this daunting task. The book offers excellent advice on how to choose a fabric from the thousands available, how to approach windows with awkward proportions and how to avoid costly mistakes. Readers are encouraged to abandon intimidating rules and preconceptions, and instead take their lead from top interior designers – whose work is featured throughout – by embracing soft, layered looks and clean styling. The tone is lively and instructive, with plenty of personal experience to give the reader confidence; the many photographs cover a large range of styles and details, with neither a heavy swag nor an oppressive pelmet in sight. As Hoppen says: 'Simply being able to say to your curtain-maker, "That is what I am looking for," makes this book worthwhile.' **Gabby Deeming** *H&G readers can buy a copy for £25 (inc p&p) by calling 01903-828503 and quoting 'JS212'*

Sir John Soane's Museum London **Tim Knox** *(Merrell, £24.95)*

The eccentric home of architect Sir John Soane has been open to the public, free of charge, since 1833 – the result of an Act of Parliament negotiated by Soane himself. For the first 100 years of its life it was rarely visited; it was only in 1925, following the substantial demolition of one of Soane's greatest architectural achievements, the Bank of England building, that the very personal style of this Regency architect began to be appreciated. This remarkable museum, which is largely unaltered – another of Soane's stipulations – now welcomes over 93,000 visitors each year. Nothing quite replaces a visit, but this book, by the museum's director, Tim Knox, with compelling photographs by Derry Moore, is a lively and scholarly account of a unique and idiosyncratic space. The introduction places the museum and its evolution within the context of Soane's life, work and obsessive 'collectomania', while the second half is a detailed, room-by-room tour. Knox touches on the vital role of successive curators as custodians of Soane's creation; his own sense of responsibility adds an important human element throughout. In this way, subtly, the reader is given an insight into Knox's exciting plans for the museum. **Hatta Byng** *H&G readers can buy a copy for £22.95 (inc p&p) by calling 01235-465500 and quoting 'MERSJS'* □

PHOTOGRAPHS: SUDHIR PITHWA; TINA ERAMERI. ALL READERS' OFFERS APPLY ONLY TO THE UK

BELGRAVIA BOLT-HOLE

The American owners of this London apartment wanted a classic English look; working with their decorator, they have integrated modern and traditional elements in a pretty, and supremely comfortable pied-à-terre

TEXT **YSENDA MAXTONE GRAHAM** | PHOTOGRAPHS **SIMON BROWN** | LOCATIONS EDITOR **LIZ ELLIOT**

'Of all our homes, this is the most romantic and the cosiest,' says the owner of this flat.

She and her husband divide their time between Florida, New York, Nantucket, the Long Island Sound and London. They love decorating, cooking and shopping, so they find owning homes infinitely preferable to staying in hotels or service flats.

'While we were looking for a flat, I walked past the Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler shop in Brook Street,' she continues, 'and noticed some chairs and tables. I went in to have a look and had a great talk with the interior designer Roger Jones, who runs the antiques department. Afterwards I called my husband and said, "I may not have found our apartment yet, but I've found our decorator."'

The flat they eventually bought occupies the ground floor and basement of a north-facing, 1840s Belgravia house. Roger got to work, melding his own style with the owners' slightly more conservative vision. They had fun working together, discussing and disputing different options. Some of Roger's more modern ideas were gently overridden by the owners, who wanted a very classical English look – what they call '*Upstairs, Downstairs*-ish'.

'For me,' says Roger, 'getting the architecture right is the most important aspect of a project.' And in its original state, he thought the architecture of the entrance hall was wrong. The two doors leading off it to the left and right were low and glazed, and the ceiling was also too low. Via the simple expedient of raising the ceiling by 38cm and making the doors correspondingly taller, he and architectural

BOTH PAGES FROM LEFT The entrance hall of the flat is painted in a deep plum colour mixed on-site; a door leads to the drawing room. The starting point for the drawing room was a nineteenth-century Ziegler Mahal carpet that designer Roger Jones found at auction. The French, satinwood coffee table dates from the Forties

HARDY

draughtsman Joao Reis transformed the entrance hall into a stunning, symmetrical aperitif for the delights to come. The walls are a deep plum colour with a shiny lacquer finish, glowing with opaque reflections from wall lanterns set into the corners. 'When we arrive here,' says the owner, 'we throw down our coats and feel instantly at home.'

The room to the right of the entrance hall is the dining room-cum-library, a double function that the owners particularly requested. Roger and Joao removed the chimney breast and designed a tall, wide, breakfront bookcase, fitted with two small, swing-arm lamps. The owners sit at the large, round Regency table on sturdy, upholstered chairs designed by Roger, and take their pick from the books on the shelves. On the walls, which are covered in a striped linen by Rogers & Goffigon, hangs a mixture of modern paintings and more classical works, such as military prints. 'I like those battle scenes,' the owner says. 'If we're having a cocktail party, I want to give someone running out of conversation something to talk about.'

The drawing room was 'a difficult room', according to Roger, for the simple reasons that it is almost cube-shaped, and north facing. 'The starting point was the carpet,' says Roger. At an auction, he found a nineteenth-century Ziegler Mahal example that had been damaged and badly repaired. 'We had it cleaned and the repairs redone, and the owners ended up paying half what they might have paid for one from a dealer.' He also replaced the old wooden chimneypiece with a Regency marble one from Nicholas Gifford-Mead, together with a gas fire, which provides instant heat to the arriving owners. The oval mirror above the fire is the ideal

BOTH PAGES CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT The marble chimneypiece in the drawing room was from Nicholas Gifford-Mead. The painting was inspired by a work by Ivon Hitchens. Reproduction botanical prints hang in the kitchen. For the dining room-cum-library, Roger designed the breakfront bookcase and the chairs, which are covered in 'Eaton Check' by Colefax and Fowler. The walls are lined with a striped linen by Rogers & Goffigon. The curtain fabric was custom-printed

way to deal with the chimney breast in such a cuboid room, and the opposite wall is dominated by a picture inspired by the artist Ivon Hitchens, and painted specially for that space.

Downstairs, the main bedroom opens on to a garden redesigned by Christopher Masson: a green haven with trelliswork and a water feature. The owners requested a four-poster bed for the bedroom, but a simple one, so Roger had a light, elegant bed designed and made in patinated bronze and steel. He stresses that 'on a job, we're not restricted to using only Colefax and Fowler fabrics, and frequently commission specially woven and printed designs.' Roger supplied a pretty breakfront wardrobe made of white-painted wood, which has a glazed top half with panes backed with silk. On either side of it, and above it, are jib doors concealing further storage space.

For the spare room at the back – which has what Roger calls a 'developer's Georgian window' overlooking the garden – the owner was very keen to have a classic Colefax look. 'I said to Roger, "I'm an American – you have to give me a Colefax and Fowler bedroom,"' she recalls. So he did.

The walls are covered from top to bottom in Colefax and Fowler 'Bowood' chintz – the same chintz that is used for the bedhead and for the bed curtains, which fall lusciously from a Regency corona.

The owner is delighted with the result. 'If we have an American guest coming over to stay, they cosy up in there and they love it,' she says. 'I just had to have a room bearing Colefax and Fowler's signature' □

Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler: 020-7493 2231; www.colefaxantiques.com | Christopher Masson: 020-7223 6045; e-mail info@christophermasson.com

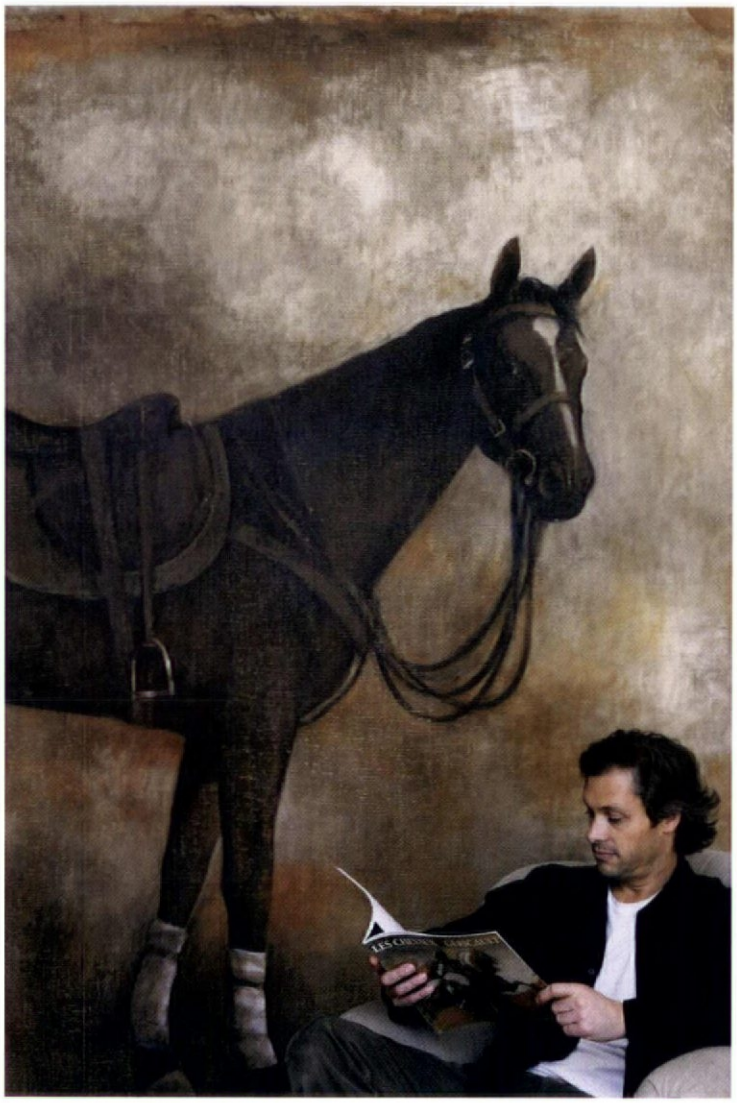
BOTH PAGES CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT The four-poster bed in the main bedroom was commissioned by Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler. The room opens on to a pretty garden. The spare bedroom is decorated in 'Bowood' chintz by Colefax and Fowler. The bathroom is tiled in marble. An eighteenth-century, Danish mirror hangs in the spare room. In the main bedroom, the sofa has embroidered cushions from Chelsea Textiles. The wallpaper was specially printed by George Spencer

PHOTOGRAPHS
CHRIS TUBBS

FROM *THE* MIND'S *EYE*

Jorge Estevez claims he is a decorator, not an artist; his work, the expression of inner feelings, not representations of the physical world. Hatta Byng visits him at his home and his studio in Paris, where his painting provides a beguiling, dream-like backdrop

Like all of his paintings, the work in Jorge's studio takes its inspiration from the natural world – on the left are two panels from a triptych featuring trees – but he rarely copies from life. The life-size polo pony is a work in progress – a commission for a polo-loving friend



Banish any thoughts of quaint trompe-l'oeil landscapes or garish faux-paint finishes: Jorge Estevez's painted decorations are beautiful, sensitive and refreshingly understated. Despite a portfolio stuffed with commissions that are often spine-tingling in their subtlety, Jorge is the first to say he is 'unknown', and is beguilingly unpretentious about his creations. 'I'm not afraid of decoration,' he says. 'Ultimately it is better to decorate and find it is art, than to try to create art and find it is only decoration. This is not art, but neither is it decorating, and I like this ambiguity.' He doesn't want to have to explain his art – he is not striving to be intellectual, nor is he trying to be avant-garde. Though he studied fine art in Chile – his native country – and worked for several years as an artist, he never felt the need to be innovative and daring. 'It just isn't my way,' he explains. 'I like to surprise with silence, not parody or violence. I need to be able to lose myself in my work.' For Jorge, his work is more about capturing 'a feeling', and it is this intimacy that makes his creations so alluring.

It is also for this reason that he prefers to work on a large scale – whole

'I like to surprise with silence... I need to be able to lose myself in my work'

walls or vast canvases. He uses water-based paints, often using rags, sometimes even his fingers, to build up thin layers. His subject matter is the natural world – trees, berries, flowers, animals and birds – but he rarely copies from real life. 'Nothing exists,' he says; 'the things I paint are like ghosts in my imagination.' A tree, for example, is no particular tree, but 'an idea of a tree', 'a universal tree', a vehicle for an expression of 'sensations deep inside me'. He is not afraid of being considered old-fashioned or traditional and readily cites the old masters as inspiration (he studied art history in Florence for several years). But he is not trying to compete with them; it is the backdrops – the misty landscapes and detailed floral studies in many a Botticelli or a Leonardo – that provide the means with which Jorge can immerse himself in his painting.

OPPOSITE The kitchen is a combination of sleek stainless steel and vintage finds; the chairs are from a school. THIS PAGE Jorge in his studio (top). Jorge's paintings are created using water-based paints, which produce a soft glow of colour (far left). The red berries (centre) mirror the soft white berries – entirely of Jorge's imagination – on a panel. In his studio, painted medallions on beaded strings echo those on the walls at his home

'People love the fact that they are getting something special and I love watching them respond with emotion'

In the big living area, three large, rough boards, painted with delicate flowers inspired by details in Botticelli's *Primavera*, rest behind the dining table. The room is cool and relaxed, and not typically Parisian; the wide bare floorboards, which run throughout the apartment, are complemented by muted, natural linens and stylish, sometimes quirky pieces of furniture, such as the gymnasium bench, used here as a coffee table

THIS PAGE Barely there friezes give interest to the main bedroom; the bedhead was made from an old door. OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP A painted roundel leans against a wall in Jorge's apartment. Delicate details enhance the eggshell-grey walls. The white berries on the bathroom walls derive not from nature, but from Jorge's imagination. Elegant medallions adorn the children's bedroom

He rarely does preliminary sketches – only if asked to by a client. Ideas tend to come to him as he puts the brush to the wall. 'I'm lucky to have clients who trust in my work and love my pieces,' he explains. 'It is a careful balance between adapting to a client and giving myself. People love the fact that they are getting something special and I love watching them respond with emotion.' That he numbers several art dealers among his clients is a testament to the beauty and sincerity of his creations – it is not uncommon for his works to sit alongside the old masters by which they are inspired.

Having lived in Madrid for several years, Jorge moved to Paris with his Parisian wife, Elsa, and their two young children last year. His studio is a traditional atelier in a street where artists including Picasso once painted, while home, for the time being, is an enviably stylish apartment in St Germain owned by an Argentinian friend. She is also Jorge's client, and the apartment forms a perfect showcase for his work. 'She's both my most supportive and most demanding client,' he laughs.

'The style is very her,' says Elsa of the owner, who is also her best friend. 'It's very cool and relaxed, with lots of natural linen. It's not very urban or typically Parisian.' Wonderfully wide, bare floorboards run throughout. 'Every piece is unique – not expensive, but full of personality,' Elsa continues. The bedhead, for example, was made from a door found in Brussels, while the coffee tables in the vast sitting room are old gymnasium benches. The deeply cool kitchen was by a designer who specialises in one-off designs incorporating vintage finds.

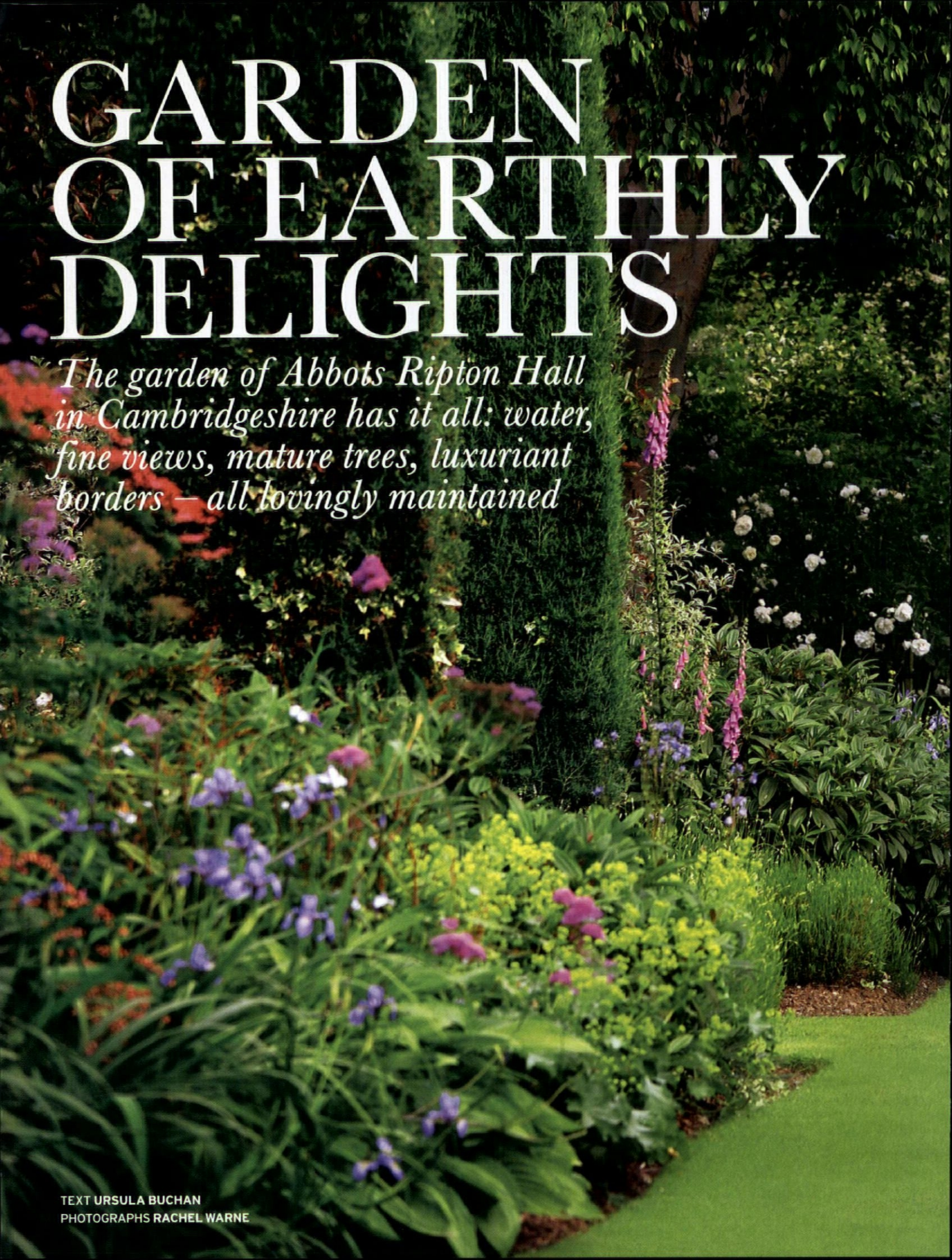
Jorge's commission started with the bedroom and huge en-suite bathroom. The client's brief was suitably intangible: she asked to be transported into another world. For Jorge's part, it was vital his decorations were subtle so that she wouldn't tire of them, and also that there was 'a feeling of the walls having been there before her'. The result is blissfully peaceful: in the bedroom, rough, eggshell-grey walls are painted with the most delicate of details to provide interest, and barely there borders frame doorways. In the bathroom, soft white berries, entirely of Jorge's invention, decorate earthy-coloured walls. As Elsa points out, 'Jorge never over-paints a room.'

Once he had finished, his client could not quite bear to let him go. So in the children's bedroom – in its elegance quite unlike any other child's bedroom – the walls are adorned with painted medallions hanging on beaded strings. Each medallion contains a motif, religious icon or mythical creature, which 'watch over' the children as they sleep. Similar medallions can be found in the cloakroom, where Jorge was asked to be a bit braver – here, Pompeian-red walls perfectly complement an old metal washstand (a flea-market find).

Elsewhere in the flat are a few paintings on panels that Jorge and Elsa brought with them from Madrid. Behind the dining table rest three rough boards painted with delicate little flowers, reminiscent of the meadow in which Botticelli's goddesses gracefully tread in *Primavera*. In his studio he's in the process of painting a life-size horse for somebody who loves polo. He is adamant that 'it won't be 'anything like the usual clichéd depictions of polo ponies.' As Elsa points out, not only are Jorge's creations intensely personal – he admits he couldn't possibly employ an assistant – they radiate 'good taste and style' □

Jorge Estevez: 00-33-6 72 46 15 14; e-mail: estevezart@yahoo.fr

'It is a careful balance between adapting to a client and giving myself'



GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

The garden of Abbots Ripton Hall in Cambridgeshire has it all: water, fine views, mature trees, luxuriant borders – all lovingly maintained

TEXT **URSULA BUCHAN**
PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

Flanking a view of the eighteenth-century house, and punctuated with tall columns of *Cupressus arizonica*, the deep borders burst with flowers in late spring and early summer, including mauve *Iris versicolor*, fluffy purple *Thalictrum aquilegiifolium*, *sisyrinchiums* and foxgloves

THIS PAGE The view, from the house, of the 140-metre double herbaceous borders extends towards mature trees. OPPOSITE The pale green flowers of *Primula alpicola* (top left). The iroko wood Gothic trellis (top right) was designed by Peter Foster. *Cephalaria gigantea* stands out in the herbaceous borders (centre), with a series of wide yew columns creating an undulating green backdrop. A stone urn in the old orchard (bottom left). Yellow and pink 'candelabra' primulas and pale *Libertia grandiflora* thrive in the bog garden (bottom right)

What makes a garden perfect to visit? For me, there should be both still and moving water, broad lawns, interesting trees, generously planted mixed borders, handsome garden structures and fine views. It should be laid out imaginatively, maintained to a high standard and, for preference, continuously cared for by generations of knowledgeable owners. On that basis, the garden at Abbots Ripton Hall in Cambridgeshire is well-nigh perfect.

The garden was first laid out by Lord De Ramsey after he inherited the house and estate in 1937; much of the work was done after the war. A well-regarded plantsman with excellent horticultural connections, he created an eight-acre garden, from what was mainly a field, with the assistance of garden designers Lanning Roper, Jim Russell and Humphrey Waterfield. The existing advantages, in an essentially flat site, included a small river, the Bury Brook, flowing close to the handsome eighteenth-century house, a bridge dating from 1740, and many mature trees. These included the tallest Huntingdon elm (*Ulmus* x *vegeta*) in the country until, sadly, it was blown down in a recent gale.

A large ornamental lake was dug close to the river, some way east of the house, with a ha-ha running north-west from it to separate the garden from the stock grazing in the park. Lady De Ramsey was particularly interested in roses and, with Humphrey Waterfield, created a circular rose garden as well as a lengthy pergola of climbers, ramblers and shrub roses. Waterfield also advised on the design for the impressive 140-metre double herbaceous borders which run south-west – the most striking features visible from the house. Peter Foster, then Surveyor to the Fabric at Westminster Abbey, designed architectural elements, including unique, Gothic-style structures in iroko wood for the long borders, trompe-l'oeil trellis-work on the house walls, a wooden

bridge and two garden pavilions.

In Lord De Ramsey's last years, the garden became somewhat neglected; he died in 1993 and was succeeded by his son, John, who moved to the house with his wife, Alison, and their four children. Being garden-minded, they wished to develop the garden sensitively, while retaining many of the plants and features in it; crucially, they sought to maintain its atmosphere of sylvan calm, enlivened in places with imaginative, colourful planting. As Alison puts it, 'What we have done is maintain and improve, rather than change.'

With this in mind, the river was dredged and a new, natural-looking bog garden created. The Rose Circle was renovated with the help of old-rose expert, Peter Beales; exhausted specimens were replaced with the same varieties unless there was a better, modern alternative: 'We wanted to keep the overall look,' says Alison. A millennium sundial, designed by Peter Foster, now graces the centre of the circle, its gnomon and numbers picked out in gold leaf. Garden designer George Carter assisted with the replanting of the White Border opposite the Rose Circle; he also designed the inventive gates, incorporating old garden tools, that pierce the yew hedges towards the top of the herbaceous borders. A decision to let part of the lawn revert to meadow has resulted, gratifyingly, in the appearance of six species of native orchid.

The De Ramseys have also developed an extensive collection of unusual and diverse – and sometimes extremely rare – oak species. Most of these were given to them as acorns by a Devonian friend, Michael Heathcoat Amory, holder of a National Collection of *Quercus*. 'They are my babies,' says Alison, enthusiastically. The germinated seedlings are housed in an unheated polytunnel for five years, where they grow very fast; once established, they are planted out in the old tree-nursery plot and in the

A thatched summer house is situated in a wilder part of the garden overlooking Bury Brook. Designed by Peter Foster, it has arched windows interspersed with wooden columns made of ash grown on the estate

park. The polytunnel is also used for overwintering tender plants from the borders, since the winters are comparatively cold here.

There are over 1,200 species and cultivars growing in the garden – all recorded, numbered and labelled – with more being added all the time. In all of these endeavours, the De Ramseys are ably supported by their knowledgeable head gardener, Gavin Smith, and his assistant, Laura Reynolds.

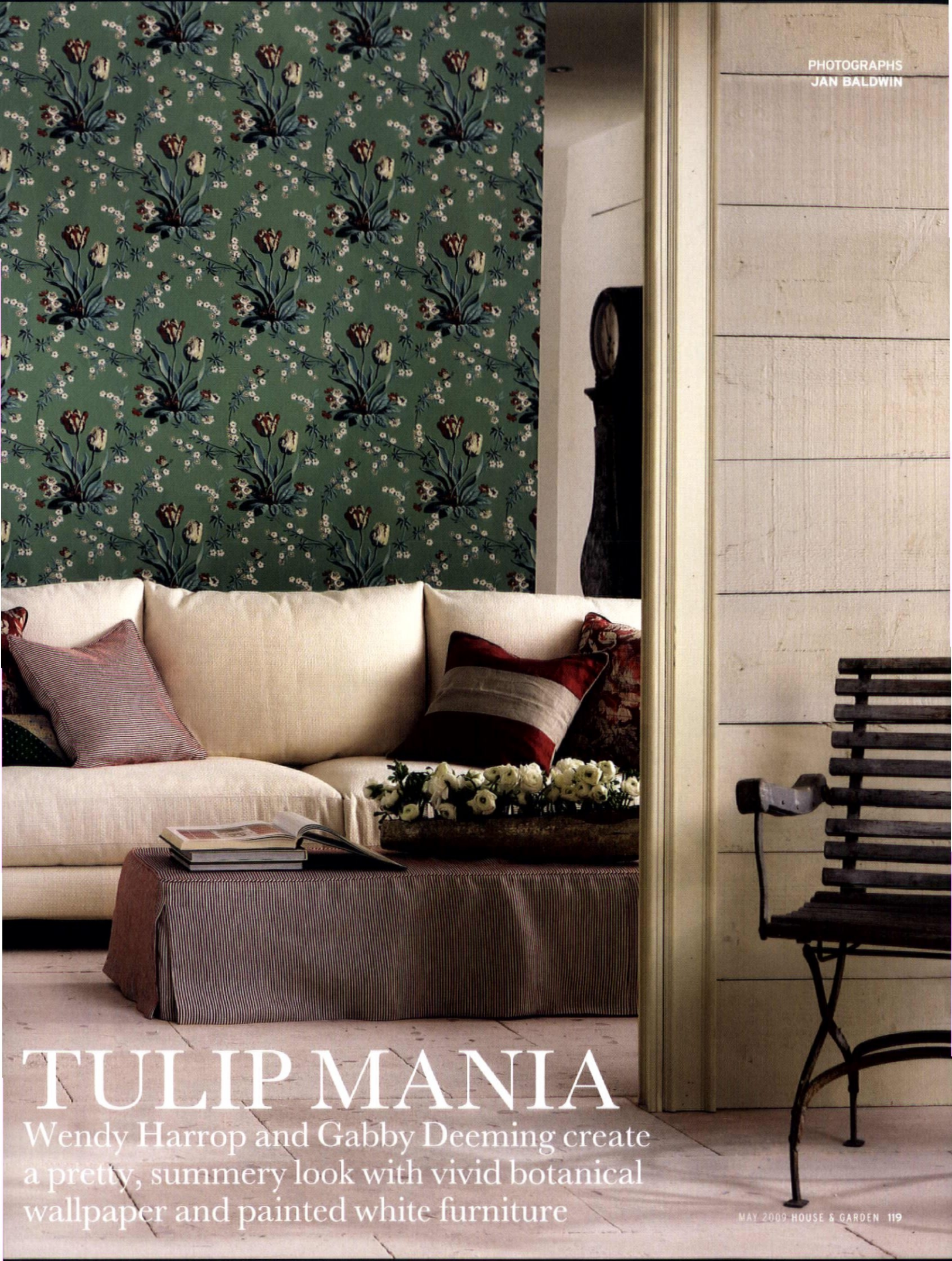
There have been some major, necessary renovation projects at Abbots Ripton Hall: dredging the river, widening a bridge, drastically cutting back overgrown *Cupressus arizonica* and yew hedges. A watching brief is kept on the mature trees – in particular the horse chestnuts (under threat from a toxic mix of leaf miner and bleeding canker), and the important Huntingdon elms, which are injected annually to protect them against Dutch elm disease. The maintenance here is exemplary; the gardeners even clean the white trunks of the Himalayan birches, standing on tower scaffolding and using tepid water and terry towelling.

