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Welcome

WINTER 2019

Welcome to Winter! It's time to cosy up indoors, maybe in front of the fireplace whilst reading our feature on the fascinating history of these important focal points. In this issue we also chat to the sisters at Wells & White who will expertly re-upholster your favourite sofas and chairs.

We uncover some of the perils and pitfalls of owning and renovating period property... a gift which comes with some responsibility. And we talk to expert stonemason Julian Linch about the most fundamental components of any building – its walls.

And as for the great outdoors, weather permitting, we have some timely tips for the garden, plus news about Kent Wildlife Trust's latest project to restore the rich chalk grassland habitat at Coombe Down near Dover.

Restoration, renovation, rejuvenation – sounds like time for a new year!

Dawn

Competition winner from our autumn issue: The Downton Abbey Cookbook was won by: Maggi Shaw from Littlebourne



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What's inside

WINTER 2019

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>12 Uncovering Coombe Down
An appeal on behalf of Kent Wildlife Trust</p> <p>16 Gardening
Winter gardening</p> <p>29 Sister act
The creative Kent sisters with a passion for upholstery</p> <p>34 Antique fireplaces</p> <p>49 Period property renovation
Our guide to success</p> | <p>59 Conservation in action
We look at the work of Conservation Construction</p> <p>72 Winter recipes
Quick and easy dishes for winter</p> <p>80 Farmers' markets
Shop local this winter</p> <p>84 Festive wine choices
Wine expert Rowena Hawtin gives her recommendations for wines to go with your turkey</p> |
|---|---|



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Uncovering COOMBE DOWN

SAT IN THE HEART OF THE DOVER DOWNLANDS LIES A BADLY NEGLECTED AREA OF OLD CHALK GRASSLAND: COOMBE DOWN. WHILST OTHER NATURE RESERVES AROUND IT HAVE BEEN RESTORED OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, COOMBE DOWN HAS PATIENTLY AWAITED ITS TURN.



Photo: Barry Cook

Due to a lack of management since the 1950s, Coombe Down has become badly scrubbed over, losing some of the iconic chalk grassland species in the process. Restoring chalk grassland is crucial in our vision to create a wilder Kent. Chalk grassland is Europe's version of the rainforest: up to 40 species of flowering plants can be found in just one square metre of this rich habitat. Incredibly, 2.5% of the UK's chalk grassland is found around Dover, so it is crucial that we protect our existing reserves and bring back other chalk

grassland sites that have been neglected.

Since 2014 Kent Wildlife Trust has successfully purchased and restored both Old Park Hill and Nemo Down, and a new extension at Lydden Temple Ewell. Now, with your support, the trust can look to bring back another beautiful chalk grassland site.

Alongside this, the aim is to bring back species and processes that would have been found naturally at Coombe Down, and create wildlife abundance here again. The rare frog orchid was last recorded in Kent at Coombe Down some 30

years ago, and the aim is to return it to the slopes. Coombe Down could also be used as a new site for the critically endangered wart-biter cricket, and one day the iconic chough could also return to the downlands where it once soared centuries ago.

All of this will be made possible by allowing our grazing herd to do their job, creating the conditions for chalk grassland to return and then thrive.

Coombe Down has a rich past and, with the public's help, we can uncover the scrub, bringing back chalk grassland habitat.

This will create conditions that could see the return of species long lost to the downs.

There are existing walking routes through Coombe Down; restoration work will help to clear and widen these and potentially link them with other neighbouring sites such as Gorse Hill. The connections between all the Dover downland nature reserves will help to give our threatened chalk grassland species a chance to thrive. Over time, restoration to chalk grassland will further enhance the wonderful views from the top of Coombe Down, from where you will be able to see Old Park Hill and Lydden Temple Ewell Nature Reserves, as well as Dover Castle.

With your support, Kent Wildlife Trust can start to clear the scrub covering this 19-acre reserve. By re-establishing grazing we can then encourage the return of butterflies like the adonis and chalkhill blues, and orchids like the pyramidal and fragrant.

Visit www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk for more information or to make a donation.

Species you can bring back to Coombe Down



The iconic chough has been used on Canterbury's coat of arms since 1380, having been taken from Thomas Becket's coat of arms. Sadly, it has been long extinct in Kent after destruction of its habitat, and persecution.



Historically the wart-biter used to be widespread in southern England, but now it is considered one of Britain's most endangered insects.

The frog orchid is a short orchid, between 4-20cm tall. Because it is a relatively small orchid, it can be easily shaded out by larger vegetation, so it is crucial that the surrounding grassland is well grazed. Coombe Down is the last place in Kent that it was



recorded, and we hope to bring it back to the slopes.



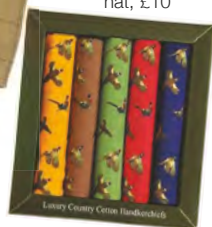
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WINTER GARDENING

Winter doesn't have to be white in the garden, even if there is a blanket of snow covering the soil. Most of the colour comes from berries: hollies, firethorn, and other winter-fruiting plants that add unexpected splashes of reds and oranges to your winter garden.



SIZZLING WINTER STEMS

The native dogwood, *Cornus sanguinea*, has rich brown stems and purple, almost chocolate, autumn leaves but is seldom planted in gardens. The cultivated variety of the common dogwood, *Cornus sanguinea* 'Winter Beauty' or 'Winter Flame', has rich orange stems and wonderful deep purple autumn leaves. Much the best-known dogwood, though, is *Cornus alba*, which has brilliant stems in shades of crimson. Plant three or four shrubs closely together and the stems will grow up thicker-thick like a haze of intense coral.

Don't waste apples

Apple harvesting is coming to an end; it has been a pretty good season and the chances are there are plenty of apples for bottling; using in jams and chutneys; ciders and sauces; and for drying and freezing. Homemade preserves in individually decorated jars and pots make wonderful presents. And don't forget to leave a few windfalls for the birds and other wildlife to enjoy.



HARVEST JUNIPER

Juniper is a native, evergreen, coniferous shrub or small tree. Once established it yields a continuous supply of fresh berries that are useful in cooking and to make your own liqueurs. You will need to buy two plants – a male and a female – plant them fairly closely together.





FESTIVE HYACINTHS

Pots of forced hyacinth bulbs are a brilliant way to bring colour into the home during the winter months. You can also plant them out in the garden once they've finished flowering and enjoy them for years to come. Plant bulbs 10-15cm deep in a well-drained sunny spot. Feed every ten days until the foliage dies back and they will flower again the following spring – and even more strongly the year after.

