

COUNTRY HOMES

& INTERIORS

It's our birthday!

- CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF COUNTRY STYLE
- HOW MODERN RUSTIC INTERIORS LOOK TODAY
- FRESH IDEAS FOR KITCHENS, LIVING ROOMS & MORE

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COLOURS INSIDE

SMART UPGRADES FOR
FLAT-PACK FURNITURE

PROJECTS SO GOOD,
THEY LOOK BESPOKE

BRITISH DESIGN CHAMPIONS

In bed with a
business founder

At the table with
design stars

Partying with
heritage brands

Editor's letter

HAPPY
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Andréa x

THIS MAGAZINE FIRST APPEARED 40 YEARS AGO! Back then, chintzy florals were in their prime and we spent a lot of time adding wallpaper borders to our room schemes. *Country Homes & Interiors* has had amazing editors in its time, from founder Sally O'Sullivan to my predecessor Rhoda Parry. I'm grateful to play my part and hugely appreciative of our wonderful team and the contributors who bring their ideas and skills to these pages each month. And of course, we wouldn't be here without you, our readers – thank you for your continued support.

On to the issue! Fittingly, it's our fourth annual Best of British edition, in which we champion the designers and brands who help us create the homes we love. We've spoken to a roster of talent – not just the founders and designers, but also to the brand strategists and spreadsheet whisperers whose financial acumen helps keep the businesses going in tough times. Read about them all, from page 75.

Plus, we've launched a furniture collection with French Bedroom! Find out more on page 86.

Sign up for our newsletter on page 124 and you could win Robert Welch tableware worth £500.

Contributors



JANE CRITTENDEN

wrote our *Falling in Love* house story, on page 18. 'A home connected to nature is a design concept that's more than visual,' she says. 'I love the feeling evoked by the cocooning green bedroom with its rusty tones, which draws on views from the balcony.'



AMELIA THORPE travelled from desk to field for our feature on page 142. 'I admire these entrepreneurial farmers for opening up imaginative ways for us to experience nature, eat well and slow down.'

CHRISTOPHER McPHAIL

is CH&I's brilliant graphic designer. 'I look forward to the Best of British edition every year; designing the layouts is always an inspiring challenge.'



HALLWAY Parvelling and original stone flooring bring texture to this welcoming space. Try Pacific seashells in Black, Dunelm, Morris & Co. Pimpernel lampshade, Pooky. Mirror, Rockett St George.

FALLING IN LOVE

Warm autumn colours and a rejigged floor plan revitalised Louise and Matt Smythe's early 20th-century family home, making it perfect for modern living



LIVING ROOM Dark green walls make a contrasting backdrop for the light grey sofa and pale table lamp, while wicker stools add texture. Find similar stools at Nicky Cornell. Sofa, Love Your Home. Lampshade, Pooky.

A

handsome property set within Kent farmland is surrounded by apple orchards and far-reaching views. Yet the bustling cathedral city of Canterbury is only a five-minute drive away. 'We'd lived in cities for many years and really needed a change of environment,' owner Louise

explains. 'We often walked through the orchards on our visits here to see my husband Matt's family, and had admired this house. We loved the location, in easy reach of the city – and the timing was perfect when it came on the market.'

The detached house is believed to have been built between 1920 and 1930 and was probably associated with the orchards. Although there was enough space, the layout didn't work for modern family life, so Louise met with local interior designer Michelle Shakallist to discuss how to make it a better fit.

'Michelle had quite a few period projects on her website and I could see that she was sensitive to the original architecture while modernising the interiors,' says Louise. 'I loved her use of colour and we needed guidance when it came to reconfiguring the layout.'

It looked as though the original property had been extended at some point, as access to the main bedroom was via another bedroom. Also, there was a second en-suite bedroom but no family bathroom. Michelle reduced the size of this bedroom, blocked up the en-suite door and created an opening onto a new landing that leads to the main bedroom.

Downstairs, the kitchen and breakfast room were next to each other. 'We considered opening up the wall either side of the chimney,' says Louise, 'but Michelle pointed out that we could have a much bigger kitchen with a better layout if we took the whole wall down.' Also, a lift between the main bedroom and living room was removed and turned into a second wardrobe, while a window in the dining room became French doors to improve the access to the garden.

