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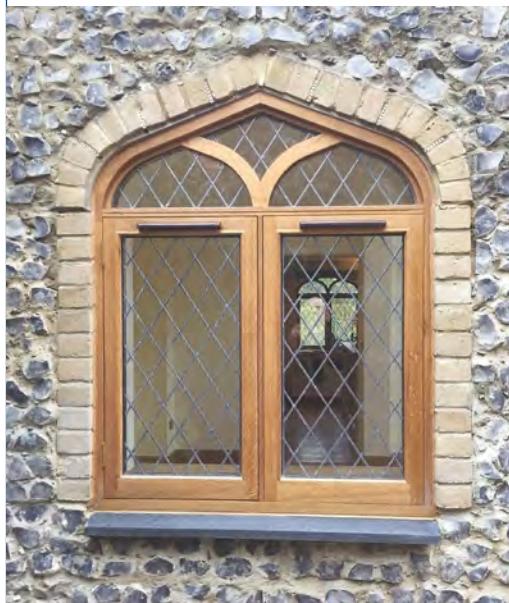
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Welcome

WINTER 2018

If you've not ordered your turkey yet, do read our article about impressive young farmer Sam Figgis, who really cares about his birds... and if you still need a tin to cook it in, pop along to Copperfields in Whitstable for all the kitchenware, tableware and Christmas decorations you need.

Winter's not only about Christmas, though, and it's a good time to plan other projects. We have good advice about kitchen worktops, and fascinating facts about stonework from specialists Chilstone. There's inspiration, too, from up-cycler Jay Blades, star of TV shows Money for Nothing and The Repair Shop; and great ideas from imaginative Eve Ranger, who has transformed her seaside home.

If that all sounds too much like hard work, put your feet up and just enjoy our feature on restoration work at a 13th century church near Sittingbourne.

Congratulations to our competition winner from the Autumn issue. Elizabeth McLaren from Chart Sutton, Maidstone won a copy of The Orchard Cook book by Stuart Ovenden.

Have a happy Christmas and new year.

Dawn





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WINTER GARDENING

Once the dormant season is well and truly upon us, it's time to take stock of the year's successes and failures, and to get on with planning for next year. It's also time to enjoy displays of evergreens, winter flowers and attractive barks.

VISIT A NATIONAL TRUST GARDEN TO SEE THE SEASON'S HIGHLIGHTS



The first spots of colour start peeking through in winter. The garden at **Chartwell** is a feast for the eyes year-round. In the colder months, admire the winter border, wander through the orchard and circle the lakes. With wintry mists and frosty mornings, the garden and estate at **Ightham** is beautiful this time of year. **Sissinghurst** closes for conservation over winter, but the colder season is perfect for a quiet walk around the wider frosty estate. For more information visit nationaltrust.org.uk.

Welcome Jack Frost

A beautiful and necessary occurrence in the garden, Jack Frost transforms gardens into a glittery scene of ice and sleep while never being certain when the curtain will rise. One reason to refrain from cutting back perennials at season's end is to enjoy the architectural quality of their seedheads in winter, especially when rimmed with frost. Shown here are sea holly and spent blossoms of Hydrangea paniculata.



RAISE SOME RHUBARB

This popular pudding tastes even better when the stems are home-grown. Choose a bright frost-free winter weekend for planting. For success, prepare a planting hole in a well-drained spot and dig in plenty of well-rotted manure or compost. In their first year, plants should not be harvested or 'forced' - let the plants get established. Cover with a forcing in the second year to exclude light and encourage early April pickings.





PERFECT IN POTS

The intense blue flowers of *Iris reticulata* in February are a joy to behold. They will bloom whatever the weather in late winter providing a striking display varying from pale blue to deep violet, and standing at just 12cm tall, they're perfect for pots. Place containers in a sunny spot and ensure they are well drained. These hardy plants will appear every year, but with more vigour than the last.

A WINTER ESSENTIAL

Snowdrops are one of the first signs of life in gardens after the long winter months, flowering between January and March. They enjoy a well-drained soil and need good light when in active growth. Containers of snowdrops are lovely, especially near the house. However, being hungry and thirsty plants, they don't do well in pots long term. After planting, feed with a balanced fertiliser while they are growing, and divide clumps every few years. Also, remember to keep a note of where you've planted them, so you don't step on emerging flower shoots.



What to do now

- Help wildlife. Resist the urge to tidy up. Many creatures will be sheltering in leaf litter and the hollow stems of dead perennials.
- Clear leaves from paths and patios where they're a slippery hazard and mow up leaves smothering grass on the lawn on a dry day.
- If your garden feels bare of plants offering winter interest, buy some in: hellebores, skimmias, heucheras, euphorbias and evergreen grasses.
- Lift and store dahlia tubers once their leaves are blackened by frost.
- Check climbers are securely attached with plant ties to their supports.

FEED WILD BIRDS

It's hard to spot garden birds at leafier times of the year, but in winter we get a really good view of them as they pay our gardens a visit. Encourage them with hanging feeders or a bird table; position these where you can see them from the house.





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SPROUTS HONOUR

BRUSSELS SPROUTS GOT A BAD REPUTATION AS THE VEGGIE KIDS LOVE TO HATE, BUT MANY OF US HAVE REALISED (AS ADULTS) THAT THIS VEGETABLE IS INCREDIBLY DELICIOUS. IT'S ALSO BRIMMING WITH VITAMIN C AND FIBRE, SO IT HAS A TONNE OF HEALTHFUL PROPERTIES.

Once universally, and in some cases justifiably, despised, Brussels sprouts are finally getting their due, and if you love sprouts as much as we do, you may even fancy trying to grow your own next year. Yes, they take up a bit of space in the veg plot, but apart from that they're really not a very demanding crop. The advantage of growing your own is that by carefully choosing your varieties, you can spread the sprout love from autumn until early spring.

The other advantage of growing your own is that you get to enjoy the sprout tops, too – that is, the sheltering crown of foliage at the top of the plant. Sprout tops make pretty good cut-and-come-again greens provided you take just a few at a time during the growing season. Their taste is something between cabbage and Brussels sprouts, and they're very tasty shredded and either tossed in butter or added to stews, rather as you would with the posher, more glamorous cavolo nero.

Brussels sprouts are thought to have acquired their name due to the fact they were first grown commercially in Belgium, where they were a favourite winter vegetable. Having

proved a hit, the plant made its way across Europe and has become an established sight on many British plots.

As with other brassicas, such as cabbage and broccoli, Brussels sprouts need a firm soil that is not acidic. Most plots are well-suited to this requirement, and even those that are less than ideal can be treated to bring them up to scratch.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS VARIETIES

Standard varieties, such as Bedford Fillbasket (early cropping) will produce a bumper crop of large sprouts that can be picked over many weeks. More modern F1 hybrid varieties tend to mature all at one time, meaning you have to pick them more-or-less in one go.