Although continuity is important to the owners, there have been gradual changes, especially in the planting, reflecting their developing interests and the introduction into nurseries of new plants – a Wollemi pine has replaced the felled Huntingdon elm, for example. The herbaceous borders, in particular, are less formal in appearance than they were 20 years ago, and more generously planted. By keeping such a close eye on things, the De Ramseys have prevented the garden from looking dated or old-fashioned. This is not an easy trick to pull off in any long-established garden, but possible when both owners and staff are committed to its present care and future appeal □

The second biennial Abbots Ripton Garden Show will take place on June 26–27, 2010. For details, visit www.abbotsriptonhall.co.uk

OPPOSITE Two Swedish terracotta urns frame a view of the lake (top). A view of the mixed borders, with white 'Iceberg' roses (centre left). A path winds towards the wild-flower meadow (centre right). Two gates (bottom left), designed by George Carter, are set into the yew hedges at the top of the herbaceous borders. A long wrought-iron pergola (bottom right) is festooned with over 30 different rose varieties.
THIS PAGE White roses 'Alberic Barbier' and 'Madame Plantier' are underplanted with lavender, *Stachys byzantina* and *Salvia lavandulifolia*

FROM LEFT French, Thirties, painted-wood and metal **park chair**, 110 x 53 x 70cm, £750, at Appley Hoare Antiques. 'Provence' **chair** (GUS23/7), painted wood, 89 x 66 x 60cm, £811, covered in 'Faded Red Wildflower', embroidered linen/cotton, £80 a metre; three-drawer **bureau** (GUS41/5), painted wood, 80 x 65 x 40cm, £668. All at Chelsea Textiles. Nineteenth-century French **mirrors**, £45 each, at Artefact. Painted metal **tin** (used as vase), £2.95, at C Best. 'Willem' **lamp**, metal base, £298, at Casper Slieker. Bespoke fabric **lampshade**, 40cm diameter, £41.95 plus 50cm of fabric, from Lighting Works, shown here in 'Selendi' embroidered linen, £80 a metre, at Vaughan. 'Reversi' **sofa**, 85 x 262 x 102cm, £5,020, at Molteni & C Dada. **Cushions**, from left: floral cushions and small green lavender-filled cushion made from nineteenth-century quilted fabric, £120 each and £70, respectively, at Guinevere. 'Narrow Stripe' and 'Panel Stripe' cushion covers in red, £25 each, at Volga Linen. **Ottoman**, 30 x 130 x 50cm, £1,060 plus three metres of fabric, at Ben Whistler, shown here in 'Red Narrow Stripe', linen, £37 a metre, at Volga Linen. Nineteenth-century, painted wooden **toy boat**, £395, at Josephine Ryan. Nineteenth-century, Swedish **Mora clock**, 207 x 60 x 25cm, £3,200, at Artefact. **Nineteenth-century**, slatted, **folding chair**, £650, at Appley Hoare Antiques. 'Botanical Tulips' (02) hand-printed **wallpaper**, by Twigs, £165 a 4.5-metre roll, at Simon Playle. **Foreground walls** painted in 'Clunch', £25.50 for 2.5 litres matt emulsion, at Farrow & Ball. 'BX121 Luxxus' **architrave** in Duropolymer, £11.87 a 2.4-metre length, from Orac Decor. 'Blonde Sancerre' stone **floor**, £193 a square metre, at Paris Ceramics. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page*



PHOTOGRAPHS
JAN BALDWIN

TULIP MANIA

Wendy Harrop and Gabby Deeming create a pretty, summery look with vivid botanical wallpaper and painted white furniture

Three-drawer painted-wood **side table** (GUS91/5), 76 x 150 x 40cm, £697, at Chelsea Textiles. Painted-metal **tins** (used as vases), £3.25 each, at C Best. French, wire, three-tiered **centrepiece**, £250, at Appley Hoare Antiques. 'SOR27061' Regency-style metal **wall lanterns**, £550 each, at I & J L Brown. Painted **stepladder**, two metres tall, £250, at Wild at Heart. **Hats**, from top: 'Foldable Crochet Crown', £78; 'Monte Cristi Savannah', £186; and 'Flat Weave Panama XL Brim', £142. All at Lock & Co. Striped linen **bags**, £150 each, at Few and Far. 'Hardwick' handmade **doors**, from £650 a pair; painted in 'Cobble Grey' exterior paint, £18 a litre; with lever-latch **handle** in bronze, £66. All at Marston and Langinger. **Curtain** in 'Ticking Union', linen/cotton, £22.50 a metre, at Ian Mankin. **Reverse of curtain** in 'Rilly Stripe' (red/pink), bleached linen, £34.26 a metre, from Elanbach. 'Botanical Tulips' (01) hand-printed **wallpaper**, by Twigs, £165 a 4.5 metre roll, at Simon Playle. **Dado paint**, 'Clunch', £25.50 for 2.5 litres matt emulsion, at Farrow & Ball. 'PX116 Axxent' **panel moulding** in Duropolymer, £3.69 a metre, from Orac Decor. 'Stitch and Knit' **runner** (natural), plant fibre, 200 x 70cm, £836, at Top Floor. 'Blonde Sancerre' stone **floor**, £193 a square metre, at Paris Ceramics. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page*

Rough, untreated timber – here, the dado – is harder to paint than sanded wood, but looks more characterful

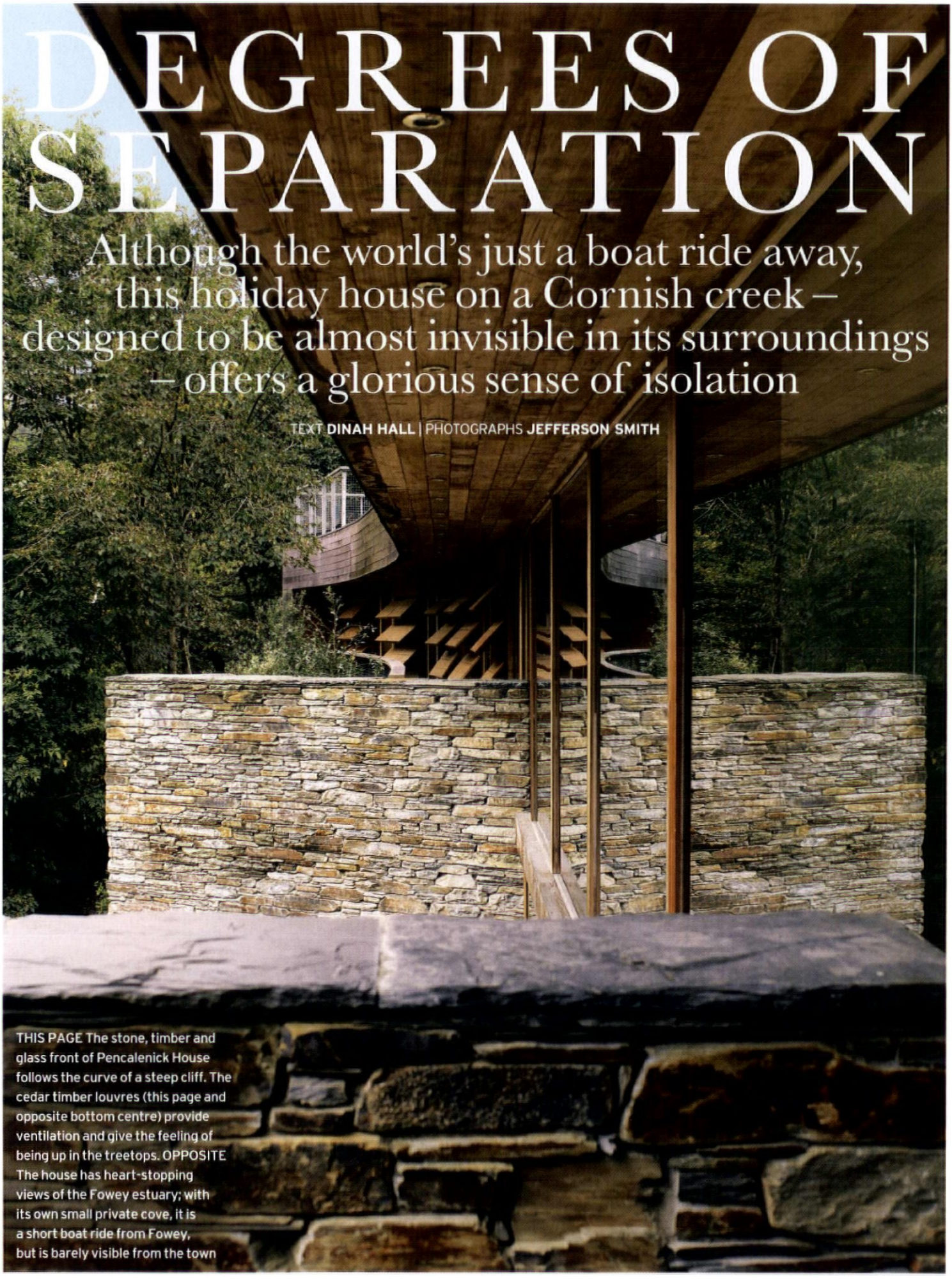
These artificial columns are inexpensive, very light, and simply need to be glued in place

'Nimes' **dining chair**, shown with and without arms, 88 x 57 x 46cm, £586 each; left-hand chair seat covered in 'Keros' (NF30) embroidered linen, £107 a metre; 'Portobello' **lantern** in bronze, £931, plus **shade**, £70. All at Vaughan. **Writing desk** (GUS73/1), painted wood, 99 x 104 x 46cm, £1,422, at Chelsea Textiles. Mid-twentieth-century, plaster **geometric polygons**, £4,800 for a set of 16, at Guinevere. Late-nineteenth-century, wood-framed **mirror**, £180, at Shane Meredith Antiques. Painted-metal **tins** (used as pen pot and vase), £3.25 each, at C Best. Red cloth-covered **notebooks**, £1.95 each, at Few and Far. Eighteenth-century, French **print**, £45, at Julia Boston Antiques. **MacBook** in white, from £719, at Apple Store. 'Botanical Tulips' hand-printed **wallpaper** (02), by Twigs, £165 a 4.5 metre roll, at Simon Playle. **Columns** comprising 'K2131 Luxxus Half-Plinth', £48.26 in Duropolymer, and 'K3101 Luxxus Half-Column', £137.72, in polyurethane, from Orac Decor; painted in 'Clunch', £25.50 for 2.5 litres matt emulsion, at Farrow & Ball. 'Blonde Sancerre' stone **floor**, £193 a square metre, at Paris Ceramics. **Tulips** throughout courtesy of The Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Centre (www.flowerbulbs.co.uk).
For suppliers' details, see Stockists page □

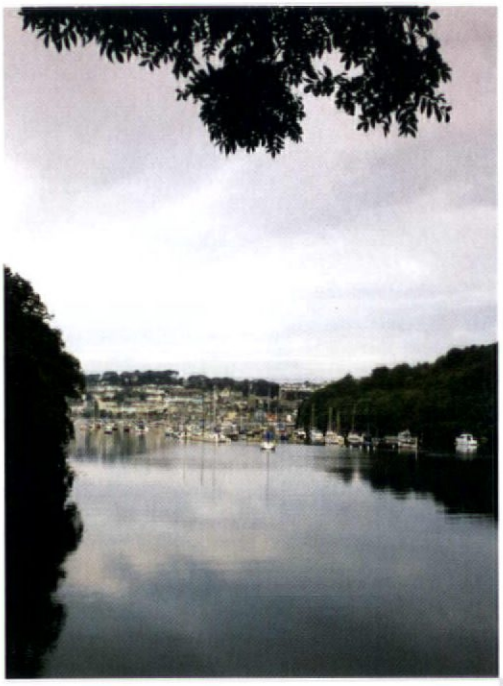
DEGREES OF SEPARATION

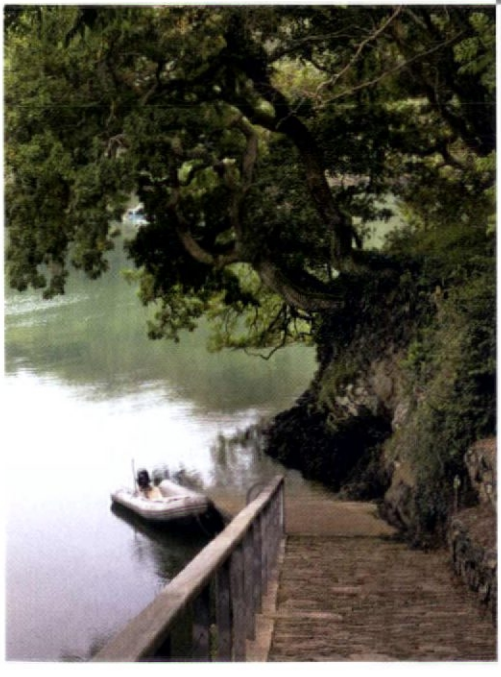
Although the world's just a boat ride away, this holiday house on a Cornish creek – designed to be almost invisible in its surroundings – offers a glorious sense of isolation

TEXT **DINAH HALL** | PHOTOGRAPHS **JEFFERSON SMITH**

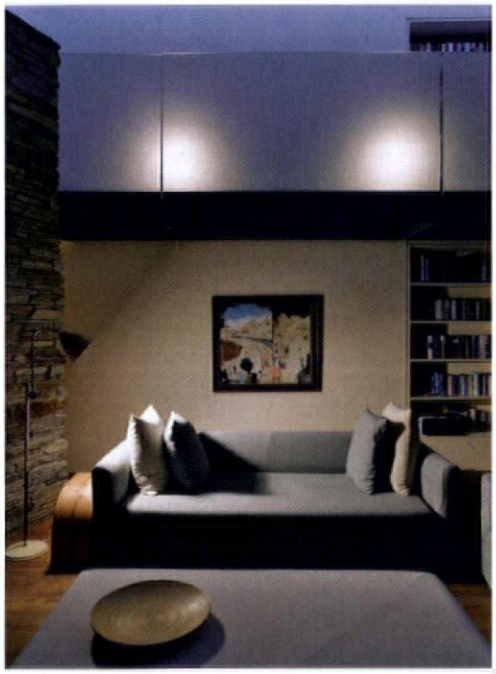


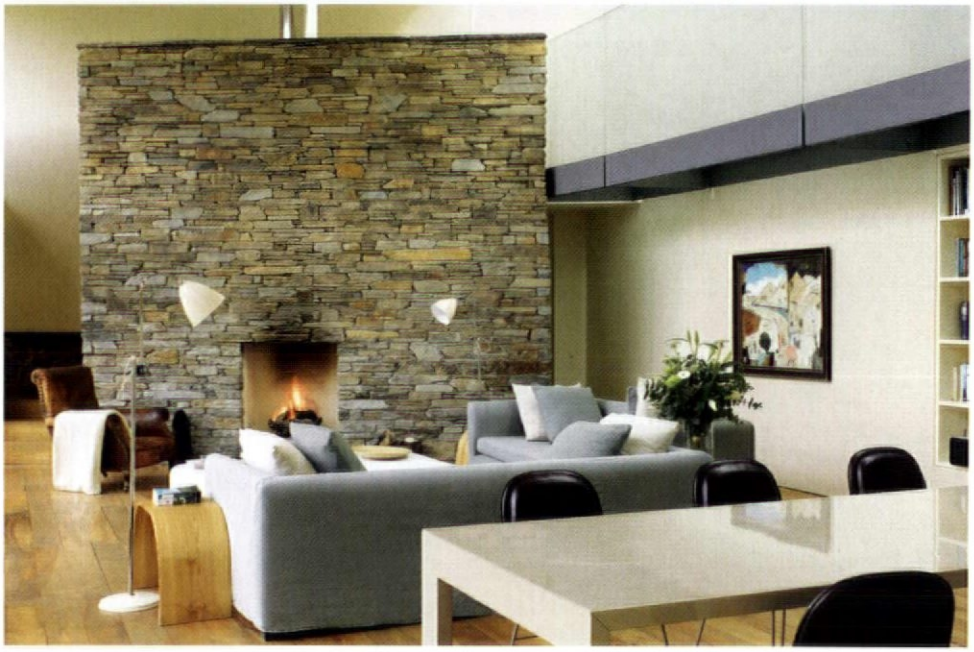
THIS PAGE The stone, timber and glass front of Pencalenick House follows the curve of a steep cliff. The cedar timber louvres (this page and opposite bottom centre) provide ventilation and give the feeling of being up in the treetops. OPPOSITE The house has heart-stopping views of the Fowey estuary; with its own small private cove, it is a short boat ride from Fowey, but is barely visible from the town

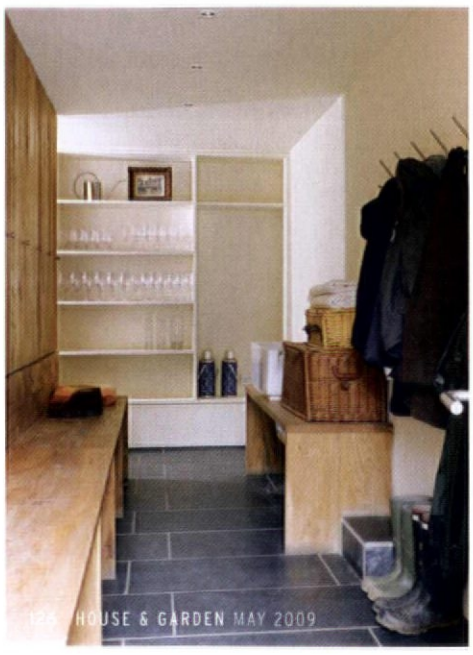


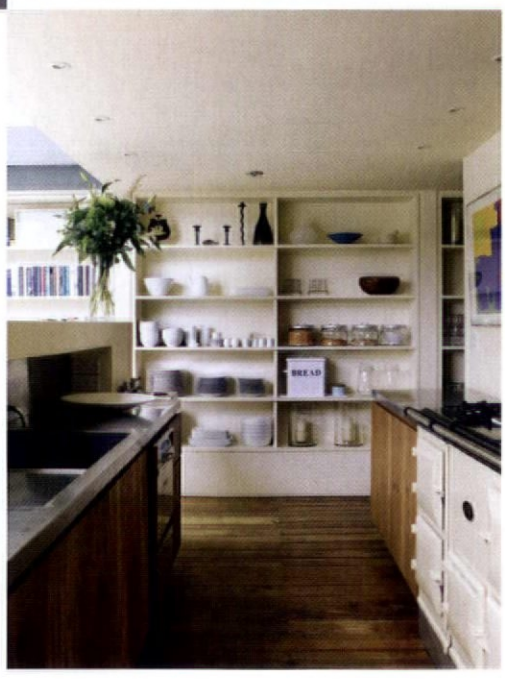


You might expect an article about a modern house on the Cornish coast to start with the planning battle, the years of wrangling with small-minded officials, the appeals, the soul-destroying compromise. But Pencalenick House sailed through. 'They really liked the scheme,' says its architect, Seth Stein, his tone betraying not the least surprise. And indeed, why wouldn't they? Set into a steep cliff above its own private cove, on the site of a former isolation hospital, the stone, timber and glass house merges with the landscape so effectively that it is barely visible from across the water in Fowey. What is more surprising is that when you approach it from the other side, down a winding country lane, it is also virtually invisible. As Seth puts it, 'you sort of discover it': the steepness of the site and the fact that the roof is grassed over mean that at first glance you just see an enigmatic stone tower emerging. Only once you know it's there do your eyes focus on the strip of glazing that is actually the roof light, and the architectural lines of the house which follow the curve of the land.









Then, as you make your way down a dramatic flight of steps and are confronted by the house in its full glory, you can give way to heart-stopping awe and gut-wrenching envy. This is the kind of site that rarely, if ever, comes on to the market in this country. Seth's client was tipped off by a local agent and acquired it against stiff competition. It's a part of Cornwall that is particularly magical: idyllic scenery, the estuary bobbing with sailing boats, but also the bustle of historic industry as tugs make their way up the creek towards the china-clay quarry. It's not hard to see why Daphne du Maurier, who lived just along the creek, loved this area – 'like a gateway to another world', as she put it.

For Seth, who had already built coastal houses in Finland and South Africa, this was a perfect setting because the strong

BOTH PAGES In the double-volume living space (opposite centre and this page) the modern shapes of the lamps and sofa contrast comfortably with the old leather chair and the rustic texture of the slate wall. The exterior at night (opposite top). The kitchen (bottom right) occupies the space beneath the upstairs study area. The 'mud' room (bottom left) has a floor made of slate. At night, the etched-glass bridge (centre left) is illuminated, creating a soft glow

THIS PAGE The dining area – separated from the kitchen by a half-height wall – demonstrates the same fierce geometry as the rest of the house. OPPOSITE The glass bridge (centre) runs along the upper level of the living area, leading along a curved landing (top) – lit by a skylight – to bedrooms and bathrooms (bottom), with giant Philippe Starck tubs

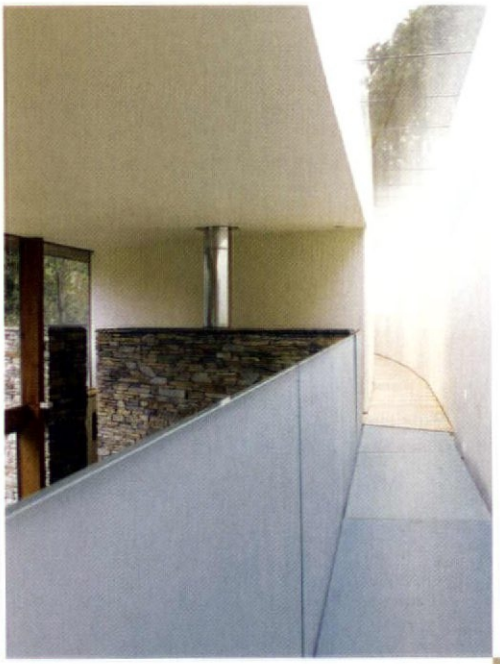
characteristics of the landscape dictated the design. 'If you've got a site that is essentially flat and spacious, there are few constraints to what you can design,' he explains. 'Here, the house hugs the hill, following the contours in a rough J-shape, and the landscaping is used as a kind of cushion over which the building projects.' Using local Cornish slate and a restricted range of materials, Seth has created a house of elemental beauty and fierce geometry that connects with nature in the most fundamental way.

As in his other houses, the entrance is intended to be slightly ambiguous. There is no obvious front door – instead you 'filter' into the house either through the huge sliding glass doors or through the 'mud room', where lockers, Wellington boots and buckets and spades tell of blissful childhood holidays. This takes you into the kitchen which, in turn, leads through to the double-volume living space that Seth describes as 'basically the big convivial family hang-out'. But although it seems vast, the proportions are very carefully considered so that you don't feel that you're rattling around. It feels amazingly cosy; there's a sense of isolation but in a good way. And the world is only a boat ride away.

Most people think that if you have a big view you should just throw in an enormous picture window, but Seth explains that it is important to feel quite snug when faced with the extent of a view like this. 'It's not that vast views are necessarily overbearing or intimidating, it's just that they oblige you to acknowledge them. And maybe you need a bit of balance.' In this case, the balance is achieved by framing the view but also orienting the room towards the chimneypiece in the thick slate wall, set at a dynamic diagonal, which is a continuation of the line running up from the slipway to the external wall that extends into the house.

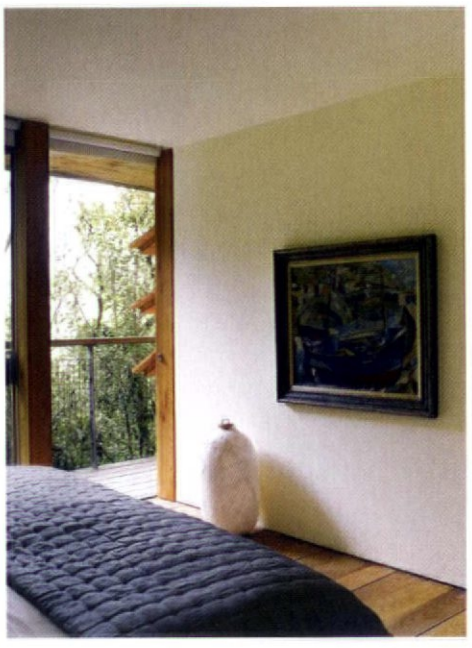
In contrast to the rustic, textural nature of the slate walls, a slick, glass bridge shoots across the double-volume space, leading to the study at one end and a line of bedrooms and bathrooms at the other; above it, the glass skylight drops light down the back of the house and through the etched-glass bridge, which glows at night.

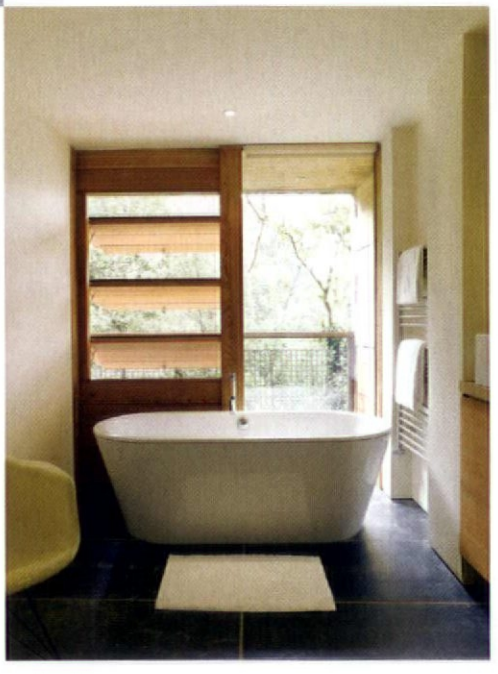
Seth describes the bedrooms as 'dormitory-like', which, when you are lying in one with the timber louvres open, listening to the rhythm of the waves, undersells them. But his point is that, whereas in the city, bedrooms take on a sanctuary-like importance, in a holiday house like this, the main emphasis is on the communal space. Bathrooms, however, are not just functional places here – they're for wallowing in the giant Philippe Starck tubs, enjoying the connection with the outside. Bathrooms and bedrooms have the same fenestration – fixed glazed panels, with sliding sections for access and timber louvres for ventilation. Viewed from the outside, the louvres give a feeling of being up in the treetops, almost jungle-like, but in fact the inspiration for them came from the Finnish house that Seth designed.