With the building work underway, Michelle then guided Louise and Matt through the interior design. 'The house had an old-fashioned farmhouse feel,' explains Louise, 'and we wanted our interiors to keep that sense of tradition and to complement the countryside setting, but also for the rooms to feel inviting. I had this idea of walking

through the front door and feeling warmed by our home.'

A theme of moody greens and blues, plus a strong sense of nature, emerged through Louise's mood boards. 'I'm an autumnal person,' she says. 'I love the change in seasons, and colours like rusts, ochres, earthy greens and blues really appealed to me and reflected what we saw outside. I also love the textured look of the original hallway panelling and brick fireplaces.'

Michelle put together a colour palette in warm seasonal tones to connect the rooms. New panelling adds depth and character, while limewash features in the kitchen and sun room. 'Limewash has a velvety finish and I was pleased Michelle suggested we take it over the ceiling, too,' says Louise.

As for furniture: a modern sofa in the living room mixes with wicker stools; a traditional coffee table sits alongside a geometric armchair; mid-century styles bridge contemporary and vintage. 'Michelle showed us how mixing furniture from different periods, and having shelves for display, could make our home feel eclectic and more lived in,' says Louise. Original stone and wood floors were retained along with the barn doors that were stripped back to their natural wood.

'Michelle's small changes to the layout have made a massive difference to how we live,' says Louise. 'The kitchen is glorious – we love the connection between the dining room and garden. However, our favourite spot is sitting on our bedroom balcony watching the sun go down. The house really belongs to us now.'

AT HOME WITH

OWNERS Louise Smythe lives here with her husband Matt, who both work in finance, and their children Maddie, 15, and Finn, 12.

HOUSE Early 20th-century detached house with living room, sun room, dining room, kitchen, four bedrooms (two en suite) and a family bathroom.



EXTERIOR Louise and Matt's detached house was built between 1920 and 1930. 'Our favourite spot is sitting on our bedroom balcony looking out over miles of fields and watching the sun go down,' she says



LIVING ROOM Walls and woodwork in rich green shades, a tan leather chair and wooden floorboards ground this space. **Walls and woodwork** in JoJo's Green, Coat. **Cushion**, Oka. **Floor lamp and shade**, Pooky

OFFICE Colour-drenched in earthy blue, this room has a calm feel. A sofa bed (not shown) transforms it into a guest room. **Walls in Oval Room Blue**, Farrow & Ball. **Novani desk**, La Redoute. **Leather chair**, West Elm



KITCHEN Knocking out the wall to a breakfast room created a larger floor plan with space for a pantry, fridge-freezer, wine fridge and island. Try off-black David Rose by Coat for a similar **cabinetry** shade

DINING ROOM The rustic table and leaf-print curtains are a nod to the house's rural location, while the rug brings a mid-century look. **Table**, Garden Trading. **Curtains** in Gingko Trail, Sanderson. **Rug**, Ruggable

'I lean into an autumnal palette of leafy greens, textured woods and touches of rust and ochre – it's my favourite time of the year'



KITCHEN Louise finds that deep drawers are a better use of space; hers are finished with Elm cup **handles**, from Corston. Lilley **bar stools**, Garden Trading. Cobb Rise and Fall bone china **pendant light**, Original BTC



SUN ROOM Large windows frame the garden and fields beyond, while seating around the fireplace creates intimacy. Cushions in Alma by GP & J Baker. Scrumpton velvet bench in Green, Loaf



STAIRCASE The original stone floor and wall panelling remain, enhanced by a runner from Unnatural Flooring. **Paneling** in Slipper Satin, Farrow & Ball. **Holophone pendant light**, Pooky



MAIN EN SUITE Making one of the windows smaller allowed for a walk-in shower, while classic hardware completes the look. **Ecru Zellige tiles** (in shower), Otto Tiles & Design. **Berkeley towel radiator**, Burlington



