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Welcome Spring 2022



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Welcome to the spring edition of Conservation News. Our team are really excited about this edition because spring is our favourite time of year and, judging by the weather we've had so far this year, this spring is going to be particularly gorgeous!

Yes sunshine and blue skies are coming back, the flowers are blooming and the lambs are being born. There really couldn't be a more life affirming season. We're hoping that you, like us, are feeling the excitement and inspiration that comes with spring; so we've put together a collection of articles to really help you seize the moment and improve or reinvent your house and garden. From our A-Z of kitchens, to creative ways to freshen your fencing, we've got household ideas that you'll be raring to try.

We've also got the history of clay tiles, lots of garden advice and even a medieval makeover in our pages, so if you're still feeling the winter blues right now, you won't be by the end of the magazine. We hope that this quarter's edition will put a real spring in your step!

Dawn and Nadene



CONSERVATION NEWS
conservationnews.co.uk

Publisher
Conservation News

Contributors
Rowena Hawtin
Susan Hubbard
Liz Norton
Louise Tomlin

Design
Dandelion Design

Editor/Sales
Dawn Long

Sales Manager
Nadene Weed
Tel: 07515 157795

Cover image
Handmade Rugs

© Conservation News 2022
Printed in the UK by Pensord



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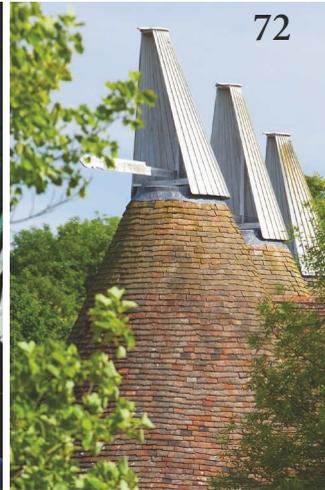
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Garden NOTES



DAZZLING DAFFODILS

Daffodils and narcissi make a splendid show in spring, but to ensure a dazzling display next year, follow these three simple steps.

- 1) Deadhead as soon as they have flowered to stop them setting seed.
- 2) Leave the foliage standing for six weeks before tidying up and
- 3) If your daffs produce leaves but no flowers, then they either need feeding or thinning out. If in doubt, do both!

Sweet success

Home-grown sweetcorn cooked within minutes of picking is simply the sweetest and juiciest sweetcorn you'll ever taste. A favourite allotment crop, its statuesque, leafy structure and easy-to-grow nature make it great to plant in bold blocks in your borders, or as a productive screen to divide up areas of your vegetable plot. Sow seeds indoors in small pots on a sunny windowsill in a warm room. When all danger of frost has passed, plant your seedlings in a grid formation about 50cm apart. Sweetcorn is wind pollinated so plants need to be in close proximity. Water and mulch regularly throughout the growing season.



Tulip celebrations at Hever Castle

Feel uplifted by over 40,000 tulips proudly standing to attention and providing a visual feast of spring colour. A kaleidoscope of brightly coloured parrot, Darwin, Peony and Triumph Tulips will declare that spring has well and truly arrived at Hever Castle & Gardens this April. Head Gardener Neil Miller, a fan of bold bright colours, has selected a palette for 2022 that celebrates spring in all its glory and heralds the start of warmer days to come.

For more information visit <https://www.hevercastle.co.uk/whats-on/tulips/>



SUMMER FLOWERING BULBS

Now is the time to plant summer flowering bulbs to ensure a magnificent splash of colour come the warmer months. Here are some of our favourites:

Allium (*Purple Sensation*). A very popular choice, but it is one of the best and it self-seeds generously.

Canna. Invaluable for bringing a touch of the tropics to your borders. Not totally hardy, so mulch in autumn.

Dahlia. A must-have in the summer garden, they make wonderful cut flowers.

PLANTS TO PRUNE NOW

Spring is, perhaps surprisingly, one of the most important times for pruning.

Tender shrubs: Mediterranean shrubs such as lavender need protection from their top growth in winter, so trim in spring to make way for new growth.

Grasses: Deciduous grasses can be cut back from March to April.

Spring flowering shrubs: Shrubs that flower on the previous season's growth (such as weigela below) benefit from being cut back immediately after flowering.

Foliage shrubs: Encourage the growth of large, vibrant leaves and colourful winter stems by cutting plants such as dogwoods back hard every year in early spring.



What to do now

- Keep weeds under control.
- Protect fruit blossom from late frosts. Most top fruit and soft fruit are very hardy but once they start into growth in spring, flowers and buds are especially vulnerable to frost and may need protection to crop well.
- Tie in climbing and rambling roses.
- Sow hardy annuals and herb seeds.
- Start to feed citrus plants.
- Increase the water given to houseplants.
- Feed hungry shrubs and roses.
- Sow new lawns or repair bare patches.
- Prune fig trees.
- Divide bamboos and waterlilies.

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST COMPOST

- Separate ingredients: Remove leaves from other compost ingredients and use for leafmould.
- Get a good balance: Too much carbon (woody stems etc.) and the composting process will be too slow, but too much nitrogen (grass cuttings etc.) and you'll get a horrible-smelling sludge. For every load of green material, mix in the same volume of dry material such as straw or cardboard.
- Turn the heap: Mix it up as often as possible. Once every ten days is ideal.
- Don't let it dry out: Damp the heap down with the hose if it gets too dry.

MAKE YOUR GARDEN A CORKER!

Corker Outdoors have risen past recent challenges, and have their sights and site firmly set on the future.



Corker Outdoors, based in Paddock Wood, recognised COVID as an opportunity to shake up their business, and perhaps even their industry. “We saw unprecedented demand for landscaping products, especially those centred on what’s known as RMI – repair, maintenance, and improvement,” Oliver Corkery, Operations Director, explained. “It became clear that people were embracing al fresco living on a different level and were viewing their gardens as a true extension of their house.”

But, with the construction industry affected by shutdowns and staff in isolation, Corker found their product sources and service suppliers unable to reliably fill the growing order bank.

It was Oliver who came up with a creative response to these potential threats. This year has seen Corker begin to import unique products and exquisite stonework directly. Furthermore, they have begun to market directly to garden designers to professionally showcase these products, exclusive to Corker.

Another hint at the exciting evolution of the business can be found in the fifteen show gardens at their Paddock Wood site. The spots in the show gardens are hotly contested, with the newest arrivals currently being installed. It's very much a case of 'watch this space'. The Corkerys have been hinting that there is much more to come, as they expand into more areas of the industry – from spectacular garden galas to new workspaces and service-orientated facilities. They feel it's something bigger operations are missing. "Developers and the construction industry as a whole need to rethink a home's outdoor space, just as we are, to meet customer expectations," Mick explains. "People are using these spaces differently and have higher expectations than a patch of grass front and back. They want and deserve much more than that. We aim to give them all of that and more."

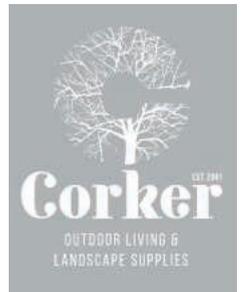


For more information visit www.corker.co.uk.

Tel: 01892 833325.

One of the refreshing aspects of a visit to Corker is that their forward-facing, expansive vision has not compromised their family values. Alice – Mick's wife and Oli's mother, runs the front-of-house, delivering the impeccable customer service they have become renowned for. Their passion for their customers and what they do is infectious, something evident in the newest members of the team.

The enthusiasm and high-energy is evident the moment you step onto the Corker site. The smiles and greetings are genuine. There's no pressured selling tactics – just helpful consultation and advice, often including a visit to a show garden to see exactly what is meant – and possible. If the future of the business is as bright as their outlook and approach, then it is not only assured, but bound to become a highlight of the industry.



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What's going on with petrol?

Petrol has changed and we all need to understand the impact of these changes to avoid expensive repair bills.

The UK Government has increased the ethanol percentage in petrol to 10% (E10) to help reduce CO2 emissions.

That's a good thing right? For cars maybe, but for petrol lawnmowers it's not.

What's the problem then?

The problem with Ethanol is that it de-stabilises petrol & makes it breakdown into varnish (just like Ronseal) & water. The breakdown starts after 58 days & it's separated by day 80. So now if you leave petrol in your mower over winter you will find it won't start next spring & carb will look like this:



inside this carburettor that was left for six months with petrol in it.

Can it be fixed? Yes. It can, but it's easy to think your engine is dead & the more unscrupulous repair shops will say you need a new mower.

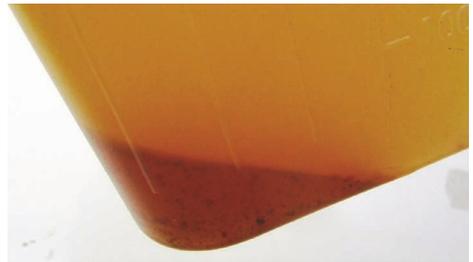
Mowpower include a varnish removal procedure as part of their standard service to get everything cleaned & back up & running & they also provide a FREE petrol stabiliser shot.

So is the petrol I bought last year any good?

If you haven't put a stabiliser in it - don't use it.

The water floats to the top & the varnish sinks so you will be pouring water into your engine which could seriously damage it. The varnish also attacks pipes & primer buttons & makes them go brittle & crack.

So what does it look like?



The petrol in this container is three months old. You can clearly see the "varnish" deposits at the bottom & above the varnish is water. It also has a very distinct smell. If your petrol looks like this – don't use it.



These are the pipes & carburettor from a Mantis tiller that had petrol left in it for over a year. This was so bad it had to have new pipes, filter and a new carb.



Every year we get 100s of mowers that won't start just because the petrol has gone off. All of these mowers were dropped off in one week because they wouldn't start & every single one has got bad petrol in it.

So what can I do about it?

Follow these simple rules.

1. Don't buy too much petrol in one go. Buy little and often and buy a new petrol can to stop cross contamination.
2. Empty petrol if you plan to store empty machinery for over three months.
3. Try putting our free fuel stabiliser in at the end of the year – that will keep the petrol good for nine months.

So what about this Ethanol free petrol?

There is a brand of Ethanol free petrol called Aspen, but it's very expensive and if you follow our rules you won't need it.