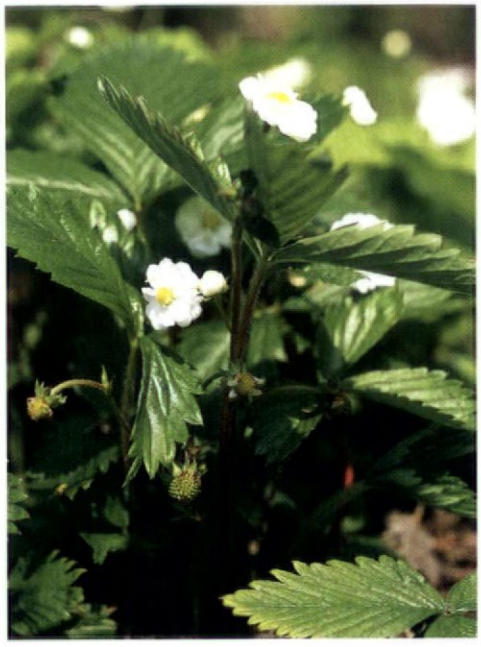
He seems genuinely puzzled when asked if there were any battles with the client. 'I can't remember any resistance to our proposals, but then we had worked together on projects before, and the client said that the point about coming to me for the nth time was that it was a bit like going to your tailor – by which I think he meant that there are some things you don't have to brief your architect on because they've got the measure of you already. Of course, though, there were things that I insisted upon.' Which just goes to show that you don't get a strong building without a strong-minded architect □

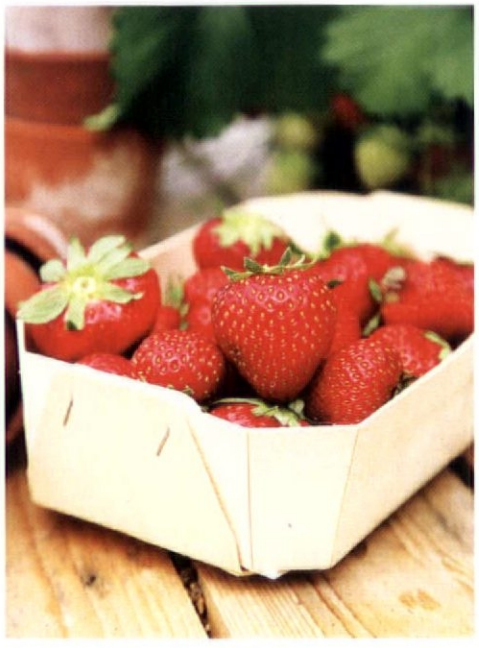
Seth Stein Architects: 020-8968 8581; www.sethstein.com

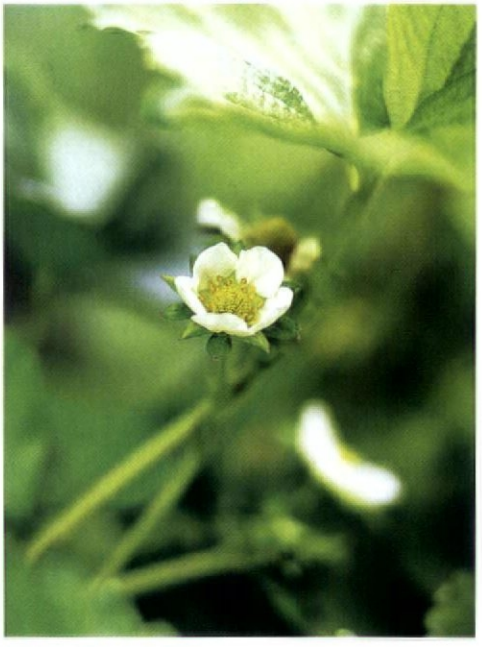


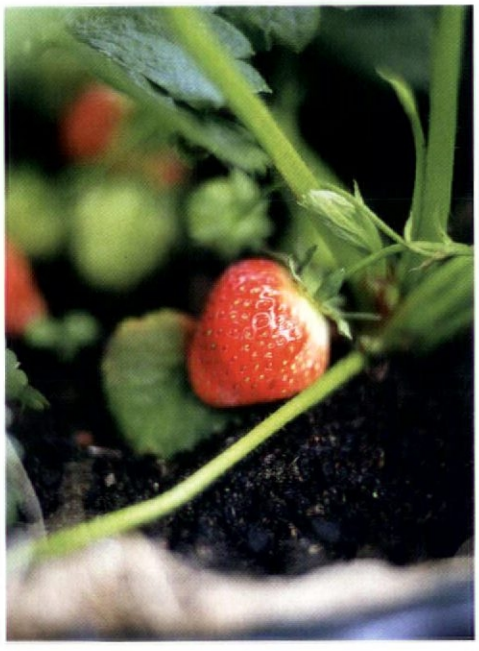


THIS PAGE The fruit of the Alpine strawberry, *Fragaria vesca* var. *'Semperflorens'*, is small and sweet. It makes a useful ground-cover plant, spreading quickly to fill awkward corners in either shade or sun. OPPOSITE Strawberries produce small, fragrant flowers in late spring; the fruit will set when these flowers are pollinated, and the plants should be surrounded by straw at this stage to keep the developing fruit clean and dry. Ideally they should also be netted to protect the crop from birds. In May or June, the plants will start to produce runners. These should be cut off in the first year to strengthen the plant for the following year, but in subsequent years runners can be used to propagate new plants. In midsummer, after harvesting, the runners should be pegged down into fresh compost in pots (middle right). The plantlets will root within a few weeks



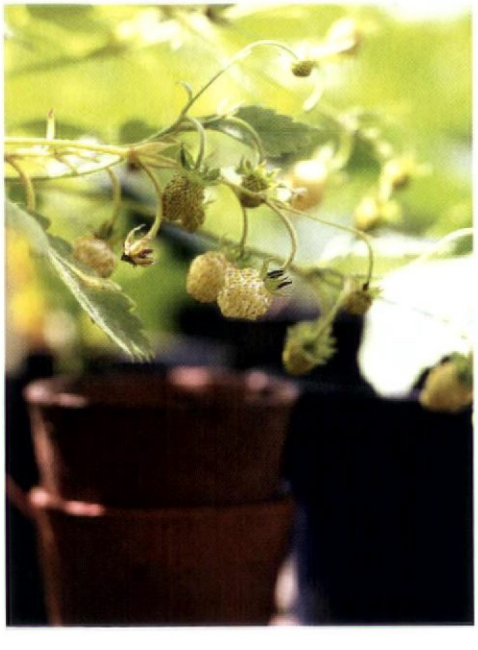


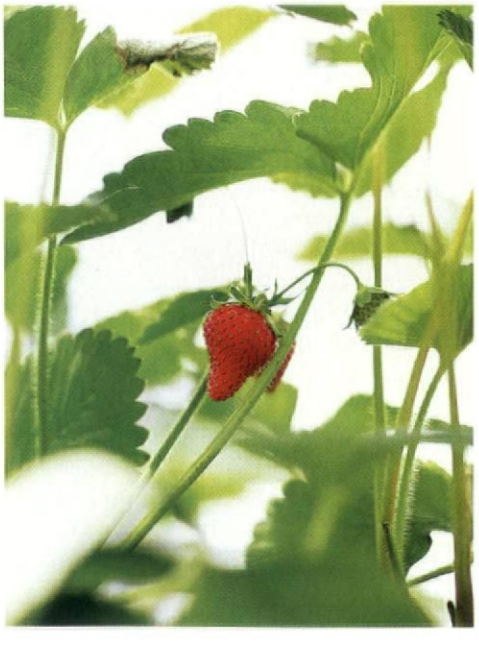




TOP CROPS *Part 5:* STRAWBERRIES

Continuing her series exploring the history, mythology and cultivation of fruit, Clare Foster considers the strawberry





PHOTOGRAPHS **ANNAÏCK GUITTENY**

The sixteenth-century physician William Butler famously wrote of the strawberry: 'Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.' How right he was. Sweet and juicy, strawberries are one of the nation's favourite fruits, eaten by the truckload and available on demand all year round. But as with so many other modern fruits and vegetables, the flavour of these production-line strawberries is nothing like it used to be. Bred for appearance, longevity and disease resistance, today's mass-produced strawberries are almost always disappointingly insipid in flavour. The answer is, of course, to grow your own, and re-educate yourself in what a strawberry should really taste like.

Cultivated strawberries have a much shorter history than many other fruits. The larger hybrids that we know today didn't appear until the eighteenth century, so it is likely that William Butler was referring to the small, wild strawberry, *Fragaria vesca*, that grows in woodland across Europe. From other references, it is easy to deduce that these woodland strawberries were a popular food in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, gathered from the wild to be sold in the streets, and also grown in back gardens from plants pillaged from the countryside. Around this time, three other species arrived from Europe – the Alpine strawberry *F. v.* var. *'Semperflorens'*, still popular today; the Hautbois, from central Europe; and the Virginian strawberry, sent from New England by the first European settlers. Apparently superior in flavour, all these berries were similar in size to the British woodland strawberry, but because of unmatched chromosome numbers, none was conducive to hybridisation.

The event that led to the giant leap between these tiny wild strawberries and the large, juicy fruits that we know today was the discovery of the Chilean strawberry by the aptly named Frenchman A-F Frézier (the French for strawberry is *fraise*). In 1712, Frézier, who was employed by the French navy as a spy, sailed to the Chilean port of Concepción, where he spent the next year posing as a merchant while assessing the port's military defences. Exploring the surrounding countryside, he found a native strawberry with fruits bigger than he'd ever seen. Two years later he returned to France with as many cuttings as he could take on the six-month voyage, during which supplies ran so low he was forced to sustain them with his own ration of water. Five plants survived, and were taken to the royal gardens in Paris to be grown on. Propagation was successful, and two years later the first Chilean strawberries were brought by Philip Miller to Britain, where they were given pride of place in Chelsea Physic Garden.

But although the Chilean strawberries were large, to British tastes they were unexciting in flavour and rather pale in colour. This might have been the end of the story had it not been for the serendipitous discovery that Virginian and Chilean strawberries cross-pollinated when grown alongside each other, allowing for the potential of new hybrids. Armed with this knowledge, growers began to develop a host of new cultivars with large, luscious and sweet-tasting fruit. One of the first and most celebrated was the famous 'Keens' Seedling', introduced by nurseryman Michael Keens in 1819, for which he was awarded a Silver Cup by the Royal Horticultural Society to acknowledge the unprecedented size and flavour of the fruit. With this, the modern strawberry was born.

STRAWBERRY TRIVIA

Strawberry ancestry

The great British strawberry is not as British as you may think. Its origins are not from our native woodland strawberry, but from two American species, the Virginian strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana*, and the Chilean strawberry, *F. chiloensis*. Keeping its hot, sunny origins in mind will help when it comes to cultivation – on the whole, strawberries do best in a sunny summer and need surprisingly little water.

Origins of the name

There are various arguments about the origins of the name strawberry. The most convincing is the fact that it was described as the 'streabariye' in Anglo-Saxon times because of its tendency to 'stray' using runners. Others claim that the name comes from the practice of surrounding the plants with straw, while a third theory is that it comes from the nineteenth-century practice of threading the berries on to straw to sell at market. Meanwhile the botanical name *Fragaria* is derived from the Latin *fragum*, meaning fragrance, relating to the fruit's aromatic qualities.

Flavour and vitamins

Flavour is the single most important quality in a strawberry, with disease resistance and reliable cropping coming second and third. The balance of sweetness and acidity is paramount, and this is dependent on many things, including soil type, rainfall and, above all, levels of sunshine, which contribute to the build-up of natural sugars. The scent of strawberries is also important – inhaling the aroma can affect the expectation of flavour. To get the best out of your strawberries, eat them as soon as possible after picking, and at room temperature. Sun-ripened strawberries have many health-giving properties, including plenty of antioxidants, a high vitamin C content, and high levels of iron and calcium.

CULTIVATION

Strawberries tolerate a wide range of soil types, but they do best on a loamy, well-drained soil in full sun. They are stoloniferous plants, reproducing by sending out runners, each of which forms a rooting plantlet. The best time to plant these runners is in September or October, but many growers supply cold-stored runners in late spring that can be planted out between May and July. Choose a sheltered, sunny spot and ensure your soil is prepared in advance by digging in well-rotted compost or manure. Set each plant about 45cm apart in rows a metre apart, with the crown sitting just on the surface of the soil. If you're planting in late spring or summer, cut off any flowers in the first year to strengthen the plant and encourage a bumper crop the following year.

Watering is a delicate issue, as too much water early on in the season will result in leafy growth and a poor crop. Watering should be carried out little and often if the weather is dry. In early summer, when the fruit is developing, straw should be placed around the plants to keep the fruit clean and dry, and to prevent infection from grey mould (botrytis). Ideally, the plants should also be netted to protect them from birds, and surrounded by beer traps or other devices to stall slugs. In the first year, snip off any new runners as they appear, which will strengthen the plant for the following year. In subsequent years, the runners can be used to create new plants – simply peg the runner into a pot of fresh soil using a loop of wire and wait for the plantlet to root. All strawberry plants should be replaced after three years as they lose vigour and are more likely to succumb to disease. New plants must be situated in a different bed to avoid the build-up of soil-borne disease. Strawberries can also be grown in pots, hanging baskets or growbags, using a good proprietary compost.

Over 60 strawberry cultivars are available in the UK, both early- and late-summer varieties, as well as the so-called perpetual strawberries that produce an early crop followed by a second flush of fruit in late summer and autumn. Virus and other disease makes strawberries relatively short-lived, so old varieties are easily lost. One of the few old-fashioned cultivars still grown today is 'Royal Sovereign', introduced in 1892. Its fruit is smaller than most of the modern cultivars, but the flavour is superb. 'Elsanta' is a well-known, reliable and heavy-cropping variety favoured for its firm flesh. One of the most talked-about recent arrivals is the flavoursome, reliably prolific 'Chelsea Pensioner', introduced by fruit grower Ken Muir in 2003. The perpetual strawberry 'Mara des Bois' is a hybrid between the modern garden and wild woodland varieties, which produces a second flush of strawberries in autumn □

Fruit specialist Ken Muir (01255-830181; www.kenmuir.co.uk) supplies strawberry runners and pot-grown plants either in October or between April and late July, for immediate planting

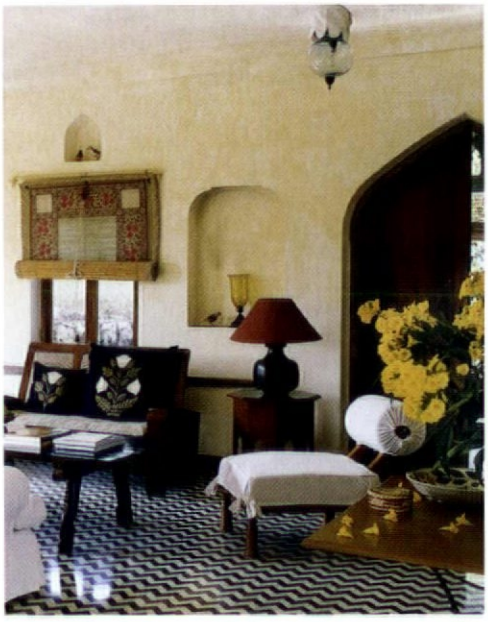
The large, glossy red strawberries that we know so well are actually hybrids from two American species – the Virginian strawberry, *Fragaria virginia*, and the Chilean strawberry, *F. chiloensis*. They need well-drained soil and a sheltered position in full sun. Sunshine contributes to the natural build-up of sugars in the fruit, so the sunnier the summer, the sweeter the strawberries

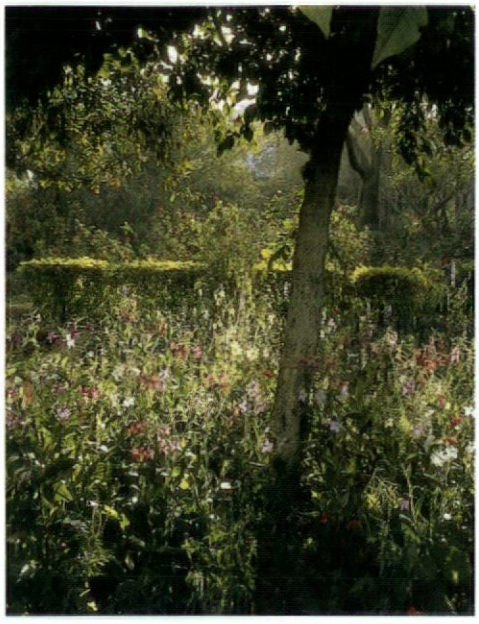
THIS PICTURE Brigitte Singh's house was built to her own specifications, round a central courtyard; she lives on the upper floor, above her studio. OPPOSITE The floor of the airy, open-plan living space is covered with locally made tiles in a Moghul chevron design traditionally used for water features

Inspired by Moghul art, the owner of this modern 'haveli', left her native France to develop her own hand-block-printed fabrics business in India, where she now lives and works

FRANCO-INDIAN FLAIR

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS **HENRY WILSON**





Brigitte Singh follows a particularly European tradition. She is one of that handful of people who have successfully upped sticks and left the comfort and assurance of their native surroundings – in her case, France – to set up a business in challenging circumstances. She now lives in India, running her successful hand-block-printing business from a newly built stone *haveli* (mansion).

As a young girl in Cholet, near Nantes, Brigitte dreamt of such exotic places as Herat and the Great Bazaar in Afghanistan. At 19, she went to study Islamic arts in Cairo; in 1979, she travelled to Jaipur, capital of Rajasthan, India's desert state. She studied Moghul and Rajput miniature painting, but soon discovered the area's famous hand-block-printed fabrics. For centuries these were one of India's most refined and sought-after exports to Europe, the floral fabrics first becoming known as indiennes, later evolving into chintz.

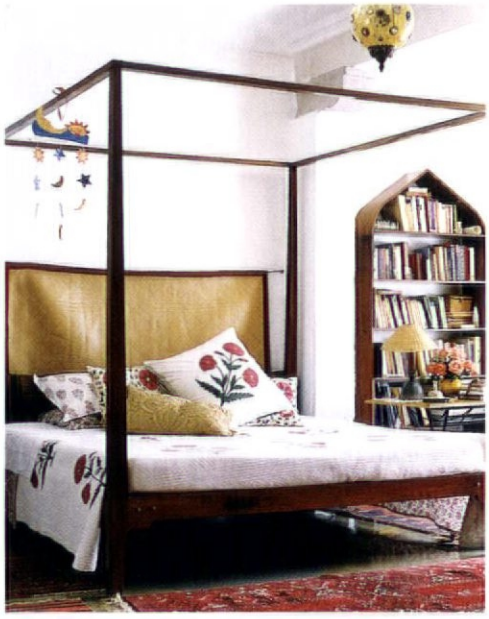
So impressed was Brigitte with the bright, sophisticated finish of one new pattern, based on an eighteenth-century example, that she went in search of the artist who had created it. Soon she was producing her first hand-block-printing commission for Colefax and Fowler.

Brigitte's house, built to her specification in 1995, is on the outskirts of the village of Amer, which is dominated by a spectacular hill fort. 'I adore the old stone-built *havelis* of Rajasthan, and I designed the house along their ancient principles – or rather, it designed itself,' she laughs. 'I love working with the local builders who work with such basic tools, still use the traditional methods and materials, and still work to perfection.'

The heart of the building is a large airy *chowk* (courtyard). Its design creates natural ventilation, essential to combat the high summer temperatures. The ground floor is entirely given over to her atelier, as for Brigitte it is essential to be close to her work – 'to live with it,' she explains.

A stone staircase leads to Brigitte's quarters, at the centre of which is an airy open-plan living area with views of the garden. Here she combines her own French style with Indian tradition, tempering decoration with practicality. The floor is finished with locally made tiles in the distinctive chevron design that traditionally decorates Moghul water features. 'I am constantly reminded of animated water,' says Brigitte. Not only are stone or tile floors crucial here for their cooling effect, they are also a practical choice due to the fine sand that is constantly blown in from the desert.

Brigitte combines French and Indian styles - the chair in the living area (above left) was formerly in the Rajasthan Legislative Authority building in Jaipur. The fabric covering the kitchen table (above right) was inspired by an eighteenth-century French design. The garden (above centre) is filled with over 200 varieties of flowers, shrubs and trees. Brigitte's fabrics (below left) are all hand-block-printed in her studio (below centre), using a variety of tools (below right)



The furnishing of the house is constantly evolving. 'I'm not a great shopper for myself, but often when I go hunting with friends to help them I end up buying things,' says Brigitte. Her style is informal and understated, often arrived at by happenstance: 'I found the art-deco sofa in an antiques shop in Delhi, and the trunk while holidaying in Sri Lanka.' Many of the accessories in Brigitte's home are made by local craftsmen to her own specifications. There are also plenty of her own botanical fabrics – 'just adding a few flowers adds so much beauty to an interior.' Her main decorative inspirations are Moghul botanical motifs – the cushion covers on the art-deco sofa feature the 'Black Tara' poppy – and, to a lesser extent, traditional French floral toiles, such as the tablecloth in the kitchen, which was inspired by an eighteenth-century French design.

Instead of curtains, which become dust traps, she has chosen the traditional rolled chicks (split bamboo blinds) paired, in the main sitting room, with one of her own favourites, a lotus design. The chicks are lowered every afternoon, particularly in summer, to keep out the hot sun, producing a soft, filtered light.

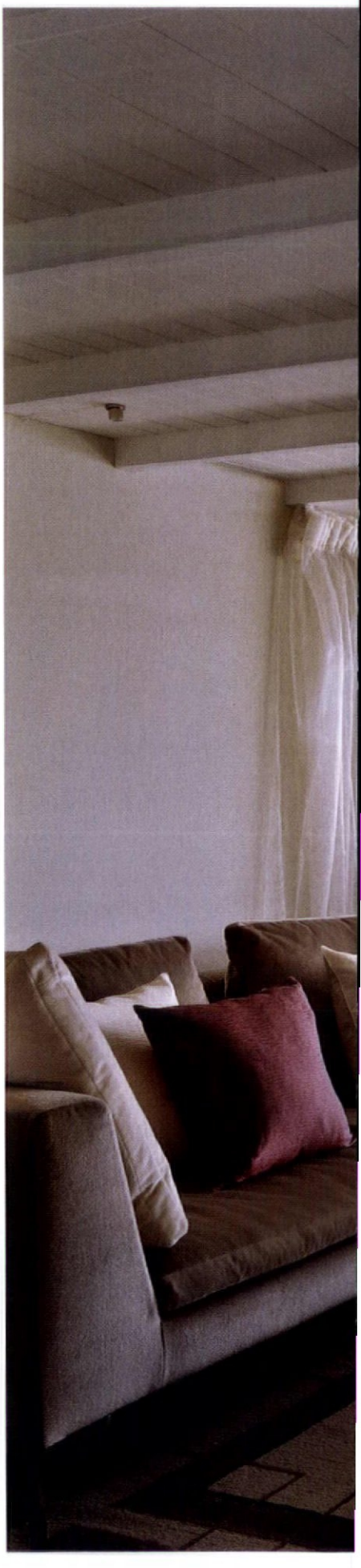
There are many unexpected green vistas. 'My Chinese sign is the wild goat,' says Brigitte. 'I need to chew green and I need a garden; I would not survive without one around me.' She quotes an old adage: 'If you want to be happy for a day, have a drink; if you want to be happy for a year, get married; if you want to be happy for a lifetime, work in your garden.' Crumbling Rajput ruins form a focal point in the garden that Brigitte planned around a traditional Moghul layout, filling it with over 200 different flowering perennials, shrubs and trees. The vibrant colours of the borders – which overflow with Moghul roses, poppies, marigolds, cornflowers and many more – 'serve as templates for the combination of flowers which I reproduce in my fabric designs'.

Brigitte admits, 'I am not a city person and my isolation is by choice.' She needs the peace and space to work. Her creations are the result of conscientious research and a meticulous approach but, by her own admission, she is an incurable romantic: 'Great stories start with dreams,' she states. What is certain is her precise vision of delicious, bespoke fabrics and the beautiful setting in which she dreams them up □

To order Brigitte Singh's fabrics in the UK, contact Aleta Bartel (020-7228 9676; e-mail: aleta@aletaonline.com)

The main bedroom (above left), with its simple four-poster bed, is typical of Brigitte's understated style. Throughout the house, Brigitte has dressed the windows with split-bamboo blinds (above right) paired with thin curtains. The vibrant colours of Brigitte's garden (above centre and below left) inspire the floral patterns that she reproduces in her fabric designs (below centre). Brigitte is pictured in the garden with her daughter, Lilah (below right)

The main entrance to Sally Wilkinson's houseboat is accessed via a gangplank at the rear (below). The sitting room (right) is sophisticated and stylish, with an L-shape sofa from B&B Italia and a custom-made ottoman covered in 'Galuchat' leather by Alma. Sliding doors open on to the south-facing deck (left), which is lined with pots of herbs and shrubs, and has sweeping views of the Thames



VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

The owner of this houseboat moored on the Thames wanted nothing 'boaty' or 'ropy'; she briefed her designer to create a floating, high-tech apartment to make the most of one of the widest views in London

TEXT **BECKY PUGH**
PHOTOGRAPHS **SIMON UPTON**

'I've always thought it would be nice to live on a boat. It's not for everyone, of course, but to me it's a haven,' says Sally Wilkinson, managing director of bespoke kitchen designer Smallbone of Devizes, as she shows me round her houseboat.

Moored with a motley collection of other boats, it is an enchanting sight. To get to it, you turn your back on the busy London streets, slip through a gate and follow a gangplank round to the front door. Once you are on board, the sounds of the city disappear and, at high tide, a gentle rocking sensation immediately soothes you.

When Sally bought the boat in June 2006, 'it had been done up by the previous owner, but not at all to my taste.' So she enlisted the help of interior designer Mark Smith, with whom she had worked on Smallbone showrooms.

Mark's brief was clear. 'I said to him, "I don't want a boat,"' Sally recalls. '"What I want is for you to think modern apartment with fabulous river views. I want glass and space; I do not want rubbed teak and lengths of rope all over the place."'

Together they set about a major refurbishment that took just over a year to complete. The ground floor had consisted of a narrow corridor, with small rooms leading off it and a poky staircase to one side. Out came the old walls and staircase, leaving in their place one large room that flows from the entrance at the rear of the boat all the way to the sliding glass doors at the front.

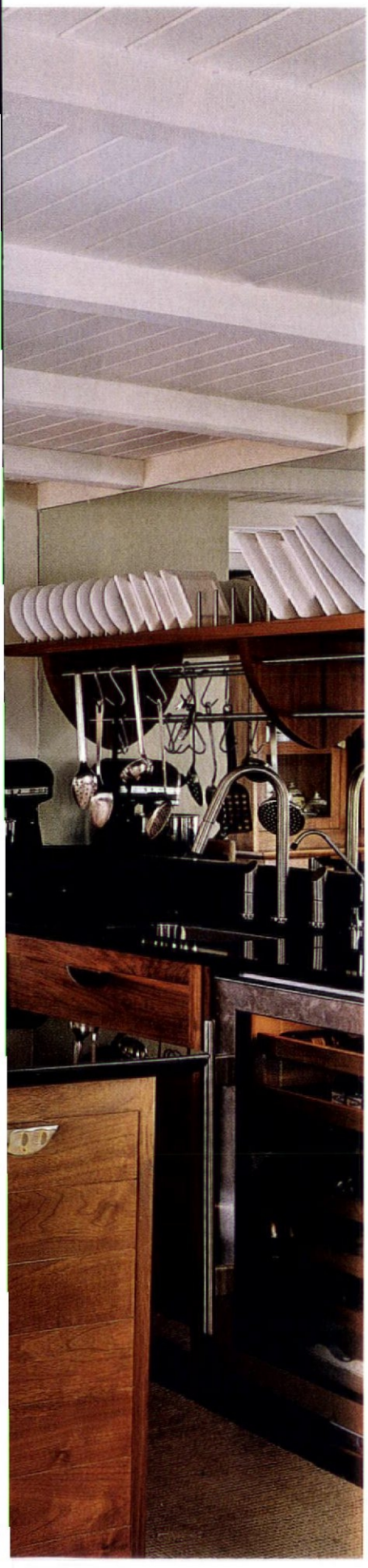
They enlarged all the windows, and added extra ones – which, Mark says, was no mean feat: 'Window sizes and positions required careful thought, because although we wanted to maximise the light and view, we also needed to provide privacy from the neighbouring houseboats.'