For an early crop before Christmas, try Maximus or Breeze. For a late maturing variety, try Wellington. Trafalgar is said to be great for a child-friendly taste as the sprouts are sweeter and less bitter.

For something a bit different, try Red Bull or Rubine, which produce attractive purple-red buttons that retain their colour when steamed and also have a mild flavour.

Winter vegetables

- GROW YOUR OWN -





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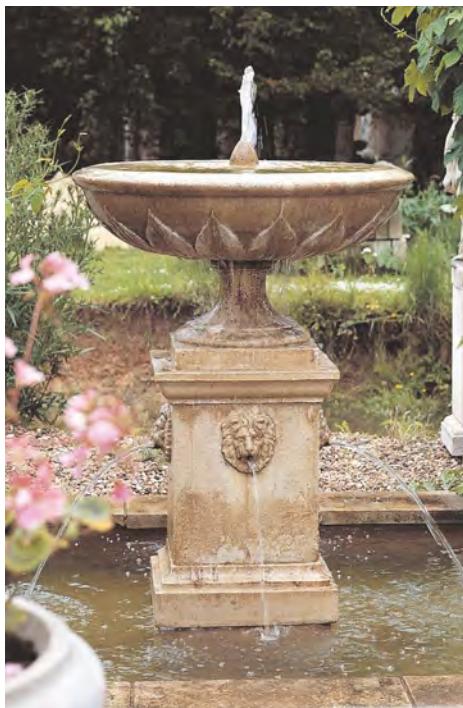
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- by Louise Tomlin -





Replacement stone portico by Chilstone



The beautiful Kew fountain from Chilstone

Welcome to Chilstone, the home of cast stone. For those of you who are uninitiated in the wonders of cast stone, let me give you a quick introduction to this very versatile and clever material. Back in 1953 the founder of Chilstone; Michael Dibben wanted to find a substance that resembled natural antique stone as closely as possible. After extensive research he found cast stone, which can be crafted or moulded into virtually any shape or size, which makes it perfect for garden ornaments, bespoke stonework and architectural restoration projects. This material closely resembles natural stone, what's more it weathers wonderfully taking on an antiqued patina that blends beautifully with any stonework in its surroundings.

The special process of hand making all of Chilstone's pieces, both large and small, is carried out in the workshops on site by a team of dedicated craftspeople. They use their skills and attention to detail to create elegant pieces, some

of which grace many well-known and prestigious properties, such as Kensington Palace, Hever Castle, Kew Gardens and the Longleat Estate. Chilstone exports worldwide with customers in the USA, Asia and throughout Europe.

There's no doubt that the elegant ornaments and decorative pieces that Chilstone produce are bound to appeal to all types of customer from the residential gardener to garden designers alike – interesting to note that Chilstone's products have featured in many award-winning show gardens at RHS Chelsea and Hampton Court flower shows – and they are set to yet again in 2019. And there's so much more they offer, there's the whole arena of bespoke architectural services they provide to architects, builders, developers, landscapers and the general public.

Chilstone can restore original features like statues and fountains, but also window and door surrounds, sills, cornices, columns or other

stone features. An interesting example is a house refurbishment project in a street that was mainly made up of Victorian properties, the owners wanted to match the other houses, but sadly their house's portico had been removed at some point in the past. Chilstone was able to provide a stone portico within keeping of the history of the house and matching the others in the street.

They can do this by supplying from their existing stone product range or by taking a mould from neighbouring properties. This works for almost any stone feature like coping, balustrades and sills. It's well worth pointing out that damaged or eroded stonework can be replicated more cost effectively than carved stone. The fine texture is perfect for detailing and engraving, and they have excellent colour matching capabilities along with optional stainless steel reinforcements when components are load bearing.



Kensington Palace gardens



Above: Ballustrading at Hever Castle

Left: Bespoke cornices are used to define porticos, window surrounds, pediments and other decorative features



Not every Chilstone product is installed as a result of restoration, they are frequently being utilised in new builds. Some developers incorporate Chilstone's range of architectural elements to give a more classical appearance, with features that will weather well. Likewise extensions to period properties can be helped to blend more easily with the original building by replicating features, so the new parts complement the old.

If you would like to know more about Chilstone, please see www.chilstone.com or visit their show garden where you can enjoy the beautifully landscaped grounds and see their wonderful work in person.



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As the nights draw in and the weather turns cold, there's nowhere in the house that can bring quite as much pleasure as a warm, comfortable living room. In order to create a cosy atmosphere you need to conjure up a sense of warmth.

A warm colour palette, woolly blankets, thick pile rugs, fluffy throws and soft lighting are the staples of a cosy living room and the perfect accessories to create a space to escape to from the cold and frosty weather this winter.

The colour scheme is the key; darker, warmer tones and sumptuous fabrics will bring the room in, making it appear cosier. Traditional patterns made from heavier-weight fabrics such as tartan and check feature heavily in winter décor styling guides year after year.

Incorporating tactile textures imparts a sense of warmth; cushions, rugs, and throws will all make a room feel instantly cosy. Soft blankets and fluffy throws are wonderful to snuggle up in during the colder months.

FURNITURE ARRANGEMENTS

There's nothing less cosy than a room that feels too formal. The best living rooms are defined by the activities you do in them – so start considering how you can make your living room personalised. First, establish a focal point, then divide the room into sections – creating areas with different

functions to make that room feel cosier. Once you've decided on a space, think about where to put the rest of your furniture. Aim for flowing lines with circular layouts – pull pieces of furniture forward around your focal point.

COMFORT UNDER FOOT

Hardwood and tiled floors have become increasingly popular in recent years and, whilst attractive and practical they can make your home feel cold during the winter months. Introducing rugs provides a barrier, reducing draughts, adding warmth and if placed by armchairs and sofas they will ensure you never have to put your feet onto a cold floor. Rich deep colours and thick pile will accentuate your winter look.

The beauty of rugs is that they're available in so many different colours, textures, shapes and designs that you can always find the perfect one for your living room. Rugs often look great in the shop, but sizing, colour and lighting can affect just how it looks once it's put down in your living room.

REFLECT ON THE ROOM'S CHARACTER

The best cosy spaces have a level of comfort, informality and warmth – in both a decorative and a literal sense. But a crackling fire and a





All items from Neptune

comfortable sofa are only part of the story. The cosiest of sitting rooms must also have character, much of which is derived from the objects that fill the surfaces and cover the walls. An abundance of empty wall space can make a room feel cold – avoid this by giving your walls a lick of paint – consider dark warm colours. You could even fill up the wall space with some sort of storage that holds your favourite collections, or maybe hang some old antique paintings that you'd love to show off.

A WARMING ACCESSORY

Radiators are an absolute necessity for warmth and comfort within the home. Designer radiators allow you to have a functional item which provides warmth whilst improving the appearance of your living room. If your home has more of a period feel, choose a traditional or reclaimed radiator rather than having the

unattractive, conventional white radiator hindering the appearance of your living room.