Some garden machinery companies stick a label on mowers saying the engine will only work with Aspen petrol. We have customers who believed this & were buying £50 of this brand every month. They now follow our simple rules & have never needed it again & saved lots of money!

What do I do if my mower won't start?

If your mower isn't starting but it's making all the right noises then call 01622 828627 & get it to Harrietsham and we will sort it. Mowpower

& Mowtastic have a repair workshop and showroom in Harrietsham.

Unit 6 a/b Harrietsham Ind. Est., Station road, ME17 1JA.

Pick up your free stabiliser from Mowpower

If you're going to store your machine, simply put the stabiliser in a five litre can (the green plastic curved can) and it will preserve it for ten months stopping the petrol from breaking down. When you store your machine for the winter just pour some of this petrol in your machine, and run the engine for ten minutes to run it through and you will have no petrol problems in the spring.

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Freshen up your fencing

With the joyful thought of spring on the horizon, it may be time to show your garden some love and consider tackling some meatier projects like updating your fencing to give your garden a well-deserved facelift before summer gets under way.



Photo: charttimberbuildings.co.uk

Over the last couple of years those of us lucky enough to have our own outside space may well have come to view our gardens with fresh eyes and renewed appreciation, having realised how fortunate we are. It can be a daunting prospect and not something to rush into without taking time to prepare properly, and first you need to decide what it is you want to achieve, so we've come up with ideas to give you some inspiration and get your creative juices flowing.

For what seems like centuries, garden fencing was just something that no-one got excited about; it was just there to fulfill the purpose of demarcation and security. It can go unnoticed

unless it starts to fail, fall down or look like an eyesore. The good news is that over the last decade or so garden fencing has undergone something of a renaissance and instead of just replacing boring old wooden featheredge panels with the same old-same old, there are now many sleek, modern and contemporary fencing styles that can bring your outside space into the 21st century.

Take a look online and you may be surprised; there are all sorts of newer styles like tongue and groove panels rather than featheredge or close-board panels. Some companies are even selling panels that look good on both sides, so you and your neighbour get the best of both worlds. Nowadays instead of being simply a



perimeter, your fence can be an integral part of your garden design and not merely a ‘backdrop’.

Instead of the usual and rather conventional

softwood options, there are now hardwood panels like cedar, redwood and larch available that, depending on how they’re used and which design you choose, will look great in both modern and traditional settings, so if you have a period-style property there’s scope for thinking outside the box. Many style programmes on TV these days like Grand Designs, Amazing Spaces and Your Garden

Made Perfect show us that it’s cool to blend the old and the new, and this isn’t just for the inside of your property.

“Garden fencing has undergone something of a renaissance ... there are now many sleek, modern and contemporary fencing styles.”

A style of fencing that has become very popular is the cedar horizontal slatted panel, sometimes referred to as ‘Venetian’. These look superb, and with the small gap between the battens or slats give some privacy but also allow a certain amount of light to filter through along with offering less wind resistance. If you prefer more privacy, solid hardwood

panels are also available that look very classy and modern too.

A note on softwood versus hardwood: most typical timber fencing, gates, posts etc. have traditionally been made from softwoods which, unless they are pressure-treated, can rot after as little as 5 – 7 years, especially when in contact with the ground. Hardwoods tend to be longer-lasting and some companies will guarantee their hardwood panels for 20 years, so although they may be initially more expensive they will work out cheaper in the long run. There aren't many softwood fencing companies that can offer guarantees on how long their timber will last before rot sets in, but there are a few so it's well worth researching. Look out for those that pressure-treat their timber and offer a guarantee.

Another new addition to the fencing scene that has arrived in the last decade or so is composite. This is now being used to manufacture materials for everything from decking, fencing, garden structures and buildings. Now this really has set the cat amongst the pigeons, so to speak! It really is a change from the same-old etc etc...

What is composite? It is a blend of recycled wood and plastic used to design and manufacture products that look like real timber decking boards and fencing, but the lifetime of these products far outlasts natural timber. Most of the companies that are selling composite products say they use 100% recycled materials, 100% renewable energy to produce them, and are leading the way in moving towards sustainable living by reducing the impact of their manufacturing on the environment.

Companies like EnviroBuild and e-Composite Products Ltd are really hammering home their 'eco' credentials and if that sort of thing concerns you, like me, then

you will want to take a look. Many of them are offering a range of other products made from composites, such as decking, cladding, garden buildings and structures that look stylish and not at all fake or 'plasticky'. I think they are going to give the traditional suppliers a run for their money, so before embarking on your garden hard landscaping project keep an open mind and take a look at all the options.

There's another alternative fencing choice in the market: coloured metal fencing systems. One such company, ColourFence, offers what they call 'fit and forget' fencing. They boast that once it's fitted it requires no repairs or treatment and that it's virtually maintenance-free. They've got a range of pre-coloured metal panels and posts that look similar in design to traditional fencing – solid panels, some with a choice of trellis at the top.

And finally, if your fencing doesn't require replacement and is basically structurally sound but just looking a bit dull and tired, you could consider freshening things up by staining it a lovely new colour to complement your planting and garden furniture, then going that extra mile by fixing some lovely new decorative trellis screens in contrasting colours. There are many companies online that have superb floral, geometric and exotic designs cut from composite material or metal that could take your garden to another level, adding a touch of Moroccan, Mediterranean or Oriental styling: the world is your oyster.

Photos opposite:

1. www.contemporaryfencing.com
2. charlesandivy.co.uk
3. colourfence.co.uk
4. charlesandivy.co.uk



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HOW TO... REVIVE METAL FURNITURE

Cast iron furniture left outside can suffer weather damage including rust, flaking paint and surface algae. Follow our tips to help restore it to its former glory. Make sure you choose the perfect day – dry, slightly overcast, with no threat of rain.

- Check the bolts holding the furniture together and replace any that have rusted. Use a release oil on any that fail to undo.
- Wearing gloves, use a fungicidal wash or household bleach to kill off any algae. Apply and leave for 24 hours before washing off.
- Use a steel brush to remove flaking paint to make a sound base for the new coat of paint.
- Worn-away paint exposes the metal and a powdery coating may be present. Use a sanding block and wet and dry abrasive paper to remove this. Make sure you wear a protective dust mask.
- Scrub the furniture to remove any traces of grease and dust and allow it to dry completely.
- A specific range of paints can be applied straight on to bare metal.
- Brush on a coat of paint, and once completely dry, give it a light sanding with fine glasspaper to provide a key for the next coat. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations for the best time to apply a second coat.



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The joys of spring

Spring has finally arrived, bringing promises of warmer weather, longer days and sunnier skies. What better way to celebrate than to get out in the garden, enjoy the fresh air and look forward to another gardening year?

Spring bulbs, early flowering shrubs and blossoming fruit trees provide welcome splashes of colour throughout March and April, with the rest of the garden slowly waking from its winter slumber.

Planting hanging baskets and containers with spring-flowering plants is a wonderful way to bring more colour and interest into the garden at this time of year. Garden centres and nurseries stock a fabulous array of spring bedding, with wallflowers, polyanthus, primulas, ranunculus, bellis daisies, violas and forget-me-nots all widely available now, along with pots of flowering spring bulbs including daffodils, hyacinths, grape hyacinths and fritillaries. Do not be tempted to buy summer

bedding or frost-tender plants just yet, as temperatures can drop considerably at night, and frosts are a possibility until mid-May.

For a colourful spring display, combine candy pink bellis daisies with daffodils and vibrant violas. For fragrance, freshly-scented hyacinths pack a punch and look wonderful planted alongside pink primulas and delicate forget-me-nots. Jewel-coloured polyanthus can add bright sparks and dazzle when planted en masse or with daffodils and grape hyacinths.

When planting new displays in baskets or containers, it is always advisable to empty out old compost and wash the container inside and out to minimise the risk of pests and diseases. Cover the large drainage hole at the base of the container with a stone and add a layer of gravel



to keep roots free from standing water. Fill with fresh peat-free potting compost, arrange plants as desired and then water in. Remember to deadhead faded flowers regularly to encourage further flowering.

There are many other important gardening jobs that need doing at this time of year. Grass is starting to grow steadily, and lawns will require regular mowing in order to look their best. Ensure that lawnmower blades are at their highest setting for the first few cuts. Lawn edges can be redefined with a half-moon edging iron; this not only makes mowing easier, but also really improves the appearance of the lawn which then acts as a wonderful foil for the rest of the garden.

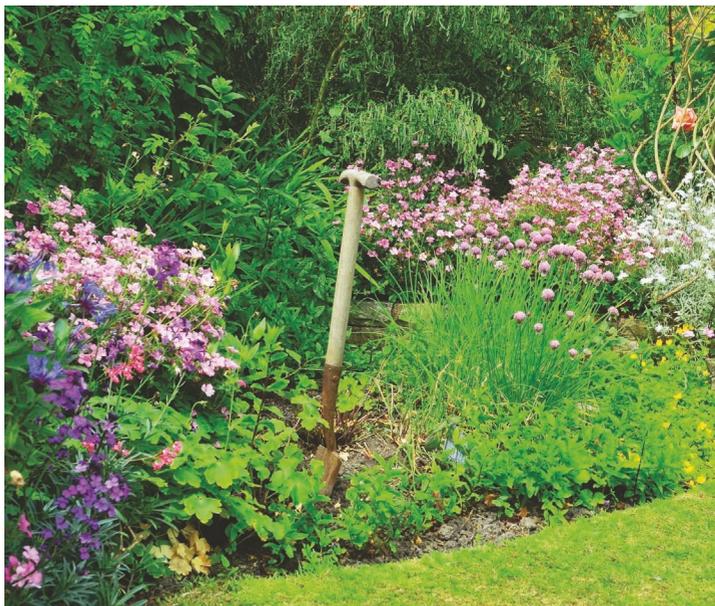
Another hugely rewarding job to carry out on a sunny spring day is to work through beds and borders removing weeds, cutting back faded perennials and applying mulches or fertilisers.

Hardy annual seeds can be sown once the soil warms up in March, and this is an easy and cost-effective way to ensure the garden is filled with colour in a matter of weeks. Summer-flowering bulbs such as lilies, agapanthus and gladioli can be planted out now, as can dormant dahlia tubers.

Spring really is an exciting time in the garden, with the longer days and brighter skies filling us with anticipation for the year ahead. So, make the most of the fine weather, get outside and enjoy your garden.