Keen to make a feature of the new staircase, Sally's architect, Michael Seiersen, positioned it in the centre of the boat, beneath a vast skylight. Stunning, sheet-glass panels now take the place of ordinary banisters. 'Michael insisted that we introduce some drama with it, and some light going down the stairs. At the time I couldn't quite appreciate how clever the plan was; it was brilliant,' Sally admits.

Dark stained oak floorboards run the 18-metre length of the top floor, and the walls are painted in a calming neutral shade throughout. But two inventive partial walls separate the open-plan space into three distinct areas: a smart Smallbone kitchen; a dining area with a steel-framed Macassar-ebony table and linen-covered chairs; and a stylish sitting room with glass doors leading on to a deck.

The partitions have various functions. They conceal unsightly

ALL PICTURES The open-plan upper floor is painted throughout in 'Stone II' by Paint & Paper Library. Partial walls divide the space into three distinct areas, and are also used to display art (above left). The remote-controlled gas fire and surround (top centre) were from Chesney's. The kitchen (above centre) is at the rear of the boat, leading through to the dining area and sitting room beyond. A large mirror in the dining area (right) bounces light from the skylight around the space; the steel-framed, Macassar-ebony table was custom-made



heating and air-conditioning units, and provide large, clear spaces on which to hang artwork. Above all, they are there 'to tease people with the view from the boat'. Sally explains, 'Michael taught me that you mustn't do the full strip as soon as you walk through the door, as it were. You must tantalise. And then when people finally get into the sitting room and see the view, it is the most wonderful surprise.'

Downstairs, where there had been four bedrooms, there are now two large suites, each with a fabulous bathroom and dressing room. Sally's is at the front of the boat, which is more peaceful and has the best views of the river, while the other is at the back. At the bottom of the stairs, a square space is lined with rows of built-in cupboards covered in a chic lizard skin. A door leads to a utility room that neatly houses the washing machine and an extra fridge.

'This project was the first time I have come to a house bringing nothing with me. As there isn't a huge amount of space here, I could indulge myself and buy exactly what I wanted, because I wasn't going to buy very much of it,' Sally says of her grey velvet B&B Italia sofa, its plump aubergine cushions and the carefully chosen paintings on her walls.

The fact that it is a houseboat hasn't prevented Sally from installing a raft of slick, modern conveniences. A Bose sound system is wired into the walls; flat-screen televisions hang in just the right places; and a stunning, remote-controlled gas fire has been fitted in the sitting room.

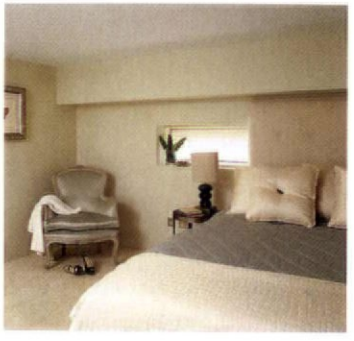
The south-facing deck at the front of the boat provides an ideal space for eating, drinking and sunbathing. Around its edge, landscape gardener Vere Rowsell has arranged fragrant pots of lavender, herbs and gardenias. And, to finish off the project, Vere is helping Sally to install colour-changing LED lights in the outside area. 'We are going to illuminate various pots, and throw some light on to the river, from where it will bounce back up,' she says with glee.

Sally and her team have transformed an ordinary houseboat into a sleek, functional, urban home, with enviable entertaining space, plenty of room for storage and superb views of the Thames.

'I am utterly thrilled with it,' Sally enthuses. 'I used to say I could live in a nice apartment in a hotel – I wasn't one of those people who felt a huge tie to anywhere. But the minute I got this, I just felt I'd come home. It felt absolutely right, and now I wouldn't be anywhere else' □

Smallbone of Devizes: 020-7589 5998; www.smallbone.co.uk | Mark Smith: 020-8747 3909; www.smithcreative.net | Michael Seiersen: 07980-015090; e-mail: michael.seiersen@btinternet.com | Vere Rowsell, Landscape Solutions: www.landscapesolutions.co.uk; 0845-200 8252

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT The smart kitchen is from Smallbone's Walnut & Silver range. Downstairs there are two bedrooms; Sally's, from Smallbone's Alchemy collection, is decorated in rich, chocolatey shades. Each bedroom has a spacious en-suite bathroom. The spare bedroom, decorated in a neutral, calming palette, is at the rear of the boat. The staircase is situated beneath a large skylight, with sheet-glass panels in place of banisters



COPY THAT

Hatta Byng suggests ways to recreate the look of the houses featured in this issue

Page 138

1 IN THE KNOW: ART

The artwork on the stairs in Sally Wilkinson's houseboat is a corrugated copper sheet, 180 x 140cm, designed and made by **Villiers Brothers** *(01799-514915; www.villiersbrothers.co.uk)*, using a special method of 'press tooling'. Sally and designer Mark Smith originally looked at it as a finish for a door panel but liked it so much that they decided to create a piece of art. Expect to pay £5,000 or more for something similar.

2 CLOSE MATCH: DINING CHAIRS

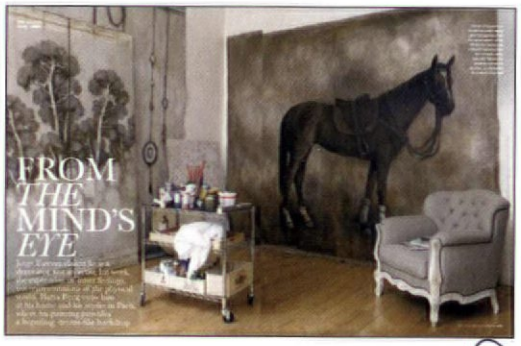
Bespoke slip covers disguise Sally's chairs. Mark used Jim Thompson's slub silk 'Mekong' (199/131), from **Fox Linton** *(020-7368 7700; www.foxlinton.com)*. Achieve a similar look with the 'Diaz Due' chair (upholstered, with a removable cover), 96 x 47 x 43cm, £600, from **Cheetah Design** *(01797-270149; www.cheetahdesign.net)*.

3 IDENTIFIED: CARPET

To have the same rug as Sally, or a variation, head to **Stark Carpet** *(020-7352 6001; www.starkcarpet.co.uk)*. This is the 'New Oriental' Tibetan rug, in hand-knotted wool, which costs from £495 per square metre.

4 SOURCE: OTTOMAN

A leather-covered ottoman like Sally's provides chic extra seating. **Ben Whistler** *(020-7622 6246; www.benwhistler.com)* will make something similar; alternatively, choose from the existing range – this 'Bali' box, covered in 'Oslo' chocolate leather, 50 x 120 x 45cm, costs £1,775.



Page 102

1 SOURCE: LIGHTS

Trouver Antiques *(07973-885671; www.trouverantiques.co.uk)* has several of these 'Trumpet' lights, made from old gramophone horns, and is always on the lookout for more. They cost £125 each.

2 ACCESSORISE: TEA-LIGHT HOLDERS

For a cheerful look, copy Jorge Estevez and hang these multicoloured glass tea-light holders, £12.95 for a set of three, from **The Conran Shop** *(08448-484000; www.conranshop.co.uk)*, from your utensil rail.

3 DESIGN NOTE: SHOWER CURTAINS

Shower curtains - such as this natural linen one - can be chic. The one in Jorge's apartment was specially made, but **Balineum** *(020-7487 5826; www.balineum.co.uk)* sells beautiful, off-the-peg curtains. 'Alison', shown here, is made from a textured cotton-linen fabric, with a grosgrain ribbon trim in a choice of muted colours. Measuring 180 x 190cm, it costs £73.50. Balineum also sells shower-curtain liners - useful if you want to make your own.

4 CLOSE MATCH: BATH

Sink into this rather splendid bath by **The Water Monopoly** *(020-7624 2636; www.watermonopoly.com)*. Aptly named the 'Paris Bath', it is a faithful reproduction of an early-twentieth-century French fireclay bath, but, made from Vitrite - a composite very close to the look and feel of the original - it weighs much less. It measures 56.5 x 177.8 x 82.8cm, and costs £5,980.

BELGRAVIA BOLT-HOLE

The American owners of the London apartment wanted a classic English look, working with their decorator, they have integrated modern and traditional elements in a pretty, and supremely comfortable pied-à-terre

Page 96

1

1 CLOSE MATCH: DINING CHAIR
The 'Cranbourne Carver' from **Sean Cooper** *(01264-811008; www.seancooper.co.uk)* would look perfectly at home in this kitchen setting. It measures 100 x 60 x 64cm, and costs £680, plus three metres of fabric.

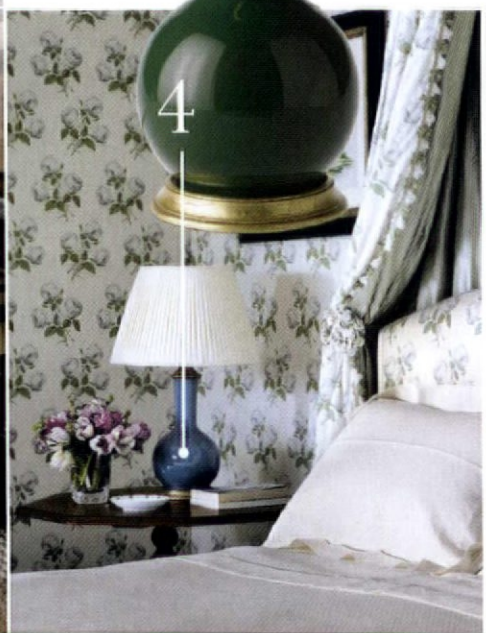
2

2 SOURCE: LAMPSHADE
Add a quirky look to a traditional scheme, as designer Roger Jones has done, with a green enamelled 'Chinese Hat' lampshade, which has a green fabric flex. It costs £40.25, from **Retrouvius** *(020-8960 6060; www.retrouvius.com)*.

3

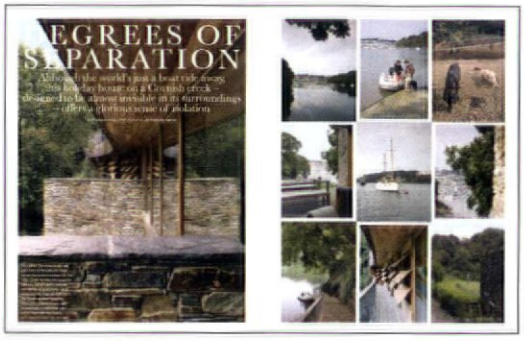
3 IN THE DETAIL: DOOR KNOBS
Complete your look with these brass door knobs ('Urchin Knob') from **The Beardmore Collection** *(020-7351 5444; www.beardmore.co.uk)*. Measuring 6 x 8cm diameter, and costing £85 for a pair, they are similar to the ones in this house.

4



4 SPOTTED: LAMP BASE
Follow Roger's lead and head to **Bella Figura** *(01394-461111; www.bella-figura.com)* for the Eglomise collection of lamp bases. They are available in an impressive array of 42 colours, so there is one to suit almost any colour scheme. This is the 'Jasmine' lamp (jade with gilt fittings), which costs £240.

SUDHIR PITHWA



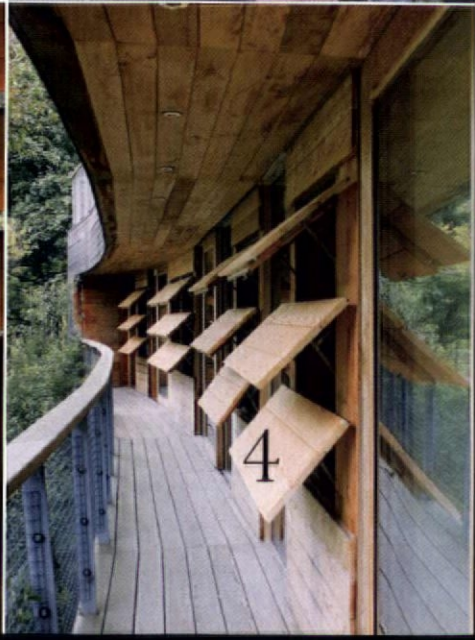
Page 124

1 IDENTIFIED: FLOOR LAMP
This classic floor light, the 'BL-3' by Bestlite, shown here in cream, looks good in both modern and traditional settings. It costs £489, from **Holloways of Ludlow** *(020-7602 5757; www.hollowaysofludlow.com).*

2 SOURCE: PICNIC BASKETS
Willow picnic baskets provide attractive, country storage. Try **Optima** *(01903-741111; www.optimacompany.co.uk)*, which has baskets and trunks in several sizes, including the 'Stratford', pictured here, which measures 41 x 72 x 40cm, and costs £75.

3 GOOD MATCH: QUILT
To emulate the bedrooms at Pencalenick House, buy this hand-stitched, quilted, silk bedcover, shown here in anthracite charcoal, 260 x 230cm, £229, at **Habitat** *(08444-991111; www.habitat.net).*

4 SPECIALIST: WOODWORK
Cornish-based Patrick Ford, of **Woodall Designs** *(07929-357598)*, is the man behind the distinctive timber louvres, and most of the interior joinery. He began his career as a boatbuilder – something he still continues to do – but will turn his hand to anything bespoke and unusual. Elm – an uncommon choice – was used for the kitchen, wardrobes and floors at Pencalenick. 'It has the most incredible characteristics,' enthuses Patrick. It is often used in boatbuilding because of its durability, and has a wonderful yellowy-grey colour, as well as a more lively grain than oak or pine □



wine & food

Recipes | Short orders | Taste notes

Mauritian prawn 'chutney' with Melba toast and salad

SPRING FLING

Inspired by pretty, seasonal ingredients, Sybil Kapoor suggests delicious recipes for a fresh, light lunch

PHOTOGRAPHS **JEAN CAZALS** | FOOD PREPARATION AND STYLING **PUFF FAIRCLOUGH** | TABLE STYLING **KASSIA ST CLAIR-ROUSE**

Chicken fricassée with watercress, peas and leeks

With spring well under way and the first hints of summer in sight, you feel like throwing open the windows, filling the house with flowers and entertaining friends and family. Naturally, when planning such meals, you should consider using the prettiest of spring colours in your food. Think pale pink, fresh green, soft yellow and light orange as you construct your menu to create a visual feast. A salad of yellow-tipped chicory served with a delicate green cucumber mousse; primrose beurre blanc with grilled salmon; peony-pink rhubarb fool; tiny almond cakes iced pale lavender to accompany sugary raspberries; or pistachios, ground for a creamy, green-flecked parfait: these all conjure up a delicious, anticipatory sense of early summer. The possibilities are endless. All recipes serve 6 unless otherwise stated

First courses

Mauritian prawn 'chutney' with Melba toast and salad

My recipe was first inspired by Eliza Acton's 'Mauritian shrimp chatney' in my 1855 edition of *Modern Cookery for Private Families*. She pounds shrimp and adds oil, green chillies, young onions and lemon juice, then serves the mixture as a chutney. However, it is so delicious that it makes a perfect first course accompanied by Melba toast.

For the prawn chutney

600g shelled, boiled North Atlantic prawns
1½ green Thai chillies, or to taste, finely diced
1½ bunches chives, finely sliced
3 tablespoons finely chopped mint
Juice of 3 small limes
140ml extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the Melba toast

12 slices white bread

For the salad

¾ cucumber, peeled
½ bunch chives, finely sliced
130g baby salad leaves
½ tablespoon lime juice
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 Squeeze any excess water out of the prawns and place in a food processor with the chillies, chives, mint, lime juice and olive oil. Process in a few quick bursts until the prawns are finely chopped. Don't let them turn into a sticky paste. Transfer to a bowl and season. Chill until needed.

2 For the Melba toast, heat the oven to 150°C/mark 2. Lightly toast the bread slices in the toaster. Once they are cold, cut off the crusts and, using a knife with a long blade, gently split the bread in half horizontally. If wished, cut the bread into triangles. Arrange the toast on a couple of baking sheets, uncooked side up, and place in the oven. Bake until golden brown and crisp.

3 Cut the cucumber in half lengthways and finely slice at a slight angle to form elongated half-moons. Place in a large mixing bowl with the chives and salad leaves.

4 When ready to serve, add the lime juice and oil to the salad. Toss and, if necessary, adjust the seasoning to taste. Divide the prawns between 6 plates, add the salad and serve with the Melba toast.

To drink

Choose a fairly simple, crisp, dry white, such as Taste the Difference Gavi 2007, from Piedmont, £6.99, Sainsbury's.

Baked pea ramekins

Served with crusty bread and a pretty, leafy salad, these simple ramekins make a lovely light lunch. The method below uses 150ml ramekins, which would be fine for lunch, but if you want to serve the custards as a first course, bake them in 100ml pots for about 25 minutes (the quantity will make 10 ramekins of this size).

Olive oil for greasing
525g frozen petits pois
4 tablespoons finely grated Parmesan
Large handful of basil leaves, roughly chopped
250ml double cream
5 medium eggs
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

To garnish

Pea shoots (optional)

1 Heat the oven to 180°C/mark 4. Lightly oil 6 ramekin dishes (150ml) and place on some kitchen paper in a deep-sided baking tin.

2 Drop the peas into a pan of boiling, unsalted water, return to the boil, cover and reduce to a simmer. Cook for 7 minutes, then drain and tip into a food processor. Add the Parmesan and basil leaves. Process until smooth, then add the cream and eggs and process until they are thoroughly mixed into the purée. Season to taste with salt and black pepper.

3 Divide the mixture evenly between the greased ramekins. Pour enough boiling water into the baking tin to come halfway up the outside of the ramekins, then cover the baking tin with foil. Place in the oven and bake for 30 minutes, or until just set. Remove the ramekins from the tin, decorate with pea shoots, if liked, and serve the ramekins warm with lots of crusty bread and a pretty salad.

To drink

Opt for a youthful Sauvignon Blanc, such as Flaxbourne 2008, from New Zealand, £7.99, Marks & Spencer.

Main courses

Baked salmon with avocado salsa

The salmon can be served hot or cold with buttered new potatoes and a salad. You can also pan-griddle salmon fillets instead of cooking a whole fish.

For the salmon

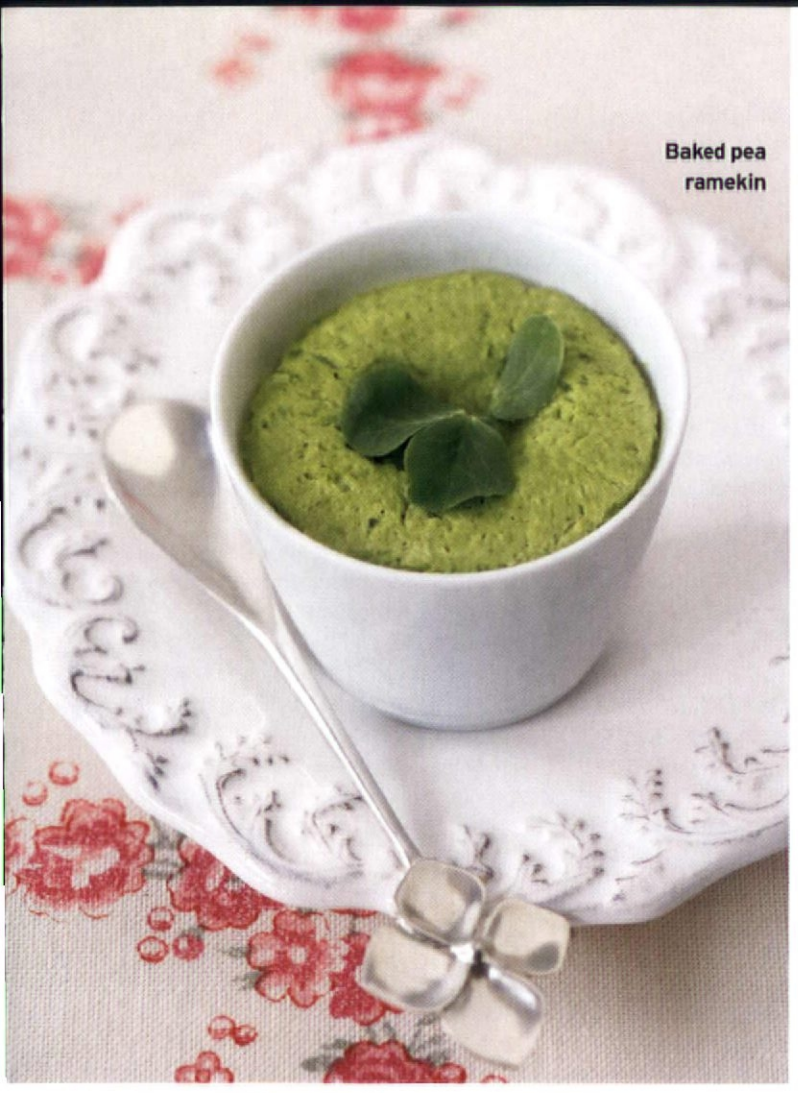
2 tablespoons olive oil
2-2.25kg whole salmon, cleaned
Juice of ½ lemon
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the avocado salsa

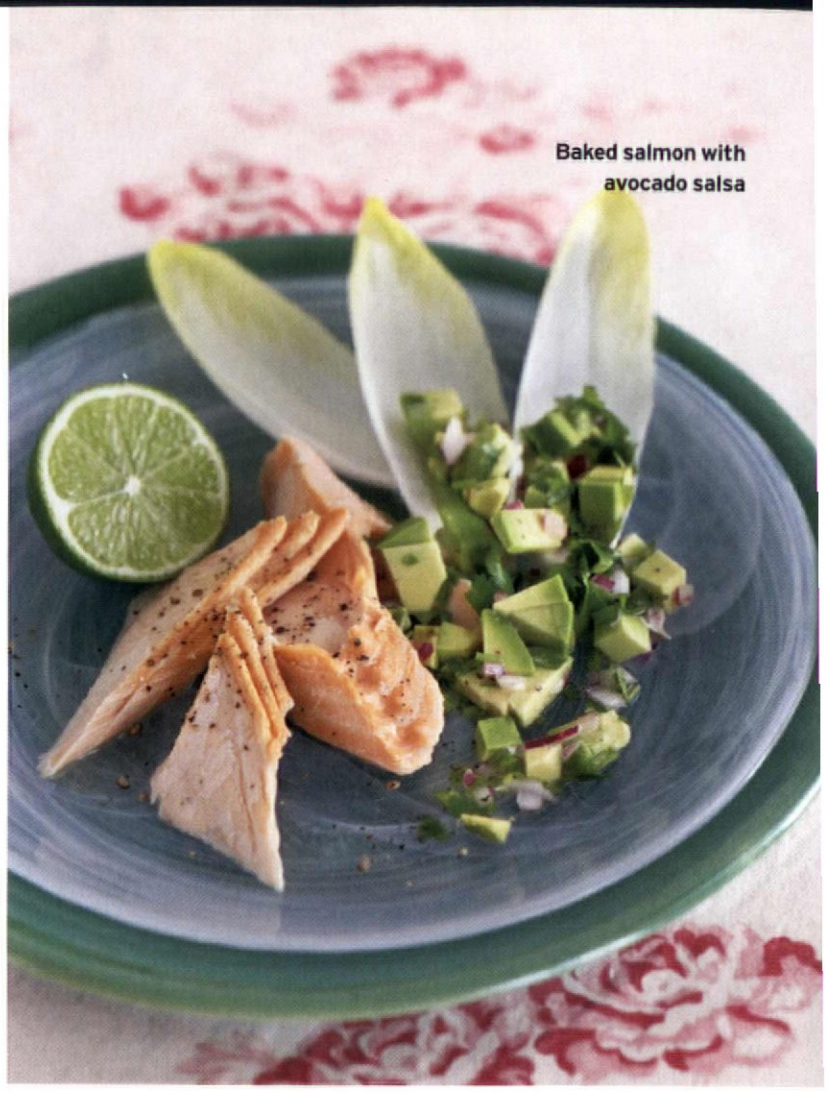
Juice of 2 small limes
2 ripe avocados
1 green Thai chilli, or to taste, finely diced
2 small bunches coriander, finely chopped
½ small red onion, finely diced

1 Heat the oven to 220°C/mark 7. Place a double layer of foil (large enough to enclose the whole salmon) on a work surface. Pour a tablespoon of olive oil on to the foil and place the salmon on top. Pour on a further tablespoon of oil, and rub into the salmon - including its cavity. Repeat the process with the lemon juice, and season with salt and pepper. Seal the foil so that it forms a baggy parcel around the salmon and lift it on to a baking sheet. Place in the centre of the oven and bake for 35 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, make the salsa. Place the lime juice in a bowl. Halve, stone, ▷



Baked pea ramekin



Baked salmon with avocado salsa

Crémets with strawberry sauce

Lemon gin 'honeycomb' jelly

peel and finely dice the avocados. Mix in the chilli, coriander and onion, and season to taste with salt and pepper.
3 Remove the fish from the oven and loosen the foil. If wished, remove the salmon skin by cutting it away from behind the head and tail, then peeling it off. Carefully turn over the fish and repeat on the other side. Very gently lift the salmon on to a warmed serving dish, divide into portions and serve with the avocado salsa.

To drink

A white Burgundy would work well here: Pouilly Vinzelles 2007, Domaine Thibert Père & Fils, £11.99, Waitrose.

Chicken fricassée with watercress, peas and leeks

I suggest serving this dish with steamed basmati rice or with small discs or crescents of baked puff pastry.

650ml good chicken stock
200ml double cream
6 chicken breasts, skinned
3 tablespoons plain flour
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Approx 7 tablespoons sunflower oil
3 leeks, finely sliced
200g baby carrots, trimmed and scrubbed
4 sticks celery, finely sliced
150g watercress, washed
125ml dry white wine
115g frozen petits pois

1 Pour the stock into a saucepan and boil vigorously until reduced by half. Add the cream and continue to simmer for a further 10 minutes, or until thickened slightly.
2 Trim the chicken and cut into 2.5cm chunks. Put the flour in a large bowl and season liberally with salt and pepper. Set a pan over a medium-high heat and, once hot, add 3 tablespoons sunflower oil. Dust the diced chicken with the flour and place a single layer in the hot oil. Fry briskly for 3 minutes, turning regularly, until golden. Using a slotted spoon, remove the chicken to a clean bowl and repeat the process, adding more oil as necessary, until all the chicken has been sealed.
3 Reduce the heat under the pan to low. Add more oil, if necessary, and stir in the leeks, carrots and celery. Fry gently for 5 minutes, or until the leeks and celery are soft. Meanwhile, strip the watercress leaves from their stems, roughly chop the leaves and discard the stems.
4 As soon as the vegetables have softened slightly, return the chicken to the pan. Add the white wine, bring to the boil, then stir in the cream/stock mixture. As soon as the mixture is bubbling, add the peas, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes. Stir in the chopped watercress and leave to rest for 5 minutes before serving, so that the juices are reabsorbed into the chicken.

To drink

A white would work better with this fricassée than a red: Lanner Hill Sauvignon Blanc 2007, £11.99, Majestic.

Puddings

Lemon gin 'honeycomb' jelly

This refreshing pudding separates as it sets, so that, when it is turned out, you see a clear lemon-jelly cap, contrasting with a layer of fluffy 'honeycombed' mousse at the bottom. The quantities below give just over a litre, so, depending on your moulds, you will make 7 puddings of 150ml or 10 of 100ml. If wished, you can serve the jellies with little biscuits.

12g fine leaf gelatine
2 unwaxed lemons
425ml gold-top milk
85g caster sugar
100ml single cream
2 tablespoons gin
Sunflower oil for greasing
3 large eggs

1 Cover the gelatine in cold water and leave for 5 minutes. Finely pare the zest from the lemons and place in a saucepan with the milk, sugar and cream. Set over a low heat and bring up to simmering point.
2 Pour off the water from the gelatine and mix the gelatine into the hot milk; set aside. Squeeze the juice from the lemons and add the gin; set aside. Lightly oil your mini pudding basins. Separate the eggs, placing the yolks in a clean saucepan.
3 Slowly stir the milk mixture into the egg yolks and set over a low heat. Using a wooden spoon, stir continuously until the custard thickens to the consistency of runny cream. Do not let it boil, or it may split; if the pan is getting too hot, lift it off the heat and keep stirring until the custard cools slightly before returning to the hob.
4 When the right consistency has been achieved, remove the pan from the heat and strain the mixture into a bowl. Whisk the egg whites until they are stiff, then mix the lemon juice into the hot custard and, using a metal spoon, immediately fold the hot lemon custard into the egg whites until thoroughly mixed. Take a ladle and, scooping the mixture from the bottom of the bowl, divide between the moulds. Pile the mixture up so that it is slightly above the rim, as it shrinks as it separates and sets. Place in the fridge and chill overnight. To serve, run a knife round the rim of the moulds and invert on to serving plates. It usually takes a sharp shake to release the jellies.