GROW RHUBARB

If you don't grow your own rhubarb you really are missing out on a culinary treat. It's easy too! Rhubarb is a very hardy plant that grows enthusiastically in any well-drained sunny or partially shaded spot. Now is the time to plant rhubarb crowns, but don't harvest the stalks this coming spring; give your rhubarb a full year to get established. If you already grow rhubarb, cover with an upturned bucket or pot in later winter to produce blanched tender stems.



What to do now

- Plant out spring bedding displays of pansies, violas and primulas.
- Plant bare root roses – they can be planted any time between now and March.
- Before the birds eat them all, cut a few stems of holly with berries for making Christmas garlands. Stand them in a bucket of water in a sheltered spot.
- Divide mature clumps of rhubarb once they are dormant.
- Prune apple and pear trees between now and February.
- Clean out the greenhouse thoroughly. Wash the glass and floor with horticultural disinfectant.

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It is a privilege to have a wild animal visiting your garden and hedgehogs are no exception. They need all the support that they can get, as they are now on the protected species list. Apart from enjoying their natural diet hedgehogs will visit your garden if you place: a saucer of cat/dog meat (chicken in jelly is a favourite but please no meat in gravy); cat biscuits; hedgehog biscuits found in garden centres and pet shops. A bowl of water is also really important.



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WEAVING IN WOOD

TO OAK OR NOT TO OAK? TO GO DARK OR REMAIN ON THE LIGHT SIDE? TO STICK OR TO TWIST? HERE, NEPTUNE EXPLORES THE MANY WAYS TO SUCCESSFULLY AND SEAMLESSLY BLEND MORE THAN ONE WOOD FINISH IN YOUR INTERIOR.

Tone on tone

While having two or more wooden tones in the same space works well – as we'll see shortly – that's not to be said that one constant colour isn't an option either.

Neptune's Dark Vintage Oak Savernake flooring precisely pairs with the new dark wood finish on the Arundel dining room furniture. Two tones akin with one another and yet in the same room, with no other wood present, the scheme doesn't appear flat in any way. This is because the variations in colour and texture come from all of the other elements in the room. From the rough stone bust on the tabletop to the painted wall panelling and expanse of glass on the Crittall wall and the atrium ceiling, there's enough differentiation elsewhere that allows the wooden aspects to perfectly match.

Dark meets light

Opposites certainly attract and so, unsurprisingly, combining a darker wood finish with a lighter one is a match made in interiors heaven.



In that same dining room setting (opposite page, left), the more honeyed Savernake flooring shows how well it works against the Darkened Oak Arundel.

What helps it to triumph is that the same tale of contrast is told on the walls, with two paint colours from opposite ends of the spectrum. It's a space where dissimilar tones are encouraged and where each act as a foil to the other.



Old meets new

Forget not that a popular (for good reason) way to play with opposing wood characters is to have fresh-out-of-the-workshop pieces alongside a weathered, time-honoured antique.

Vintage finds naturally introduce new species to a scheme – pine and walnut being favourites in the brown furniture arena. And while seemingly poles apart in look and feel to the pieces never-before owned, they can be surprisingly sympathetic and add a storytelling side to your decor.

A place in every space

Weaving in wood isn't all about incorporating numerous wood varieties in the one room, but how to continue them in other areas of the home. If you decide to mix different shades of oak, different tree types, or new and antique wooden pieces, think about how to repeat them in upstairs and downstairs zones. By repeating the same finishes, you'll weave them in

gradually so that each feels like it has its place.

Look to even the most unassuming spots, like hallways where there's often opportunity for a timber piece or two, be it a wooden console table or an oak bench – ideal for putting on boots before you head out.

Even postage-stamp-sized hallways need not miss out: an oak coat rack or picture frame or two won't go unnoticed.

From little to large

Coat racks and picture frames are just the beginning. A combination of timber is produced by giving attention to not just the bigger characters in a room (such as flooring, kitchen cabinetry and furniture) but to the smaller players – in other words, accessories. Don't overlook the impact that a gnarled and rustic breadboard will have leant against a kitchen wall. In fact, add more than one in different shapes and finishes and the tapestry grows richer still.



Another area to think about is a kitchen's work surface. One stretch in timber means your wooden worktop adds a band in the middle of the room to create distinct layers of timber tones.

Too many cooks

Remember, though, that while the aim is to knit together a whole home's scheme of complementary wooden pieces, there is a tipping point and too many types of timber can look confused.

Similar to the advice on choosing the number of colours in a palette, more than two is welcome, three certainly isn't a crowd, but venturing into the realms of four, five and beyond should be done slowly and surely. That way, you'll quickly detect whether your interior is beginning to feel overwhelmed with wood, preventing each type from shining as bright as it should. Because yes, less is, so very often, more, more and more.





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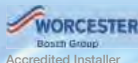


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SISTER ACT

OUR WRITER, SUSAN HUBBARD MEETS TWO CREATIVE KENT SISTERS WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT DESIGN, UPHOLSTERY SKILLS AND SAVING FURNITURE FROM LANDFILL!



Upholstery wasn't the first career choice for either Amber Judges or her sister Jade Peel, but it was perhaps inevitable that they should turn to it later. The two little girls who watched grandmother Nornie working with wonderful fabrics and helped grandfather Grandie create woodwork 'masterpieces' in his

garage have now combined these two interests into an upholstery business.

Always creative at school and college, Jade and Amber seized the opportunity to change direction after having children. They enrolled for upholstery courses at Wendy Shorter Interiors in Hertfordshire.

Now the sisters each teach one day a week on the AMUSF Diploma courses at Shoreditch Design Rooms in London, which they successfully completed themselves, alongside fulfilling bespoke commissions in their purpose-built workshop on the old family farm at Great Chart.

The Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers sets an industry-wide standard for operators and trains students who want to work in the industry. The sisters are now offering leisure courses like this at their Wells & White premises (they chose these 'ancestral' names for their business in homage to their grandparents). There are weekly classes on Tuesday evenings and Friday mornings, as well as weekend sessions. The classes are great fun, with cake and chat included, and quickly fill up by word of mouth.

The premises are usually open to customers on weekdays, but it's best to phone first as the sisters may be out visiting a client. As well as being passionate about design and skill, they





both enjoy working with customers. There are discussions to be had about materials, particularly the top fabric layer, then there are trims to be chosen. Buttons are hand-made to match fabric.

It's these small details and personal choices which make renovation preferable to buying a new chair or sofa. And, of course, there's one less frame going to landfill, says Jade. She likes the challenges of renovating furniture – “you never know what is going to come in” – while Amber loves the design side of the job and putting colours together, so not surprisingly her own house is full of bespoke furniture, much of it painted by her.