“Planting hanging baskets and containers with spring-flowering plants is a wonderful way to bring more colour and interest into the garden at this time of year.”



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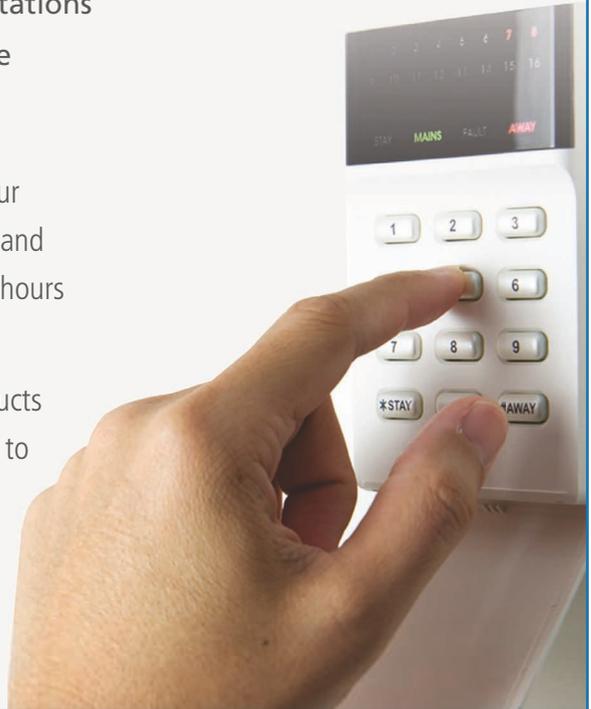


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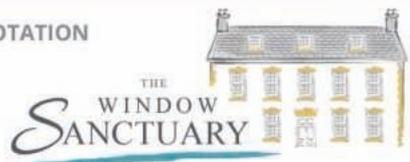


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Investments can go up and down in value, so you could get back less than you put in

TAKE A SEAT!

Buying a new sofa is a real investment, and one of the most important decisions you can make when it comes to decorating your home.

The sofa is a piece of furniture on which we lounge, read, eat and drink, entertain family and friends, watch TV and even sleep, so it makes sense that we take the time to invest in one that's going to last for years to come.

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Try out different styles to ensure you get good back support. There's no right or wrong height, so again, try before you buy to make sure it

suits the whole family. Spend plenty of time sitting on sofas to test them for comfort, as what you see, and more importantly what you feel, is mostly what you get. That said, be aware that a sofa that feels wonderfully supportive now may sag over time.

INVEST IN A GOOD FRAME

Spend as much as you can afford on a quality frame. A solid hardwood frame is a good option, but be wary of a particleboard or



Wilson sofa, Lenleys

metal construction. Also, take note of the guarantee before you commit – always opt for manufacturers who offer at least a 15-year guarantee. Ask about the construction of the sofa's frame.

A sturdy frame is usually a long-lasting sofa. A wooden frame is best, especially if it's a quality timber that has been kiln-dried – be wary of cheap pine or green timber, which may warp over time. The frame should be secured together by dowels or nails; avoid those that are held together by staples and glue. The legs should be either part of the frame or solidly attached. Metal frames may be necessary when the seat of the sofa has a large span, but it may make the whole piece of furniture very heavy to move.

CHECK THE CUSHIONS

Remember that what's inside a sofa is just as important as what's used on the outside. When it comes to the sofa back and seat, feather-filled cushions are high on comfort but they will need regular plumping, while foam or fibre fillings may flatten out and lose their shape over time.

FOCUS ON FABRIC

Whether you go for a bold colour, pattern or a neutral, your choice of fabric will have a huge impact on the room, so choose carefully. Natural materials may fade in strong sunlight so go for a synthetic fabric if the sofa will be near

TIP

Choose fabrics with patterns in the weave, as these tend to wear better over time. Ask the store you are buying your sofa from for a swatch to take home. Place in situ to see how the fabric looks in both natural daylight and under artificial light at night.



Pugin three seater sofa, Sofas & Stuff

a window. It's particularly important in a busy family home, and if you have a dog or cat, to opt for a fabric that's easy to spot clean. If you want to keep your sofa for decades, choosing the right textile for your sofa is as important as making sure the construction standards are high.

Ercol Cosenza sofa, Lenleys



MEASURE

There is honestly nothing worse than buying a piece of costly furniture that doesn't fit into your home, so before you do anything, make sure you measure up.

Get out the tape measure and make sure you're certain of the maximum sofa dimensions that will fit your space. Pay attention to the depth as well if you're buying for a smaller room, as the depth of the seat rarely changes from the larger to smaller size sofas.

Finally, check the dimensions of your doorways and any stairways the sofa will have to

pass through whilst being delivered and installed – your unscuffed walls will thank you.

If access is limited, you may need to opt for a low-back style, one with removable legs or even a modular design that can be delivered in smaller sections. If you have a small room, why not consider a two-seater or even a snuggler?

You might have your dream sofa in your sights but you have to be practical too. The good news is that it's never been easier to customise a sofa to make it really work for you and your space.

COLOUR

When in doubt about colour, play it safe.

If you've found your dream sofa but are unsure which colour will work in your scheme, or haven't even decided on one yet, stick with a neutral. It will probably work with any of the colourways or patterns you introduce at a later date.

If your décor plan has a predominately warm palette, choose a beige, mushroom or cream sofa; a grey, charcoal or white sofa will work best with a cool colour palette. Punchy colour should come from cushions, throws or rugs as these can easily be replaced when the next new colour trend hits.

MAKE A MODULAR WORK FOR ITS MONEY

Modulars come in a range of sizes and have many benefits. As they combine various lounging pieces in one unit, they are relatively compact, maximising the space a room has available. They also offer more space to sit, especially if a chaise or fixed ottoman is attached.

Due to their flexibility, modulars can be set up in different formations. From the L-shapes of two- and three-seat corner sofas with chaise longue additions, to larger U-shaped modulars which can be expanded by adding a corner or terminal, these are sofas well worth considering.



Lyng Milly sofa, Scandinavian Touch

BUYING ANTIQUE SOFAS

Antique sofas come in many different styles and forms and buying sofas at auction or from dealers is all about look and comfort. Having said that, it is vitally important to check the structure and upholstery. What looks good on the outside can hide a multitude of sins. Make sure the legs and arms are steady and be aware that reupholstery, respringing and rewebbing can be costly.

The important thing is not to rush into an impulsive purchase, as your sofa will be one of the most-used pieces of furniture in your

home. A high level of craftsmanship that delivers deep comfort and support is paramount, but then there are other considerations, such as sofa style and shape, upholstery type and durability, and the sofa's suitability to your home and lifestyle.





*Windsor stain resistant velvet sofa,
The London Road Furniture Company*

SETTLE ON YOUR STYLE

The style of your sofa will be influenced by your room's existing décor, so choose one that will suit. A low-profile sofa will work really well in a modern scheme, while a high-back sofa will look better in a more traditional period home.

Consider the style of arms and whether they are comfortable enough for resting your arm on, snoozing against or even perching on.

Wide arms suit more contemporary styles, especially sofas with a low profile, but can take up a significant amount of room. A high-backed sofa often has a narrow arm, and if the sofa is a classic style, may have a curvaceous scroll or flare.



George sofa, Neptune



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Using colour in the kitchen

Your home's colour palette should flow into your kitchen, just as it would in any other room. There are plenty of ways to welcome colour into your kitchen, making a feature out of one (or more) of your core shades.



We look at some of the techniques for pulling together your kitchen's scheme.

CONTRAST CABINETRY

Your kitchen doesn't have to stay as one colour. By using two shades, not only does it give you opportunity to reference two colours from your palette, but it lets you change the pace of your scheme. One way to do this is by picking from the opposite sides of the colour wheel. Green-blue, Powder Blue and earthy red Paprika would be two examples, as would Flax Blue and Burnt Sienna or Mustard and Navy.

Another idea is to take one more colourful colour and one neutral. The contrast is still lively, but incorporating a more familiar shade like white or grey helps you to be braver with your cabinet accent colour. And then if all-over neutrals are more your cup of tea, you can do the same thing by choosing two colours from a core palette, Silver Birch and Grey Oak for instance, or Shell and Cobble.

ALL-OVER COLOUR

If two colours feel too much for your taste, paint all of your cabinets in the one shade. This is the more classic approach to painted kitchens.

What makes this effect more impactful, though, is when you carry that shade to other parts of the room. That could be by using the same colour on architectural woodwork like window frames, doors and skirting boards too, or it could be top to toe, with the walls and possibly even

ceiling included. The latter sounds like a brave choice but, in actual fact, it can be very soothing, especially when done with calming colours like Sage, Walnut, Cactus or Old Rose.

BEYOND CABINETRY

Remember that paint isn't the only way to apply colour in your kitchen. Wall and cabinet colours are the starting points, followed by your flooring, but the hardware, lighting, furniture and accessories – and any window treatments such as Roman blinds – you use are key to your palette so be sure to pick ones that are part of it, or at least a tonal extension of one of your key colours.

APPLIANCES COUNT

An extension of thinking above and beyond cabinetry is considering whether your appliances can provide a flash of colour. You could choose a vibrant orange stove so that colour is felt in the kitchen, but in one bright burst rather than a long ribbon. If you then link it with other orange-based tones in the room, such as warm wood flooring and terracotta pots, it doesn't feel remotely out of place.



Article courtesy of Neptune. For kitchen design advice, book a complimentary design consultation at your local Neptune store. (neptune.com)





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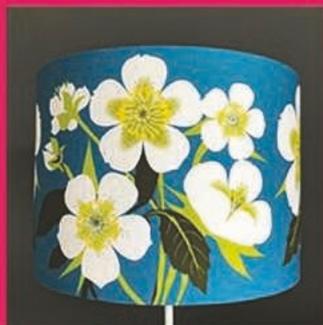
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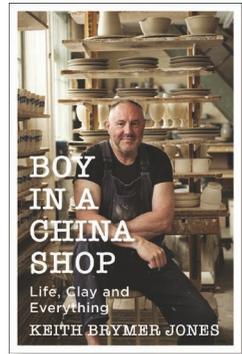
But I always say we make our own luck. What if an art teacher hadn't given me a lump of clay? What if the band had been really successful? What if I hadn't taken a photograph of a bowl to the buyer at Heals in London? What if she'd hated it? Or hadn't seen it... What if I hadn't agreed to dress up as Adele to make a crazy YouTube video?

