



"If you can afford it, going bespoke is the fast-track to home health and happiness. Why? Because when our homes are custom-fitted, coloured, furnished and finished to fit the way we authentically live, the level of sustenance and support we can receive from them is immeasurably enhanced, and its restorative power is super-charged"

MICHELLE OGUNDEHIN, WRITER AND TV PRESENTER

INTERIORS SPECIAL

THE BEAUTY OF BESPOKE

Staying at home is the new going out, so why not create a home that is personalised to meet your needs and allows you to indulge yourself a little? Seán O'Connell says perhaps it is time to spoil yourself and go bespoke

Over the last 12 months, most of us have spent more time in the home than we could have imagined, and apart from those lucky – or unlucky – enough to be allowed out and about, our four walls have been our refuge. Home is often described as being the physical embodiment of the people who inhabit it, but if it’s true that the last year has changed us all, it goes without saying that our homes should change accordingly.

SERVING UP STYLE

According to Jo Hamilton, the founder and creative director of design studio Jo Hamilton Interiors, choosing bespoke makes more sense than ever. “Everybody knows they want a beautiful home, but what sometimes goes under the radar is that home is a multi-functional space as well. The kitchen is probably the best traditional example, where joinery should at once be both elegant and act as a storage facility; while worktops have to stand up to the rigours of pans, knives, spices and the like, all the while texturally complementing the kitchen aesthetic.”

A kitchen maker that is now a British institution and for *“Our team of experts’ vision is to create innovative, distinctive and individual designs, tailored to the needs and specifications of the client”*

TOMMASO LOTTI, LINLEY



Above: The sumptuous LINLEY Odyssey kitchen recently installed in Harrods



Farrow & Ball’s Modern range gives you a captivating new look without compromise

whom the word “aesthetic” could have been invented is LINLEY, which creates beautiful, inspiring and unique spaces, and unbelievable attention to detail. LINLEY’s Head of Fitted Cabinetry, Tommaso Iotti says: “Every design is one of a kind and discerningly stylish. Our team of experts’ vision is to create innovative, distinctive and individual designs, tailored to the needs and specifications of the client.”

The overused phrase “hub of the home” nevertheless accurately describes the area where we socialise, both with family and friends, and which is the room that creates the biggest impression. It is also the space that has the most potential for personalising, with main considerations being lighting, flooring, furnishings and the area that is more than a shade important – the paintwork. Choosing colours is not a job for the faint-hearted but not easy to get hands-on advice in these self-isolating times, which is why Farrow & Ball came up with their Virtual Colour Consultancy. By chatting with you over a video call, F&B’s experts will help you put together a custom-made colour scheme.

THE MATERIAL WORLD

Where décor is concerned, fabrics play an essential role in creating a certain atmosphere. Whether you prefer minimalistic or opulent, textiles bring innumerable qualities that can improve the sense of well-being in your home. One of the leading trends for 2021 is the abundance of colourful blooms in the form of small-scale contemporary florals, and this is reflected in a new collection by iconic

London store Liberty, which invites customers to bring their own mood boards and paint charts in store so expert staff can advise on creating a look that is unique to them and their home. Drawn from its legendary archive, the Liberty Fabrics Modern Collector range is organised into three design stories Floribunda, Art Nouveau and Tree of Life.

While the colour, texture and pattern you handpick for your furnishings can elevate a room to new heights, there's another area of the room with even loftier ambitions – the walls. Discerning designers are turning to wallpapers for the richness and depth they can bring to a room, and the more personalised the better, according to Jo Hamilton: "For me, a room never feels fully dressed until it's been papered," she says. "It adds texture and warmth as well as softening and cushioning the visual flatness of the plaster."

Hand-painted silk wallpapers, such as the amazing creations of de Gournay, the ultimate in the luxury market, have the most glorious effect on any space. The texture of the silk, complemented with the soft, organic movement in the hand-painted designs are unbeatably serene and elegant.

Indeed, the effect of being surrounded by de



Top: Piccardi Living's floors 'reflect the character of the customer'

Left: Gilt-edged glamour of de Gournay
Right: Louis de Poortere turns rugs into an art form

Bottom: The Modern Collector range from Liberty



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JO HAMILTON

Gournay's rich, exotic designs is often described as 'intoxicating' and that effect doesn't come easily. As co-director Rachel Cecil Gurney points out: "The background is typically painted in gouache, and then the design is meticulously painted on using watercolour. Every detail and element of the design is first outlined in pencil – so if you look closely at any of de Gournay's wallpapers, you'll even see the pencil lines." Clearly the mark of perfection.