The pair say that in London there is now a trend in upholstery for using recycled fabrics such as hemp, while in Kent a country style is perennially popular. They offer a huge range of fabrics from the bright modern colours of

Scottish designer Bluebellgray to classics like Morris & Co. But fabrics all behave differently, the sisters warn, with some more stretchy than others, so that's another challenge for them!

To keep up with trends, they attend national exhibitions such as Chelsea Harbour Design Centre and the NEC Furniture Show in Birmingham (where Jade exhibited after being runner-up in a design competition two years running).

They have lots of ideas for the future and would like to collaborate with other local craftspeople and suppliers. One specific dream is to make footstools using local-produced wood and wool.

The enthusiasm of the two little girls watching their grandparents is still there and growing with the business...

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VICTORIAN

The Victorian Era was the period of Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 – 1901. Fireplaces from this period can be categorised into two main sub-styles, the early and mid-Victorian fireplaces and the late Victorian fireplaces.

Early and mid-Victorian fireplaces are typically very ornate, with intricate designs focusing somewhat on a floral pattern to the casting. This design has become very popular in modern day reproduction fireplaces as they take their inspiration from these original antique fireplace designs.

During the mid to late Victorian period in the fireplace industry, the styles became a little more geometric than floral, offering a much cleaner and simpler look, but all the same these antique fireplaces still look excellent in their fully restored state. Additionally, antique marble fireplaces and antique wood fireplaces with their floral and geometric designs are exhibitions of the standard these craftsmen worked to at the time.

GEORGIAN & REGENCY

The Georgian Era is normally defined as including the reigns of King Georges I, II, III and IV covering 1714 to 1837 (with the sub era of The Regency 1811 – 1820). Fireplaces from this period were of grand proportions and typically designed a complete focal point of the room. This look was achieved by using cast iron register grates and grand fire baskets in large fireplace openings; these were accompanied by intricately designed solid wood surrounds and marble fireplaces. A typical antique Georgian fire surround or antique cast iron register grate from this period would include designs such as hand carving; or, in the case of cast iron 'cast' medallions, urn or swag features. All these types



of design comes from this era and our range of fully restored antique fireplaces compliment this stunning period of British History.

ART NOUVEAU

Art Nouveau is a particular period in time in which an international design movement swept the world covering the years of the early 1880s to 1914 (although most popular in the 1890s to 1905). For the fireplace industry this was an exciting time, never-before-seen designs were created, new styles were manufactured, and previously outrageous ideas were now the fashion. A typical antique fireplace of this



period is easily sorted from the preceding Victorian and Georgian period fireplaces, these designs were very organic incorporating more floral and plant-inspired motifs, as well as highly stylised flowing curvilinear forms.

This era in design history is an important step and is classed by many as the 'bridge' between the historicism of Neo-classicism and Modernism.

EDWARDIAN

The Edwardian Era covers the period between 1900 and 1920. At the beginning of the Edwardian period most fireplaces, particularly the cast iron insert fireplace designs, were focused on having tiles as a feature.

Fireplaces in this era were typically made from cast iron, and as the period progressed fireplaces became taller and slimmer, the decoration becoming simpler and less complex



Cleaning marble hearths and surrounds

Marble is porous so you need to be careful what you use to clean it as it will soak up liquids. Avoid liquids that could stain, such as coloured household cleaners. Wipe over regularly with a damp cloth and use a specialist cleaning solution for getting rid of stubborn marks without damaging the stone.

than designs seen in the late Victorian period. Cast iron inserts with tiles became less popular, being replaced more often by canopies on legs with large angled panels either side covering the space between the canopy and the fireplace surround. Instead of traditionally having a space to slot the tiles in the cast, canopies on legs used tiled panels which were then placed at angles to the canopy.

In the mid-Edwardian period, cast iron combination fireplaces with tiles became popular, similar to tiled cast iron inserts seen in the Victorian period but with simpler designs and a surround included in the cast.

During the Edwardian era another style became popular known as the arts and crafts style, which was mainly focused on using local materials for the fireplace and bringing them into the home. The theme for the arts and crafts style was always natural and materials were sourced locally where possible. A range of materials were used during this period including mainly cast iron, brick and tiles and, in some of

the more upmarket houses made-to-measure beaten copper fireplaces were a popular design.

Large surrounds also became a popular fashion during the Edwardian era, particularly wooden surrounds that incorporated large mirrors. During the late Edwardian period cast iron started to decrease in popularity for fireplaces as other demands for cast iron materials increased significantly at the start of World War 1.

Removing paint from cast iron

If you have an old fireplace that needs some attention you can strip it back and protect the iron or repaint it. The main thing to remember is not to use a hot air paint stripper as it could cause the metal to crack. Put plenty of protection on the surrounding areas, make sure the room is well ventilated and wear gloves and protective eyewear, then apply a chemical paint stripper to the surface. Leave it to work for the recommended time until you see the layers of paint start to bubble, then remove the softened paint with a plastic or wooden spatula. Use an old toothbrush to get into any detailing or intricate areas.

If you really can't face the thought of all that work, have the whole piece taken and dipped.

Protecting cast iron

Once the paint has been removed it's important to protect the bare metal in order to stop rust forming. You'll need to use an iron paste, which protects and gives a beautiful black sheen at the same time.

Cover the surrounding areas with dust sheets, wear gloves and apply the paste sparingly using a soft cloth. Leave it to dry for at least four hours and then buff.

Make sure that the fireplace is free of any old, flaking paint by using a wire brush, then rub over with an abrasive paper and wipe clean. A matt spray paint will give a good finish; just remember to cover all surrounding areas and use a sweeping action, applying several thin coats to avoid drips.



Safety first

If you have a wood-burning fireplace and use it regularly, always use a screen for safety purposes. It will stop sparks and embers from falling on the floor and keep children safe. A free-standing screen can add a decorative touch, but make sure it meets your safety requirements and is an adequate size.

If you're restoring an old fireplace, don't just light it, as there are checks which need to be carried out first. Make sure that the hearth and chimney are in good condition and comply with current regulations. If you are in any doubt, check with your local authority's Building Control Office.

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Top tips for efficient burning



1. Have your wood-burning stove installed by a registered professional. It is important that the stove is fitted properly for it to work the way it was intended to.
2. Install a quality stove with a good efficiency rating. Look for labels such as ‘Eco Design Ready’. All the stoves installed by Wingham Woodburning Stoves are efficient and clean burning.
3. Burn dry logs, which have less than 18% moisture. Buy kiln dried logs with an average moisture content between 0-4%, or any dry well seasoned logs. Use a wood moisture tester if you are unsure.
4. Use the stove as per manufacturers manual. Stoves like to be worked hard or not at all.