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Sifting through half-forgotten memories, trying to pick out the golden nuggets from the stuff that is definitely dross has been a curious, and at times hilarious, sometimes sad, but definitely enlightening process. So here it is – my pottery life with some very loud music and some pretty good dancing. And a lot of throwing, fettling and firing. Oh... and a good dose of anxiety.

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Great inspiration

To say that the kitchen is the ‘heart of the home’ would be an understatement. As such we all have a vision of what our perfect kitchen would look like. In reality, however, many hurdles stand in the way: so where do you start? We asked Great British Kitchens in Sevenoaks what they see as the key trends for the coming year.

What we’ve noticed in 2021 – clients are more confident to go bold with darker tones. Over the past year we’ve seen a resurgence in natural timber finishes; albeit mostly as feature pieces or contrasting panels rather than full kitchens; the use high quality veneer finishes has proved popular, although we’d still say that the ‘traditional’ neutral tones of light greys, blues

and earthy greens are the main stays.

Painted shaker doors are still the ‘bread and butter’ of our business, although we see an increasing amount of clients now opting for flat panels. Whether that be flat veneers, painted or flat gloss, contemporary with handles or more the modern handle-less look, this has become a big part of our business.

What we foresee for 2022 – brass remains

a beautiful addition to any kitchen... deep rich blues or earthy greens with brass handles, contrasting quartz tops and warm oak is still an ever popular choice. Glass doors are now a regular addition to most shaker kitchens – not always to display their contents, but to add a break in the door line, along with mirrored splashbacks and glass shelving.

People are spending more time at home, so we've seen a huge increase in requests for home bars and drinks units; not only as stand-alone pieces but also built into kitchens.

However, the main 'trend' that we have seen over the last few years is the growing desire to invest in a quality and reliable product and personnel. People want all-round value, not just value for money. They want low maintenance, functional spaces – spaces that work perfectly for their families and will stand the test of time.

Our clients also want high quality, smart appliances, and are not prepared to put up with poor quality, sub-standard products and services that are readily available. They want proper craftspeople; skilled and personable; and ultimately they want confidence in their kitchen supplier.

About the company

Great British Kitchens & Interiors of Sevenoaks, design, make and install quality, bespoke kitchens, bedrooms and study furniture in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and southeast London.

Their team of experienced, knowledgeable, highly professional designers and craftsmen have over 100 years' combined experience.

Their personal approach to design means they can offer a great level of flexibility and choice; as they strive to create the most innovative home designs in the industry.

They work hard to ensure that clients receive a professional and pleasant experience from the first time in the showroom; through the design process and installation. Following completion, they continue with their excellent aftersales service, and are confident that every single member of the business puts the client first.

Owner Vince Hone says "What drives me every day is the belief that we are designing better spaces for clients to cook, entertain, work, live and relax in. We do what we do, in the way that we do it, because our clients trust us with their homes. I take this responsibility very seriously, and it shapes the way that I and

everyone at Great British Kitchens & Interiors conduct themselves..."

"We believe that our set-up comes with honesty, trust, integrity, hard graft and matching values at the core of everything we do together. Collectively, we share the same ethos and pride in our work across all divisions of the business. You don't see that every day in this game."

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design shown below may be compact in size yet it beautifully demonstrates how, with careful planning, the room can include plenty of storage, workspace and all the appliances needed for everyday meals as well as hosting guests and long overdue get-togethers.

This combination shows how a mix and match approach can be used to create a truly personal kitchen design. The Soft Eolis (handleless) collection, shown here in the new Navy colourway, is an MDF front with soft-touch ultra-matt lacquered melamine surface. Available in five colours, it works wonderfully paired with the Print door in the new Art Deco design. This melamine high density particle board features a digitally printed front for a





unique and exclusive kitchen style that is sure to get everyone talking. The Scala laminate worktop provides a perfect contrast with its pale grey finish, which is water-repellent and comes in a choice of 34 colours.

Within this compact kitchen, Schmidt has designed everything to offer maximum practicality and function while seamlessly integrating into the design so nothing detracts from the eye-catching Art Deco Print. The extractor is installed above the hob, integrated into the wall cabinet above, while a Work&Cook bespoke ceramic insert set within the worksurface is perfect for rolling pastry and kneading dough. There is also a well-organised pull-out for spices and dried ingredients and an integrated sink in a dramatic black finish.

Full-height wall units are easily accessed via the push and lift mechanism and are ideal for glassware, crockery and ceramics that aren't for everyday use. Schmidt's interior collections offer fully flexible designs suitable for everything from compact apartments to spacious open-plan layouts. As well as being design-led, exclusive and tailored to suit every need, its furniture also demonstrates



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"We are thrilled to offer this exclusive and exciting Art Deco Print within our latest range of interior collections," says David Roy, Country Manager Schmidt UK. "It offers homeowners something totally different and taps into the trend for personalisation within the home thanks to its mix and match approach that works wonderfully with complementary Navy and Gold designs."

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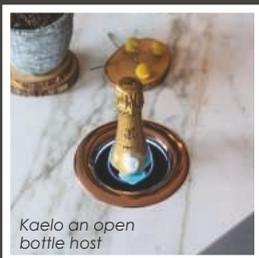
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A to Z of kitchens

When it comes to interior design, one of the most important areas for you to consider is the kitchen. As one of the most used, and most useful rooms, the kitchen truly is the heart of your home. We've put together an A-Z of kitchen ideas and must-do's to kick-start your creativity and help you get the most out of your kitchen...

A ACCESSORIES
Even if you're not going for a full refurbishment of your kitchen, you can bring it bang up to date with a few carefully chosen accessories. Just because it's a predominantly functional room, that doesn't mean you should skip on those all-important decorative accents. Consider a few carefully chosen ornaments (make sure it's just a few in order to keep dusting to a minimum!), or add a potted plant to your window sill. Snake plants, with their lush green foliage, make ideal adornments as they are the most oxygen producing of all house plants.

B BASINS
If a total refurb is on the cards then your choice of basin will be a big part of the decision making process. Heavy, luxurious materials such as marble are extremely beautiful, but if you have younger children or a busy schedule, then you may find it better to opt for something easy-clean, such as stainless steel. Don't be tempted to save space with a single

sink in the kitchen – even a small double basin will make a massive difference as it allows you to wash and rinse dishes with ease; or peel your veggies while a pot is soaking.

C COLOUR
Blues are very big this year, as evidenced by Pantone's choice of the warm blue 'very peri' as their colour of the year 2022. Blues need to be applied with some consideration, as they can look cold, and our favourite way of combatting that is to mix them with warm neutrals such as beige and oatmeal,



Photo: Indesign Kitchens

to give them a softer, more inviting look. If you don't want to make a big commitment simply add splashes of colour in the form of a blue kettle, or some brightly coloured trivets.

DOORS

DOne way to revamp your kitchen without spending out thousands is to simply replace your cupboard doors. There are lots of companies out there that will help you source doors for your existing cupboards and it's a great idea for people who've already found the perfect layout for their kitchen and simply want to update things a little. If your kitchen hasn't been touched for some time, you can modernise with smooth acrylics or, for a deliberate call back to yesteryear, embrace cottagecore with pine.

EXPERT ADVICE

EWe've said it before and we'll say it again: ask the experts. Even if you intend to fit your kitchen yourself, it's still a good idea to ask a professional to advise you on what will and won't work. If you can, get your new kitchen professionally designed. If you're buying your materials from a company they will usually include your design in the price. Not only does this save you hours of work, but it also means that if the kitchen doesn't fit because of an error in the design then you some come back.

FLOORING

FWe often forget to take flooring into account in our own homes and yet it really does make a massive difference. Think back to the last time your kids or pets tracked mud through the lounge – how terrible did it look? You can dust and polish all

you want but the thing that makes the room sparkle is vacuuming! In kitchens you'll want a hard wearing laminate, wood or Amtico for easy cleaning, so go to your local flooring company with a budget and ask them for ideas.

GATHERINGS

GSorry to get this song stuck in your head but "people always end up in the kitchen at parties" – rather than get frustrated when it happens, why not plan for it in advance and make the kitchen the focal point at your next gathering? Make sure there's seating and plenty of leg room in the kitchen (see P for Planning) and have provision for music in there (a bit of a boogie can also be a great boost when it comes to cleaning up afterwards!)

HANDLES

HThey say small changes can make a big difference, and handles are the perfect exemplar. Rather than a simple pine pull, choose cupboard handles with a bit of character to add to new cupboards or spruce up old ones. The possibilities really are endless but we suggest supporting a small business by purchasing unique, hand thrown ceramic knobs to suit your colour scheme.



Photo: Hogwood House

ILLUMINATION

Lighting is so important in a kitchen. Of course you'll need bright spotlights for when you're preparing meals, but don't overlook the impact of mood lighting, especially if your kitchen is also used for entertaining. Simply making your main lights dimmers can take you from function to celebration, but you might also want to consider a sleek lamp, or chic cupboard or skirting board lights for a real talking point.

JUNK (CLEAR IT)

If you're like me you'll seem to spend an inordinate amount of time cleaning your kitchen! It seems that I only have to turn around twice before there's another mess to be cleaned. Well you can ease the pain of constant cleaning by tidying away as many 'bits' as possible. This could mean working hidden appliances into your new design, but it could also be as easy as making sure there's room in the cupboards for the blender, cake mixer or coffee machine when not in use. When it comes to kitchens, the less you have out the better it looks and the easier life becomes.

KETTLES

Kettles can actually be a key design feature in your kitchen. For the majority of people a kettle is something that is used constantly and so needs to be kept out. That means that it should not only function well, but that it should also look good. Choose one to match your colour palette or opt for a sleek chrome design, and pick a shape that also lends itself to your aesthetic. If you're really keen to 'declutter' then consider doing away with your kettle in favour of a boiling water tap, for tea in seconds.

LARDERS AND PANTRIES

Growing up in the 1980s I knew very few people who had a proper larder, as they had largely fallen out of favour. However, in recent years people have fallen back in love with the good old fashioned pantry because it means that non-refrigerated food can be kept in one place and out of sight. If you've got the room to include a walk in larder then give it some serious thought, but if space is an issue then a floor to ceiling pull out larder is the next best thing.