A BURNING CENTREPIECE

Fireplaces are essential for living rooms, from contemporary designs to traditional wood-burning fires; they're the ultimate centrepiece. A fire or log burner will create a low-level glow and instantly add warmth. This can be added to or replicated with decorative lanterns and candles clustered together and arranged in an assortment of heights, adding an intimate and homely touch. Place tea lights around the bottom of the fireplace when entertaining to create a romantic and calming atmosphere. Making your living room cosy for the winter can really help you to appreciate it more. Once you've decorated for the winter, you can relax and put your feet up in the cosiest room of the house.



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THINK FASHIONABLY

Cushions provide “endless possibilities for how you can put a collection together on your sofa” says Nicola. If that sounds somewhat fashion-centric, then you’re right: it’s not unusual for the catwalks to influence interiors and, just as you can switch your outfits from day to day, the concept is the same when it comes to the interchangeable aspect of your sofa.

“You can be so varied,” Nicola continues, “from pared back and sophisticated to really eclectic. it’s

a way of putting your personality on the sofa.”

START WITH SUBTLE OVER SAFE

Unsure what your interior’s ‘personality’ is? Take a gradual approach. “If you’re not that confident with colour and your sofa is a muted shade of grey, then think about a mix of darker and lighter neutrals,” advises Nicola. That means all manner of shades from charcoal to oyster and, unexpectedly, pink. “We’ve seen a big resurgence in pinks, it’s almost like a new neutral”, explains Nicola. And not only does pink look arresting



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with grey, it's also perfect when paired with navy blue.

THE MORE THE MERRIER

As a nation, we're embracing colour and pattern, and this ties in with a return to maximalism where decor trends are concerned. "We're focusing on rich blues and greens," reveals Nicola, "which you can mix in with warmer neutrals and softer tones and then inject some exciting bright pinks and oranges."

When it comes to clashing prints and patterns, the best news is that "there aren't any rules," says Nicola. "It's about mixing styles." So geometric patterns and floral prints are go, as are ditsy motifs and abstract drawings, all together on one big comfortable canvas.

THINK TEXTURE

In the way that a piece of clothing might appeal to you because of its composition or tactility, the same applies to soft furnishings. Brocades,

embroidery, weaves – they all play a part in creating interest and adding diversity to our surroundings.

Velvet, for example, is a hero fabric because of its softness and the way it absorbs light, making the same panel of fabric appear in many different ways depending on placement or time of day. Heavier fabrics like wool are becoming more prevalent and contrast well against cotton upholstery. A build-up of textured layers is a surefire way to make your sofa or armchair appear inviting and cosy.

AND DON'T FORGET A THROW...

Throws are back. They're simultaneously versatile, practical and virtually foolproof when it comes to making a style statement. A cashmere version will endure and keep you warm for many winters while also promising not to bobble and itch. Choose a chunkier knit to make more of an impact when draped across the top of your sofa.



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IS YOUR HOME WINTER READY?

YOU MAY HAVE SORTED YOUR WINTER WARDROBE, BUT HOW READY IS YOUR HOME? OUR HOME CHECK WILL GUARANTEE YOUR PROPERTY WITHSTANDS THE BIG CHILL.



1 SORT OUT YOUR HOME INSURANCE

Check to make sure that your home insurance policy is up to scratch and that you're covered for winter-related damage. If it comes to sorting out water damage to your Christmas presents or fixing a leaky roof, you'll be glad you had the right cover in place.

2 GET YOUR BOILER LOOKED AT BY AN ENGINEER

A poorly maintained boiler wastes more energy and costs more, and it also runs the risk of leaking carbon monoxide. Either get your boiler serviced before winter or change your old model for a condensing unit, which could shave off around £235 a year (according to the Energy Saving Trust).

3 KEEP YOUR PIPES TOASTY

Burst pipes are common during winter due to rapid freezing and thawing, potentially causing massive damage. The best way to stop this from happening is to keep your pipes warm with their own foam cardigan (called lagging), which will reduce the heat loss and insulate the pipes to stop them from freezing. It's a simple trick that can be done easily and fairly cheaply at home yourself.





4 CLEAR YOUR GUTTERS

It's important to clear your guttering regularly but if you only clear it once, it has to be ready for winter. As autumn fades away, you can be assured that leaves and twigs will have collected in your gutters causing a nasty build-up. With heavy rain or snowfall, this can lead to exterior water damage and even a leaky roof. Seek a local professional to help if you have particularly high or blocked guttering. Plus, any cracks or breaks can be identified at the same time, giving you much-needed peace of mind during freezing temperatures.

5 INSULATION IS MORE THAN JUST A WOOLLY JUMPER

About a quarter of the heat in your house is lost through the roof, so having good loft and wall cavity insulation will keep the house warm with less energy used. These improvements needn't cost the earth, as there are a number of government grants and schemes that subsidise insulation installation.

6 ROOF MAINTENANCE

Your roof acts as a shield during winter, so making sure it can withstand the turbulent weather ahead is paramount. It's recommended that you check both the exterior and interior structure at least once a year to identify any weak spots such as leaks, old or worn insulation, debris and loose tiles. Pay special attention to vents, skylights and chimneys.

7 OUTDOOR SAFETY

Snow, ice and freezing temperatures can wreak havoc on your outdoor space, especially if you have a driveway. Outdoor maintenance is not only being safety conscious, helping to reduce the risks of trips or falls, but also prolongs the use of your drive.

8 FIRE RISK

Whether you have the luxury of an open fire or the convenience of an electric or gas powered one, fire safety is extremely important. Remember to check your smoke alarms.





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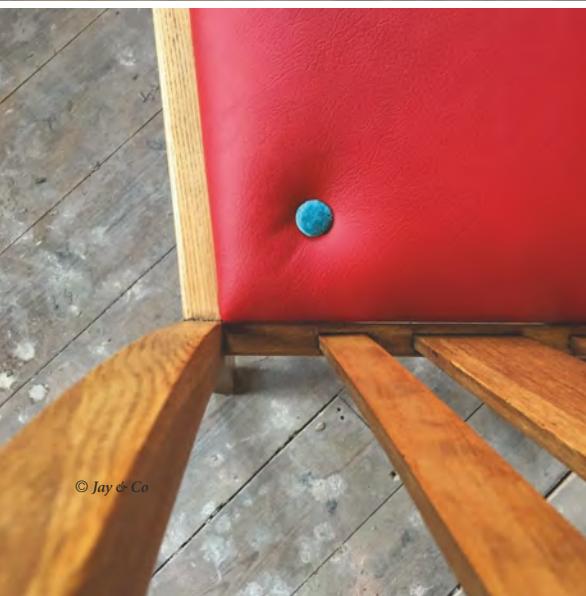
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BEAUTIFUL MISTAKES...