BEFORE AND AFTER

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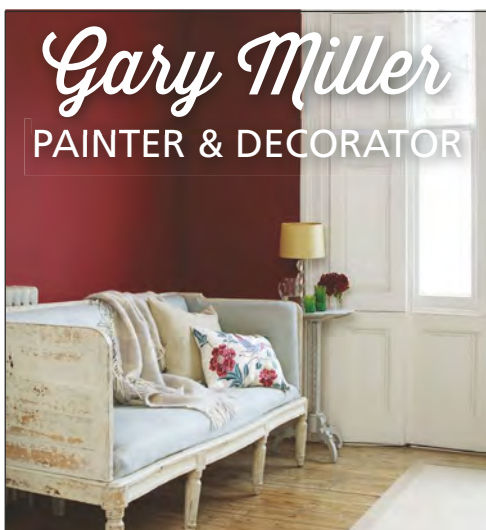
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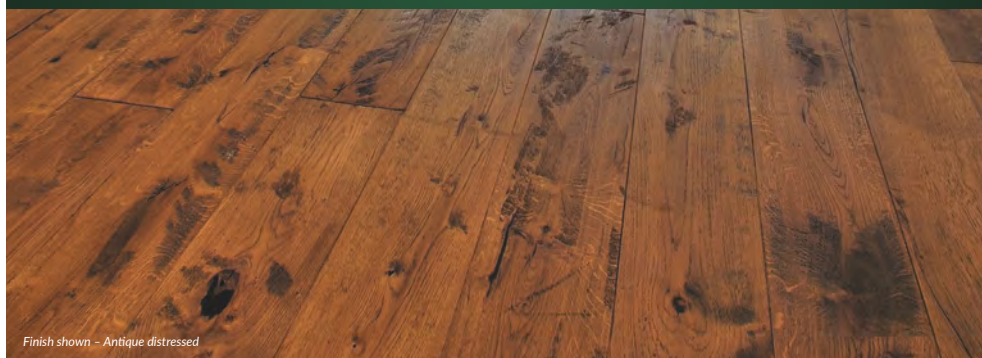
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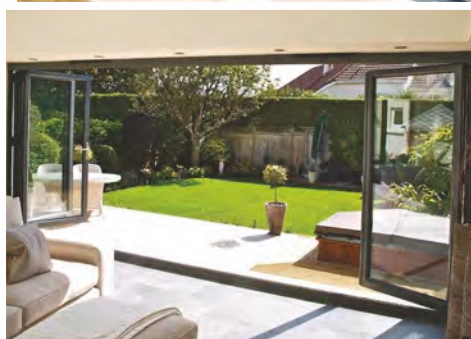
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PERIOD PROPERTY RENOVATION

Our guide to success

RETURNING YOUR HOME TO IT'S FORMER GLORY CAN BE EXPENSIVE, BUT KNOWING HOW TO REMODEL CERTAIN ASPECTS OF IT CAN GIVE THE WHOLE AMBIENCE A PERIOD FEEL.



If you have bought or are considering investing in a period property and don't want to ruin its charm, here's what to consider before you start renovating. Period homes can be a gift but they come with a considerable amount of responsibility. There was a whole era through the 1980s when a lot of beautiful old buildings were 'modernised',

removing any trace of the details that made the architecture special. Careful consideration is vital; it's important to hire professionals who have experience of dealing with old buildings.

Our tips will guide you through the renovation process without destroying the character and structure of your beautiful period home.

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Always ensure you get a thorough survey carried out. Opt for either the RICS Building Survey, or a Full Structural Survey. These will give an overall picture of the condition of the property and identify any major issues.

OUTSIDE MAINTENANCE

It's vital to keep water away from your property in order to prevent deterioration of the house. Always make sure the roof and gutters are in good order and the outlets are directed away from the building.

Roofing: As one of the most important parts of your home, the roof may be a serious concern and possibly require maintenance or complete

replacement. Original slate roofing was popular during the late 1800s and early 1900s. These roofs combined slate and tiles with iron nails. This can be a problem over time when the nails corrode and split the slates and tiles. Slate is weather-resistant; however, if the tiles split and become loose they can detach and require significant maintenance.

Walls: If you need to make repairs to old brick walls it's best to seek advice from a professional with experience of older buildings. Most repairs are likely to entail some repointing, or possibly the removal and replacement of some of the bricks. It's rare that a whole wall will need to be rebuilt. If you have an exposed brick elevation, do not neglect the pointing.