To drink

Choose a sweet wine with good acidity, such as a Riesling: Paul Cluver's Noble Late Harvest 2007 would be ideal, £11.49, Waitrose.

Crémets with strawberry sauce

Crémets should drain off their excess liquid naturally, so you will need 6 muslin-lined, perforated *crémet* moulds. You can buy heart-shaped, perforated china moulds from Divertimenti (www.divertimenti.co.uk), but you can also use yogurt pots if you make holes in the bases.

For the *crémets*

170g full-fat crème fraiche
170g full-fat fromage frais
3 medium egg whites

For the sauce

285ml double cream
400g strawberries, hulled and puréed, plus a few extra, to decorate
85g caster sugar
1 teaspoons distilled orange flower water

1 To make the *crémets*, rinse 6 squares of muslin in water and wring dry. Line your chosen perforated moulds and set aside.
2 Whisk the crème fraiche in a large mixing bowl until it holds soft peaks. Whisk the fromage frais in a separate bowl to remove any tiny lumps, then fold into the crème fraiche. Finally, whisk the egg whites in a clean bowl until they form stiff peaks, then gently fold into the crème-fraiche mixture.
3 Spoon the mixture into the prepared moulds. Fold the muslin over the top of each mould, so the surface of the mixture is covered. Arrange the moulds on a wire cooling rack set over a shallow baking tray and place in the fridge. This will allow the *crémets* to drip freely as they firm up. Chill for a minimum of 6 hours, but preferably for nearer 12 hours.
4 To make the sauce, pour the cream into a largish saucepan – this helps prevent it from boiling over – and boil until it is almost reduced by half and looks very thick. Meanwhile, purée the strawberries with the sugar and orange flower water. Blend in the cream. Decant into a jug and chill, covered, until needed.
5 To serve, unfold the muslin on top of each *crémet*, turn the *crémet* out of its mould, carefully remove the muslin, then place on a serving plate. Serve with the strawberry sauce.

To drink

The off-dry, pink sparkler Moscato Freisa Spumante (£6.99, Marks & Spencer) would be ideal here. The red Freisa (Italian for strawberry) grape actually tastes of the fruit.

For details of tableware, see Stockists page | Wine recommendations by Liz Morcom MW □

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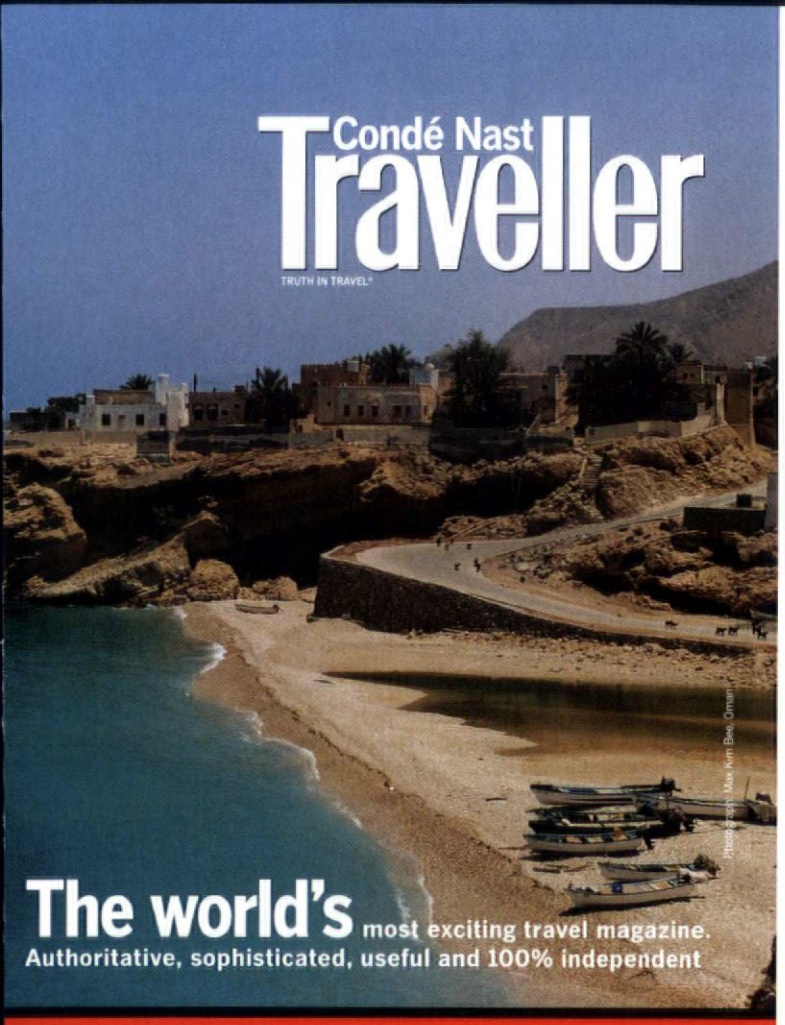

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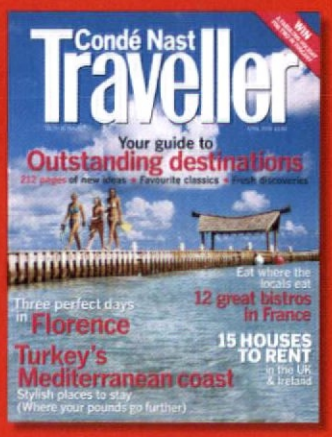

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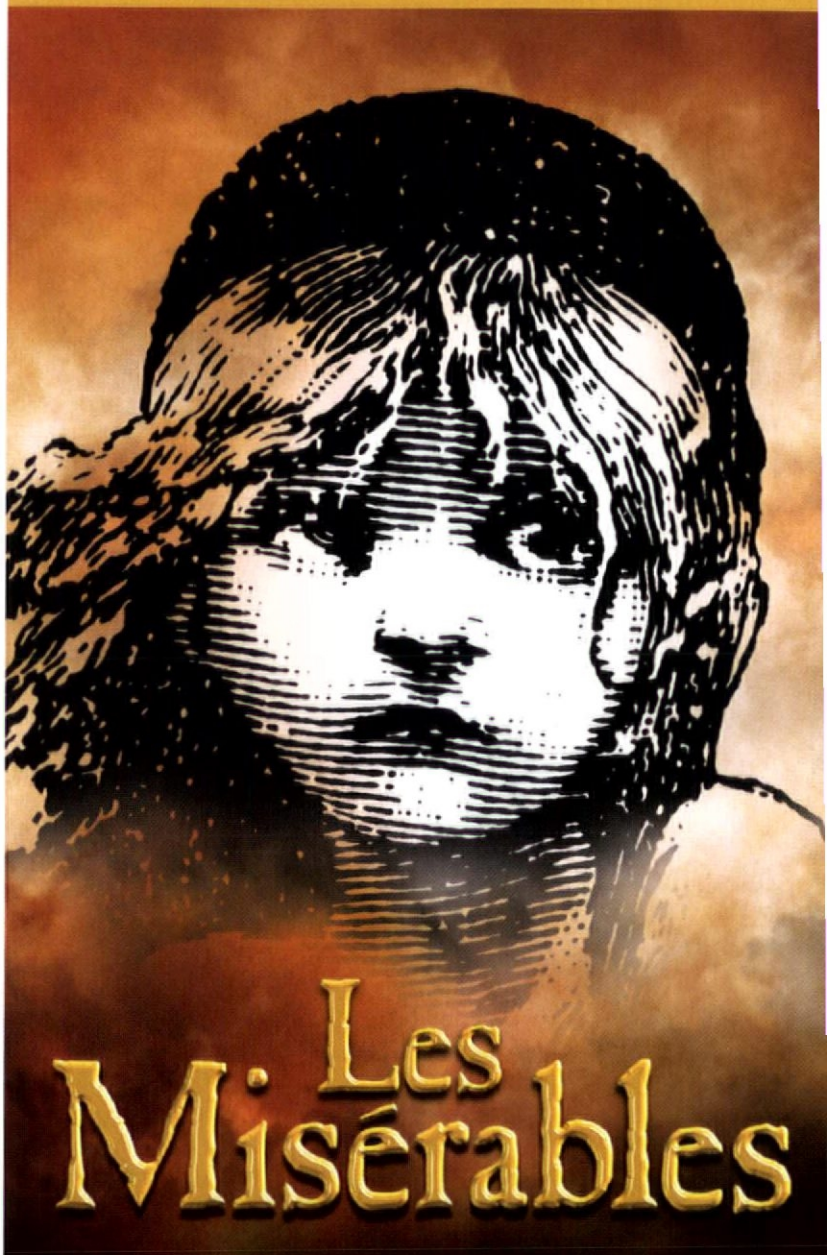

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SHORT ORDERS

Continuing her series in which the recipes achieve delicious results with relatively little effort, **Marie-Pierre Moine** devises a three-course menu that can mainly be prepared in advance

For a foodie like me, egg dishes and roast lamb sum up the joys of spring. My menu this month starts with soft-baked eggs with sorrel, served with asparagus soldiers to dip into the creamy melange. I cook the eggs in assorted small jam jars, which look more fun than ramekins; they also have the practical advantage of being a little bigger, and I like having the opportunity to use my long-handled teaspoons. The main course is butterflied lamb with plenty of herbs (there is no need to be too exact with quantities) and a little anchovy. I am a fan of butterflied meats – boning and flattening results in quick, even cooking, and easy slicing. For dessert, I suggest a pretty, chilled concoction of rhubarb, mango, mascarpone and amaretti biscuits. *All recipes serve 6*

First Course

Baked eggs with asparagus soldiers

Preparation and cooking asparagus, 20 minutes; preparation and baking eggs, 15 minutes; finishing, 5 minutes

18 medium-thin green asparagus spears, trimmed to the same length
30g butter, plus 2 tablespoons melted butter
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Handful of small sorrel leaves, rolled up and chopped
275ml whipping cream
6 large, organic or free-range eggs, very fresh
3 tablespoons Parmesan flakes, freshly shaved

To serve

Baguette slices, toasted and buttered

1 Bring about 5cm of lightly salted water to the boil in a sauté pan. Add the asparagus, cook for 3 minutes, lift out, refresh with cold water and drain well. Brush lightly with a little melted butter, season with pepper, and set aside.

2 In a bowl, stir the chopped sorrel into the cream, and season; pour a little of the mixture into the bottom of each of 6 small, clean jam jars or other ovenproof containers. Crack an egg and slip it carefully into one of the jars. Repeat with the remaining five jars. Season well, add the rest of the cream and sorrel mixture, then add the Parmesan flakes and a small knob of butter. Set aside until ready to finish (refrigerate the jars if preparing more than 1 hour ahead).

3 Heat the oven to 200°C/mark 6. Half fill a roasting pan with boiling water and place the jars in the pan. Bake for about 12 minutes (a minute or two longer if you have chilled the jars) until the eggs are just set and the topping is bubbling.

4 Remove the jars and place each in the centre of a first-course plate, with 3 asparagus spears on the side. Serve with buttered, toasted baguette slices.

Main Course

Butterflied lamb with basil, mint and coriander

Preparation, 20 minutes; marinating, 1 hour; browning lamb, 15-20 minutes; roasting, about 30 minutes; resting and finishing, 10 minutes

4 tablespoons finely chopped basil leaves, plus a little extra to finish
2 tablespoons finely chopped mint leaves, plus a little extra to finish
1 tablespoon finely chopped coriander leaves, plus a little extra to finish
6 tablespoons olive oil
Juice of 1 unwaxed orange, plus 1 tablespoon zest, finely grated
2 drained anchovy fillets, mashed, or 1 teaspoon Gentleman's Relish or other natural anchovy extract
2 garlic cloves, crushed
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
A leg of lamb (approx 1.4-1.5kg), butterflied – you can ask your butcher to do this
25g butter, chilled (optional)

To serve

Broad-bean purée and roast potatoes, or gnocchi and broad beans with chopped herbs and a little butter

1 Mix together the herbs, olive oil, orange zest, anchovy and garlic. Season with pepper. Smear all over the lamb; leave to marinate for an hour.

2 Put a large, non-stick frying pan over a moderately high heat, add the lamb, skin side down (fold it if your pan isn't big enough), and brown until slightly coloured, turning it over after 4-5 minutes. (If you have folded it, unfold, then refold with the browned side inside, and brown the raw sides.) Set aside.

3 Heat the oven to 225°C/mark 8. Lay the lamb, flat, in a large roasting pan (or oven tray lined with thick foil or baking parchment). Season with salt, and roast for 25-35 minutes, depending on how pink you like your meat. Take the pan out of the oven, transfer the meat to a warm dish, cover with foil, and leave to rest for 5-10 minutes.

4 Deglaze the roasting pan with the orange juice and about 200ml boiling water. Stir in more herbs and, if you like, a little chilled butter. Transfer the pan juices to a warm sauce boat.

5 Cut the lamb into thick slices; serve with a drizzle of the pan juices.

Dessert

Rhubarb, mango and passion-fruit coupes

Preparation and cooking rhubarb, 30 minutes; chilling, at least 1 hour

600g rhubarb, trimmed and chopped
6 tablespoons caster sugar
18 small or 9 large, soft amaretti biscuits
1 large, ripe mango, or 2 small mangoes, peeled, stoned and chopped
350g mascarpone, chilled
4 tablespoons icing sugar, sieved
3 ripe passion fruits

1 Ahead of the meal, put the chopped rhubarb in a saucepan with the caster sugar and cook over a moderate heat for 5-7 minutes, stirring frequently, until just softened.

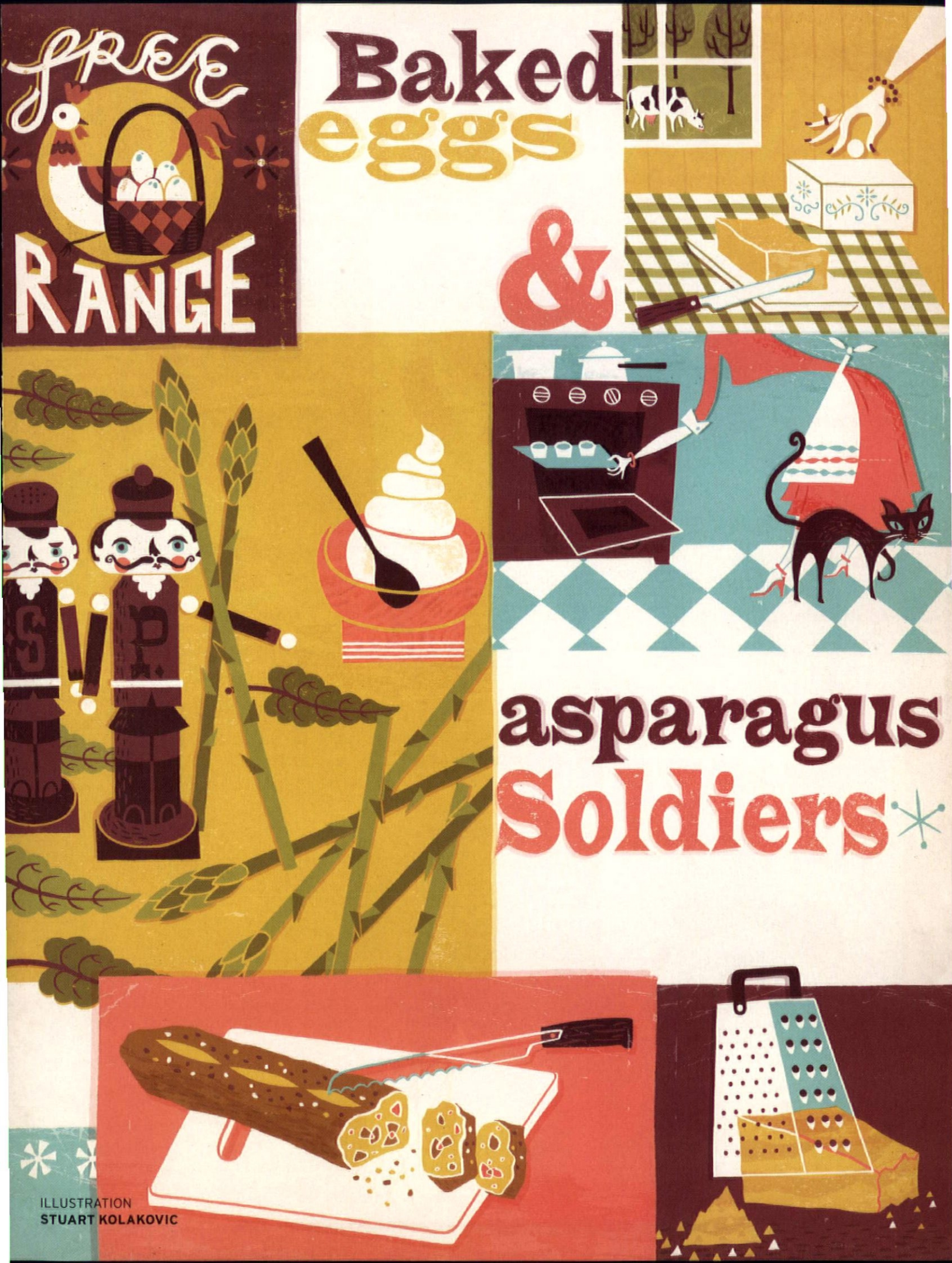
2 Place a sieve over a bowl, and pour in the softened rhubarb mixture. Stir gently with a wooden spoon to help the liquid pass through the sieve. Reserve the syrupy juice and the rhubarb pulp separately; refrigerate both. In a food processor, whizz the amaretti biscuits into coarse crumbs and reserve. Whizz the mango into a purée and refrigerate.

3 Shortly before the meal, put the chilled mascarpone and half the rhubarb syrup into a bowl, and whisk until foamy. Whisk in the icing sugar. Spoon the rhubarb pulp into glasses or coupes, and add the mango purée, then the mascarpone cream. Scatter over the crushed amaretti biscuits. Open the passion fruits, scrape out the seeds and pulp over the amaretti biscuits, then drizzle over the rest of the rhubarb syrup. Refrigerate for 1-3 hours before serving.

To drink

Chilled manzanilla with the first course. When I cooked the lamb main course for some friends, one generous guest brought Pichon Longueville 1990; it was a marriage made in heaven. I can also recommend the Pichon-Baron vineyard's 'second' wine, Les Tourelles de Longueville, Pauillac: the 2004 costs £24.69 at Bibendum, and the 2005, £22, at Berry Bros & Rudd □

OPPOSITE Ingredients for Baked eggs with asparagus soldiers


FREE
RANGE
Baked
eggs
&
asparagus
Soldiers
ILLUSTRATION
STUART KOLAKOVIC

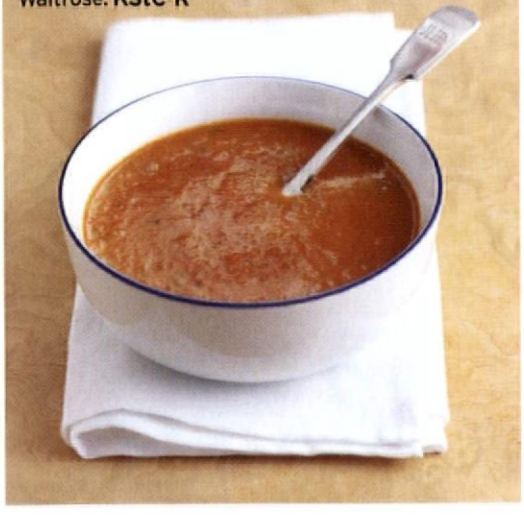
TASTE NOTES

Innovations, observations and reviews in the world of wine and food, by **Kassia St Clair-Rouse** and **Liz Morcom** MW

The perfect indulgence for anyone with a sweet tooth, Pippin Doughnuts (01793-496210; www.pippindoughnuts.co.uk) are handmade, and filled with the company's own fruit jams and rich, vanilla custards. Especially good are the cinnamon and brown-sugar doughnuts, which are delicious with coffee. A box of 12 assorted doughnuts costs £10. You can find them at Gloucester farmers' market every Friday and Swindon farmers' market on Sundays. Slightly more kitsch are the delightful cupcakes from Lola's Kitchen (020-7483 3394; www.lolas-kitchen.co.uk), which come in a variety of flavours and colours. You can have a name or a message frosted in coloured icing, so they are good for parties. I recommend the Red Velvet cupcake, which has a cream-cheese topping on a scarlet, chocolate base. A box of six assorted cupcakes costs £11.40, at Selfridges. **KStC-R**

Adrienne Baba's love of Japanese food and pottery led her to live and train in Japan for five years. These ceramics are just part of the result; they come in a range of finishes. Oxfordshire-based Adrienne also runs popular, Japanese cookery classes, and caters for dinner parties. She will be exhibiting her work at Astall Manor in early May as part of Oxfordshire Artweeks (www.artweeks.org). A six-piece dining set costs from £45. *For further information, visit www.adriennebaba.com* **KStC-R**

The ethos behind Look What We Found! soups (www.lookwhatwefound.co.uk) is rooted in the importance of provenance, and the small-scale producers of the soups' ingredients are identified on the packaging. The soups burst with flavour and make a great lunch standby. Shown here is David Baarda's English Tomato Soup with Cheviot Cheese Pesto; a 300g pouch costs £1.59, at Waitrose. **KStC-R**



Most wine regions are scenically imposing; some are stunning. The Douro Valley, home of port, is one such. An impressive new hotel, the Aquapura Douro Valley, has opened, just over an hour from Porto and a few kilometres from the town of Regua, at the heart of this UNESCO World Heritage site. It is one of only two Portuguese hotels included in Tatler's 101 Best Hotels in its 2009 Travel Guide. A former nineteenth-century manor house and port quinta, it has 50 rooms, 21 luxury villas (which are also for sale), two restaurants, outdoor and indoor pools, a gym, and a spa, in which treatments include products made from local grapes, all high in antioxidants. The hotel makes a perfect base from which to visit the local port quintas, and wine-tasting visits can be organised by the hotel. For more information, visit www.aquapurahotels.com **LM**

WINES OF THE MONTH

These two impressive blends are both from Marks & Spencer and cost £8.99 each. Cuvée Extrême 2006 is an attractive, spicy red - a blend of Syrah, Grenache Noir and Carignan - from grapes grown in Tautavel and the Agly Valley in the sunny Côtes du Roussillon. Subtle oak ageing adds complexity. Knock on Wood Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon 2008 is an elegant, dry white - a blend of grassy Sauvignon Blanc and lemony Semillon - which comes from the respected Flagstone winery in the Western Cape. A small proportion of the Semillon is barrel-fermented in American oak, which adds a hint of vanilla. **LM**

PHOTOGRAPHS: LIS PARSONS. 'ZENZAN' SERVING BOWL, £35, AND 'NIL' BOWL, 14CM DIAMETER, £5; BOTH AT HABITAT. LINEN NAPKIN, £8.95, AT THE CONRAN SHOP. SILVER-PLATED DESSERT SPOON, £72 FOR SIX, AT FEW & FAR. 'LUX'

Historically, there have been few real competitors in terms of quality to the Sauvignon Blancs of New Zealand, or those from the Loire. In recent tastings, however, I have found many more examples, from France and the New World, which are both appealing and well priced. Here is a selection – all perfect for spring and summer drinking: The Naked Grape 2007, from Charente, £6.49, Waitrose; Terrunyo 2007, from Chile, £7.49, Majestic; Secano Estate 2008, from Chile, £6.99, and M'hudi 2008, from South Africa, £7.99; both Marks & Spencer. **LM**

Badger's Hopping Hare, a light (4.5%), pale, hoppy ale, is made specially for the spring by Dorset family brewers, Hall & Woodhouse. The spring water and yeasts used are local, and the beer is brewed to a recipe passed down through generations of the family. Hopping Hare costs £1.79 for a 500ml bottle, and is available only until June, at Tesco, Sainsbury's, or online from www.badgerdirect.com **LM**

The Boston Sausage's products are exemplary. The signature Boston Sausage (above) contains a minimum of 70 per cent pork, and is not overburdened with herbs or fruits. It is that rare beast: a simple, honest breakfast sausage in which the flavour of the meat is allowed to take centre stage. With a moist, crumbly texture, the sausages cry out to be piled on to a fork, with eggs, on a Sunday morning. They cost £8.89 for 1kg, from Borough Market, SE1. *For further information and mail order, visit www.bostonsausage.co.uk* **KStC-R**

The cheerful colours of these chic, French, sugar tablets for coffee will brighten up the end of a meal. They are part of a range of similarly pretty sugars, which includes lumps in the shape of teddy bears and miniature pastries. A 45g packet costs £15.95, from Poudrier Rose. *For further information and mail order, visit poudrierrose.com* **KStC-R**

DIARY DATE *May 8–10 The Real Food Festival brings together around 500 food producers under one roof, all eager to show off the fruits of their labour. There are plenty of smaller companies involved – offering many new things for you to try – as well as familiar favourites. It makes a wonderful day out and provides an excellent opportunity to sample many different foods. It takes place in Earls Court; tickets cost £18 at the door, or £14.90 if you book in advance. For further information, visit www.realfoodfestival.co.uk* **KStC-R**

If the delicious **Blackcurrant & Kirsch Sorbet** by Beckleberry's had a mantelpiece on which to show off its awards, it would be an impressive sight. At last year's Great Taste Awards, it came top in three categories: Best English Speciality, Best Speciality from the North East, and Supreme Champion. It has a wonderfully deep, luscious colour and flavour and is the perfect end to a spring meal. A 500ml pot costs from £3.95 at Harvey Nichols, selected Waitrose stores and Beckleberry's coffee shop. *For further information, visit www.beckleberrys.co.uk* **KStC-R**

There can be few more congenial surroundings for wine study than those of Vinécole, at Domaine Gayda, near Limoux in Languedoc. Even with the strong euro, the prices for the courses are fair, while the cost of getting there can also be a steal: Ryanair has daily flights from Stansted to nearby Carcassonne. Accommodation is available in the Domaine's stylish gîtes. Vinécole is run by Master of Wine Matthew Stubbs, and Emma Kershaw. Courses range from a half-hour 'speed' lesson in how to taste wines, to all-day wine 'experiences' – including trying your hand at winemaking – and wine-related weekend breaks. For more information, call 00-33-4 68 31 64 14, or visit www.vinecole.com **LM**

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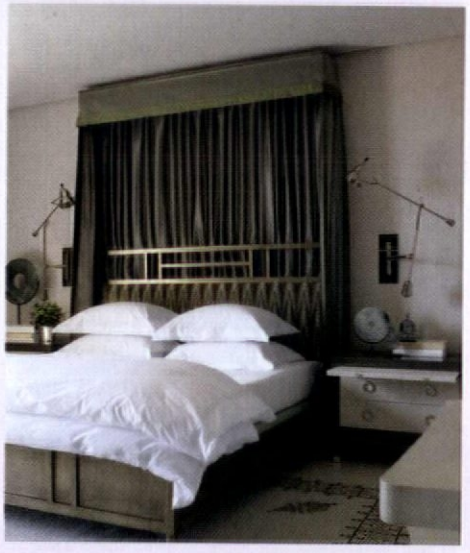