LOUISE TOMLIN CHATS WITH THE MAN WHO RESCUES THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN DISCARDED BY SOCIETY AND WITH SKILL, CARE AND ATTENTION, THEY BECOME TREASURED AGAIN – IT'S A FORMULA THAT CAN APPLY NOT ONLY TO BROKEN CHAIRS BUT TO DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE TOO!

One of the best TV shows around in recent years, in my humble opinion, has to be the Repair Shop. It's what I call 'gentle telly' and is thoroughly good for the soul. It's been described as an antidote to today's throwaway culture, which sums it up beautifully. This televisual masterpiece, where experts revive all manner of distressed, damaged and timeworn antiques, revolves around returning them to their former glory. The fascinating process of how these items are lovingly given a new lease of life and the lengths the very talented experts will go to, is part of what makes this show highly addictive viewing, as are the touching tales that are the back story of why the piece is so important to the owners. The reveal, when the cherished piece is reunited with the owner, has the feel-good factor going off the scale in most instances. Very satisfying.

One of the mainstays of this great program is Jay Blades, an unassuming man who pours his heart and soul into the restoration of treasured heirlooms, who in the last few years has brought his considerable renovation skills and unique brand of quirky creativity into this and



© Jay & Co

also another TV hit, Money for Nothing.

These are skills that Jay has honed over the years. He says he is mainly self-taught but was incredibly lucky to have had the guidance of some masters of the art of restoration who have been his mentors. Originally from Hackney, he left school at 15 with no qualifications and experienced hard times, but eventually managed to get back on track studying for a degree in criminology and philosophy at Buckingham University.



© Jay & Co

Having built up his expertise in 'up-cycling' and furniture restoration, he now has his own business, Jay & Co. He carries out private commissions and regularly visits local auctions and charity shops looking for items to transform into highly sought after designer gems. Jay has developed his own individual style, employing exciting colours and rich fabrics. Picking out a single leg, seam or button in a stray colour is his signature. This distinguishing quirk came about when he made what he calls a 'beautiful mistake' by using an unintended colour on a restoration job. Instead of correcting the mistake he recognised that it added a zing or accent that brought the piece to life, this has become something of a trademark in the work of Jay & Co. Clearly his restoration work is very much in demand, as are his TV presenting skills, having multiple series of both Money for Nothing and The Repair Shop under



© Jay & Co

his belt. He's also been a contestant on Celebrity Masterchef this year and has scooped an award in the Screen Nation Media Awards.

Giving something back to society is vitally important to this 'humble restorer of furniture' as he refers to himself – having had his fair share of hard times where if it hadn't been for the help of other people, he would have been

out on the street, Jay has in turn helped steer disadvantaged young people away from crime, by enabling them to learn the skills to make a living restoring furniture or other items, rather than turning to what so often is seen as the alternative, drug dealing or other criminal activities.

He was the co-founder of an award-winning social enterprise scheme called Out of the Dark and has spent many years working with community programs like Street Dreams, passing on his skills and teaching young people to become resourceful and to think outside the box.

His up-cycling ethos - making something

that has been thrown out by society into something valuable, is an integral part of Jay's philosophy in his work with people and with furniture. The parallels are there and this sensitive, creative guy is incredibly sincere in his need to restore a balance to society, where he says we shouldn't be afraid of failure, by understanding what went wrong and learning lessons this can hopefully steer us away from failing again.

We could do with more inspiring people in the world like Jay Blades to help us see the hidden values of people and objects that are sometimes just under the surface – perhaps we just have to look a little closer?

“Jay has developed his own individual style, employing exciting

colours and rich fabrics.”



You can find out more about Jay Blades and his work at jayand.co

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HEAVEN SENT

EVE RANGER USED HER CREATIVE FLAIR TO BRING A TIRED-LOOKING SEASIDE HOUSE BACK TO LIFE WITH A WEALTH OF PRETTY PASTELS AND MUTED FLORALS

Eve Ranger loved Heavenly Cottage, the 300-year-old home she had carefully refurbished and lived in for 16 years, and she and husband Andy never expected to move out.

But she hankered after a sea view, so when a tired-looking house slap-bang on Herne Bay seafront came on the market she knew she had to have it, and it seemed the house was meant

to be hers (heaven-sent maybe) when the cottage at Beltinge sold within 24 hours.

That was two years ago, and already the house – renamed *Heavenly View* – has been transformed. A rear extension has made an airy, pleasant kitchen on the ground floor and a large front-facing master bedroom above with a wonderfully spacious connecting bathroom. It's designed so that, while in privacy at the back of



The open-plan kitchen diner with its painted furniture; smoked and limed oak flooring and neutral palette creates a restful feel.

the house, bathers can enjoy an uninterrupted sea view through the bedroom.

There was much disruption during those two years. Damp walls needed to be injected and re-plastered; upstairs ceilings were raised. Work was held up when a 36-feet well was discovered



exactly where an extension post was due to be placed.

Eve and Andy came up with a bold solution to living in the chaos: they built a lodge at the back of the garden to live in away from the mess.

“This house was quite boring and needed character. “Furniture and interiors are what I love.”



Despite the work involved Eve and Andy could see the property's potential and after two years of building work Eve's vision has been turned into a reality.

The uninterrupted sea views are what first drew Eve to the dilapidated property.





In the main house, flooring has been replaced throughout, with smoked and limed oak downstairs which Eve says took a year to source. She imaginatively did much of the refurbishment herself, hand-painting furniture and styling rooms in a beautiful French palette of muted colours with dashes of light and brilliance.

“What makes this house a home is that it’s light and bright, yet every room is comfortable and welcoming.”



“This house was quite boring and needed character,” she says. “Furniture and interiors are what I love.” Eve continues “What makes this house a home is that it’s light and bright, yet every room is comfortable and welcoming.”

While living at the cottage she has unleashed a talent for this type of work which then built into a business, advising friends and family then opening a shop in Herne Bay called Heart and Soul offering shabby chic furniture and accessories as well as clothes and jewellery.

Eve is due to open a second shop on Herne Bay seafront called Chic to Antique, where the emphasis will be very much on interiors.

“I love being creative – it’s just in me,” she says. “I have the vision and am happy to offer a consultation service to others.”



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STYLISH SURFACES

THE WORKHORSES OF ANY KITCHEN, WORKTOPS NEED
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While cabinetry may be the main style decision you make for your kitchen, never underestimate the impact your worktop choice will have on the overall scheme. It's important to give it due consideration and not to view it as an afterthought.



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Here's what you should consider before you invest in a countertop.

YOUR BUDGET

Worktops are available at a variety of price points – from cheaper laminates to expensive granites. Cheaper options can be a good idea but may not last as long as more durable stones or composites.

YOUR KITCHEN LAYOUT

If this has already been decided, it can give you a good steer towards what worktop might be best. Straight runs are cheaper and easier to fit, while seamless materials such as composites make sense if you have lots of corners.