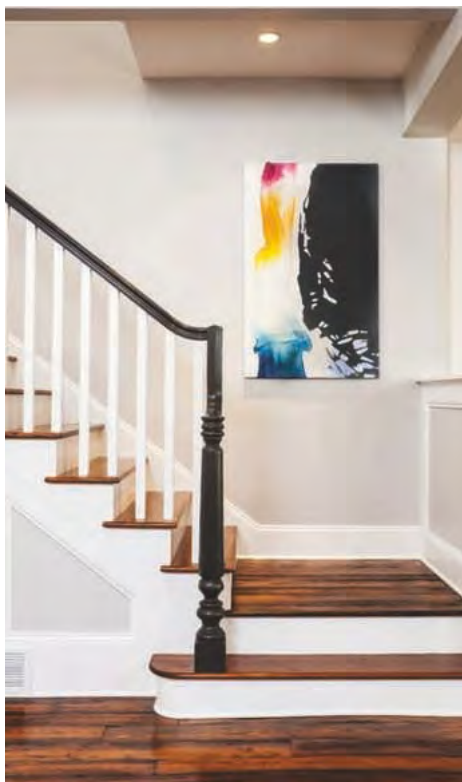
RENOVATING THE STAIRCASE

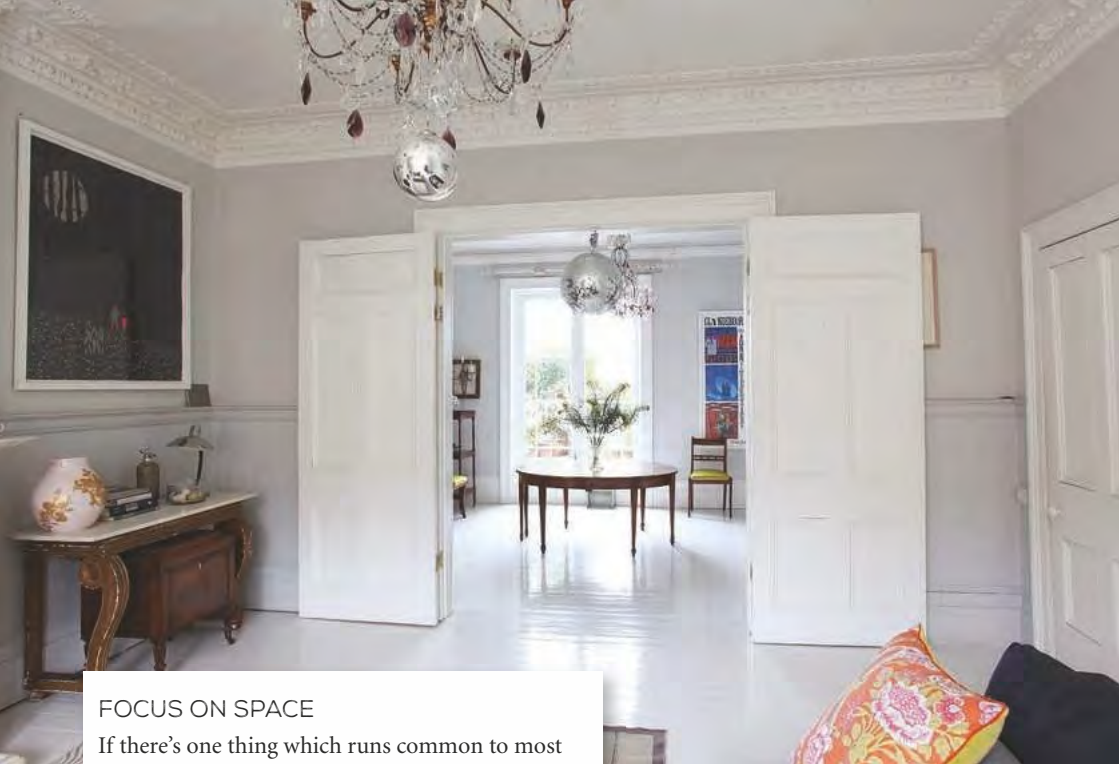
The charm and character that an original staircase can bring to a house is undoubtable, yet over time, subjected to the usual wear and tear, they can begin to show their age.

As with any original feature, it is always preferable to repair rather than replace and, thankfully, in the case of staircases, issues brought on by old age are rarely structural.

There are other benefits to retaining a period staircase too, as well as enjoying their original design: a replacement will need to conform with Building Regulations which can throw up all sorts of complications.

The most common problems include worn treads, broken or loose banisters and spindles, noisy creaks, unsympathetic 'updates' and missing parts, such as stair rods and brackets. However, keeping the original staircase doesn't mean you have to compromise on a contemporary look – you can create a modern space by working with the traditional design.





FOCUS ON SPACE

If there's one thing which runs common to most Victorian renovations, it's the idea of maximising space. A smart move when looking at Victorian renovation options will be to maximise natural light. Open up existing rooms and spaces. Many Victorian properties have stuffy, cramped rooms which benefit from being opened up and redesigned. The key, of course, is to avoid destroying any of the original charm, and that's where a period design expert's advice comes in.

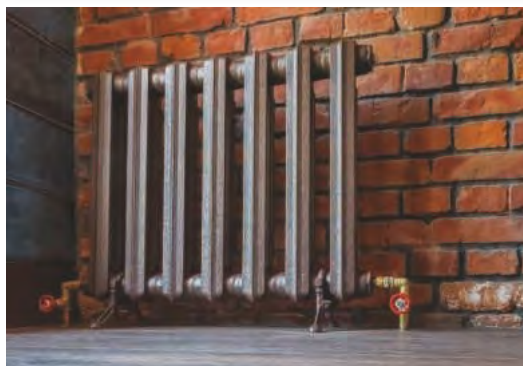
HEAT UP

The beautiful aesthetics of period homes, such as the high ceilings and large sash windows, are also what makes heating them more complicated.

So how do you conserve energy without spoiling the character and charm of the building?

Old radiators can be used as a heating source, but it's important that your contractor or plumber checks them for leaks. If you're considering underfloor heating as your main heat source, you can still combine your old radiators with a modern heating system.

To revive tired radiators, you can strip off the layers of paint and repaint them for a fresher look.



WARM UP THE MANTELPIECE

One of the joys of renovating is discovering original features, such as finding a hidden fireplace which can then be reopened. It is often the case in older properties that fireplaces, which were once the main source of heating, were sealed or covered over at some chapter in the property's ownership.

Period fireplaces create a characterful focal

feature. The Georgians favoured classical-style stone or marble surrounds, with a plain aperture containing a firebasket.

Victorian and Edwardian houses typically had one-piece cast iron fireplaces (with the surround and insert combined), or cast-iron inserts with surrounds made of stone, marble or timber. Tiled inserts on the cheeks (or sides) add a further decorative element.





WORK WITH YOUR WINDOWS

We often assume that original, single-glazed period windows are partially rotten and draughty and need to be replaced. It is easy to underestimate the contribution that windows make to the look of the house. Original, historic windows have the right proportions for the house and often have a delicacy that new windows lack.

If you want to replace the single glazing to prevent heat loss and noise, it's possible to install slim double-glazed units and keep the original sash window. Remember, however, that double-glazed panels are heavier than single ones, so the hidden weights to the side of the windows should be adjusted as well.

Make sure you consult an experienced professional when renovating your windows, and check the regulations that apply to your particular property, as these can differ from area to area.





GET FLOORED

Quite often it's perfectly feasible to keep the original flooring in your period property. If you'd like to install underfloor heating, though, make sure you get professional advice beforehand.

PAY ATTENTION TO PLASTERWORK

Almost every period feature in your home can be saved, but unfortunately lath and plaster doesn't always pass the test of time. Consult with an experienced professional to see if it's worth keeping.

Victorian ceilings usually have beautiful plaster cornices and mouldings at the junctions with walls and ceilings, and commonly feature elaborate ceiling roses. Wherever possible, these small works of art should be preserved and restored. By now most will be clogged with paint, but a lot can be achieved to restore them to their original glory using poultice strippers, a brush and a toothpick. However, major restoration of decorative plasterwork is a skilled job. Missing sections can normally be professionally recast.

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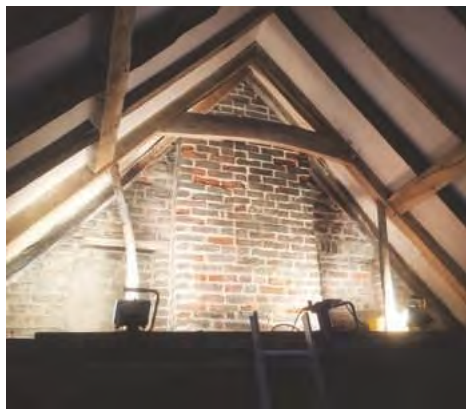
"THE WALLS AROUND US BEAR WITNESS TO LIVES PAST AND PRESENT."