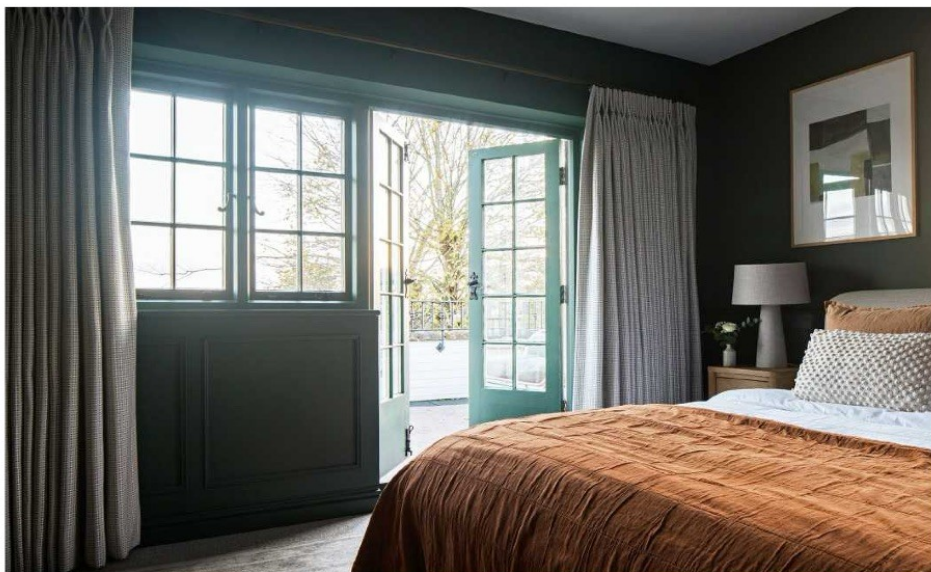
GUEST BEDROOM Bobbin legs add interest to the simple desk/dressing table. **Malpaso footstool**, The Pure Edit. Try **Milton round mirror**, Olivia's. **Drax desk lamp**, Pooky. Try **Boden console table**, Dunelm



GUEST BEDROOM The velvet headboard picks up the autumnal palette, with a touch of blush pink and ochre. **Walls** in Sunday Soul, Coat. **Headboard**, Loaf. Try **Dark Ochre quilted velvet bedspread**, Next



EXTERIOR This lovely old cart is a legacy from when the property was connected to the surrounding orchards. It is an intriguing reminder of its history, bringing more character to an already idyllic setting



MAIN BEDROOM The views through the double doors and beyond the balcony inspired the rich green tones of this space. **Walls** in Brewer, Coat. **Bedside lamp**, Heal's. **Adina bedside table**, Feather & Black



MAIN BEDROOM The limewashed chest of drawers has a modern-classic style, complemented by a metallic mirror. **Camille chest of drawers**, Cotswold Company. Try Cade round **mirror**, John Lewis

FINN'S BEDROOM The mid-century style furniture is timeless, and will last as Finn grows up. **Desk and bedside table**, West Elm. **Paneling** in Stiffkey Blue, Farrow & Ball. Try Brandon **desk lamp**, John Lewis

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN PHOTOGRAPHS JAMES FRENCH
STYLING MARSHA TAYLOR

LOUISE'S COUNTRY LIFE

SIMPLE PLEASURES 'We love hunkering down in front of the fire on chilly days and playing games; it's so peaceful here.'

FAVOURITE VIEW 'Whether it's a sunny or foggy day, it's wonderful to wake up and look out of our bedroom window at the fields and orchards.'

SHOP AT 'Domaine Evremond (domaineevremond.com) and Chartham Vineyard (charthamvineyard.co.uk); they're both nearby and have wine shops selling their own wine, plus they do tours and tastings.'

EAT AT 'The Red Lion in Hernhill (theredlionhernhill.co.uk), a 14th-century Kentish pub that serves classic pub food with a twist.'



MADDIE'S BEDROOM During the reconfiguration of the upstairs, the couple ensured that Maddie's bed would fit in her new room. **Paneling** in Inchyra, Farrow & Ball. **Bedside table**, West Elm. **Art**, Kat Kristof