RICH MIX

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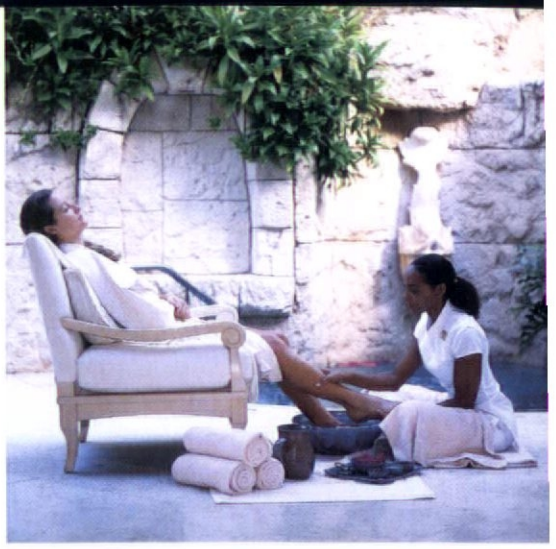
Bajan Beauty



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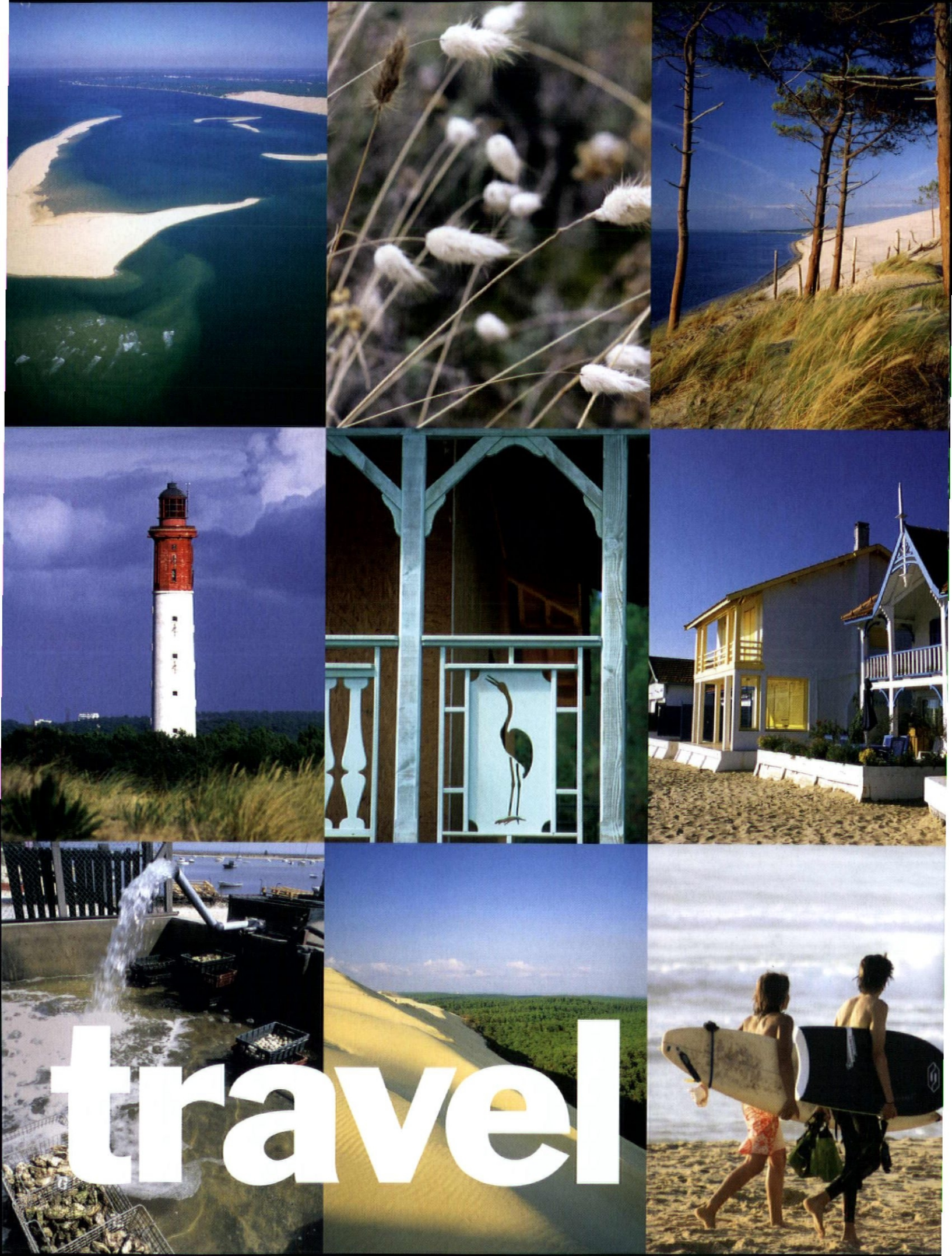

travel

ATLANTIC PEARL

Lisa Johnson visits Cap Ferret on the west coast of France, renowned for its beautiful beaches and fashionable 'scene', as well as its spectacular oysters

If you take the train to Cap Ferret, the final stage of your journey will be a boat ride across the Bassin d'Arcachon, with the vast and surreally beautiful Dune du Pyla as your backdrop. If the sun is out, the salty air, fluttering sails and glittering ocean will quickly disperse any lingering thoughts of home.

Not to be confused with its Côte d'Azur near namesake, the Cap Ferret peninsula is on the west coast of France, a finger pointing down into the Atlantic. It's only 65 kilometres from Bordeaux, but feels a world apart. On its western shore, teenagers carry surfboards across sandy beaches into rolling waves; in the centre, a Forties lighthouse rises up over maritime pines and cycle paths; and on the bay, toddlers build sandcastles beside sand flats strewn with fishing boats, as the water surface shrinks from 150 square kilometres to less than a third of that with the ebbing tide. It's simultaneously chic and *sauvage*.

It is the oysters that have made Cap Ferret such a popular destination. Washed by incoming and outgoing tides four times each day, and fresh water from the Leyre river, they were a delicacy for the Romans, but it was only under Napoleon III that the distinctive rows of tiny wooden oyster-farmers' shacks appeared on the shore. By this time, Arcachon and its Ville d'Hiver – an assortment of whimsical mansions in Moorish, neoclassical and neo-Gothic styles – was a celebrated health resort, frequented by European aristocrats including the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII.

These days, town and village have swapped status: Arcachon is a popular seaside resort, while Cap Ferret has the cachet of St Barths. There is a 'scene' here, but if you go off-season – in late June or early September – you are more likely to find yourself among bourgeois bohemians than nouveau-riche types. You will also have room to breathe – numbers swell from 25,000 to 250,000 in the summer months.

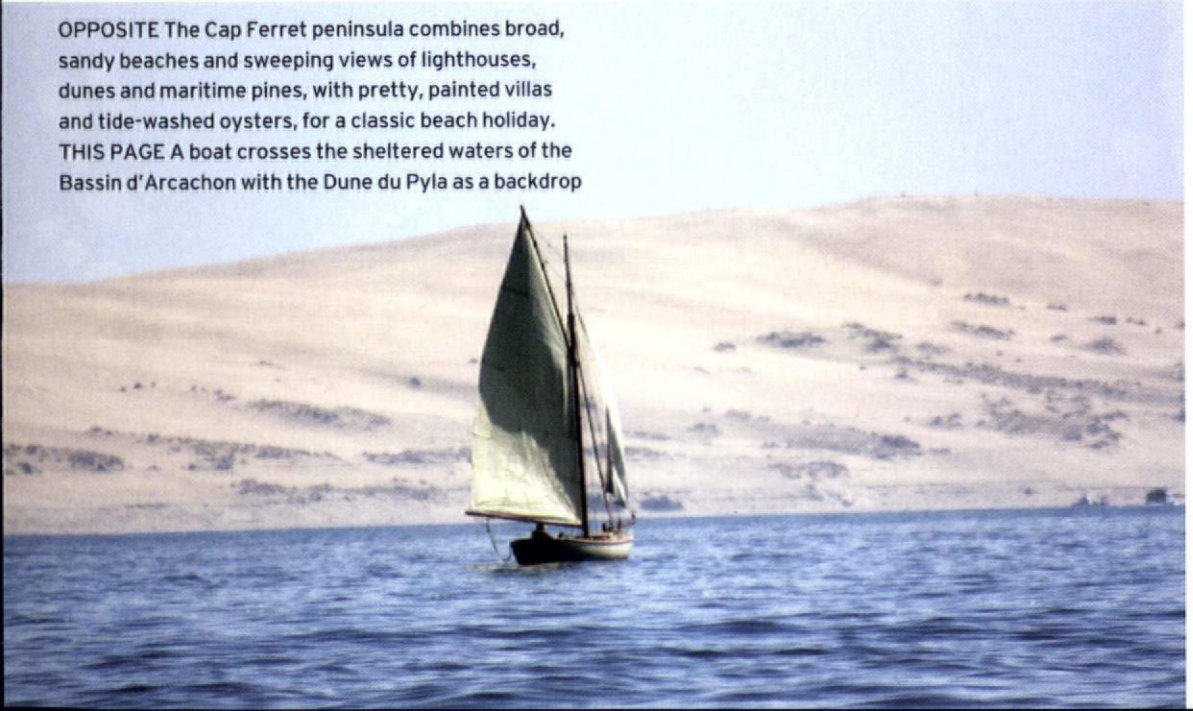
The tourist office is keen to stress that the whole Presqu'île de Lège-Cap Ferret is worth visiting, not just the 18 acres at its tip, which is true – up to a point. All the oyster-farming villages have their own appeal: L'Herbe boasts a little Catholic-Moorish chapel, the last vestige of an Algerian villa built here in 1865 by Léon Lesca; and there are interiors shops and delicatessens scattered along the main route, from Petit Piquey (where Philippe Starck has a house) heading south.

But the best hotels are in Cap Ferret itself. La Maison du Bassin is a lovely 12-room *hôtel de charme* in the fishermen's quarter, with flowers spilling over blue paintwork, flickering candles and a polished-wood bar reminiscent of transatlantic voyages. The Côté Sables is a chic boutique hotel overlooking the bay, with a Clarins spa and 15 rooms in four styles – I liked the Contemporary double with free-standing bath. And, while it could do with a little more atmosphere, the minimalist, 14-room Hôtel des Dunes has pleasant sun decks, and is perfectly sited for watching the sun set over the dunes.

Wherever you stay, hire a bike and cycle to La Pointe, for views of the Dune du Pyla; cross the bay for a tour of Arcachon's Ville d'Hiver; take a sailing boat or *bateau-taxi* to the Ile aux Oiseaux, where egrets pick about between two *cabanes tchanquées* (stilted huts); and eat oysters on the bay – raw, with just a trickle of lemon, and a bottle of Entre-Deux-Mers. It's one of life's classic experiences – a bit like Cap Ferret itself □

Ways & means Rail fares from London to Arcachon start at £100 return (0844-848 4070; www.raileurope.co.uk). **La Maison du Bassin** (00-33-5 56 60 60 63; www.lamaisondubassin.com), double rooms from €120. The owners also run a shop, **L'Esprit du Cap**, at 2 rue des Pionniers (00-33-5 56 60 67 79; www.espritducap.com). **Côté Sable** (00-33-5 57 17 07 27; www.cotesable.fr), double rooms from €165. **Hôtel des Dunes** (00-33-5 56 60 61 81; www.hoteldesdunes.com), double rooms from €140. For activities, contact the tourist board (00-33-5 56 03 94 49; www.lege-capferret.com).

4CORNERS; LISA JOHNSON; PHOTOLIBRARY



OPPOSITE The Cap Ferret peninsula combines broad, sandy beaches and sweeping views of lighthouses, dunes and maritime pines, with pretty, painted villas and tide-washed oysters, for a classic beach holiday. THIS PAGE A boat crosses the sheltered waters of the Bassin d'Arcachon with the Dune du Pyla as a backdrop

TRAVEL SAVVY

2009 sees the opening of three self-catering cottages set within the 500 acres of garden and parkland at Leeds Castle in Kent. Each one is located in a historic building, refurbished to the highest standard using a mix of antique furniture and stylish fabrics; modern comforts such as dishwashers, washing machines, DVD players and Egyptian-cotton bedlinen have not been forgotten. Battel Hall Oast, reached via an external stone staircase, sleeps four to five; Keeper's House (top), overlooking the weir pond, sleeps 10 to 13; and neighbouring Weir Cottage (above) sleeps two. Prices for one week, which include entry to Leeds Castle and grounds and the use of a nearby health club, are £450–£800, £600–£1,500 and £280–£500, respectively. The cottages are owned and managed by the castle, so every booking helps to preserve the historic buildings and landscape. *For details, call 01622-765400, or e-mail cottages@leeds-castle.co.uk* PG □

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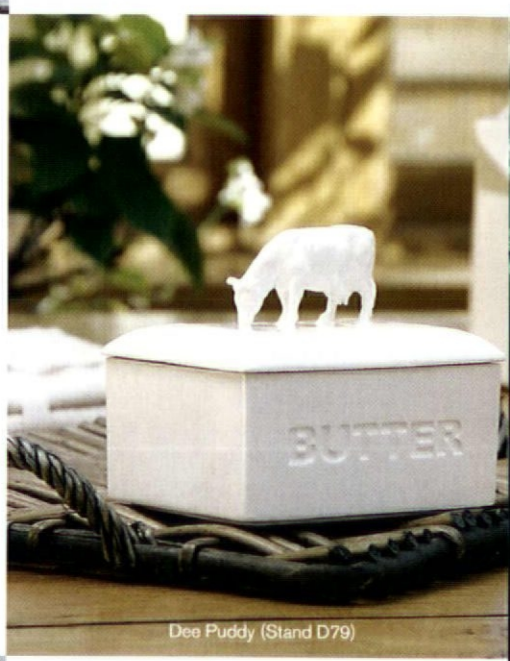

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ECO SAFARI

Francesca Syz discovers an environmentally friendly, luxury camp in Africa, with conservation at its core

It's not every day that your favourite piece of African wilderness goes on the market, so when the owners of the Selinda Reserve in northern Botswana decided to sell up five years ago, *National Geographic* film-makers and conservationists Dereck and Beverly Joubert jumped at the chance to buy it.

The inimitably glamorous Jouberts have spent decades filming animals in Botswana, and have long recognised the unique character of this 300,000-acre reserve. A wildlife sanctuary, teaming with lions, elephants and cheetahs – among other animals – it has the Selinda Spillway at its heart, which links the Okavango Delta in the west with the Kwando River and Linyanti Marshes in the east.

Rallying their closest friends to join them – a dream team including Wilderness Safaris founder, Colin Bell, and chairman of WWF in South Africa, Mark Read – the Jouberts bought Selinda and its three slightly dilapidated camps, and established Great Plains Conservation, an organisation creating conservation initiatives in stressed natural environments, funded through small, intelligently managed, luxury camps.

Before the Jouberts bought the reserve, 80 per cent of it was still used for trophy hunting. Although the annual elephant quota was just six out of a population of over 6,000, trophy hunters are known for targeting the biggest, strongest bulls – often in their breeding prime – which can devastate the gene pool. Selinda, whose camps accommodate just 32 guests in total, is now a vital hunting-free corridor linking the Chobe National Park and the Moremi Game Reserve.

I visit the four-suite Zarafa, billed as the most luxurious safari experience in Botswana – and with the lightest footprint; it is 100 per cent solar powered. Its intimate size makes it ideal for small groups of friends, or simply for those seeking privacy. Previously named 'Zib', after the Zibadianja Lagoon on which it sits, the camp has moved to a new location, two kilometres across the water.

Ways & means **Cazenove + Loyd** (020-7384 2332; www.cazloyd.com) offers five nights at **Zarafa**, including flights and transfers, accommodation, all meals, some drinks and park fees, from £4,500 per person.

Two lionesses in the Selinda Reserve, northern Botswana (above). Elephants make fresh footprints at the Zarafa camp on most mornings (below); each room is furnished with a Canon Eos 40D digital camera for guest use

In the shade of giant jackalberry trees, Zarafa's suites are housed in tented pavilions, spread out along the water's edge, either side of a communal living room with a glorious dining terrace. Each one is huge, with leather sofas, enormous beds, Persian rugs, bathrooms with free-standing copper baths and working fireplaces, and decks with private plunge pools. The floors are made of recycled Zambezi teak sleepers; the elegant campaign-style furniture is made from mahogany that was stockpiled in South-East Asia after the tsunami in 2004. And each room comes, rather brilliantly, with a Canon Eos 40D digital camera for guests to use.

Every game drive across the vast savannah plains with our charismatic local guide, Dukes, is a thrill. On one, we find a pride of eight lions stretched out under a bush; on another, a leopard in a tree. Early one deliciously fragrant morning, a herd of some 80 elephants lumbers directly across our path; we're about to move on when two stragglers appear – a mother and her tiny calf. They pause momentarily, and then the calf lurches forward a few paces – mock-charging a small electric-blue starling – flapping its ears wildly, and forcing out a squeaky trumpet. It then waits for its mother to catch up, before repeating the exercise again and again across the plain. Finally, the pair hurries to catch up with the herd.

There's a genuine sense of pride among the mostly local team at Selinda; they all 'get' the Jouberts' vision. Excellent African food is served round a big table overlooking the lagoon; I love the hearty brunch of berry smoothies, porridge and biltong muffins. Evening meals combine wonderfully fresh salads with dishes like ostrich steak, red beetroot and caramelised pearl onions, or Kalahari truffle tagliatelli.

On most mornings there are elephant footprints along the sandy path through the camp; on my final day, I can't resist leaping from one to the next all the way to breakfast. For once, it seems that man and beast are coexisting happily □

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK EVELEIGH/ALAMY; DANA ALLEN/PHOTOSAFARI AFRICA

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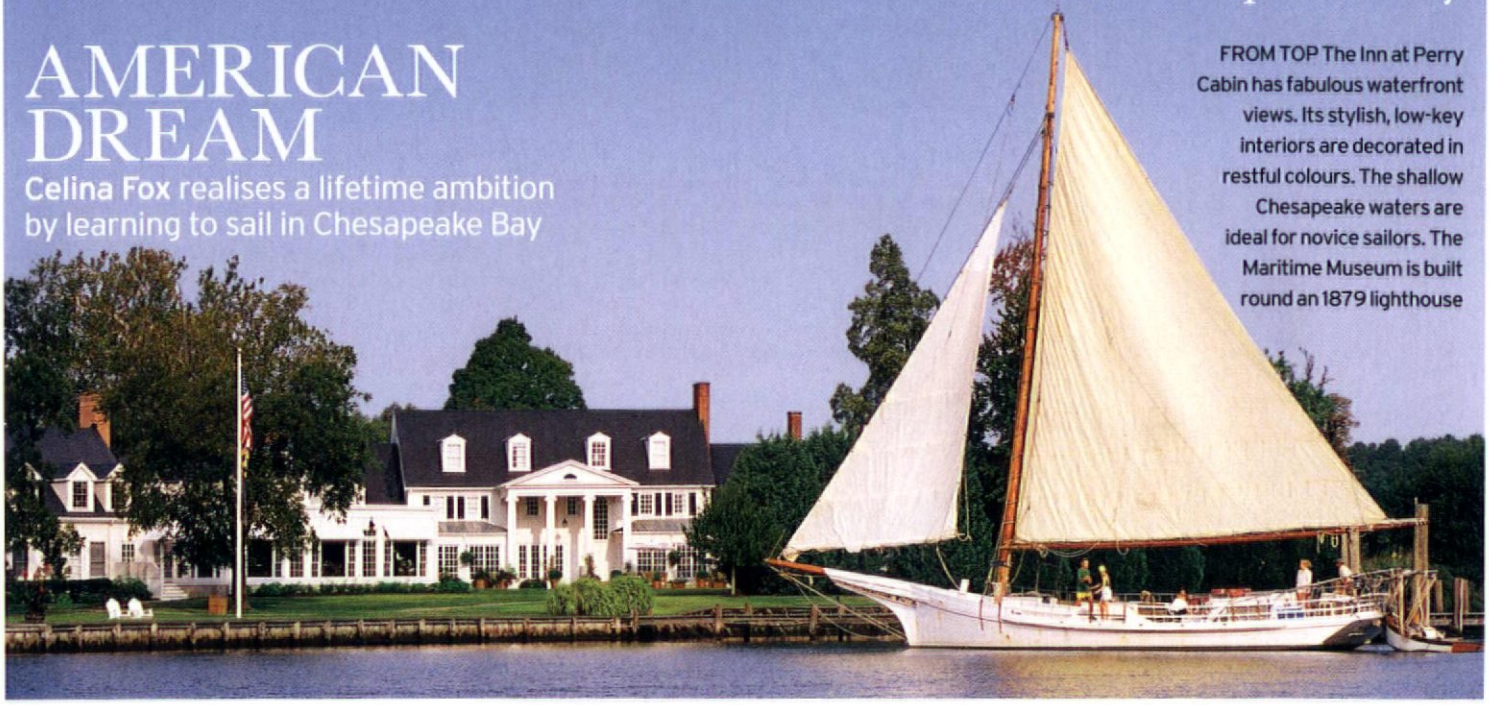
AMERICAN DREAM

Celina Fox realises a lifetime ambition by learning to sail in Chesapeake Bay



FROM TOP The Inn at Perry Cabin has fabulous waterfront views. Its stylish, low-key interiors are decorated in restful colours. The shallow Chesapeake waters are ideal for novice sailors. The Maritime Museum is built round an 1879 lighthouse

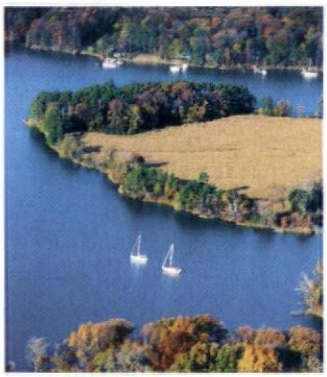
Sailing along the US eastern seaboard has always seemed glamorous to me. Maybe it is on account of Tracy Lord (Katharine Hepburn) in *The Philadelphia Story* melting at the memory of the *True Love*, the little sailboat that C K Dexter Haven (Cary Grant) had designed and built for their honeymoon. Maybe it is those photographs of John F Kennedy with hand on tiller, a lightly wind-tousled Jackie by his side. So when I was invited to hone my sailing skills in Chesapeake Bay, I leapt at the opportunity to live the dream.

Chesapeake Bay is the 200-mile length of water extending north-south past Baltimore and Washington to the west and the Delmarva Peninsula (for Delaware, Maryland and Virginia) to the east. We stay on Maryland's Eastern Shore at St Michaels, 'the town that fooled the British'. During the War of 1812, the residents cunningly attached lanterns to the masts of ships and tops of trees, causing British cannon to overshoot their target.

There is no trace of residual hard feelings towards the Brits. The locals are friendly as you cycle the streets, pause at the ice-cream parlour or explore the shops. Our hotel, the Inn at Perry Cabin, is stylish in a classy, low-key way. The original mansion of 1816 forms the core to a clutch of white clapboard houses with lawns stretching down to the waterfront. In early summer, when roses cascade down trellises and sweet peas overflow their tubs, you can sit on your terrace and hear only the songs of orioles, cardinals and mockingbirds.

The hotel has teamed up with the Offshore Sailing School, run by ex-Olympic yachtsman Steve Colgate and his wife, Doris, who, in believing that sailing is not only a sport but a lifetime activity, established sailing and cruising courses. Ideally, the sailing courses last five days, combining theory, and practical sessions in a Colgate 26, the award-winning, all-weather performance dayboat.

David Manheimer, our instructor, is deeply reassuring from the start. 'Perfect,' he says, as I step on board without falling into the water. Then we take turns on the tiller, mainsail and jib, learning commands and mnemonics, of which 'When in doubt, let it out' and 'Tiller to boom to avoid doom' seem especially useful. By day three we are more confident as we tack and gybe between the bay markers, which provide comfortable berths for nesting osprey.



'Gunkholing' round the shallow Chesapeake inlets is ideal for novice sailors not quite ready to confront ocean waves and currents. The mix of salt and fresh water, the latter from the numerous rivers emptying into the bay, also provides ideal conditions for marine life, notably crabs and oysters.

At the harbour-side Crab Claw restaurant in St Michaels, where the motto runs, 'If he don't kick, we don't cook,' our waitress shows us a flailing blue crab which reappears 10 minutes later steamed, red and ready for our mallets.

Next door is the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, centred around an 1879 lighthouse. With the help of old photographs and traditional sailing craft, the museum explains the changes that have taken place over the past century, from fishing, fowling and farming to leisure activities. The communities of the Eastern Shore were isolated from mainstream America before the construction of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 1952. The small towns nurture their history, although Talbot County now encompasses some of the most expensive real estate in the country. Using the US's oldest continuously running ferry, which started in 1683, we visit Oxford, which was once an international seaport with its own naval academy. Here we embark on the *Eleanor*, a 22-metre Trumpy motor yacht built in 1939, with teak and mahogany fittings. As we sail past the gracious mansions on the shoreline, I feel I have arrived, for she was once owned by Howard Hughes, who used her to whisk Katharine Hepburn away to the Bahamas □

Ways & means Prices start at $360 per night for a Signature double room at the Inn at **Perry Cabin** (020-7960 0500; www.perrycabin.com). The Offshore Sailing School (00-1-239 454 1700; www.offshore-sailing.com) is on-site at the Inn at Perry Cabin and offers a range of courses. British Airways (0844-493 0787; www.ba.com) flies daily from Heathrow to Baltimore.

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STOCKISTS

Merchandise supplied by the companies listed below has been featured editorially in this issue. Information was checked at the time of going to press but *House & Garden* cannot guarantee that prices will not change or that items will be in stock at the time of publication.