JOSÉ PARLA

When you first look at a period property the walls can sometimes be the last things to grab your attention, and yet they are such a fundamental part of the structure. We can overlook them, because we might be distracted by architectural details like a gorgeous doorway, feature windows, a pretty portico or even a picturesque setting. However, without the all-important walls you wouldn't have anything to hold a building together, they enable it to stand fast against the elements, they anchor it firmly to the foundations, and keep it standing tall.

As an owner of a period property you take on the mantle of custodian and protector of a building, it's your responsibility to ensure you live up to that role by ensuring you keep the property safe and sound for future generations. But when something as key as the walls start needing urgent care and attention, finding the right craftsperson that you can trust to carry out the work can be a minefield.

Probably not being an expert yourself, you can find yourself falling prey to builders who might be less of an expert than they are letting on. When it comes to using authentic materials



and sympathetic repairs on a precious part of an ancient wall, they can talk the talk, but if they haven't got the right skills and experience the results can be disastrous.

That's where an expert in conservation construction, like Julian Linch comes to the

rescue. He has learned his trade over many years. When he left school he went to college to learn bricklaying and also learnt to rebuild flint walls whilst working with his father. After finishing college he got a position as mason's mate with Cathedral Works Organisation, which was at the time one of the country's leading stone masonry firms, where he trained and qualified as a stone mason. He has built up his repertoire of professional skills and experience whilst working with various specialist construction companies on many prestigious projects, like the Tenterden Gate House, the Tower of London, Buckingham Palace, and has loved the work right from the word go. Nowadays Julian enjoys running his own company and is very much in demand using his expert knowledge and practical skills to help period property owners, in his words, 'to repair and restore, but not replace'. This is the ethos he works to.



“It’s fascinating and exciting work to do, I have a great respect for the craftsmen who have gone before me, I often find I’m carefully unpicking the work they have done many years before. It’s the very best way to learn about how something was put together. I remember being called in to work on the tower of a folly, there was a bulge in the flint wall that the owner was worried would eventually compromise the structure. First off we called in a structural engineer, it’s always best to get the advice of a key professional before you do anything else. We worked out the best way to support the tower whilst removing flints to rebuild it. It’s nerve wracking, it’s as if you are carefully removing pieces of a Jenga puzzle, holding your breath and praying each piece you take out isn’t going to mean the whole thing collapses. Then the best bit is rebuilding by reusing and recycling the original stones, in this case flints, with the correct type of mortar. I often wonder





who the craftsman was that did the original work so many years before, you get a strong sense of history in this line of work. I know many of them must be long gone – it adds a special significance to the work I do to rebuild it. I hope the work I’m doing will still be around in many years to come and that someone else may look at it and wonder who did the work with so much care and attention to detail.”

Not all of the work Julian does is careful reconstruction of beautifully carried out original craftsmen’s work though. Often he is called in to look at historical buildings that are in a woeful state and the cause isn’t due to wear and tear, or the passing of time. The problems frequently stem from misguided works to modernise them in the 60s and 70s. All manner of mistakes have been made in the name of progress that turns out to have the opposite effect. A common problem is blocking airflow bricks under floors that inevitably cause

obvious problems with damp. Another is using the incorrect and inflexible materials like sand and cement for pointing, that doesn’t allow the building to breathe and traps moisture inside the walls. And sadly, not all of the work that clients call him in to put right are from previous decades, but are much more recent bungled attempts to work on a property by ordinary jobbing builders who have tried and failed to carryout highly specialised skills, without the expert knowledge and appropriate materials.

“This type of ignorance can do untold damage to precious historic buildings and is sad to see, but it’s all part and parcel of the work that I do, and it keeps me busy, I thrive on the challenge of doing my best to put things right and to keep these lovely old buildings safe for many years to come.”

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Squirrel Cottage, Smarden

Stunning detached Grade II Listed property circa 16th Century. The property has been refurbished to a very high standard to provide a beautiful, warm and comfortable home. It sits on a large plot surrounded by pretty gardens; there is also a converted summer house with electricity along with a timber shed and ample parking. The accommodation is set over two floors with two reception rooms, a kitchen and a utility room on the first floor and three bedrooms, an en suite, family bathroom and spacious landing on the second floor. (The property used to have 4 bedrooms and this could be easily reinstated if so required).

The property has many original and stunning

features with an oak door leading to a fabulous entrance hall with a wood burner and stone floor. The sitting room is a good size with a fireplace, wood burner and triple aspect windows. The family/dining room with its vaulted ceiling offers plenty of space and views of the rear garden with access via bi-fold doors and underfloor heating. There are also a range of bespoke built in cupboards, a wine rack and wine cooler. The kitchen is fitted with bespoke wall and base units with granite work surfaces, a double ceramic butler sink and travertine flooring. The lovely cream and black Aga blends in beautifully with the décor giving this country kitchen a warm feel. The utility room also has travertine flooring with space for a washing



machine, tumble dryer and access to the cloakroom.

Stairs from the hallway lead to a large and extremely charming landing with exposed wood flooring, beams and brickwork.

The master bedroom is delightful and full of character and has a dressing area opening to an en suite. The other two bedrooms are characterful with exposed timbers. The family bathroom has a white suite comprising a bath with telephone style mixer taps, wash hand basin and W.C.

The property is accessed from the road via an electric five bar gate leading to a gravelled driveway providing parking for up to 6 vehicles. The mature gardens envelope the cottage and are filled with a variety of shrubs and trees. There is also a converted summerhouse with electricity and wood shed.



The Details

- Grade II Listed detached cottage
- Beautiful exposed timbers
- Refurbished and extended
- Bespoke kitchen with Aga
- Large extended reception room with vaulted ceiling
- Master bedroom with en-suite
- Large garden
- Ample parking

Period Homes by Simon Miller Tel: 01622 850888
enquiries@periodhomesbysimonmiller.co.uk
Price: £785,000



Harfleet House, Sandwich



Set in the heart of the medieval town of Sandwich, Harfleet House is a truly outstanding, historic period property. Originally a medieval hall house owned by the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, the reception space is remarkable throughout, with great volume and character. The property also benefits from a garden studio, garage and off-street parking. In its time the house has been a hotel, tea room and restaurant and could suit a variety of business/commercial uses subject to any necessary consents.



