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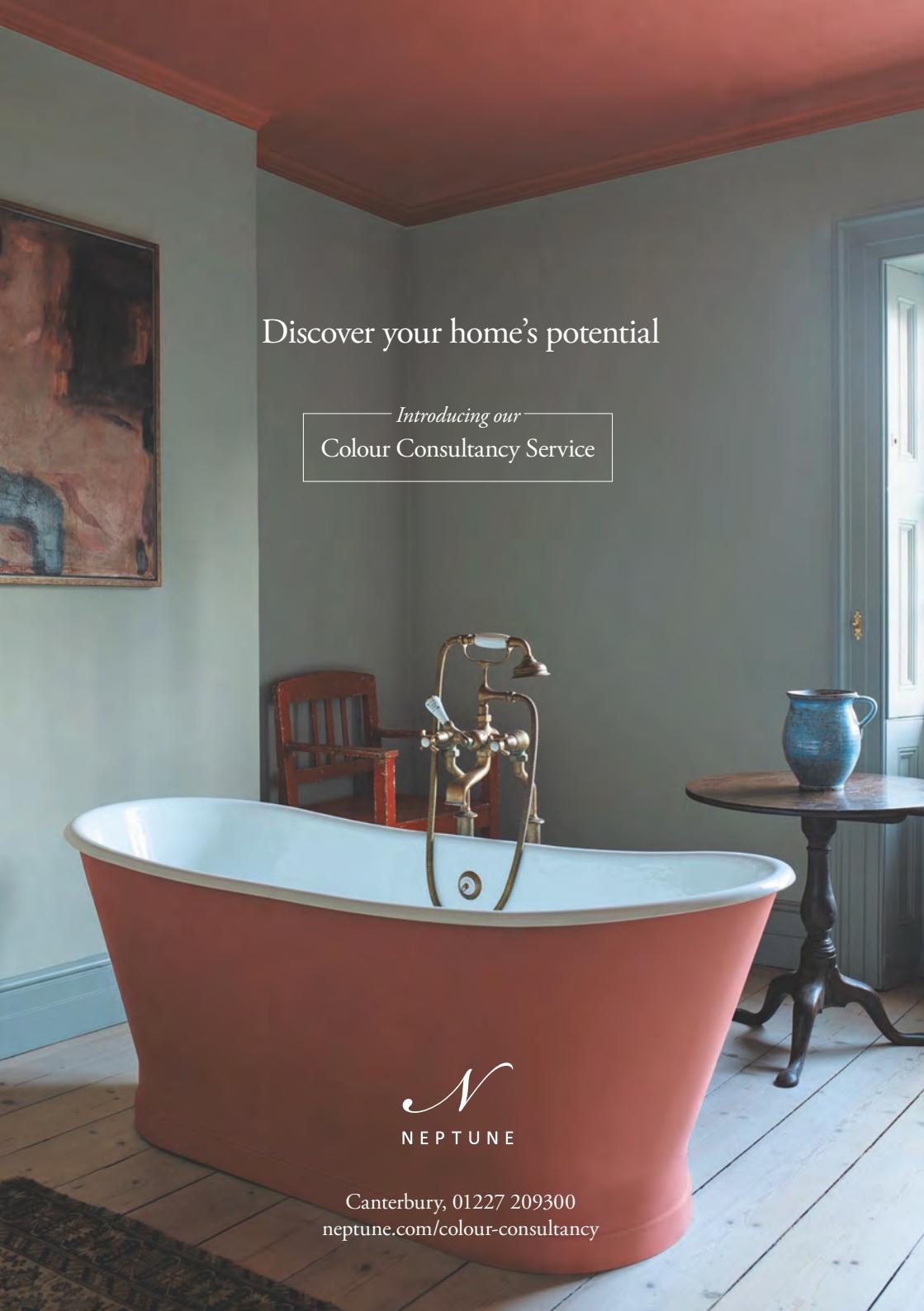


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Welcome

Spring 2023



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Competition winners from our winter issue:
Boys Hall lunch - Hannah Brown from Rainham;
The Cocktail Edit book - Alex Head from Pluckley;
Stagioni book - Anne Francis-Fisher from Maidstone

Welcome to the new edition of Conservation News. Guess what? Spring has sprung! And we're feeling the wonderful effects of the longer days.

Here in the CN office, we're gearing up for outdoor parties, long walks in the countryside and everything that Kent has to offer once blue skies appear.

Speaking of what Kent has to offer, this quarter we're going crazy for all things local, and we've got details on some of Kent's finest produce, as well as an informative piece on why it pays to support independent businesses.