Cushion cover, 'Eliza' (F1570/03), cotton, 137cm wide, £45 a metre, bordered with 'Pelisse' (F1502/04), silk, 134cm wide, £57.50 a metre; both at Designers Guild. *For further inspiration, see pages 19-22*

A

Alfies Antique Market 020-7723 6066; www.alfiesantiques.com
Apple Store 0800-048 0408; www.apple.com
Appley Hoare Antiques 020-7730 7070; www.appleyhoare.com
Architectural Textiles 01638-751970; www.architecturaltextiles.co.uk
Artefact 020-7381 2500

B

Baker 020-7823 3612; www.kohlerinteriors.com
Bambu Boutique 01380-818515; www.bambuboutique.co.uk
Bella Figura 020-7349 1320; www.bella-figura.com
Ben Whistler 020-7622 6246; www.benwhistler.com
Brissi 0844-800 9912; www.brissi.co.uk
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C

Cabbages & Roses 020-7352 7333; www.cabbagesandroses.com
Calvin Klein Home 01296-394980; www.calvinklein.com
Casper Slieker 020-7751 5577; www.caspersliekercom
C Best 020-7720 2306
Ceramica Blue 020-7727 0288; www.ceramicablue.co.uk
Chase Erwin 020-8875 1222; www.chase-erwin.com
Chelsea Textiles 020-7584 5544; www.chelseatextiles.com
Colefax and Fowler 020-8874 6484; www.colefax.com
The Conran Shop 020-7591 8707; www.conranshop.co.uk
Cox & Cox 0870-442 4787; www.coxandcox.co.uk

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Daylesford Organic 01608-731700; www.daylesfordorganic.com
Designers Guild 020-7351 5775; www.designersguild.com
Divertimenti 020-7581 8065; www.divertimenti.co.uk
Donghia 020-7823 3456; www.donghia.com

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Elanbach 01874-754631; www.elanbach.com

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Few and Far 020-7225 7070; www.fewandfar.net
Fox Linton 020-7368 7700; www.foxlinton.com

G

Go Modern 020-7349 7209; www.gomodern.co.uk
G P & J Baker 01202-266700; www.gpjbaker.com
Guinevere 020-7736 2917; www.guinevere.co.uk

H

Habitat 0844-499 1111; www.habitat.net
Harlequin 0844-543 0299; www.harlequin.uk.com
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Heal's 0870-024 0780; www.heals.co.uk
Hector Finch Lighting 020-7731 8886; www.hectorfinch.com
Henry Bertrand 020-7349 1477; www.henrybertrand.co.uk
Hidden Art 020-7729 3800; www.hiddenartlondon.co.uk/milan
Homebase 0845-077 8888; www.homebase.co.uk

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I & J L Brown 020-7736 4141; www.brownantiques.com
Ian Mankin 020-7722 0997; www.ianmankin.com
Ikea 0845-358 3364; www.ikea.co.uk
Inform 020-7228 3335; www.informfurniture.co.uk

J

Jim Lawrence 01473-828176; www.jim-lawrence.co.uk
Josephine Ryan 020-8675 3900; www.josephineryanantiques.co.uk
Julia Boston Antiques 020-7610 6783; www.juliaboston.com

L

Lakeland 01539-488100; www.lakeland.co.uk
LASSCO Three Pigeons 01844-277188; www.lassco.co.uk
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Nicholas Haslam 020-7730 8623; www.nicholashaslam.com
Nina Campbell 020-7225 1011; www.ninacampbell.com

O

Ochre 0870-787 9242; www.ochre.net
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Osborne & Little 020-7352 1456; www.osborneandlittle.com

P

Paris Ceramics 020-7371 7778; www.parisceramics.com
Paul Smith 020-7379 7133; www.paulsmith.co.uk
Petersham Nurseries 020-8940 5230; www.petershamnurseries.com
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Places and Spaces 020-7498 0998; www.placesandspaces.com
Porta Romana 020-7352 0440; www.portaromana.co.uk

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RE 01434-634567; www.re-foundobjects.com
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T

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Top Floor 020-7795 3333; www.topfloorrugs.com
Turnell & Gigon 020-7259 7280; www.tandggroup.com
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Vaughan 020-7349 4600; www.vaughandesigns.com
Veere Grenney Associates 020-7351 7170; www.veeregrenney.com
Volga Linen 0844-499 1608; www.volgalinen.co.uk

W

The White Company 0845-678 8150; www.thewhitecompany.com
Wild at Heart 020-7229 1174; www.wildatheart.com
William Yeoward 020-7349 7828; www.williamyeoward.com

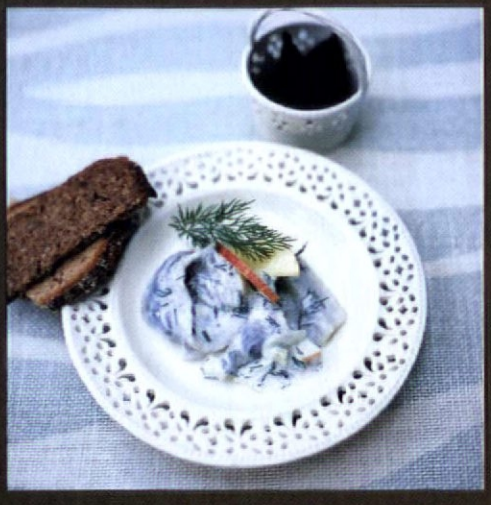
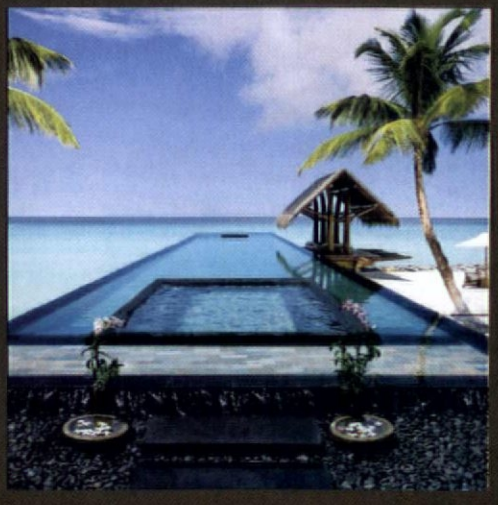
Z

Zimmer + Rohde 020-7351 7115; www.zimmer-rohde.com

WINE & FOOD

Merchandise information for 'Spring fling' (pages 148-152)

Mauritian prawn 'chutney' with Melba toast and salad 'Oyster' bowl (pink), 24cm diameter, £29.50, at William Yeoward. Leaf bowl (white), 9cm diameter, £7.50, at Ceramica Blue. Vintage glass, from a selection, at Pimpernel & Partners. 'La Vieille Rose' (faded red), by Cottonberry, linen/cotton, £49 a metre, at Tissus d'Hélène. Chicken fricassée with watercress, peas and leeks Plate (green), 21cm diameter, £12.90, at William Yeoward. 'Fontainbleau' cereal bowl, 16cm long, £16, at Brissi. White-wine glass (green), £45, at Nina Campbell. Leaf bowl (white), 9cm diameter, £7.50, at Ceramica Blue. Pink/green floral fabric now discontinued; for similar, try Cabbages & Roses. Baked pea ramekins Porcelain cup (white), 6.5cm diameter, £9.50, at Daylesford Organic. 'Fontainbleau' saucer, 16.5cm diameter, £16 with teacup, at Brissi. Silver espresso spoon, £13, at Ceramica Blue. Pink/green floral fabric, as before. Baked salmon with avocado salsa 'Provençal Green' dinner plate, 25cm diameter, £14.19, at Divertimenti. 'Smoked White' side plate, 21cm diameter, £15.95, at Summerill & Bishop. 'La Vieille Rose' fabric, as before. Crémets with strawberry sauce Silver espresso spoon, £13, at Ceramica Blue. Plate (pink), from a selection, at Alfies Antique Market. 'Fontainbleau' dessert plate, 24.5cm long, £12, at Brissi. Glass (pink), from a selection, at Retro Clothing. Pink/green floral fabric, as before. Lemon gin 'honeycomb' jelly 'Petal' side plate (pink), 22cm diameter, £5, at Ceramica Blue. Pressed glass plate (pink), from a selection, at Alfies Antique Market. 'Fontainbleau' saucer, as before. Liqueur glass, from a selection, at Pimpernel & Partners. 'La Vieille Rose' fabric, as before. *For suppliers' details, see above* □

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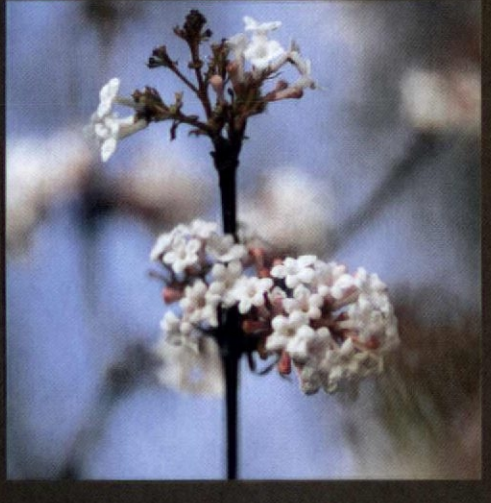

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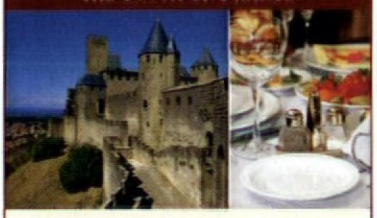

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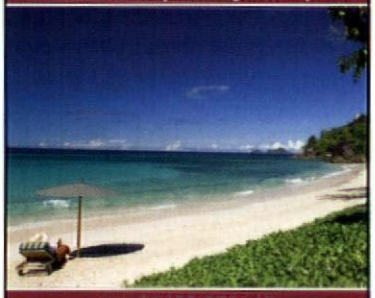

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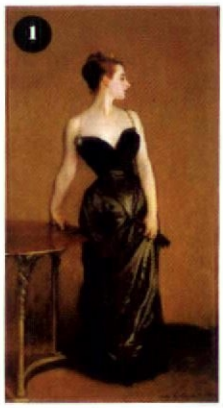

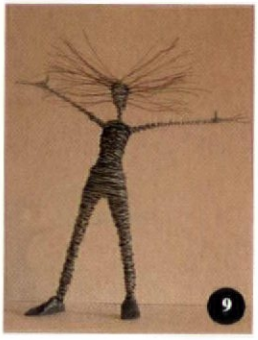

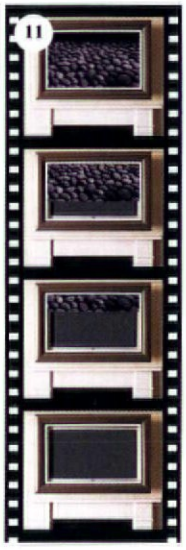

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2. SURFACE VIEW creates unique interior graphics, designed to bring distinctive character and extraordinary impact to your space. The collections of images at their website are available to be produced as Bespoke Murals, Large Canvas Prints or Roller Blinds. To find out more, visit www.surfaceview.co.uk email info@surfaceview.co.uk or call 0118 922 1327.

3. YOU ARE ART. With "You Are Art," you can commission a funky modern portrait for far less than you'd think. So there's no need for time consuming sittings, they work from your photos. You simply choose the style from one of their many options, the size, and the colours you want to feature. They then work to create your perfect portrait. To see examples of their work, visit their fantastic website at www.youareart.co.uk or call 020 7384 1113.

4. Commissioning artist **DEWEY FRANKLIN** holds over thirty years experience in a diverse body of techniques: traditional oil on canvas, ageing and gold-leafing. His tremendous skill at near-perfect copies has led him to specialise in copies of heirloom portraits for private patrons, old masters and landscapes; ageing the pieces for authenticity. For commissions and enquiries, call 01604 719 380 or visit www.deweyfranklin.co.uk

5. CRUSHED CHILLI. A Stained Glass artist living and working in Durham, Janet Rogers adds new life to old and new buildings by using vibrant, textured and iridescent art glass. All glass is individually designed and hand cut, so each piece is an entirely unique work of craftsmanship. To enquire, call Janet on 07960 654996 or visit www.crushedchilli.co.uk The work featured here is a recent commission for The Rt Hon. Michael Portillo.

6. TERRAMUNDI money pots are handmade in Italy and handpainted in London. Fill the money pot until full, smash whilst making a wish, only spend the money on good things. Money pots contain around £600 in £2 coins. Personalisation is their speciality. Call 020 8808 3818, visit www.terramundi.co.uk or email moneypots@terramundi.demon.co.uk

7. RAYLIGHT showcases **POWERAIL**, a picture hanging and lighting system, combining traditional styling, modern technology and is the perfect answer to picture hanging and lighting, especially in heritage environments. There is minimal interference with the fabric of a building, it is easy to move or add pictures to the system. A contemporary system is also available. Call 01525 385511 or email h&g@raylight.co.uk to find out more.

8. SARAH OSBORNE makes beautiful pencil or oil portraits, to commission. She works from photographs that she takes of the subject, or from the clients' own. Sittings available, though not recommended for young children, during which supporting photos are taken, for her to work on at her studio. The perfect gift for a loved one, visit www.sarahosborne.co.uk for examples of portraits of all ages, or call 07976 273 234 between 9am and 6pm, including weekends.

9. RACHEL DUCKER Sculptured wire figures concentrating on the expressive and emotional dynamics of human nature. Commissions accepted. Visit the website at www.rachelducker.co.uk or call 07855 751756.

10. IT'S ALL GREEK. Fine reproductions of classical art. Opposite the British Museum. 65 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3BL. Call 020 7242 6224 or view www.itsallgreek.co.uk

11. ATLANTIS FURNITURE produce metamorphic picture frames that disguise plasma televisions as works of art when not in use. They can also supply and install all TV and audio equipment. Call 01666 829080 or visit www.atlantisavsolutions.com

12. HONEY & MCALPINE have expanded their range to include light and wire sculptures by the acclaimed artist Michael Methven: Visit the website www.honeyandmcalpine.co.uk or call 01476 860010 for more information.

13. GLASS PATCHWORK. Glass Artist Max Jacquard breathes new life into old bottles, etching them with patterns from scraps of fabric and literally stitching them together. The result is part tapestry, part stained glass and looks stunning in front of a window or against a wall. Available to commission in a range of sizes and colours, visit www.maxjacquard.com or call 01622 842 003.

14. RICHARD BOSTOCK can replace a lost, damaged or stolen painting by re-painting it in the best traditions of the genre. This painting of Lady Elgin (painted from a black and white image of the lost original) is now back in her family home near Edinburgh. If you have a similar challenge for Richard Bostock, he would be delighted to hear from you. To browse more examples of his work, visit www.richardbostock.com or call 01785 665556.

15. DOUGLAS WATSON. Every piece in this elegant Delft range from Douglas Watson's studio is based on a traditional design. The tiles are handmade in Oxfordshire and individually hand painted to order. Perfect for fireplaces, kitchen backsplashes and bathrooms. The pieces shown are £19.55 each and measure 127x127x12mm. For a bespoke service, to order or enquire, call 01491 629960 or visit www.douglaswatsonstudio.com

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17. JANE HAMILTON is a member of The Society of Portrait Sculptors and has been sculpting professionally for 25 years. For more information, call 01295 758 066 or visit www.bronzesculpture.net or email jahamall@hotmail.com

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2. FULHAM PALACE GARDEN CENTRE has everything for the town gardener: quality plants, furniture, pots, tools and expert gardening advice. All profits to the youth charity Fairbridge. Visit www.fulhamgardencentre.com or call 020 7736 2640.

3. GYPSY CARAVAN COMPANY. For the child in all of us – enchanting garden retreats for grown ups (and children!). Built to order and furnished with double bed, table and seating. These gypsy caravans can be used as a romantic hideaway, garden studio, playhouse, guest bedroom or simply somewhere to take a glass of wine and a good book. Call 01953 681995 or visit www.gypsycaravancompany.co.uk

4. TRULY MADLY GARDEN. Does your garden blow you kisses? Truly Madly Garden's quirky tree faces are guaranteed to raise a smile from all who see them. The faces are all weather durable, heavy enough not to blow down and can easily be attached to trees, sheds, fences, playhouses etc. To find the character that suits your garden, or to solve a gift dilemma (prices start from £9.50), visit www.trulymadlygarden.com or call 01732 400100 for more information.

5. POTS & PITHOI have one of the largest collections of Cretan terracotta pots found anywhere in the world. They also offer water features, garden furniture, ceramics, glassware, olive oil and foods. For more information, visit them at The Barns, East Street, Turners Hill, West Sussex, RH10 4QQ. Call 01342 714793, email info@potsandpithoi.com or view www.potsandpithoi.com

6. WILVERLEY. The King of Swing. For those with an eye for something special, the Idler from Wilverley is a traditionally upholstered swinging garden sofa. Marine canvas and spring cushions make the Idler not just a fair weather friend! £1,695. Call 01843 603 462 or visit www.wilverley.com

7. COLIN KELLAM creates beautiful ceramics and sculptures in his pottery in Totnes. The stoneware is fired to around 1300 degrees centigrade and so is suitable for interiors or exteriors. Famed for his larger-than-life cockerel sculptures, his collection also includes large animal and bird forms like this distinctive Heron. All his work is hand-decorated and individual commissions are undertaken. For more details, call 01803 863158 or email collinkellam@btconnect.com

8. RIVIERA HOT TUBS specialise exclusively in cedar wood hot tubs, combining traditional cooperage methods with the latest technology they've created a unique range of hot tubs which boasts the thickest staves on the market. Prices range from £6,500 up to £10,500. Call 01803 326638 or visit www.riviera-hottubs.co.uk to request a brochure.

9. SCOTTS OF THRAPSTON. The wonderful National Trust Summerhouses provide an ideal garden retreat for relaxing, working or entertaining and provide a distinctive feature in any garden setting. Manufactured by Scotts of Thrapston, The Reading Room (as shown) is inspired by Virginia Woolf's garden writing room at the National Trust property, Monk's House. Other summerhouse models are available within the Scotts range of garden buildings. For more information, call 01832 732366, visit www.nationaltrustsummerhouses.co.uk or email NTsummerhouses@scottsofthrapston.co.uk

10. PAUL DYER creates specialist natural and formal (modern and traditional) water features. View over 3,000 examples on www.waterfeatures.co.uk Paul Dyer is a multiple gold medal designer and has exhibited at Chelsea Flower Shows since 1992. Nationwide and overseas enquiries welcome. 30% off-season discount available in April only. Then 20% "downturn" discount in May and June and 10% "downturn" discount in July and August. Call (7 days, 8am to 8pm) on 0800 91 98 33 or contact Paul direct on 07970 309 165.

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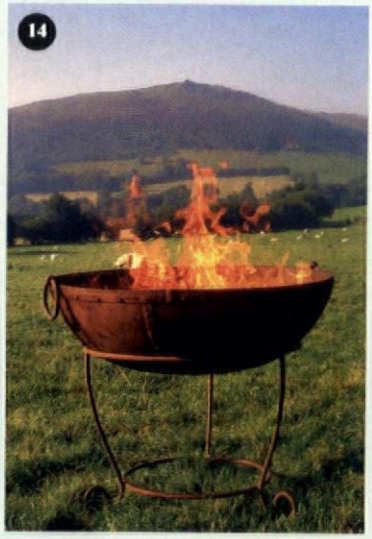

12. SPACEINTENSE supply marquees in a choice of styles mostly for private parties in gardens. Weddings are their speciality. In addition to tents Spaceintense also supply everything else you might need to transform your garden into the perfect party venue. They are located near Stroud in Gloucestershire. To view examples of their beautiful party venues visit www.spaceintense.co.uk or call 01452 813658 for more information on their unique service.

13. AQUATRAC are the creators of Britain's leading automatic swimming pool safety cover. Providing unrivalled safety, heat retention and reduced chemical usage, their models suit various shapes and types of pools. Call 01268 571515 or visit www.aquatrac.co.uk for all the vital information.

14. WILSTONE specialise in original hand carved sandstone and bespoke architectural pieces. Featured the unique Kadai once used for cooking at ceremonies across India now makes a fabulous Fire Bowl. Wilstone import antique and copies of the originals in recycled iron for use as barbeques, planters and water features. The originals are from 50cms up to 2 metres in diameter, copies are available in three sizes 60, 70 and 80cms in diameter. The price includes stand, tongs and barbeque grill, from £140. Call 01694 771800 or visit www.wilstone.com for inspiration.

15. GL'EAUBAL LTD. Pictured is the Aqualens, £3,900+VAT by Allison Armour, whose work combines modern materials with classic geometrical shapes to add magic to gardens and other spaces. Catering to large-scale projects for corporate work and special commissions for interiors or exteriors, the sculptures can be customised where necessary. Prices range from £2,000-£35,000. Call 01293 871575 or USA 805 450 6422. Email allison@allisonarmour.us or visit www.allisonarmour.us

16. HAMMER & TONGS design and install hand-forged structures which create focus points in gardens, parks or public areas. This award-winning stainless steel and acid etch steel sculpture, was commissioned by Mckelvey Wise Garden Design for one of the show gardens at The Chelsea Flower Show. Call 01442 826009 or view www.blacksmithonline.co.uk

17. ANIMALS IN WIRE. Barry Sykes, a trained sculptor, designs and crafts these beautiful life-sized animals that bring character to any garden. Made from dense layers of wire mesh, they are easily movable yet sturdy and weatherproof. Choose from a selection or commission your own ideas. Call Barry on 07951 039663 or visit www.animalsinwire.co.uk

18. LOVE IS... a sculptured loveseat, hand carved from a single piece of aromatic cedar. Suitable for both interior and exterior use, make the perfect declaration of love with this statement piece designed by **JAKE PHIPPS**. Visit www.jakephipps.com or call 020 8816 7855.

19. CYAN offer a superb range of all weather wicker furniture, suitable for use in the kitchen, conservatory or garden. The Lotus Table Set shown is available in various colours from black to honey and table sizes to seat two to eight. For further details, call 0845 6789 890 or visit www.cyan.co.uk Quote House & Garden for a further discount.

20. STONE & WATKINS specialise in designing and constructing high quality bespoke play equipment, tree houses and play houses. Featured is the Classic Veranda (from £5050) which will entertain your children for hours and look great in the garden! Visit www.play-houses.com or call 01363 772879.

21. CAT & MOUSE LANDSCAPES. Established in 1997, Cat & Mouse landscapes are an experienced garden service supply company, offering practical outdoor living space solutions. From a pointer in the right direction, to a complete rejuvenation of your garden, they have something tailored to suit all styles, taste and budget. To find out more and receive your free brochure pack, call 01323 843 488 or visit www.catandmouselandscapes.com

22. SUMMERS PLACE AUCTIONS are the world's leading auctioneers of Garden Statuary and Fossil Decoration. Next sale to be held on 19th May 2009 at The Walled Garden, Billingshurst, West Sussex. Pictured is a Coalbrookdale lily of the valley pattern cast iron seat, estimated value £2,500-£4,000. For more information, visit www.summersplaceauctions.com, email info@summersplaceauctions.com or call 01403 331 331.

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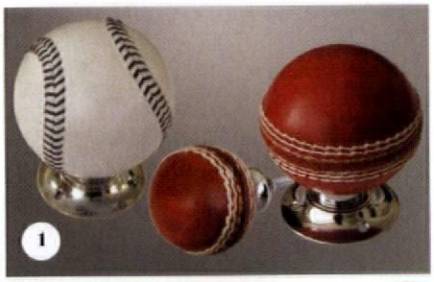
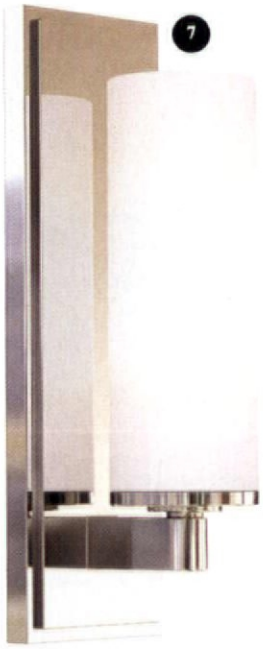


1. CHLOE ALBERRY'S latest collection of door and cabinet pulls are both humorous and fun. Along side the sporting theme pictured, for which she won a BIDA award Decorex '08, Chloe continues to produce crystal, stone, porcelain and hard wood handles. Visit her Shop at 84 Portobello Road, London W11. Call 020 7727 0707 or visit www.chloealberry.com

2. FRITZ FRYER. Superb, Art Nouveau fitting, restored and rewired by Fritz Fryer Antique Lighting. Price £960. As specialists in the restoration of original light fittings, Fritz Fryer offer a truly unique collection and a full restoration service. Call 01989 567416 or visit www.fritzfryer.co.uk

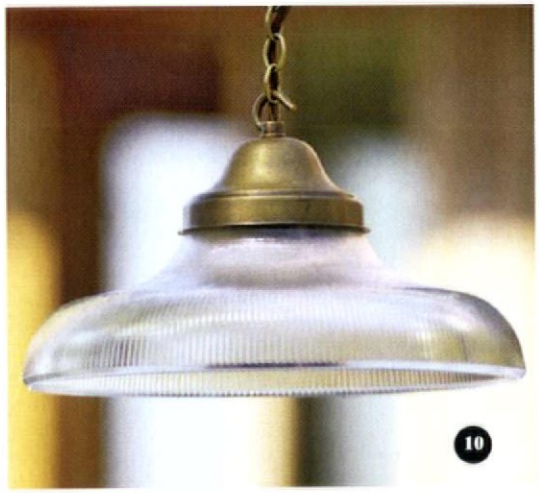
3. A&A ORIENTAL ANTIQUE RUGS WAREHOUSE offer a huge selection of fine antique and contemporary Oriental and European rugs, including rug-runners, Kilims, Aubusson and Tapestry. They also offer a full restoration service, insurance valuation and home approval without obligation. Let them know your specific requirements and they will visit you with a wide selection. They also offer a special interiors service which caters for a complete interior, using contemporary oriental rugs. Each rug can be made to order in a customer's own design, colour and size. For more information on this service, visit them at Romsey, Hampshire or call/fax 01794 511 988. London Office 020 8992 6867. Mobile 07767 420033. Southampton Office 02380 221 805. Visit www.antiqueorientalcarpets.co.uk or email aandaoriental@btconnect.com

4. CRYSTAL CORNER are antique chandelier specialists. Call 01628 488868 to make an appointment to visit their huge workshop which houses hundreds of beautiful French and Italian chandeliers. Also, all repairs and electrical work undertaken. Visit www.crystal-corner.co.uk to view a sample of their antique chandeliers and to request a catalogue of their exquisite handmade chandeliers.



5. DOMINIC MYOTT LIGHTING CONSULTANCY design, plan and supply modern, decorative and architectural lighting. Featured is their "Tio Reading Light" available in nickel, chrome, steel, brass or bronze. Visit them at www.greatlights.co.uk or call 01438 718226. Welwyn showroom only by appointment.

6. MEDITERRANEO. From an extensive portfolio, Mediterraneo creates spectacular Murano glass design solutions in contemporary, traditional and bespoke designs. Mediterraneo, The Imperial Laundry, 71 Warriner Gardens, London SW11 4XW, call 020 7720 6556 or visit www.mediterraneodesign.com



7. HOUSE OF ORANGE Incorporating IP44.COM, an extensive collection of mixed styled IP44 rated bathroom and outdoor lights. Brought to you by Orange Lighting, this online catalogue of lighting for use throughout the interior, can now be purchased through the website as well as offering the contract user online trade pricing and quotations. Visit houseoforange.co.uk email info@houseoforange.co.uk or call 01279 812350.

8. THE LIGHT COMPANY offers outstanding contemporary and vintage lighting, murano chandeliers, architectural feature lighting and remote control lowering equipment for the hard to reach chandelier. Bespoke options and lighting design/consultations are available for any project. Pictured is the Carousel fitting, 15 light large scale in soft bronze with crystal candle pans, priced at £2095. For more information, call 01792 476777 or visit www.thelightcompany.co.uk

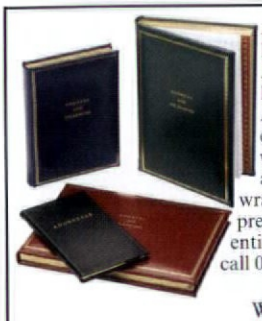
9. W SITCH & CO. This company specialises in the reproduction and renovation of antique light fittings, and has a vast stock of antique fittings for sale, as well as a range of reproductions manufactured using traditional techniques. They will repair, rewire or renovate clients' own fittings. For further information, visit them at 48 Berwick Street, London W1F 8JD, call 020 7437 3776 or browse www.wsitch.co.uk

10. JIM LAWRENCE is a family run company based in the heart of Suffolk which makes handcrafted products for the home. These include curtain poles, door handles, switches, soft furnishings and a huge array of lighting. You can see the full range at their new Suffolk showroom or at www.jim-lawrence.co.uk or call for a brochure on 01473 828176.

11. LIONWITCHWARDROBE design interiors and furniture for family homes – from space planning and structural refurbishments, to bespoke furniture commissions and new decorative schemes. This child's bedroom is an example of their innovative design. For further inspiration, visit www.lionwitchwardrobe.co.uk email info@lionwitchwardrobe.co.uk or call 020 8318 2070. Member of the British Interior Design Association.

12. ELG LONDON. Now fully established in the Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour, London, ELG London, has rapidly gained an international reputation for supplying the finest hand carved mirrors and furniture. Find them on the 2nd Floor in the South Dome. Call 020 7351 4433 email info@elglondon.com or visit www.elglondon.com

13. ADAM WILLIAMS DESIGN specialise in patinated bronze furniture and mirrors. This elegant Scrolled leg console table with Sunburst mirror is painstakingly crafted using hammered bronze, which refracts the light beautifully, and contrasted with the limestone top, is a desirable acquisition to either traditional or contemporary interiors. The website is tempting, view www.adamwilliamsdesign.co.uk or call 01749 830 505. Email info@adamwilliamsdesign.co.uk



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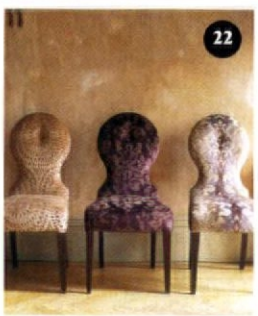
14. SIMON WHARTON holds an interesting collection of antique fireplaces at his yard near Bath. For latest stock with prices, go to www.whartonantiques.com or call 01761 420 293 for more information.