Photo: Neptune

MEALTIMES

Family mealtimes can be a fun and important part of any home. Whether you're a single person hosting guests, a couple who love to give one and other a rundown of the day, or a family who relishes the chaos and noise, then eating together is one of the best bonding exercises there is, so try and accommodate space to eat in your kitchen, even if it's just a small breakfast bar for snacks.

NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Sometimes it only takes a few simple changes to give a whole new lease of life to a room. This could mean painting the walls or changing the doors, but one thing that can make a huge impact is new tiling. If you're not a DIY expert then it really is a good idea to get a pro' in for this one, as there will undoubtedly be new tiles that need cutting, and removing your old tiles can be tricky. However, for a fairly small outlay, this can be an incredibly dynamic way to spruce up your kitchen.

O VENS COOKERS AND RANGES

We could easily devote a whole article to this subject, but for now let's just cover the three Es: Examination, Economy and Environment. Examine your options carefully before choosing your new appliance as there is probably far more available than you realise. Consider how economic your new appliance will be – not only in the initial purchase, but also in terms of running costs. Finally, is your new appliance environmentally friendly and does it conform to relevant legislation?



Photo: Everhot Range Adena Fires & Stoves

Photo: Collins Bespoke



P LANNING

If you're completely redoing your kitchen, how much can you actually change? If you've got the room and the budget, consider open plan; combining your kitchen with your dining room or even your entire downstairs area. It's a big job, but open plan living areas make the space seem so much bigger and allow the kitchen to become a more integral part of family life.

Q UARTZ

Quartz is one of the most abundant on earth, but when used for home countertops is actually ground down into a powder and then combined with resins, polymers and pigments, making it incredibly durable and stain-resistant (although not entirely heat resistant). It's a little pricey and needs to be professionally installed, but if the look of quartz appeals to your sense of style then it's a worthy investment.

R REFRIGERATORS AND FREEZERS

If a new fridge is on the cards then you may have your work cut out for you, because the breadth of choice on offer these days is mind boggling! Whether you're looking for the best space saver, the most economic or the fanciest tech, there's something out there for you. However, as the early part of this year was blighted by power cuts, we think this is probably a good time to tell you about the latest advancement in fridge/freezer technology: EverCool. EverCool technology from LG keeps food frozen for up to seven hours without electricity so your next power cut doesn't have to be a disaster!

S SPACE SAVING

No matter how big your kitchen, it seems that you will never have quite enough space! That's why so many of us are constantly on the lookout for space saving solutions. In kitchens this desire for space saving has spawned an entire industry of products, from turntables and pull-outs that allow you to utilise the furthest corners of your cupboards, to centre islands that house dog beds underneath! Take a look at what's available and ask your designer for tips because it's easier to work space saving solutions into a new design than to try to fit them retroactively.

T TOPS

So you're not a fan of Quartz? Well worry not, because there are myriad options available. From wood, to marble and even concrete! Believe it or not, one type of material that's really seeing a comeback is



laminates. About as far from quartz as you can get, laminate is inexpensive, light and easy to fit. The downside of laminate (other than its 1970s image), is that it's not as durable as other materials. However, if you're on a budget or prone to changing your aesthetic then it can be a perfect fit. Modern laminates are far superior to their 20th century equivalents and come in a vast range of colours, so take a look and put the kitch in kitchen!

U UNDERFLOOR HEATING

It's hard enough forcing yourself out of bed on a cold winter morning but having to shuffle into the cold kitchen for your daily caffeine hit makes it a really miserable experience. Underfloor heating can be a godsend in winter. Now I know we're heading into spring, but in a country that tends to experience more cold weather than hot, this is a long term investment well worth considering. However, if you are thinking more about the summer right now, it might worth taking a look at plinth heaters. These heaters fit under your cupboards so can be easily switched on and off, and many also feature a fan for air circulation in summer.

V VELUX AND SKYLIGHTS

There's no better pick me up than sun streaming into your home, but kitchens, with their many cupboards and appliances, can sometimes seem a little dark. Many people are now opting to velux windows and skylights and, although this is a step best taken during a major refurbishment, it can be a fairly simple job for an experienced builder. You might want a window with the option of a blind when it gets really hot in summer, but if your kitchen feels oppressive this may be the mood booster you need.

W WINE RACKS

Built in or added extra, wine racks are a feature piece and the sheer variety available means that there's something to suit every 'palette'! No longer are we limited to rickety balsa wood constructions, today's wine racks can be a work of art in their own right, and whether you want a simple six bottle holder, or a floor to ceiling construction, every budding vintner deserves a rack worthy of their finest bottles.

X X FACTOR

Kitchens aren't simply functional these days; they're an important part of the home and, as such, they deserve to be decorated with a bit of pizzazz, which means...

Y YOU

You are unique and your kitchen should reflect that. Although we're always happy to inspire you with the latest trends and fashions, you should never go for what's 'in' if there's something different out there that speaks to your heart. Do you crave lime green wallpaper or want to create a space age centre console? Then do it. Let your personality shine in your kitchen. After all it's where you spend a lot of your time.

Z ZOOM

For our final entry I simply want to say that the kitchen is no longer just a food prep centre, or even a family room. For many of us it now doubles as an office as well. You've seen the advert about sprucing up your kitchen for when

you take online meetings? Well it's right. Not necessarily because of potential embarrassment (I firmly believe that it shouldn't matter what others think), but because working from home is yet another reason you might be spending more time in your kitchen, and it therefore needs to be a space conducive to productivity and calm.



Photo: Great British Kitchens



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Get the spring off to the best start by making sure that your oast house is ready for the coming year. Good maintenance is essential to keep your oast house looking fabulous but it can also save you serious time, effort and money in the long term.

1 CHECK THE PAINT

There is nothing nicer than a freshly painted bright white oast cowl. If yours is looking weatherbeaten and drab then it might be time for a refresh. This is especially important if the paint is starting to peel off. A repaint is not just about aesthetics, it can prevent costly repairs down the line. If you would like to know more about how we clean a cowl, take a look at our oast cowl cleaning tips on our website for some valuable insights.

2 LISTEN OUT FOR STRANGE SQUEAKING SOUNDS

Spend a little time listening to your oast cowl for any odd noises. If you hear any high-pitched squeaking, that's your oast cowl crying out for some attention! Jokes aside, this can be a sign of something more serious so give us a call and we will come and take a look for you.

3 LISTEN FOR BANGING NOISES

Banging is another sound of an oast cowl in despair. A banging noise should never be ignored. This must be checked as it could be damaging to the whole roof and the oast cowl. Basically, if it doesn't sound normal then it should not be ignored.

4 CHECK FOR HOLES

Get up close and personal with your oast cowl and see if you can spot anything that doesn't look quite right. If you see any holes, then it might be time to get the cowls down for a refurbishment as they can potentially become dangerous. Don't be daunted by the thought of taking the oast cowl off, it is much simpler to refurb them once they are off the roof and as with most things prevention is always better than a cure (especially for your wallet!)

5 CHECK THAT THE COWL IS TURNING

An oast cowl needs to turn, that's why it is there, so an oast cowl that is refusing to do a turn might be trying to tell you something. If you notice that your oast cowl is not moving, or not turning as and when you would expect, then it is probably time to get us up there to figure out what is going on and to free it. This is definitely something you should tackle sooner rather than later as if the oast cowl stops turning you may find that you start to get water in your home. Don't wait until it's too late.

Article courtesy of Dude & Arnette
(www.dudeandarnette.co.uk)

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The history of clay tiles

Clay has a rich global history going back to the earliest days of the roofing industry – and it continues to enjoy popular appeal for roof builders and homeowners alike, today and into the future.

Clay tiles have been around since around 2700 BC and were first introduced in England by the Romans. They form an important part of our architectural heritage and to this day, alongside slate, remain a standard tile for the roof industry.

When most of us think of clay tiles it's likely our minds drift to a quintessential English scene; rows of houses with distinctive red roofs,

made up of evenly distributed straight edged tiles.

It's a well established fact that clay tiles have been a fixture of our local landscape for hundreds of years. In fact it's probably fair to say that clay has been a staple of the roofing industry across the world for about as long as people have been putting roofs on their dwellings.

Certain forms of clay tiling were used on the roofs of some ancient Greek houses; and



Photo: Aldershaw Tiles



Photo: Tudor Roof Tiles



Photo: Ashford & Cranbrook Roofing



Photo: Ashford & Cranbrook Roofing

the material was also favoured by Egyptian builders of the time, as well as the Romans who adopted a typically innovative ‘over and under’ structure – a flat tray with curved sides would be laid against the roof while a cylindrical tile was overlaid to cover the joints and create a waterproof roof. However the practice of clay tile production died shortly after their occupation ceased, with thatched roof dwellings

becoming the standard on homes and buildings throughout England for the best part of 400 years.

The use of clay as a roofing material wouldn’t feature upon the English landscape with any prominence until the 13th century. The tiles of this era were simple in design – flat rectangles, conveniently sized and referred to as peg tiles, they had small holes at the edge into which pegs were inserted to hold them in place. They were laid in an overlapping fashion flat to the roof structure, much as you might find tiles laid in the centuries that followed after.

In light of the Great Fire of Southwark in 1212 AD it was decreed that buildings in the



Photo: Spicer Tiles

city adopt clay tiles as they presented less risk. Similarly, in light of the fire and potential risk that thatched roofs presented in a built up area, the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered all buildings in the vicinity of the church to adopt clay roof tiles from that day forth.

These decrees initiated mass use of clay tiles across the country, with a standard size fixed into law by Edward IV in 1477.

In the decades and centuries that followed, the distinctive red and orange tiled roof would become the main feature of rural and urban living.

The British Standard for clay plain tiles was published in 1935 and with minor adjustments it remained in force until it was replaced by the European Standard in 1999.

To this day clay, alongside slate, remains a standard tile for the UK roof industry. Design and technology has brought improvements to their efficiency and installation, but much of their appeal, their durability and rustic charm and attractive colours especially, has endured through the ages.

In a Roof Tile Association survey of conservation officers, planners, architects, house builders, surveyors and roofing contractors, 99% agreed that clay tiles enhance the built environment with 95% acknowledging that they are sustainable building products.