ADDED COSTS

Usually stone composites, granite and some woods will need templating by an expert. Every cut-out you have – for a hob

or under-mounted sink for instance – will cost around £80-100. Drainer grooves cut into stone by the sink will also cost extra.

CHOOSE YOUR PROFILE

The depth of worktop you choose can also alter the look of a kitchen. Thinner profiles of 10 or 20mm are still popular but thicker edges are also having a resurgence. The standard thickness is 30mm.

MIX IT UP

Don't rule out mixing two materials – a marble slab with wooden worktops, say, or a stainless steel island with a wooden breakfast bar attached. Different materials can serve different culinary purposes, and can also be used to visually order your kitchen.

Choose the best kitchen worktop material for you. The most popular materials for kitchen materials – laminate, granite, wood, glass, composite stone, stainless steel – have different advantages, so it's important to look at all the factors involved.

HARDWOOD WORKTOPS

A traditional favourite for its natural warmth and the character that comes as it ages, hardwood is preferred over 'soft' woods like pine for its strength. Popular choices of hardwood include oak and walnut. Always choose a sustainable hardwood, preferably from an FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) accredited source.

If hardwoods are properly sealed and maintained they will last for a long time, but don't use the worktop as a chopping board, or





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place hot pans directly onto the wood as it can scorch.

Hardwoods require an initial programme of sealing using oil. Apply a coat once a day for the first week, then once a week for the next month, then once a month for a year.

Avoid direct exposure to heat and prolonged soaking, especially by the sink and tap area. Wipe up spills instantly to prevent staining. Once established, seal with Danish or linseed oil quarterly to stop drying out. Avoid using any abrasive and chemical-filled cleaning products or wire scouring pads.

COMPOSITE WORKTOPS

Made from about 90% natural quartz crystals mixed with a small percentage of binders, and referred to as both 'quartz composite' and 'engineered stone', this material is very tough,

virtually non-porous and resistant to scratches, stains, heat damage and impact, and often comes with a long warranty.

It also offers consistent composition so, unlike natural stone, there won't be variation in veining and colour shading.

This is a very practical and beautiful choice that can be used anywhere, including next to the hob and around the sink.

Composite is very tough and more durable than many natural stones. As the colour runs right the way through the material, any scratches can be sanded out. In the very unlikely case that your composite surface is scratched, chipped or stained it can often be repaired by a specialist. However, it is easier to achieve perfect restoration with acrylic composites as scratches can be sanded out, while quartz is more likely to be filled and any polishing can leave a dull area.



GRANITE WORKTOPS

For some, nothing beats the beauty of natural stone, its veining and colouring unique to each slab. Marbles are classically beautiful and luxurious, tend to be rarer and therefore are more expensive.

It's a luxury material that never falls out of fashion and suits traditional and modern styles. Choose from a classic polished finish, or a honed matt for a more contemporary look.

Granite is hard and resistant to heat and scratches, but it must be treated with respect to prevent damage. The best of all the natural materials, it can withstand high temperatures, is water resistant and impervious to most stains, but wine and citric acids must be cleaned up at once to avoid damaging the stone.

One great thing about granite is that it's very low maintenance. You can clean it using a damp cloth and a mild detergent.



LAMINATE WORKTOPS

Long considered the best budget option, laminates are non-porous, offer easy maintenance and come in lots of design and colour choices. Made by fusing multiple layers of impregnated paper under high pressure temperature and bonded to a substrate, they are resistant to impact, scratching and moisture.

They resist most stains and chemicals, but not heat or steam and are not suitable as a cutting surface. Choose a thicker, high-pressure worktop for greater durability.

Laminate is one of the few materials that can be cut and fitted by a DIY enthusiast rather than a kitchen professional. It is very low maintenance: clean with a cloth and mild detergent.

GRANITE OVERLAYS

What distinguishes a granite overlay worktop from all others is the remarkable 'top that fits on top'.

Unlike regular work surfaces, the material is made only a quarter of an inch (6.7mm) thick and is especially lightweight, so that it can be installed over existing worktops without removing the original or needing extra underpinning.

For traditional kitchens, go for the look and feel of natural stone worktops, choosing either Italian granite or ultra-contemporary recycled glass. Black or white surfaces, some with mirror fleck, give an upscale look and check out the latest porcelain worktops too. Waterfall ends, right down to floor level, look elegant and stylish.



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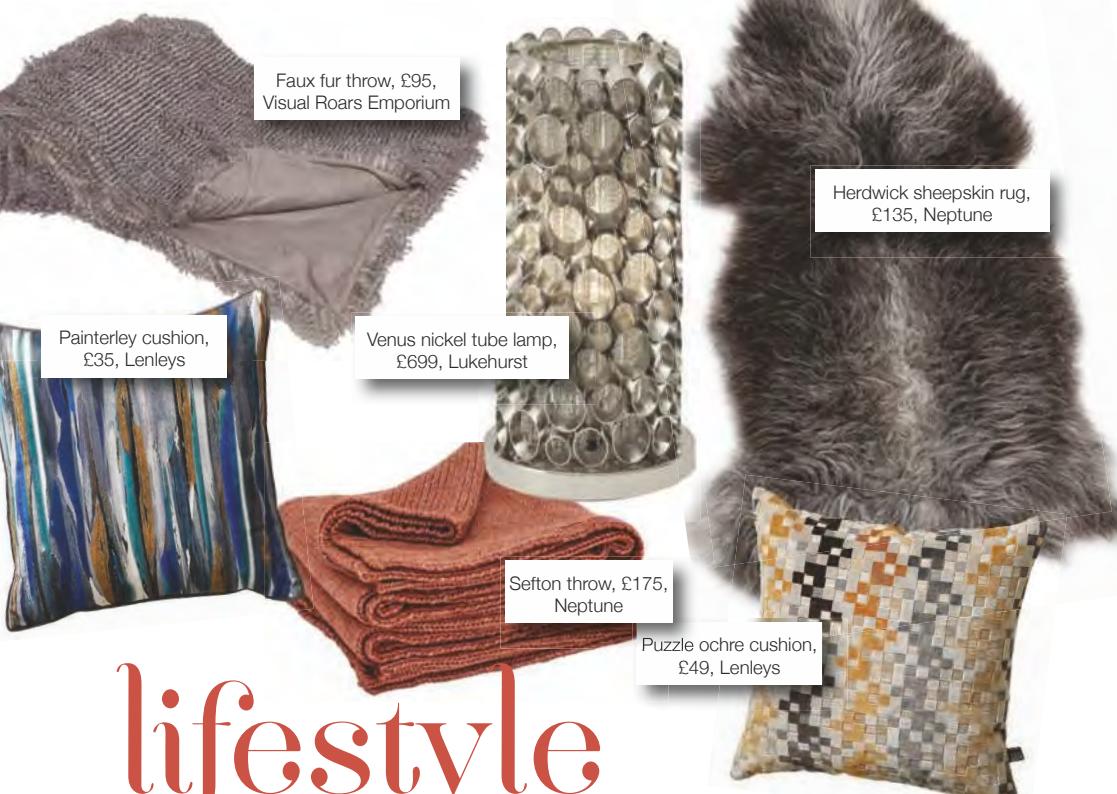
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BY LOUISE PRIESTMAN



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LISTED CHURCH OF GREAT ART-HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

St John The Baptist, Tunstall, is a Grade 1 listed parish church dating back to the 13th century nestled in an ancient hamlet just north of the North Kent Downs, the setting providing a quintessentially English background to a building steeped in history.