The front door opens into the bespoke kitchen/breakfast room with a door to the courtyard. The adjacent 'Grand Dining Room' is set to vast proportions with extraordinary ceiling height, a charming leaded 'galleon' window overlooking the courtyard and an inglenook fireplace with carved oak surround. Twin staircases either side of the fireplace rise to the sizable drawing room with ornate wood panelling; a split level landing off the second staircase continues to the first floor.

The 'Grand Hall' on the first floor is an exceptional room with a vaulted ceiling, exposed beams featuring a King post and chequer pattern painted floorboards. A door to one end leads to the master bedroom,



which has an en-suite bathroom, a fireplace and two large sash windows, allowing ample light into the room. The family shower room sits adjacent, together with a staircase to a substantial



space above the master bedroom, currently arranged as one large room with a vaulted ceiling, which could be used as a bedroom or family/cinema room.

Stairs from the opposite end of the grand hall descend to a further bedroom, a shower room and a generous landing with wrought iron spiral staircase leading to the kitchen. Two bright double bedrooms, both with chequer pattern painted floorboards, are on the second floor.

The wonders continue with an 'Undercroft' approached off the courtyard via stone steps. The room has exposed beams with stone and flint surround and provides an ideal space for a home gym/office, hobby room, music room, etc.

The pretty central courtyard garden is enclosed and private, serving as an outdoor reception space. A passageway leads to the sheltered rear courtyard, the perfect area for al-fresco dining.

The garden studio has French doors opening to the rear courtyard. A gate leads to the garage and parking area

Harfleet House is conveniently located close to the picturesque quayside within the Conservation Area. Regarded as one of the finest medieval towns in England, Sandwich offers all one would expect of a thriving, prosperous town and the property has easy access to a wide range of shops and cultural attractions together with excellent educational facilities.



The Details

- Three reception rooms
- Kitchen/breakfast room
- Undercroft
- Master bedroom with en-suite bathroom
- Four further bedrooms & two further bathrooms
- Garden studio and storage room
- Courtyard gardens
- Garage and parking
- Private accompanied viewing strictly via Strutt & Parker,
2 St. Margaret's Street, Canterbury CT1 2SL
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Price: £925,000



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All this makes Kent an outstanding place to eat out.
From contemporary Michelin-starred restaurants to
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views. Kent offers everything from fine dining and gourmet
Asian cuisine, to great grub in rural pubs.

Kent is also renowned for its orchards abundant with apples,
pears and cherries. Fertile soil, a favourable climate and
centuries-old expertise create prime growing conditions.

**SERVES
TWO**

This dish with ready-prepared lentils is perfect for a simple and satisfying meal, and contains three of your five-a-day.



Recipe: Waitrose & Partners

QUICK AND DELICIOUS

LENTIL & AUBERGINE RAGU

This ragù also makes a delicious base for a cottage pie – just tip into a small pie dish then top with a pack of mashed potato. Bake at 200°C for about 20 minutes or until piping hot.

YOU WILL NEED

2 tbsp olive oil
1 small aubergine, cut into
1cm dice
1 red onion, finely sliced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tomatoes, diced
180g dried tagliatelle
250g pouch Tomatoey French
Puy & Green Lentils
Small handful basil leaves

METHOD

Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large frying pan. Add the aubergine, season and fry for 10 minutes, stirring regularly, until golden. Tip onto a plate and set aside. Add the remaining 1 tbsp oil along with the onion and fry for 5 minutes, then add the garlic and fry for 3 more minutes. Stir in the diced tomatoes and cook for a further 2 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the tagliatelle according to pack instructions, then drain.

Return the aubergine to the pan, then tip in the lentils. Fill the pouch halfway with water and pour into the pan. Simmer gently until everything is warm, then stir through most of the basil. Serve the ragù over the tagliatelle with the remaining basil leaves scattered on top.



LEMON & RICOTTA HOTCAKES WITH BLUEBERRY SYRUP

These hotcakes are similar to American-style pancakes - wonderfully thick and fluffy with a lovely, light texture from the ricotta. Serve a stack of these with the cardamom-scented blueberry syrup for an indulgent brunch or fruity dessert. The quantities can be doubled easily if serving more.

YOU WILL NEED

250g ricotta
90g self-raising flour
50g caster sugar
3 large free range eggs, separated
2 lemons, zested
2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
2 tbsp extra thick half fat cream
BLUEBERRY SYRUP
150g blueberries
3 tbsp maple syrup
4 cardamom pods, cracked open
½ tsp vanilla extract

METHOD

For the syrup, put ½ the blueberries in a small saucepan with the maple syrup, cardamom and vanilla. Bring to the boil, then turn down to simmer gently for 3-4 minutes until the berries have just burst.

Take off the heat, stir in the remaining blueberries and set aside to cool.

For the hotcakes, put the ricotta, flour, sugar, egg yolks, lemon zest and a pinch of salt in a large mixing bowl and beat together with a wooden spoon.

In a separate bowl, using electric beaters, whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks, then fold into the ricotta mixture.

Heat a large frying pan over a medium heat with 1 tbsp butter. Fry three hotcakes at a time (to make 6 in total), using 2 dessertspoonfuls of the mixture per hotcake, and frying for about 3 minutes on each side.

Repeat using the remaining 1 tbsp butter and hotcake mixture.

Serve with the blueberry syrup (discard the cardamom pods) and a dollop of cream.



For a breakfast option, serve these pancakes with yogurt instead of cream. They also work well with orange zest instead of lemon.

**SERVES
TWO**



Recipe: Waitrose & Partners

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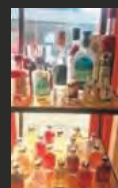
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Tel: 01622 884386



Tiddly Pomme is the Farm Shop at Brogdale Farm. We are home to a fabulous range of bottled Kentish ales and ciders, as well as our own **Brogdale Craft Cider** (makers of **Woolly Pig**), produced entirely from apples and pears of the National Fruit Collection here on site.

We are also the main stockist of **Brogdale Juices**, pure single variety and blended apple and pear juices made from the same fruits as our ciders. Our range of locally produced food and drinks is ever expanding, and is complimented by a fabulous selection of gifts, cards, prints and books.



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Email: tiddlypomme@brogdalecider.co.uk Web: www.tiddlypommeshop.co.uk

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A fruitful business

IT'S QUITE A LEAP FROM DATA NETWORK ENGINEER FOR A MULTINATIONAL COMPANY TO HANDS-ON LOCAL CIDERMAKER, BUT ONE THAT JOHN LEWINGTON IS VERY HAPPY WITH

Nearly two years ago John took over the Tiddly Pomme business near Faversham, where he makes cider from apples grown only yards away in the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale.