Roof tops across the country still appeal thanks to the distinctive reds of English clay from new homes to the restoration of period buildings.

STRENGTH AND DURABILITY

Plain clay tiles offer superior strength and durability than all other roof coverings. Many examples exist of roofs with plain clay tiles that are still standing in pristine condition after more than 100 years. The permanence of the colour with naturally burnt clay colours guarantees that the roof will never look washed out and as it ages it will improve and mellow.

COLOUR

The overwhelming case for plain clay tiles rests upon aesthetics. The wide range of natural burnt colours from Red to Brown to Blue can be imitated but never reproduced with artificial colouring. The permanence of artificial colours is not guaranteed.

VERSATILITY

The small size of plain clay tiles provides the versatility for the architect to design roofscapes of infinite interest. Large format roof tiles simply do not offer this flexibility.

HERITAGE

Clay tile roofs form an important part of the architectural heritage of the UK. Planners and architects keen to preserve regional distinctiveness are keen to specify clay roof tiles.

SUSTAINABILITY

Plain clay tiles are a sustainable product, the longevity of clay means that the energy and raw materials used in their production are offset over the whole life of the roof, which in the case of most clay tile roofs, is over 100 years.



PEG CLAY ROOF TILES



Peg tiles retain their popularity due to the simplicity with which they have been made and fired and for aesthetic reasons which result in subtle variations which are not repeated by modern manufacturing methods.

Hand-made tiles are made from clay prepared in the mass from which a piece is cut by hand and pressed into a simple flat rectangular piece with two holes.

Peg tiles are normally provided with two holes at the head of the tile, one on either side of the vertical centre-line of the tile where the joint of the upper two tiles occurs when laid. These holes are formed by simply poking through the tile with a suitable slightly tapered device in such a way as to avoid splitting the unburnt clay.

As originally devised, the peg holes should be roughly rectangular, the holes would be approximately 8mm wide although variations to 15mm wide are not uncommon, varying even within a district of origin. The tapered device facilitates

withdrawal from the clay when the hole is made. The tapered hole is provided to allow a wooden peg to suitably wedge into position. A roughly prepared wooden peg is also more secure in a rectangular hole.

Often aluminium pegs are now used instead of wooden pegs.

Historically, each locality where peg tiles have been traditionally made and used will have its own size of tile, probably determined by the type of clay used and the incidence of loss due to firing. These tiles were made at local brick and tile yards, often on country estates.

Kent peg tiles are usually 9.5 inches (240mm) in length whilst Sussex peg tiles are more likely to be 10 inches (250mm) in length.

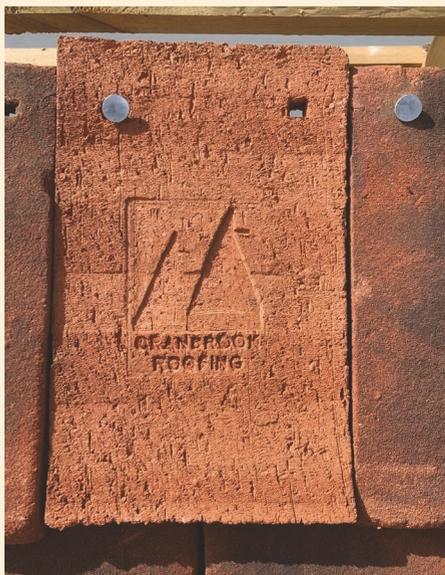


Photo: Ashford & Cranbrook Roofing

Photo: Canterbury Roofing



Photo: Karl Terry

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Betsy the Easter Bunny has been leaving eggs all over the Reuthe's gardens. If you manage to find all ten eggs you will receive an easter painting kit. The Café will be open all day offering you hot and cold food and drinks, so make an afternoon of it.

www.reuthes.com

Easter Family Fun at Hever Castle

2ND APRIL - 18TH APRIL

Make family memories at Hever Castle this Easter. Hop through the beautiful grounds following the trail of colourful carrots and look out for the Hever bunny. Celebrate spring by taking part in a free Easter Egg hunt. With a spring in your step, head to the Think Tank and let your little ones get creative in a free craft workshop.

www.hevercastle.co.uk

Bee Keeping Course at Brogdale

13TH MAY - 27TH MAY 2022

Spend a day in beautiful surroundings learning the basics of beekeeping with expert Michael White.

Dates: 13th, 26th & 27th May

www.brogdalecollections.org

Gaia at Rochester Cathedral

24TH MAY - 12TH JUNE

If you loved the Museum of the Moon, you won't want to miss Luke Jerram's Gaia arriving at Rochester Cathedral in May. The artwork provides the opportunity to see our planet on this scale, floating in three-dimensions.

www.rochestercathedral.org

Delphinium Festival at Godinton House

11TH JUNE - 26TH JUNE

A celebration of the fabulous Delphinium collection in the Walled Garden. The Delphinium Society members will be on hand to offer expert advice and have delphiniums for sale 1pm - 4pm.

www.godintonhouse.co.uk

Kent Whisky & Steam Train, Spa Valley Railway

19TH FEBRUARY - 16TH JULY

Take a journey on the South East's first 'Whisky & Steam Train' at the Spa Valley Railway in Tunbridge Wells on selected dates from February. Dates available to book are Saturday 19 February, Saturday 21 May and Saturday 16 July.

www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk

Balfour Spring Dining Club

2ND APRIL

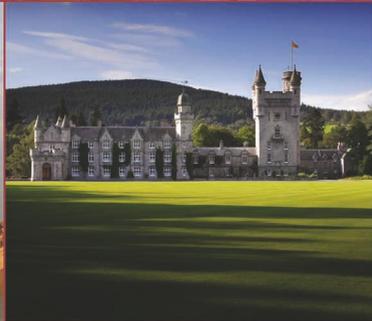
The Balfour Dining Club returns with a series of exclusive Saturday evening dinners hosted within the beautiful tasting room "The View", part of the Balfour Winery on Hush Heath Estate. Enjoy a seasonal four-course gourmet dinner created by our talented head chef.

www.balfourwinery.com



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15TH APRIL - 16TH APRIL

Come along to CAMRA's annual Thanet Beer & Cider Festival, returning with a selection of the finest Real Ale, Cider and Perries from across the UK, with an impressive selection of national and international bottled ales and lightly sparkling ciders. www.dds.camra.org.uk

Demelza's Annual Easter Egg Hunt

15TH APRIL

Demelza's Annual Easter Egg Hunt is back at the spectacular Doddington Place Gardens this Good Friday. Each child taking part will receive a prize for completing their hunt. Doddington Place Gardens, ME9 0BB. £5 per child, £1 per adult.

www.demelza.org.uk/easter

Rochester Sweeps Festival

30TH APRIL - 2ND MAY

Rochester Sweeps Festival is one of the largest gatherings of Morris sides in the world, with the

streets, parks, bars and pubs of historic Rochester filled with the best and quirkiest live folk music and dance over this three-day spectacular.

www.visitmedway.org

95th Anniversary Steam and Diesel Gala

14TH MAY - 15TH MAY

For this event all available RH&DR steam locomotives will be in service plus diesels J B Snell and Shelagh of Eskdale, which is on long-term loan from the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway.

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www.kesr.org.uk



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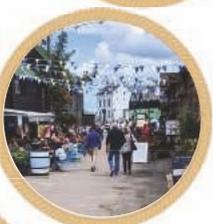


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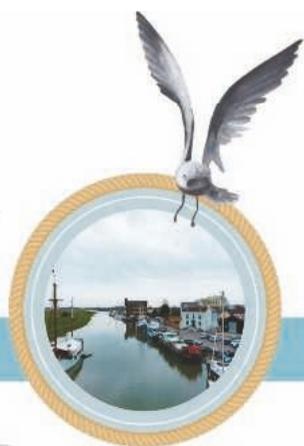
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Fairfield, Ashurst

Positioned towards the end of a no-through private lane, an attractive, detached country house, situated at the edge of the village, enjoying fabulous views to the west over the gently rolling countryside of the Kent/East Sussex borders. With part rendered exteriors, under a pitched tiled roof with double glazed windows, the house was constructed in 1924 and has been extensively modernised by the present owners. The improvements and extensions to the property enhance the period detailing, whilst at the same time capitalising on the marvellous views as well as reimagining and contemporising the interiors with a neutral palette and a sure feel for design. The accommodation extends to in

excess of 3,100 square feet and is arranged over three levels. Features include an integrated Sonos sound system, under floor heating throughout the ground floor with Porcelanosa wood effect porcelain tiles, Cat 6 Wiring, fibre optic broadband and a Rako programmable lighting system. Reception areas include a drawing room with double-sided wood burning stove, opening through to the sitting room and a dining room, which connects to the kitchen/breakfast room. Here the style is very contemporary with simple, white cabinetry and granite work surfaces, black two oven Aga and Neff integrated appliances.

The utility room is an excellent supporting space and there is also a WC and wet room. The first floor is given over to four bedrooms and



four bath/shower rooms, three of which are en-suite. The principal bedroom is a stunning room with its tall vaulted ceiling and dual aspect with French doors framing the extended views and opening out to a private balcony with glazed balustrading. The dressing room is fully fitted and the en-suite bathroom has a separate shower. The second floor has a bed/studio and small study along with spacious attic storage.

The house is set well back from the lane and is approached via a gravel, 'in and out' drive, leading to a parking and turning area. Detached from the main house is a marvellous studio annexe, which has a large living/working space, kitchenette and shower room.

The house sits well within the two-acre plot with gardens designed to provide mature seclusion but also taking in to account the rural surroundings.