Crossroad paths intrigue and delight as you make your way through the flint and brick wall and lush yew trees in well-maintained grounds. There are several grave memorials of such architectural quality they are listed in their own right.

Our churches have become more than just a place to worship, they provide tranquillity for the soul.

Tunstall Church is made of knapped and coursed flint with some brick and Kentish ragstone – flint being also a local material. It has a 13th century chancel and a 14th century nave and was extended in the 17th century. In 1848-55 it underwent a heavy round of restoration by R C Hussey, and much of his legacy survives in the fabric today.

Regular maintenance and consistent upkeep are required for buildings of such significance. On a building as varied as this, it can be a relentless and expensive task. Recent works undertaken include emergency repairs to the aisles. Both were re-roofed in the late 20th century following lead thefts, but the ceilings were showing evidence of sagging. Architect Jo Deeming, who works for conservation specialists Purcell, recommended removal of the ceilings based on their dangerous state. This would also give opportunity to inspect the condition of the



Above: The church roof



Above: The exterior clock

ancient roof timbers for hidden pockets of decay caused by water ingress and insect activity.

One of Jo's priorities is the protection of the historic fabric, whilst also ensuring the safety of church users and visitors. "Working in a living



Decayed timber



Armoury

building is always challenging, but none more so when that building is a church of great art-historical significance,” he says. “The fabric has different and complex meaning for parishioners, visitors and the statutory authorities who are charged with ensuring we make appropriate change.

“Our churches have become more than just a place to worship, they provide tranquillity for the soul.”

“To keep the church protected and speed up the work, we introduced two safety decks above the pews and sealed the arcades and windows from dust and debris. This minimised the downtime for the church.”

When working on ancient fabric, there are often hidden surprises. One possibility was the presence of historic painted decoration to the ceiling, hidden beneath later limewashes. This would have meant halting the works and a visit by a specialist to inspect and date any paintings. The inspection process proved that many of the most decayed works had previously been replaced, some even with plasterboard. The medieval roof timbers thankfully remained intact, with only small original sections of plaster trapped by the cornice.

It was found that moisture build-up in the roof void had accelerated the decay of some timbers and caused advanced nail rot in the lathe fixings. To keep as much of the historic fabric as possible, new ‘partner’ repairs were fixed, supplementing an old decayed timber with a new one to take the structural load.

Vicar Alan Pinnegar says: “We have struggled to achieve substantial funding from individual trusts, though overall we have accumulated enough from various sources to carry out a significant portion of the urgent external work, hopefully in Spring 2019. This has been achieved



through small grants and donations from local people and organisations. We are hopeful that by March we will have sufficient funding to work on both sides of the main aisle, including the lady chapel.”

In the lady chapel, a tomb carries the inscription: “Here Lyeth Sire Edward Hales of Tunstall in the county of Kent knight and baronet who dyed 6th October 1654 in the 78th year of his age.” On top of the tomb lies an effigy of Sir Edward and, mounted on the wall above, is some funeral armour – a helmet and gauntlets – which were customarily made for funerals of gentry and aristocracy. The memorial is signed by sculptors W Sweet and M Miles, 1655.

Keep an eye out for the church’s Christmas Tree Festival which runs over four days, ending on the 2nd Sunday in Advent. Proceeds are divided equally between church funds and a local charity. Your support would be very much welcomed.



Louise Priestman works for architects Purcell, who have an office in Canterbury and are currently also overseeing work at Canterbury Cathedral.

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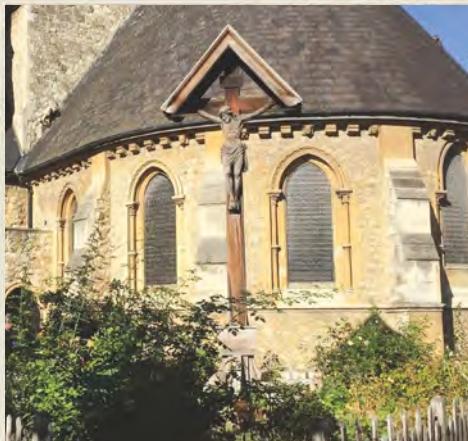
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Top turkeys for Christmas

SAM FIGGIS TELLS CONSERVATION NEWS ABOUT HOW HIS CHILDHOOD DREAM OF RAISING POULTRY HAS BECOME A REALITY

A happy turkey for a Happy Christmas – that's what keen young farmer Sam Figgis is offering. The 21-year-old is passionate both about animals and about good food, a winning combination for his business Sam's Turkeys which is based in Hernhill just outside Faversham.

An outdoorsy young man and a fifth generation farmer, it was his childhood dream to raise livestock. As a teenager he kept a couple of turkeys and some pigs at the bottom of the garden, going out to look after them in all weathers while many of his peers were indoors playing computer games. "I asked my mum if I could use an old chicken shed," Sam recalls.

Leaving St Edmund's School in Canterbury at 16, he went to agricultural college then travelled the world a bit before being offered an opportunity by a retiring local turkey farmer. Sam had also worked for and learned a lot from renowned KellyBronze Turkeys, which have been endorsed by Delia Smith and Jamie Oliver.

"I like turkeys and wanted to diversify from fruit growing. Actually I like all animals," he says, telling of a fascinating 'conversation' he recently witnessed between a bunch of turkeys and a pheasant – which you wouldn't get in an industrial turkey shed!

Sam buys five-week-old bronze turkey poultts in June to raise to maturity for Christmas. They are free-range and slow-grown with a longer life than the average supermarket bird, allowing tenderness and flavour to develop. "Welfare of the birds is key," says Sam. "I know they have



a very good life." They are given freedom to roam over four acres and as well as being fed a traditional natural turkey mix, they are happy to be given a few apples from the farm and the opportunity to forage the ground for other food.

Hand-plucked, hand-prepared and hung for at least 14 days, the birds are guaranteed under the Golden Turkey Quality Assurance scheme as a premium product.

This is Sam's second full season and his enthusiasm is growing. He hopes to raise 1,000 turkeys next year, and his ambition is for Sam's Turkeys to become a well-known and trusted brand among people who appreciate what they eat.