15. ALTON BROOKE. The exquisite new Soumak Collection available from Alton Brooke. Visit the showroom at 2/25 Chelsea Harbour Design Centre, London SW10 0XE. Call 020 7376 7008 or view www.alton-brooke.co.uk

16. ON REFLECTION specialise in top quality, original, 19th century mirrors with many unusual and decorative pieces, including Venetian mirrors. To see a selection from current stock, look online at www.on-reflection.co.uk call 01963 220723 or email info@on-reflection.co.uk to arrange a visit. See them at the Battersea Decorative Arts Fair, 21-26th April 2009.

17. FELT. Rugs from the Mountains of Heaven.Felt's unique collection of rugs, floor cushions and cushions are hand made by the nomadic peoples of Kyrgyzstan. From dazzling and bright to elegant and subtle, they suit both traditional and contemporary interiors. Viewing by appointment in London SW12. Call 020 8772 0358 or visit www.feltrugs.co.uk

18. BRUME decorative window film looks just like etched glass and provides a contemporary and practical solution for any window where you need privacy but don't want to lose natural light. For more information, visit www.brume.co.uk or call 01364 73951 for a brochure or 01364 73090 to place an order.

19. THE WEST SUSSEX ANTIQUE TIMBER COMPANY are a company set in the South Downs of England. As they supply the best traditional oak floors from sustainable sources, it is no surprise that their clients include The National Trust and English Heritage. They supply and fit random width planks (from 6" to 12" wide) hand planed and stained on site to your choice of colour with their own range of antique oils. They also supply and fit parquet flooring and offer a complete in-house joinery and fitting service. To view their ranges, call 01403 700 139, email wsatimber@aol.com or visit www.wsatimber.co.uk

20. DANN ANTIQUES make individual bespoke television cabinets, specialising in antique styles and period finishes. The cabinets come with manual and fully remote lifting mechanisms hiding televisions and apparatus. Visit www.dannantiques.com or www.plasmatvcabinets.co.uk alternatively email sales@dannantiques.com or call Gary Low on 01225 707329 for more information.

21. THE FEATHER COMPANY. Luxurious goose down pillows. Original channelled duvets. Traditional feather bolsters. Extensive range online. Bespoke service. All made at The Feather Company workshop in Edinburgh. Visit www.thefeathercompany.com or call for a price list on 0131 228 1254.

22. THE SOFA AND CHAIR CO. are renowned for the quality, craftsmanship and sheer originality of their furniture, which would grace any home beautifully. It is the epitome of elegance. For more information on their traditional, modern and commercial ranges, visit www.sofaandchair.co.uk or call 020 8993 4415.

23. SOFA.COM offer elegant, well-made and comfortable furniture at astonishingly reasonable prices. For more information, call FREE on 0800 988 6672 and for reader offers, visit www.sofa.com/house or visit their Chelsea showroom. The Jackson Sofa (pictured) starts from £780.

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Timeless Classics... continued

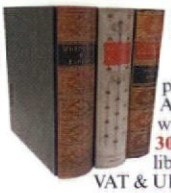
24. GLAZEBROOK & CO. offers some of the finest British sterling silver, silver plate and stainless steel cutlery at prices that represent exceptional value. For their mail order catalogue and price list, contact PO Box 1563, London SW6 3XD, call 020 7731 7135 or fax 020 7371 5434. Free sample service by post. Visit www.glazebrook.com

25. WORLD OF BEADS. Rialto Jewellery design and make unique, individual jewellery in their Hampshire studio, using high quality components, including their own lampwork glass beads, which are individually handmade. To view the latest collection, visit www.rialtojewellery.co.uk or 1 Stonemasons Court, Parchment Street, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8AT. Call 01962 861255 for more information.

26. THE PERIOD PIANO COMPANY carry an amazing stock of rare and unique pianos such as the fantastic grand piano illustrated above, made of cast aluminium by Rippen in the 60s. Their current stocklist starts with exceptional 18th and 19th Century pianos and goes right up to some great Art Deco pieces. Call 01580 291393 or visit www.periodpiano.com

27. SOMETHING FOR THE WICKEND. What could be more romantic than a room full of beautiful, luminescent candles complete with incense and essential oils, all available from Something for the Wickend. Pictured is the Soy Wax candle. With competitive prices, secure payment methods, and next day delivery, www.somethingforthewickend.co.uk has got your romantic evening all wrapped up. For more information, call 0845 1664051.

Something For The Wickend



28. THE WATCH AGENCY specialise in buying and selling new, ex display and pre owned watches by the world's leading watchmakers, including Rolex, Cartier, Patek Philippe, Jaeger Le Coultre and diamond set Jewellery. Pictured Lady's 18ct Gold Rolex Datejust on President Bracelet with Diamond set Bezel Dial, Lugs and Bracelet. New £34,160. As New £8,995. With prices starting from under half of retail ensure that you speak to one of their watch experts to get the right watch at the best price. Call 01702 395100 or visit www.watchagency.co.uk

29. SIGNATURE CARPETS. Beautiful and luxurious; each Signature carpet or rug is custom designed to work perfectly with your interior choices. Any size and shape, all made in 100% wool and all made in the UK. A handcrafted carpet or rug designed exclusively for you is a rare pleasure. Find out more at www.signaturecarpets.co.uk or by calling 01422 845075.

30. THE MANOR BINDERY has designed a range of 25 Lever Arch Files, to transform your office into an elegant library. Standard or customised titles, spines supplied with or without file binders. 10 standard files £70.50 including VAT & UK delivery. Call 02380 894488 or email manorbindery@btconnect.com for more information.

31. THE NATURAL RUG STORE, showcases a fine basket weave Seagrass rug with a luxurious double border. They are suppliers of superior custom made natural rugs and runners in Bamboo, Coir, Jute, Paper, Seagrass, Sisal, Sisool and Wool. They also offer a full rug design, colour search and quotation facility online via their Rug Builder. For more information and to design and commission a bespoke natural rug, visit www.naturalrugstore.co.uk or for telephone orders, call 0845 076 0086.

32. CAREW-JONES have been one of the countries leaders in perspex and glass for 35 years. Pictured here is the Redenham coffee table frequently used in both contemporary and traditional interiors. To view other designs please visit www.carewjones.co.uk or call 0845 230 2411.

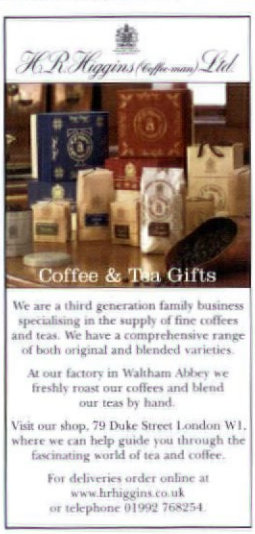
33. THE HIDDEN TV COMPANY AT MANSER ANTIQUES. Cabinets available in Walnut, Mahogany, Oak and Olive Ash. For more information and a brochure, call Mark Manser on 01743 351120, log on to www.thehiddentvcompany.com or visit the showroom at Coleham Head, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 7BJ.

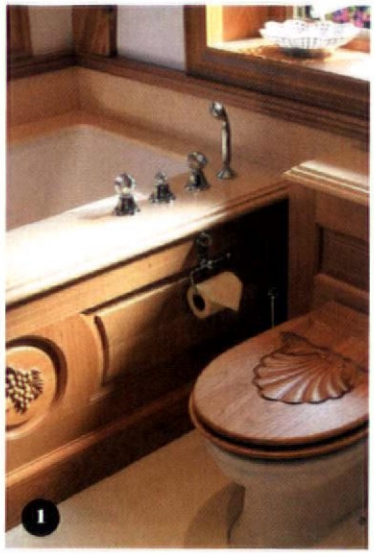
34. THE ALBION BATH COMPANY. How has Albion recreated the pleasure of bathing? By using a special material called Iso-enamel, Albion has created the ultimate luxury in bathing. To find out more about the 53 different models, including the elegant and sumptuous "Lilye" pictured, or to request a brochure, call 01206 794462 or visit www.albionbathco.com

35. OLLERTON HALL DÉCOR. Stair Runners – Stripes, Contemporary or Traditional designs. Off the roll or bespoke made any size. A nationwide Customer Created Carpet Service brought to you in the comfort of your own home. Est. Family Business for over 35 yrs. For FREE samples, call 01565 650222 or visit www.ollertonhalldiscountcarpets.co.uk

36. NICOLE FABRE DESIGNS LIMITED specialises in the reproduction of beautiful French antique textiles. Pictured here is "ORLEANS", hand printed linen, which has been adapted from an 18th Century Toile from Bourges "Circa 1780" Call 01485 576 200 or visit www.nicolefabredesigns.com for more information.

37. BALMAIN AND BALMAIN are makers of traditional upholstered furniture that specialise in unusual and bespoke pieces. Each piece is handmade to order by craftsmen using the best skills and materials. The furniture can be seen at their showrooms in Dorset or by visiting the website www.balmainandbalmain.com
Call Balmain & Balmain on 01963 220247 or fax 01963 220580.





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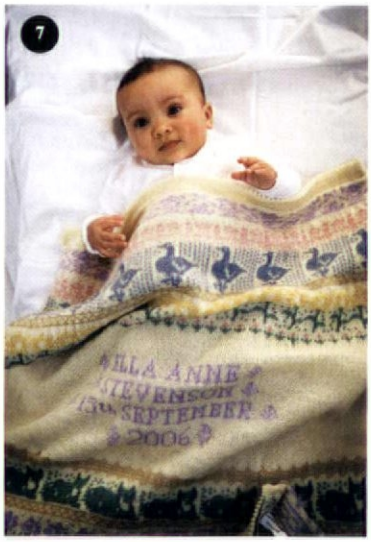

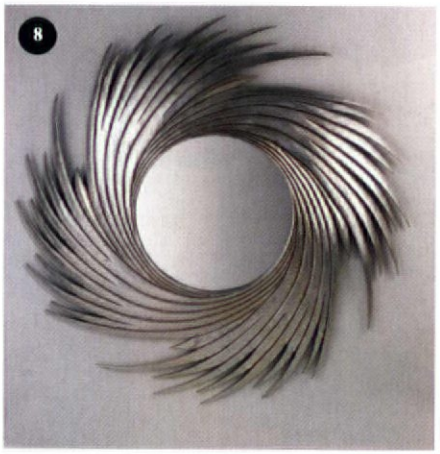

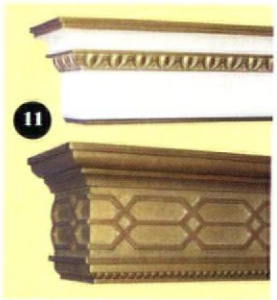

1. PAUL LEVY LTD. produce beautiful, custom made joinery to your specifications at an exceptionally high level of craftsmanship. For more examples, visit www.paullevydesign.co.uk or call 01622 356634 for more information.

2. OVERMANTELS supply a wide range of traditional giltwood mirrors, any of which can be made to measure in a choice of gilded or painted finishes. See full details and their bespoke help service on www.mirrors.co.uk or call 020 7223 8151for a free brochure.

3. RICHARD BAKER FURNITURE. The Kensington Sideboard in Zebrano wood is just one stunning example of Richard's bespoke designs. Richard Baker has been designing bespoke freestanding furniture for over 20 years concentrating on an ethos of well proportioned design-led furniture for your home at a fair price. For more information and your nearest showroom, visit www.richardbakerfurniture.co.uk or call 020 8336 1777 to discuss your requirements.

4. GILLY NICOLSON BESPOKE BEDLINEN produces luxurious pure Egyptian cotton bedlinen in custom made designs. Create your own unique set of exquisite bedlinen by browsing the new website www.gillynicolson.co.uk They also supply Interior Designers, hotels and have a Wedding & Gift List. Call 0131 220 0681 or email gilly@gillynicolson.co.uk to find out more.

5. UNIQUE DESIGNS FURNITURE offer a personal service making beautiful bespoke furniture to order. Each piece is individually designed and handcrafted to your exact specifications. They work in a wide range of styles from modern to traditional: for your living, dining, study and bedrooms. To see many more fine examples of their work, visit www.u-d-f.com or call 01621 855708.

6. NIGEL NORTHEAST. Pictured is the Sycamore Oriental style coffee table; 1200mm square with Birds-Eye Maple panels, priced £3,850. Made by Nigel Northeast bespoke cabinet makers in Wiltshire. Contemporary and traditional designs made to order. Nigel will be exhibiting this and other work from the 30th May-7th June, visit www.nigelnortheast.co.uk for more details or call 01980 862051 to find out more.

7. CHARLOTTE COT BLANKETS. Bespoke personalised baby blankets in wool or organic cotton, a choice of designs and colours to choose from, all handmade in Norfolk England. For a free brochure, call 01603 627448 or visit www.charlottecotblankets.com

8. JULIETTE'S INTERIORS. Turn heads with this astonishing unique collection of mirrors and furniture that can be tailored to customers' own size and colour requirements. The range is huge and they offer a personal customer focused service. If you can't find what you want, they can usually make it for you. They are an excellent sourcing tool for interior designers worldwide. Visit www.juliettesinteriors.co.uk or call 01789 721911.

9. RUBY ROSE FABRICS offers innovative fabrics and accessories, specialising in strong, elegant designs inspired by both vintage country fabrics and retro themed prints. Their bespoke service gives you the opportunity to create a fabric to perfectly match your existing interior. Visit the online boutique at www.rubrosefabrics.co.uk or call 01432 869 088 for more information.

10. STEPHEN PERKINS. The Unicorn Chair. Stephen Perkins Ltd., The Cellar Workshop, Brewery Arts, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1JH, UK. Visit www.stephenperkins.co.uk Call 01285 657588.

11. JEWBY INTERIORS. Introducing a new range of wooden pelmets are specialist woodcarvers and gilders, Paul Jewby Interiors. With over twenty years of experience, Paul carves all forms of ornament and undertakes bespoke commissions making exceptional quality mirrors, furniture and lighting. All pieces can be custom made to fit the existing decorative scheme. Call 01359 269239 or view www.pauljewbyinteriors.co.uk for details.

12. THE CLEVER WARDROBE COMPANY. This family run business offers a beautiful range of bespoke, freestanding wardrobes. However awkward your space, they can create a unique, easily dismantled piece to meet your requirements. They offer a painted or wax polished finish, hassle free delivery and installation. Contact them on 01753 622980 or visit www.thecleverwardrobecompany.co.uk for more information.

13. SOFA MAGIC specialises in corner seating in both fabrics and leather. They carry all major brands including Andrew Martin, Designers Guild, Romo, Linwood and Brian Yates. For your design dilemma they can make bespoke to your size, colour and design, and can also install in-situ so they can bring furniture in no matter what access problems there may be! Corner units work beautifully in home cinemas, games rooms or family spaces! Their second shop, Fabric Magic specialises in bespoke curtains and blinds. Visit their website, www.sofamagic.co.uk for more details or call 0117 924 8282/8383. Ask about their Spring deals.

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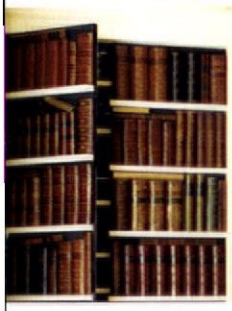

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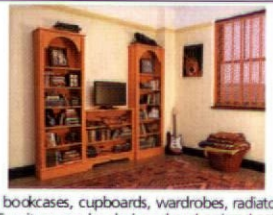

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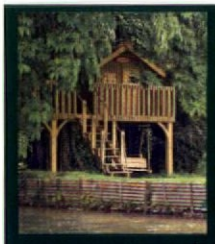

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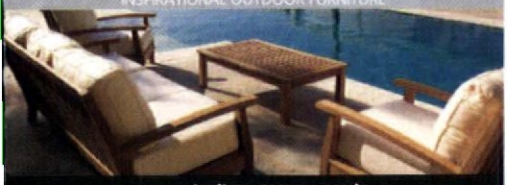

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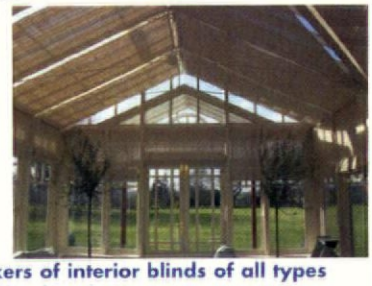

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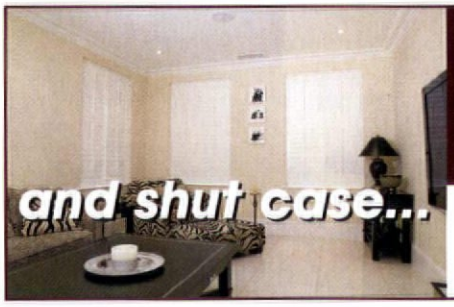

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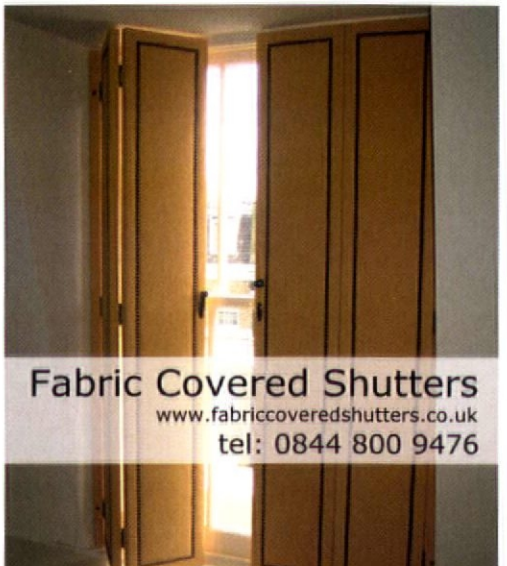

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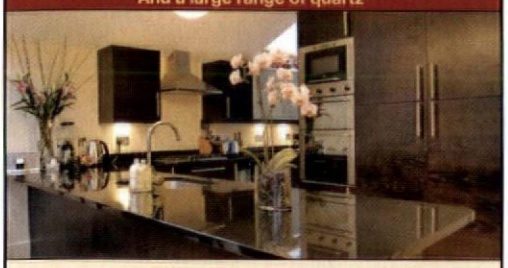

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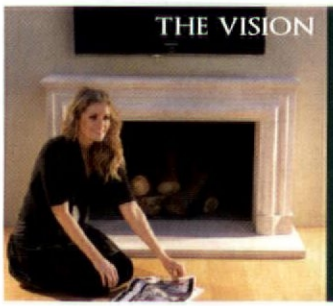

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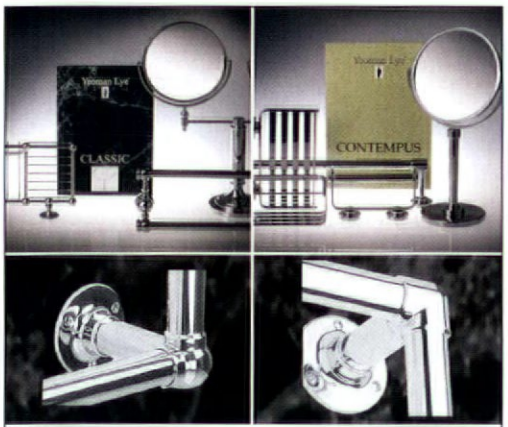

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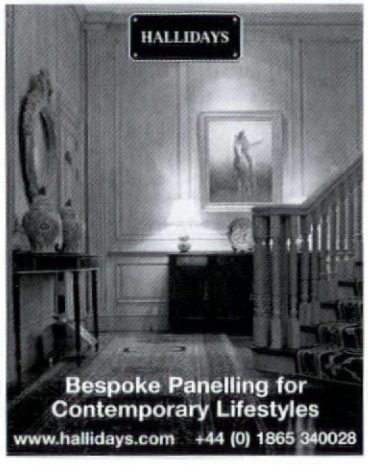

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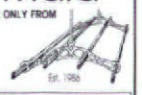

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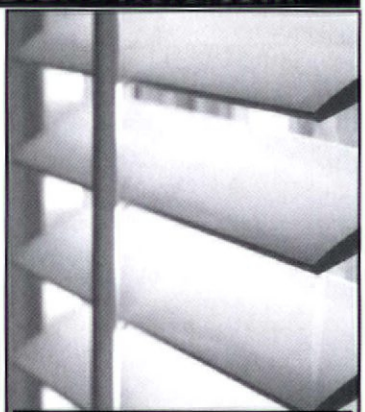

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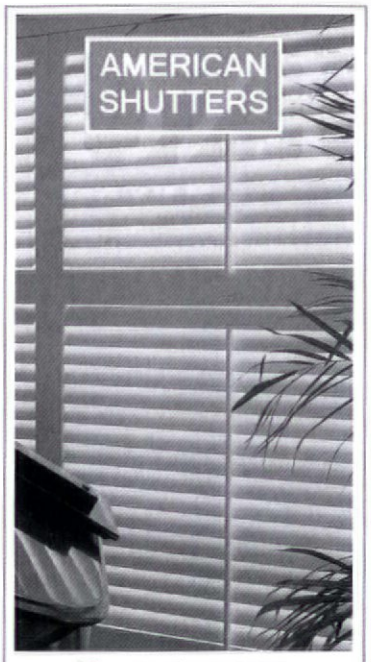

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DRIVING PASSIONS

Social arbiter and people-watcher **Mary Killen** analyses people's relationships with their cars. This month, she goes for a (necessarily short) ride in Juliet Kindersley's G-Wiz electric car

Eco-queen Juliet Kindersley has been busy being Green longer than most of us. She and her husband, Peter, bought their farmhouse on top of the Berkshire Downs in 1972, in a bid to escape pollution and live naturally.

They started with almost no land, but as Peter's publishing company, Dorling Kindersley, had a series of successes, they were able to increase their acreage. Finally, in 1997, they were able to start their own farm, Sheepdrove Organics, where they raise animals 'the eco way', and where they have built a sustainable Eco Conference Centre – with natural lighting and ventilation – almost entirely of wood. Sheepdrove Organics has shops in London and in Bristol selling the farm's produce.

We are beetling over the downs in one of the Kindersleys' four G-Wiz electric cars. 'You don't need to wear your seat belt because you are on private land,' Juliet observes. The three-door hatchback is one of the very first models produced. The newer versions have strengthened chassis, following safety fears.

'If it breaks, they come and take it away and give you another one until it has been mended'

There is a deep litter of leaves on the floor of the tiny vehicle, and with both of us in bulky coats it should feel faintly claustrophobic. Instead, it is oddly soothing; a feeling consolidated by the music that I can only describe as 'disarming' issuing from the CD player. *The Healing Power of Mozart* was commissioned by the Kindersleys from a Russian pianist, Mikhail Kazakevich. 'It is designed to promote stillness,' says Juliet. 'It is to do with the speed at which he plays, and the tone. It has been scientifically proven to promote alpha waves in the brain.'

The farm's gates open automatically as they sense the metal of the G-Wiz, 'as they do for my grandchildren's very ancient metal prams', laughs Juliet.

'You can't really go more than 50 miles in a G-Wiz before you have to recharge,' she continues. She carries an extension lead and plug in the car and tops up at friends' houses from an ordinary 13-amp wall plug when necessary. A full recharge takes eight hours. However, each mile costs just 1p, as opposed to 15p in an average petrol car.

When going further afield, her husband, son and daughter each drive a Toyota Prius, but Juliet herself goes to London in an eight-year-old Mercedes. 'I plan to keep it until it is 15,' she says. 'I think that is Greener than getting rid of it now it has been made.'

We pass some brightly coloured calendula being grown for Neal's Yard Remedies, which the family bought in 2004. 'We grow all sorts of things here for Neal's Yard – elderberries, echinacea, hips and haws. We harvest a lot of wild nettles, too,' explains Juliet. 'We have incredibly broad interests; music, the arts, healing, nutrition, even butterfly conservation – we've got marsh fritillaries.'

The whole Kindersley family is 'so absorbed in what we do'. Daughter Rosie owns the bookshop Books for Cooks, and Juliet's son, whose wife is training as a homeopath, runs Neal's Yard Remedies, as well as an olive farm in Ibiza, managed using biodynamic principles.

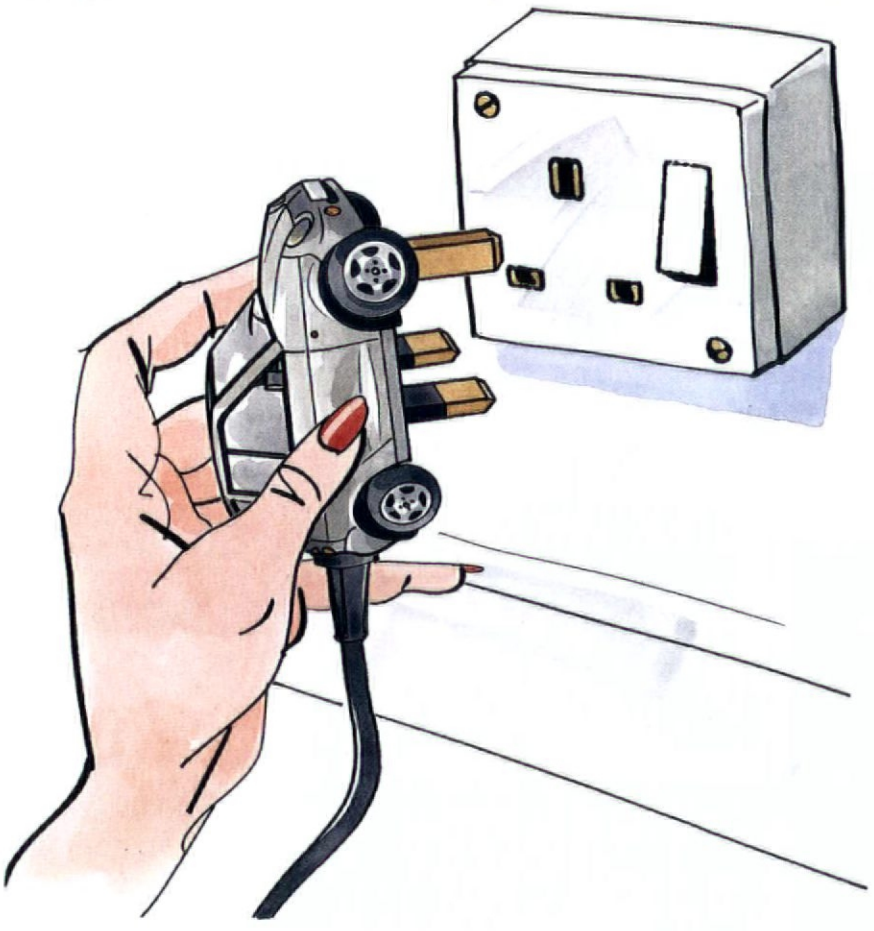
Juliet points out sculptures of sheep, and real, Shetland, ones. She attributes the award-winning taste of their meat to the way it is reared: 'the greater the biodiversity, the happier the animals and the better the food. It's simply because we don't spray.'

We leave the G-Wiz, to look around the conference centre, where up to 200 delegates, from companies such as Vodafone, can lunch on farm-fresh, seasonal, organic food produced at Sheepdrove Organics. 'Everything is grown on the farm,' confirms Juliet.

She has no complaints about the G-Wiz. 'If it breaks, they come and take it away and give you another one until it has been mended,' she says. 'I think it is fun and cosy in here. I usually drive it on "economy" rather than "fast" – Peter favours "fast", which is up to 50mph. It is sort of automatic, like a dodgem, really.'

In London the G-Wiz attracts no congestion charge, and there are free parking bays for electric vehicles in the borough of Westminster. 'Peter has just bought another one,' says Juliet, laughing. 'He ordered it online, in blue so that he could brand it for Neal's Yard, but when it turned up, it was blue with white stripes. He had pressed the wrong button on the computer and we got a Yohji Yamamoto-designed car. My youngest grandchild won't be seen dead in it' □

For more information about the G-Wiz, visit www.goingreen.co.uk
Sheepdrove Organics: www.sheepdrove.com



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