The details

Reception Hall • Drawing Room • Sitting Room • Dining Room • Kitchen/Breakfast Room • Rear Lobby • Utility Room • Wet Room • Cloakroom • Principal Bedroom Suite with Dressing Room • En-Suite Bathroom and private Balcony • 3 further Bedrooms (2 en-suite) • Family Bathroom. Second floor – Bed/Studio • Study • Storage • Studio Annexe/Home Office with Kitchenette and Shower Room • Outbuildings • Mature Landscaped Gardens, Orchard, Three Ponds, Terracing

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MARCH

TUESDAY: 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th Capel-le-Ferne; Folkestone Food Hub; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th Rye

THURSDAY: 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st Ashford Food Hub; Rolvenden; Shipbourne

FRIDAY: 4th
Egerton; Reuthe's Sevenoaks; Tenterden

SATURDAY: 5th
Biggin Hill; Deal; Gravesend; Penshurst; Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

SUNDAY: 6th
Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles); Whitstable Castle

FRIDAY: 11th, 18th
Egerton; Tenterden

SATURDAY: 12th
Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 13th
Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge

SATURDAY: 19th
Deal; Gravesend; Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles); Wye

SUNDAY: 20th
Aylesford; Folkestone; Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 26th
Ashford; Bridge; Cranbrook; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Whitstable

APRIL

FRIDAY: 1st
Egerton; Reuthe's Sevenoaks; Tenterden

SATURDAY: 2nd
Biggin Hill; Deal; Gravesend; Penshurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 3rd
Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles) Whitstable Castle

TUESDAY 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
Capel-le-Ferne; Folkestone Food Hub; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th Rye

THURSDAY: 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th
Ashford Food Hub; Hastings; Rolvenden; Shipbourne

FRIDAY: 8th, 15th & 29th
Egerton; Tenterden

SATURDAY: 9th
Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 10th
Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge

SATURDAY: 16th
Deal; Gravesend; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 17th
Aylesford; Folkestone; Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles); Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 23rd
Ashford; Bridge; Cranbrook; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 24th
Cliftonville

SATURDAY: 30th
Deal; Gravesend

MAY

SUNDAY: 1st
Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable Castle

TUESDAY: 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st
Capel-le-Ferne; Folkestone Food Hub; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th Rye

THURSDAY: 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th Ashford Food Hub; Hastings; Rolvenden; Shipbourne

FRIDAY: 6th Egerton; Reuthe's Sevenoaks; Tenterden

SATURDAY: 7th Biggin Hill; Deal; Gravesend; Penshurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 8th
Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

FRIDAY: 13th, 20th & 27th
Egerton; Tenterden

SATURDAY: 14th
Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 15th
Folkestone; Rochester; Staplehurst; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 21st
Deal; Gravesend; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 22nd
Tunbridge Wells (Pantiles)

SATURDAY: 28th
Ashford; Bridge; Cranbrook; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 29th
Cliftonville

Macknade at Hoopers

We visited Macknade in the iconic department store Hoopers in Tunbridge Wells – the perfect place for all-day dining, from breakfast and brunch to lunch, light suppers and leisurely drinks

Looking for somewhere to lunch in Tunbridge Wells? Then look no further than Macknade in Hoopers. The atmosphere is relaxed and casual and there was a mix of families, couples and groups of friends on the day we visited.

The beautiful second floor restaurant brings together outstanding food, excellent service and the chance for a little retail therapy. The well-stocked shelves include plenty of locally sourced produce, as well as Kentish wines, spirits, beer and cider. A curated collection of indoor plants and handtied bouquets from the floristry department is also available, plus bespoke hamper services and foodie gifts.

The menu offers all sorts of delights including skirt steak, three types of platter, salads, sandwiches and burgers, with vegetarian options and a kids menu for younger diners.

I chose the antipasti board which consisted of stuffed vine leaves, mixed olives, nuts, houmous and crudites, bruschetta, balsamic onions and toasted pitta bread.

My dining partner chose one of the specials of the day – a vegetable frittata which was perfectly

cooked and served with a garden salad. We both plumped for a glass of local wine – the Biddenden rose and the Chartham Pinot Noir.

As one who always feels vaguely guilty about leaving food on the plate, I'm delighted to report that the portions were sensibly judged, meaning that there wasn't any problem finding room for dessert – a delicious hot Belgian waffle served with yoghurt, Kentish honey and blueberries.

The food served at Macknade is of a high standard and the service was perfect – friendly and attentive but not overly intrusive. In conclusion I would have no hesitation in recommending Macknade whatever the occasion – you certainly won't be disappointed.





<h2>PLATTERS</h2> <p>ALL SERVED WITH BREAD OR CRACKERS</p>	
£5	BEST OF MACKNADE PLATTER ashmore, brie de meaux, kentish blue, finochiona, ceceia, guillobert, pickled walnuts, mostarda & remoulade
£4	CHEESE BOARD winterdale shaw, brie de meaux, gorgonzola dolce, honey & mostarda
£4	ANTIPASTI BOARD stuffed vine leaves, mixed mediterranean olives, smoked nuts, houmous & crudites, tomato & basil bruschetta, balsamic onions & toasted pitta bread
£6.5	
£7	
£8.5	
£9	PLOUGHMAN'S woolyk hole cheddar, gammon ham & sticky pickle
£9	ANGLO FRENCH brie de meaux, red onion & red onion marmalade
£9	NEW YORK DELI pastrami, mayfield swiss cheese, gherkins & french's mustard
£9	MEDITERRANEAN houmous, rocket & black olive
£9	SMOKED SALMON potatoes & pickles



£16	LARGE SERVED
£16	SKIRT STEAK w/ fries & café de paris butter
£9	SPICED ROAST CAULIFLOW w/ brown lentil dahl
£14	PARMIGIANA baked aubergine w/ tomato & mozzarella
	SALAD
£6.5	MARKET SALAD chosen by our chefs to showcase the best
£6.5	DATE, SPINACH & ALMOND crunchy pats, marinated red onion & sun
£6.5	WASTED KITCHEN MIXED SAL a mix of grains, beans, roots & pickles me
£7	ADD HALLOUMI SMOKED SALM
£6.5	SIDES ALL @ £3.5
£7.5	JUDION baked beans, garlic, olive oil, must & lime

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There is nothing to beat British asparagus, and it is a favourite of the royal family. In this recipe, prosciutto – a stand-in for Cumbrian ham – wraps neatly around the asparagus spears, and the concealed chive cream cheese is a delicious surprise.

Tea at the Palace

During Carol Robb's thirteen years as a royal chef she was very privileged to call some of Britain's most splendid royal palaces and castles her place of work. She has created a collection of special recipes in celebration of a unique aspect of each of the twelve superb locations. There is an afternoon tea for every taste, whether that be elegant or rustic, summery or warming, savoury or chocolatey, fanciful or flowery.

**MAKES
TWELVE**

YOU WILL NEED

36 small asparagus spears

90g cream cheese, at room temperature

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh chives

Pinch of paprika

6 slices prosciutto

Fresh chives and chive flowers for garnish

ASPARAGUS SPEARS WRAPPED IN PROSCIUTTO WITH CHIVE CREAM CHEESE

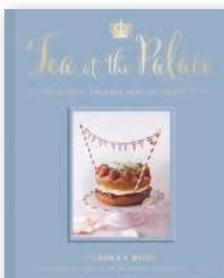
METHOD

Snap off the slightly tough, woody bottom of each asparagus spear. Then, using a vegetable peeler, peel the bottom 5cm or so of each stalk.

Have ready a large bowl of ice-cold water. Fill a saucepan with salted water, bring to the boil and add the asparagus. Cook for 1-2 minutes until just tender, depending on the size of the spears. Drain and immediately refresh in the iced water. Then drain again and pat dry with paper towels.

In a small bowl, mix together the cream cheese, chives and paprika. Cut each slice of prosciutto in half crossways, then fold each half lengthways to a width of about 4cm. Spread 1½ teaspoons of the seasoned cream cheese onto the folded ham, then gather together three asparagus spears and wrap the ham, cheese side in, around them, securing them in a small 'bunch'. Repeat with the remaining asparagus, prosciutto and cheese mixture to create 12 'bunches' in all.

Arrange on a platter, garnish with chives and flowers and serve right away.



WIN A COPY OF TEA AT THE PALACE

For your chance to win a copy of Tea at the Palace, please email your name, address and telephone number to:

dawn@conservationnews.co.uk

Closing date: Friday, 27th May 2022

Recipes taken from Tea at the Palace by Carolyn Robb, £14.99
White Lion Publishing. Photography John Kernick.

YOU WILL NEED

4 rhubarb stalks
3 tablespoons water

50g caster sugar

4 large sheets filo
pastry, thawed
according to package
directions if frozen

Flour, for dusting

3 tablespoons butter,
melted

FOR THE MOUSSE

300g white chocolate,
chopped

250g Greek yogurt

1 teaspoon pure vanilla
extract

FOR THE DECORATION

12 raspberries

12 small white edible
flowers, such as
chamomile

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4). Place twelve 7.5cm fluted round tartlet moulds or a 12-cup standard muffin tin on a baking tray.

To prepare the rhubarb, trim off both ends of each stalk. If the stalks seem fibrous, peel them. (Rhubarb at the height of the season is usually tender enough not to need peeling.) Cut the stalks on the diagonal into 2.5cm lengths. The pieces will have a lozenge shape. Transfer the pieces to a baking dish just large enough to hold them in a single layer. Add the water to the dish and then sprinkle the sugar over the rhubarb. Cover the dish with aluminium foil.

Bake the rhubarb for about 15 minutes until tender when pierced with a fork. Remove from the oven, uncover and leave to cool completely.

To make the tartlets, lay a filo sheet on a lightly floured work surface, keeping the other sheets covered with cling film to prevent them from drying out. Lightly brush the entire sheet with some of the butter. Lay a second sheet on top, then lightly brush the top sheet with butter. Cut the layered sheets into six 13cm squares. Line six of the tartlet moulds with a filo square, pressing the filo down firmly onto the base. Trim the edges where necessary so the pastry does not extend above the rim. Repeat with the remaining two filo sheets to line the remaining six moulds.