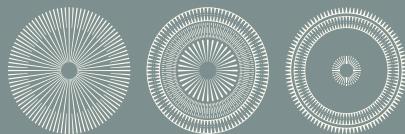
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SERVES
EIGHT



In Their Footsteps

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF BAKING AT JERVAULX ABBEY

GREEK HONEY AND PINE NUT CAKE

Pine nuts are a real favourite, so this cake is a particular delight. Drenched in honey with a nutty texture, it happens to be both gluten and dairy-free. It's delicious served warm with dairy-free ice cream; there are some great options available today.

YOU WILL NEED

1 tablespoon pine nuts
4oz/113g dairy-free spread
3oz/85g caster sugar
3oz/85g runny honey
1 orange, zested
2 large eggs, beaten
6oz/170g wheat and
gluten-free plain flour
1 teaspoon gluten-free
baking powder
½ teaspoon bicarbonate
of soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon xanthan gum
2½fl oz/74ml soya, rice, or
almond milk
2oz/57g ground rice

For the orange syrup:

2 tablespoons runny
honey
1 orange, juiced

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 170°C/150°C fan and line the bottom of an 8 inch/20cm cake tin with baking parchment.

Toast the pine nuts on a baking tray under the grill, keeping your eye on them as they burn easily. Leave to cool. Cream the dairy-free spread, caster sugar, honey, and orange zest together until light and fluffy. Gradually add the eggs one at a time, and don't worry if the mixture curdles slightly. Sift the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, cinnamon and xanthan gum into the mixture then slowly fold in so you don't knock the air out. Slowly fold in half of the milk, then the ground rice and the remaining half of the milk. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin, levelling the surface with the back of the spoon and then making a dip in the middle to get a level rise. Scatter the toasted pine nuts over and bake the cake for 45 to 50 minutes until slightly risen, golden and firm to the touch.

For the orange syrup:

In a saucepan, mix the honey and fresh orange juice together and slowly bring to the boil. Simmer for 5 minutes without stirring, until the syrup coats the back of a wooden spoon.

As soon as the cake is out of the oven, pour the syrup over the top and leave the cake in the tin until the syrup has soaked in and the cake has cooled completely, before turning it out onto a cooling rack. This cake freezes well and is also lovely served warm with a scoop or two of dairy-free ice cream.

LEMONY TREACLE TART

This tart is not only a real treat with a cup of tea in the afternoon, it doubles up as a pudding after Sunday lunch served warm with ice cream.

YOU WILL NEED

For the pastry:

6oz/170g self-raising flour
Pinch of salt
3oz/85g cold margarine
1 large egg, beaten
Cold water (if needed)

For the filling:

1lb 12oz/794g golden syrup
4½oz/125g breadcrumbs
1½ lemons, zested
2oz/57g rolled oats
2 large eggs, whisked

METHOD

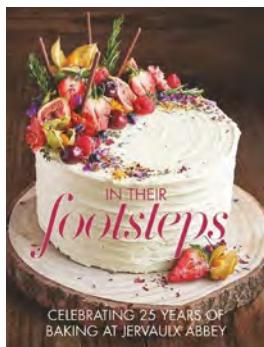
Preheat the oven to 170°C/150°C fan.

For the pastry:

Put the flour, salt and margarine in a large bowl and rub together until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the egg gradually while combining until you have a firm dough. If the mixture doesn't come together easily, add a tiny splash of cold water. Wrap in cling film and chill for 30 minutes. Roll out the pastry and line the tart tin, trimming off any excess that overhangs the sides. Store in the fridge until needed.

For the filling:

Warm the syrup in a pan, ensuring that it doesn't boil, and then stir in the breadcrumbs, lemon zest, oats and eggs. Pour into the pastry case and bake the treacle tart in the preheated oven for 30 to 35 minutes. The filling may still be slightly wobbly after this time but it will set as it cools. Leave in the tin to cool before turning out.



*Recipes and photographs from *In Their Footsteps: Celebrating 25 Years of Baking at Jervaulx Abbey*; published by Meze Publishing.*





SERVES

6



— KENT — *Farmers' Markets*

DECEMBER

SATURDAY 1ST

Chatham; Penshurst;
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells
(Pantiles); Wye

SUNDAY 2ND

Ashford; Tunbridge Wells
(Pantiles)

TUESDAY 4TH, 11TH, 18TH

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY 5TH

Lamberhurst

THURSDAY 6TH, 13TH, 20TH & 27TH

Charing; Rolvenden;
Shipbourne; Whitfield

SATURDAY 8TH

Bridge; Headcorn; Hythe;

Offham; Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells (Town Hall);
Whitstable

SUNDAY 9TH

Herne Bay; Lenham;
Tonbridge; Brogdale Farm,
Faversham

FRIDAY 14TH, 21ST

Egerton

SATURDAY 15TH

Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells
(Pantiles); Wye; Yalding

SUNDAY 16TH

Aylesford; Rochester;
Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

SATURDAY 22ND

Bearsted; Bridge; Cranbrook
Hythe; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge
Wells (Town Hall); Whitstable

SUNDAY 23RD
Dover; West Malling

FRIDAY 28TH
Egerton; Maidstone

SATURDAY 29TH
Sevenoaks

SUNDAY 30TH
Cliftonville

JANUARY

WEDNESDAY 2ND
Lamberhurst

**THURSDAY 3RD, 10TH,
17TH, 24TH & 31ST**
Charing; Rolvenden;
Whitfield

FRIDAY 4TH, 11TH, 18TH
Egerton



SATURDAY 5TH

Chatham; Penshurst;
Sevenoaks; Wye

SUNDAY 6TH

Ashford

TUESDAY 8TH

Caple le Ferne

SATURDAY 12TH

Bridge; Headcorn; Hythe;
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells
(Town Hall); Whitstable

SUNDAY 13TH

Herne Bay; Lenham;
Tonbridge

TUESDAY 15TH, 22ND & 29TH

SATURDAY 19TH
Sevenoaks; Wye; Yalding
Caple le Ferne;
Hildenborough

FRIDAY 25TH Egerton; Maidstone

SATURDAY 26TH
Bridge; Cranbrook; Hythe;
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells
(Town Hall); Whitstable

SUNDAY 27TH

Brogdale Farm, Faversham;
Cliftonville; Dover;
West Malling

FEBRUARY

FRIDAY 1ST, 8TH & 15TH

Egerton

SATURDAY 2ND

Chatham; Penshurst;
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells
(Pantiles); Wye

SUNDAY 3RD

Ashford; East Farleigh;
Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

TUESDAY 5TH, 12TH, 19TH & 26TH

Capel-Le-Ferne;
Hildenborough

THURSDAY 7TH, 14TH, 21ST & 28TH

Charing; Rolvenden;
Shipbourne; Whitfield

SATURDAY 9TH

Bridge; Headcorn;
Hythe; Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells (Town Hall);
Whitstable