TAKING THE FLOOR

Personalising the items you have in your home does not necessarily mean they have to be made to your design or specifications – it is about using them in a way that gives you most satisfaction and which reflects your lifestyle. Those who claim that rugs are only for floors clearly haven't seen the Gallery collection from Louis de Poortere. Featuring designs inspired by the great modern artists, such as Henri Matisse, Raoul Dufy and Pablo Picasso, each one is a work of art in its own right and worthy of a place on anyone's wall.

Where flooring is concerned, rugs aren't the only scene stealers. Whatever size or style of home, wooden flooring is matchless for its warmth, durability and sheer beauty. And its infinite permutations of timbers, finishes and shades will allow you to tailor-make a floor that will create a stunning impression and likely last the lifetime of both you and your house. In manufacturing its bespoke parquet floors, Piccardi Living calls on craftsmen with age-old skills, producing beautiful flooring "developed on the basis of intuition, tastes, character and personality of the customer".

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

> If you're looking to do a refresh without making wholesale changes, you could do worse than introduce a statement piece to bring energy and fun into the home. Most importantly, this piece should represent you and your home – it may be a showstopper for when guests come around, but it is an item that you will see every day. The good news is that your statement piece can be a standalone and different in style to what surrounds it – for example, if your sitting room is lacking in lustre, imagine the impact of a chest of drawers inspired by Louis XVI, and built by master furniture makers Salda. Or it could simply be a decorative accessory, such as the distinctive crystal glassware from Baccarat.

Meanwhile, if you're going to make a statement in the bedroom, do it with style and, even more importantly, do it with substance. British company Savoir are renowned as makers of the finest super-luxe beds that money can buy and produce distinctive beds that are more than just good for the soul – they are good for the body. Every Savoir bed is tailor-made to fit its owner perfectly, the result being not only a wonderfully comfortable bed but a magnificent piece of furniture that is the height of style and design. Literally the stuff dreams are made of.

However, statement pieces can also have a function with an emphasis on fun. Whether or not you're a musical household, a piano from Cambridge company Edelweiss is the ultimate object of desire. Personalised to look as outlandish as you dare, these instruments are not just for playing manually but have state-of-the-art electronics that allows them to play themselves, providing remote-controlled live music and entertainment. “We design and >



Above: Above: Unsurpassed gilt-edged glamour by Salda. *Below:* Edelweiss's pianos are off the scale for style





“I love how colour and print have the potency to change your mood and the way you feel, and I wondered how this would relate to your body and mind at night – the peace and mood it brings.”

ZANDRA RHODES

From the size to the style to the fabric – every aspect of Savoir beds is designed specially



Above: The Modulr home office is designed with sustainability, longevity and energy efficiency in mind

build each customer’s piano with their specific requirements at the centre of everything we do, and cater for any age and style,” says sales director Ross Norman.

THE GREEN ROOM

Among the many lessons we have learnt over the past year of lockdown is that, for many of us, working from home is the new reality. Where the emphasis has traditionally been on the home as a place to relax and escape from the workplace, that very same workplace is now likely to be in your home. But to be effective – even pleasurable – your workspace needs to be a dedicated environment. As Jo Hamilton points out: “Getting it right now that work and home are more intertwined than ever, is as good a reason as any to create the bespoke home that best suits you and your family. That applies to how you work, just as much as how you relax.”

For many of us, the most desirable place to work is in an outside space – a choice that has numerous advantages, according to Jo van Riemsdijk of Modulr, designers of bespoke outdoor home offices. “Having a workspace in your garden means that your work life is separate to your home life – this creation of a ‘destination’ produces a boundary between the two,” she explains.

And the benefits can be tangible as van Riemsdijk points

“The rise of the home office over the last year means that more thought than ever must be given to its design and style”

JO HAMILTON

out: “A number of estate agents who have contacted us have said that house buyers are looking for a dedicated home office in the garden as long as it is good quality and stands the test of time.”

The Modulr home office certainly fit the bill, with light-filled, contemporary structures that are architect-designed with sustainability, longevity and energy efficiency in mind.

THE POWER OF PLANTS

Nature is a great starting place for any home design and offers a wealth of inspiration on colour, texture and light. All too often, displays of greenery in a home are an afterthought, but the transformative effect of plants, judiciously chosen and carefully placed, cannot be overstated. “They are one of the key pieces to consider in any design,” says Jo Hamilton, pointing out that they finish and soften, while adding movement and interest. “A home should be a restful, calming space that gives a sense of peace – it calms the very core of us if we get it right.” ♦