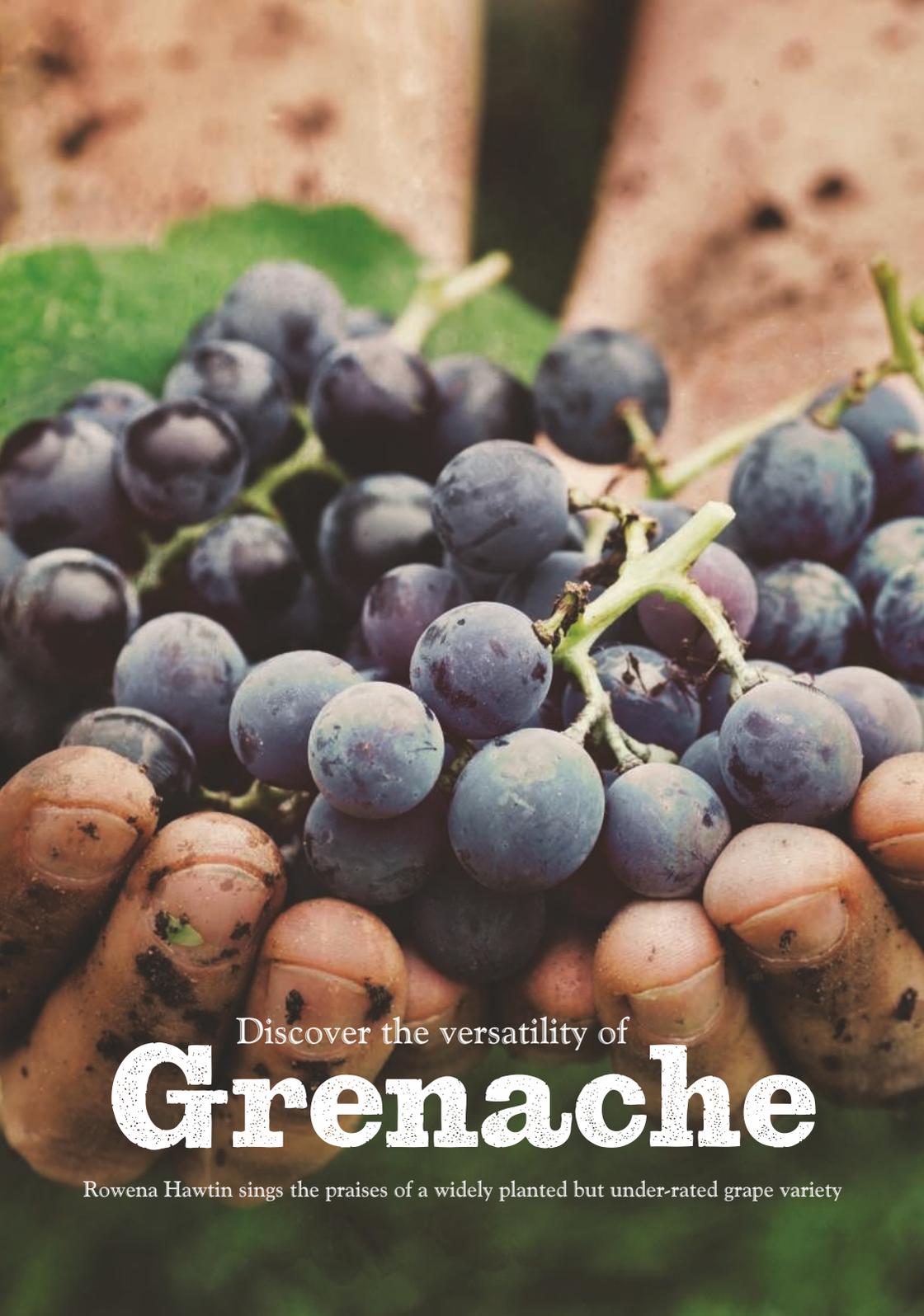
Bake the tartlet shells for 10-12 minutes until golden. Leave to cool completely on the pan on a wire rack, then carefully remove them from the moulds.

To make the mousse, put the chocolate into a heatproof medium bowl over (not touching) barely simmering water in a saucepan and heat, stirring occasionally, until the chocolate melts and is smooth. (Alternatively, heat in a microwave.) Remove from over the heat and leave to cool. Using a balloon whisk, gradually whisk the yogurt into the chocolate. The mixture may initially curdle, but as you continue adding the yogurt, it will become smooth and thick. Whisk in the vanilla.

To finish, spoon the mousse into the tartlet shells, dividing it evenly. Drain the rhubarb well and arrange the pieces on top of each tartlet, finishing with a raspberry and a flower. Serve within a couple of hours, as the pastry softens if left longer.



In this recipe, thin, crisp gold fillo pastry shells are filled with unctuous white chocolate-vanilla mousse and topped with tart rhubarb – a heavenly marriage of crunchy, creamy and tangy.



Discover the versatility of

Grenache

Rowena Hawtin sings the praises of a widely planted but under-rated grape variety

Although best-known for producing those big red wines from the Southern Rhone such as the famous Chateau Neuf du Pape, or being a blending partner to Tempranillo in Rioja where it contributes lashings of fruit, spice and tannins, Grenache as a varietal is one of the great wine experiences with raw power that sweeps you along on an intoxicating journey.

In fact, Grenache (Spanish name Garnacha) originated in Aragon in north-east Spain, hence its synonym Tinto Aragonéz, and having a preference for warmer climates, it develops very high alcohol levels such that one glass too many and your head can start spinning before you realise its deceptive seductiveness.

But it is not a 'one size fits all' kind of wine as it makes a surprising number of different styles from lesser-known Spanish regions such as Navarra, Aragon, (which includes Calatayud, Campo de Borja and Carinena) as well further south in Castilla-La Mancha, south of Madrid.

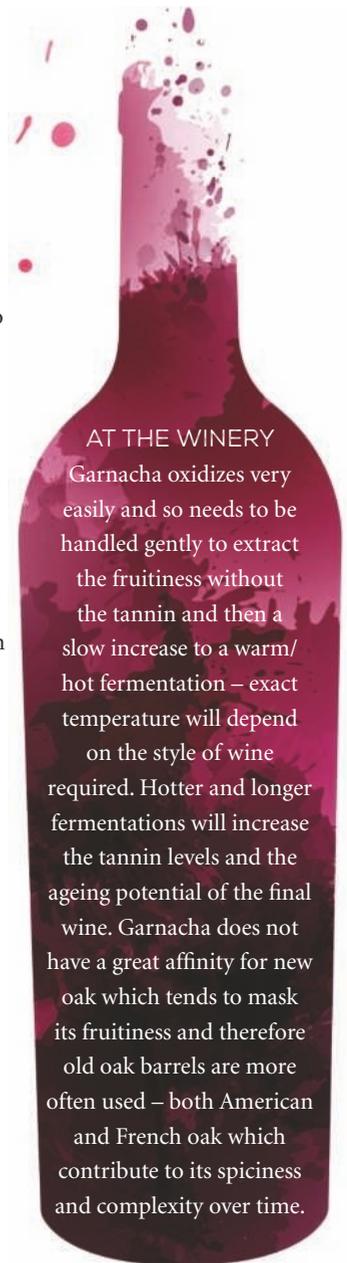
Spain has large numbers of old Garnacha bush vines, which result in wines that are more concentrated than those from younger vines as the yields are much lower. These regions produce wine with a range of quality levels, with the higher quality wines having great ageing potential. Often grown at high altitude which slows down ripening, they tend to be more delicate in flavour than those from the lower plains, with

raspberry and red plum fruit rather than black fruit, with subtle notes of oak.

Raul Acha in early 2000 recognised the potential of the grape and led a project aimed at protecting these old vines and demonstrating to the world what fantastic wine can be produced from this amazing variety.

CLIMATE

Garnacha is a grape that survives drought well, so it's not surprising that it is planted in some of the driest places in the world such as Australia and Southern France as well as Spain. Being late ripening, it loves sunshine and warmth and in fact will not ripen at all in a cool climate so it's very unlikely that England will be planting Garnacha for the foreseeable future. It typically reaches very high sugar levels, which in turn gives wine with high alcohol levels, and therefore management in the vineyard is key as it can easily reach alcohol levels of 16% ABV, which is getting on for the strength of fortified wine.



AT THE WINERY

Garnacha oxidizes very easily and so needs to be handled gently to extract the fruitiness without the tannin and then a slow increase to a warm/hot fermentation – exact temperature will depend on the style of wine required. Hotter and longer fermentations will increase the tannin levels and the ageing potential of the final wine. Garnacha does not have a great affinity for new oak which tends to mask its fruitiness and therefore old oak barrels are more often used – both American and French oak which contribute to its spiciness and complexity over time.

Here is a selection of single variety Garnacha wines which I think are especially delicious and all are available at the time of writing.

VINA ZORZAL ROSADO, NAVARRA, 2020 THE WINE SOCIETY £7.25
Vina Zorzal was founded in 1989 and is based in the Ribero Baja region of Navarra which borders Rioja. A Mediterranean climate with sun-drenched slopes overlooking the river Ebro is an ideal location for Garnacha. The wine is bright pink in colour with lovely floral notes on the nose and lashings of juicy raspberry fruit and an elegant finish. Unoaked to highlight the fruitiness in the grape – drink now.

VINA ZORZAL MALAYETO GARNACHA, NAVARRA, 2018 THE WINE SOCIETY £14.50

This wine is from a single vineyard and made from 40-year-old vines giving superb concentration. The oak is subtle to showcase the juicy black fruit notes of cherry and plum, a rich texture, full body and well-integrated tannins. Drink until 2028.

SAINSBURYS TASTE THE DIFFERENCE OLD VINE GARNACHA, £9.00

Calatayud in Aragon has a long history of growing Garnacha and this wine which is part of the Garnacha project comes from vines which are over 35 years old. The roots grow deep into the soil in search of water. Old vines give lower yields of fruit but in turn the wine they make has greater flavour concentration and this wine has it in oodles! It is full bodied, elegant and complex with plum and juicy black cherry fruit and hints of black pepper finish. The intense fruit flavours are well balanced with the fresh acidity and would go very well with barbecued meats or spicy peppers.



LA GARNACHA 2019, SALVAJE DEL MONCAYO, THE WINE SOCIETY £8.99

This wine is also from Calatayud and part of the Garnacha project detailed above. It has powerful aromas of wild berries and tobacco leaf which complement the fresh fruit and floral notes. Made in a lighter bodied style compared to the other examples here, it is an easy drinking style to be enjoyed either on its own or with picnics and barbecues. Drink now.

LA GARNATXA FOSCA 2018/19, PROJECTO GARNACHAS DE ESPANA PRIORAT, MAJESTIC £14.99

Priorat in north-east Spain is one of only two Spanish regions along with Rioja that produces wine of the higher tier DOCa. The soils are rich in slate known as 'llicorella' which helps to create these rich, complex wines and gives notes of strawberry, dried herbs, dark cherry, plum and spice. Drink until 2026.

Rowena Hawtin (Dip WSET)



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