SUNDAY 10TH

Herne Bay; Lenham;
Tonbridge

SATURDAY 16TH

Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells
(Pantiles); Wye; Yalding

SUNDAY 17TH

Aylesford; Rochester;
Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

FRIDAY 22ND

Egerton; Maidstone

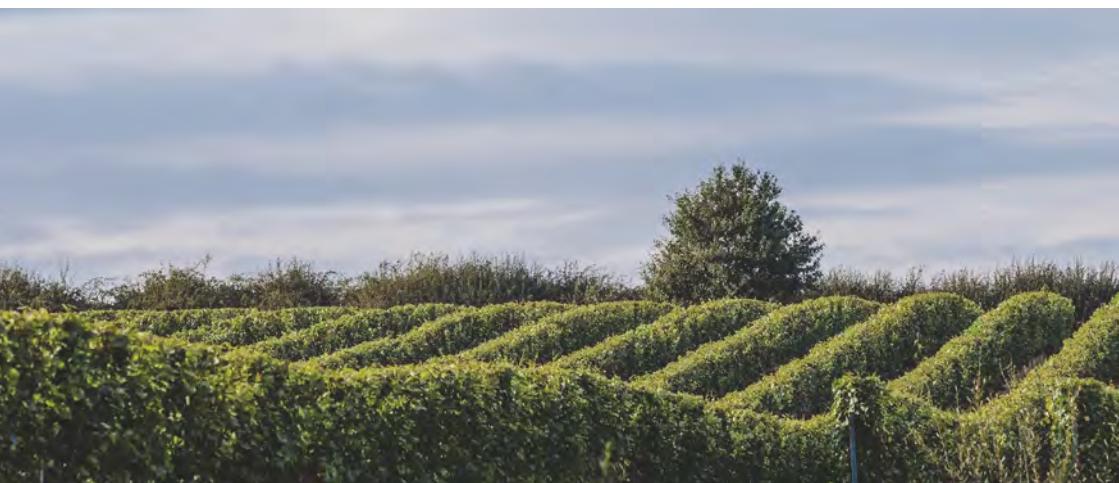
SATURDAY 23RD

Bridge; Cranbrook;
Hythe; Knockholt;
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells
(Town Hall)
Whitstable

SUNDAY 24TH

Brogdale Farm, Faversham;
Cliftonville; Dover;
West Malling

*For more information on
Kent Farmers' markets and
what's in season please visit
www.kfma.org.uk.*



POPPING CORKS

WORDS: ROWENA HAWTIN

I WAS VERY FORTUNATE TO BE INVITED TO WICKHAM MANOR IN NOVEMBER TO VISIT THE PALMER FAMILY WHOSE COUNTRY ESTATE, OWNED BY THE NATIONAL TRUST, IS IN THE HISTORIC TOWN OF WINCHELSEA NEAR RYE.

Wickham Manor is a charming 16th century country house set in 750 acres of Sussex countryside and is the home of the family who run the farm and the vineyard as well as a bed and breakfast. The landscape has not changed much for centuries and with the peace and quiet here, you could actually imagine that you had gone back in time a couple of hundred years!

The vineyard itself is 30 acres and they planted their first vines back in 2006 with their first vintage in 2009 which won the Bronze Decanter award for their Classic Cuvee – a blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Encouraged by such a prestigious award for their first vintage, they went on to produce some outstanding premium sparkling wines and they are launching soon their 2014/5 vintage which I was lucky enough to taste before the formal launch.

All the grapes are hand harvested with whole bunch fermentation and using the Champagne method of production with an average of two to three years on the lees. The wines have a great concentration of flavour with south facing slopes, Kimmeridgian clay soil and, being just five miles from the Sussex coastline, this keeps the frost at bay as the nights are not so cold. They plant just two varieties – Chardonnay and Pinot Noir – and they make a 100%

Chardonnay, a 100% Pinot Noir and a blend of the two which differs from many other English sparkling wines which tend to include the other Champagne grape – Pinot Meunier. Conditions were also favourable enough this year to harvest the Pinot Noir for a still red wine; however, we will have to be patient and wait at least another four years to sample this!



These are the wines I tasted from the 2014/15 vintage and they are all very good indeed.



CLASSIC CUVEE 2014

- PINOT NOIR 60%

CHARDONNAY 40%

On the nose, the concentration of red fruit is very prominent: strawberry, raspberry and an underlying earthiness clearly indicate the character of the soil. On the palate, there are delicate honey flavours, brioche from the lees ageing and great length and concentration. Perfect with scallops and most white meat. £38.00.

BLANC DE BLANCS 2014 – 100% CHARDONNAY

A gentle persistent mousse, this wine has aromas of citrus, apricot and peach and a crisp, dry, refreshing acidity. On the palate, apple flavours linger and there is a nice long finish. After fermentation in stainless steel, the wine spent 3 years on the lees adding a creamy texture to the wine which complements the fresh fruit flavours. Serve on its own as an aperitif or it would pair very well with fish or a creamy cheese such as a goat's cheese. £39.50.



ROSE 2015 – 100% PINOT NOIR

I would describe this wine as off dry – not because there was much sweetness added – but the sheer ripeness of the fruit in this vintage gives it a lovely, smooth, off-dry texture. However, that crispness and refreshing acidity is not far away. Bursting with red fruits – cherries, strawberries and redcurrant – this is a superb example of an English rose. I recommend it to be drunk on its own or pair with some mild-flavoured cheese, so the subtler flavours of the wine are not overpowered. £40.50.



Tours of the estate and winery are £25 per person and tastings take place inside the family home at £10 per person for two wines and some well-paired nibbles. For more information and bookings telephone 01797 226216 or email sales@charlespalmer-vineyards.co.uk (www.charlespalmervineyards.co.uk)
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DOWLE STREET COTTAGE, PLUCKLEY



Awonderfully attractive 15th century late medieval hall house, listed Grade II* set in a beautiful rural location in Pluckley.

Dowle Street Cottage is an excellent example of a Wealden Hall House.

The property has been lovingly cared for and improved by the present owners who have updated the kitchen and bathrooms to more contemporary styles, whilst retaining all of the character throughout the property.

The versatile accommodation is arranged over two floors including an entrance hall with heavy oak front door, kitchen/dining room with french doors leading directly onto the rear patio, stunning drawing room with inglenook fireplace and contemporary wood burning stove, ground floor en-suite bedroom, galleried landing with space for a small study area, master bedroom with en-suite bathroom and dressing room and a guest bedroom with en-suite bathroom.

The property benefits from a new LPG-fuelled central heating system and a private drainage system. Outside, the property is approached via a five bar gated entrance onto a long driveway that sweeps past the front of the house leading to a detached double garage and parking area.

The front garden boasts a wealth of mature trees and shady lawned areas along with a lovely lily pond. The rear garden is landscaped with patio, lawn and well tended borders and a small orchard.

PROPERTY DETAILS



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Price: £899,995

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