Following redundancy from GlaxoSmithKline pharmaceuticals, he was looking for a completely new challenge when he stumbled across Tiddly Pomme for sale. As he wanted to be creative, and was already enthusiastic about local produce, it caught his interest. "It was an opportunity to think about what's important to me," he says.

In an outbuilding at Brogdale, he presses apples of around 30 varieties, nurtures the juice carefully during fermentation then bottles it. It travels just another few yards to his Tiddly Pomme shop in Brogdale Marketplace. Can't get fewer 'food miles' than that...

As well as his own cider (including the wonderfully-named Woolly Pig), John sells Kentish beers, ciders, wines and spirits plus fruit and vegetables grown on the Brogdale Farm. There are also gifts, cards and books for sale which make a Christmas visit a particular must.

Woolly Pig, by the way, was named after the unusually hairy Mangalitsa pet pigs which used to belong to another trader at Brogdale and gobbled up the residue from apple pressing!

Since taking over the business John, with occasional help from his wife and daughter plus part-time shop staff, has expanded the range

of retail goods particularly with local food connections. He is getting excellent feedback as he strives to attract local customers as well as the tourists who arrive to visit the UK's biggest fruit collection. There are guided walking tours of Brogdale orchards seven days a week from April – October (The Market Place is open year-round).

"There is fantastic work going on here to keep this heritage site alive and accessible," says John. "There really is nothing else like it in the world." www.tiddlypommeshop.co.uk







KENT

Farmers' Markets

DECEMBER

SUNDAY 1ST

Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells
(Pantiles)

TUESDAY 3RD, 10TH, 17TH & 24TH

Capel le Ferne; Folkestone;
Hildenborough

THURSDAY 5TH, 12TH, 19TH & 26TH

Charing; Rolvenden;
Shipbourne; Whitfield

FRIDAY 6TH, 13TH, 20TH

Egerton

SATURDAY 7TH

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

SUNDAY 8TH

Herne Bay; Lenham;
Tonbridge

SATURDAY 14TH

Bridge; Hythe; Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

SUNDAY 15TH

Aylesford; Rochester;
Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

SATURDAY 21ST

Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells;
Wye; Yalding

SUNDAY 22ND

West Malling

FRIDAY 27TH

Egerton; Maidstone

SATURDAY 28TH

Bridge; Cranbrook; Hythe;

Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells;
Whitstable

SUNDAY 29TH

Brogdale, Faversham

JANUARY

THURSDAY 2ND, 9TH, 16TH, 23RD & 30TH

Charing; Rolvenden;
Whitfield

FRIDAY 3RD, 10TH, 17TH & 31ST

Egerton

SATURDAY 4TH

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

SUNDAY 5TH

Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)



**TUESDAY 7TH, 14TH,
21ST & 28TH**

Capel le Ferne; Folkestone;
Hildenborough

SATURDAY 11TH

Bridge; Hythe; Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

SUNDAY 12TH

Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge

SATURDAY 18TH

Sevenoaks; Wye; Yalding;
Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

SUNDAY 19TH

Aylesford; Rochester;
Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

FRIDAY 24TH

Egerton; Maidstone

SATURDAY 25TH

Bridge; Cranbrook; Hythe;
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells;
Whitstable

SUNDAY 26TH

Brogdale, Faversham;
Cliftonville; West Malling

FEBRUARY

SATURDAY 1ST

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

SUNDAY 2ND

Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

**TUESDAY 4TH, 11TH,
18TH & 25TH**

Capel le Ferne; Folkestone;
Hildenborough

FRIDAY 7TH, 14TH & 21ST

Egerton

SATURDAY 8TH

Bridge; Hythe; Sevenoaks;
Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

SUNDAY 9TH

Herne Bay; Lenham;
Tonbridge

SATURDAY 15TH

Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells
(Pantiles)

SUNDAY 16TH

Rochester; Tunbridge Wells
(Pantiles)



SATURDAY 22ND

Bridge; Cranbrook; Hythe;
Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells;
Whitstable

SUNDAY 23RD

Brogdale, Faversham;
Cliftonville; West Malling

FRIDAY 28TH

Egerton; Maidstone

SATURDAY 29TH

Sevenoaks

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Festive wine choices

WHAT'S THE BEST WINE TO GO WITH YOUR TURKEY? WINE EXPERT ROWENA HAWTIN TALKS US THROUGH HER RECOMMENDATIONS

Christmas dinner for many of us is a big social occasion and we often spend hours in the kitchen preparing our Christmas turkey and all the delicious trimmings to go with it. Therefore, we want to choose a wine that compliments the food rather than killing or conflicting with all those complex flavours. Turkey is actually quite a delicate meat and a red wine with too much tannin really is the enemy as the high fat

content of all those trimmings such as the roast potatoes, parsnips, stuffing, bacon and other vegetables can create harsh and bitter tastes in the mouth which can be quite unpleasant – not to mention spoil all that hard work!

So the best wines would either be a full bodied white wine such as a Chardonnay or a medium bodied red such as a Pinot Noir, Beaujolais Cru or a mature Rioja. These wines tend to have medium tannins, medium body

and high acidity which is the perfect pairing for your turkey.

WHITE WINE

If your preference is for white wine, a Premier or Grand Cru from Burgundy such as a Meursault or a Puligny Montrachet would be ideal. These wines in general have high acidity which means they will cut through the high fat content of the meal, but at the same time the palate is full, round, creamy, buttery and rich which would stand up to the rich content of the food. Or a Chardonnay from California would also work well and the Sonoma valley produces an excellent selection – but avoid the wines which are over-oaked as again this will mask the flavours rather than enhance them.

RED WINE

If you prefer a red wine then Pinot noir is the perfect match as the medium tannins and body won't swamp the delicate flavours. The high acidity together with the earthy, gamey, mushroom flavours that evolve in a mature Pinot Noir will compliment not only the high fat content of the meal, but pair perfectly with all those trimmings. Again, Burgundy in France produces some of the best red Burgundy in the world and as it's Christmas it may be worth spending a little more for extra savouring and enjoyment and Nuits-St-Georges, Gevrey Chambertin and Vosne-Romanee are among the best. However, California produces some excellent Pinot

Noir as does Germany and New Zealand, but choose one that is not too young so the fruit has time to develop and integrate with the tannins and acidity

Another good choice would be a Beaujolais which is made from the Gamay grape. Some Beaujolais can be quite light in style, but others such as Morgan and Moulin-a-Vent are more structured and the fruit concentration and level of tannins means that they have great ageing potential and depth. Finally, if you're a Rioja fan, then this is another great pairing for the turkey, but again go for a Reserva or Grand Reserva and not too much oak which will conflict with all those complex flavours. Have a lovely Christmas #Thewinelady



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