Better weather means more opportunities for home improvement, and we've got great articles on sprucing up your hallway, as well as building the perfect boot room to protect your home from mud and damp during those April showers. All this plus gardening tips, local news and the lowdown on Kent's most reliable businesses for your every need – here's hoping you'll be reading this magazine in your garden while you watch the spring bulbs appear.

Dawn



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Spring 2023

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Beautiful rhododendrons

The rhododendron is coming into its prime now and looks stunning in containers. Healthy rhododendron specimens have loads of colour, supported with lush green hardy foliage. There are shades to match all tastes, from light pinks to dark reds, purples, creams and white. The rhododendron is ericaceous or acid-loving. If you don't have acid soil, plant it in generous amounts of ericaceous soil from the garden centre to give it a good start. You can also treat it to a regular ericaceous feed during the flowering season and when it finishes flowering.



START SOWING...

nectar and pollen-rich hardy annuals, such as marigolds, Californian poppies (eschscholzia) and annual poppies (papaver) in open ground. These will attract the pollinators.

Garden NOTES

Each year we look forward to spring to see the end of the dark gloomy days of winter. This is when the garden starts to wake up and the first signs of colour appear. You'll soon be caught up in a frenzy of seed sowing, growing, and nurturing your garden as it comes back to life.



Bluebell walk 2023

Help raise funds for the Heart of Kent Hospice by signing up to the annual 'Bluebell Walk' which will take place this year on Sunday 30th April 2023. The 'Bluebell Walk' attracted 1,500 walkers in previous years and we hope many more will sign up to take part this year and make it the best walk yet! The annual event sees walkers of all ages enjoy a ramble through the Kent countryside while enjoying the beautiful bluebell vistas. If you have any questions about the Bluebell Walk email events@hokh.co.uk or calling the Events team on 01622 790195. www.hokh.org/support-us/events/bluebell-walk-2023/.



LOOKING GOOD NOW

Myosotis 'Forget-me-not' During winter, forget-me-nots look like undistinguished leafy rosettes. But as spring advances, they turn into a carpet of flowers that form the perfect background to wallflowers and tulips. In borders they may be left to grow and seed themselves freely.

Polygonatum (Solomon's Seal) A member of the Liliaceae family, Solomon's Seal is usually thought of as being for a shady, of half shady spot and does well under trees or shrubs. It is largely pest and trouble free and bears clusters of nodding, tubular creamy white flowers in spring.

ORGANIC WAYS TO COMBAT PESTS

Use a pure wood ash feed: This contains potash which helps to make all parts of a plant less palatable to insects.

Rotate crops: Different crops take different elements from the soil so by rotating them it allows the soil to recover its nutrient status. These nutrients keep crops healthier, so they are better able to shrug off pests.

Attract natural predators: Encourage natural predators like hoverflies by planting nectar-rich flowers to attract the adults to lay eggs in your garden.

Feed the birds: Get birds to visit your garden by feeding them throughout the year. The birds will return the favour by catching garden pests.



What to do in the kitchen garden

- Now is a good time for planting in the kitchen garden. Round and pointed cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, kohlrabi and lettuce are all available now as seedlings.
- In the middle of April, peas and mangetout are sown out as well as seed potatoes.
- In the cold frame or greenhouse early lettuces, cresses and radishes can be harvested.
- Keep on top of weed control and continue through to summer.
- Liquid feed fruit trees in pots with a balanced feed every fortnight.
- Prepare runner bean supports for sowing (in May) or planting out (in June).

Sow and sow

Now is the time to begin sowing small batches of beetroot and carrot seed, repeating every fortnight to ensure an succession of tender young roots from summer to mid-autumn.

Early direct sowings can be protected from cold weather under plastic cloches; once May is in sight they'll likely survive unprotected.





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FORGING A NEW LIFE

WE TALK TO JOEL TARR – A BLACKSMITH
AND METAL ARTIST FROM KENT

I love my job, but the route I came into it wasn't ideal. In 2005 while studying Media Production at university, my life turned upside-down when I got food poisoning. It led to chronic fatigue syndrome and perpetual nausea. All my life plans went out of the window. I felt useless to the conventional working world and had no qualifications for anything I felt capable of doing.

I trod water for years in a retail job waiting to get better, as I went from doctor to doctor looking for a cure. With only slight improvements, I realised I had to create opportunities for myself... so in 2012, with a little help from YouTube, I taught myself how to forge iron.

My natural talent was spotted in 2013 when I was scouted to take part in Monty Don's Real Craft TV series. The sink-or-swim experience proved to me that I can tackle jobs of all shapes and sizes and gave me confidence in my abilities. For me, my work isn't just my job, it's the thing that gives my life direction, as Monty Don noted 'to Joel it [blacksmithing] is everything, it's absolutely everything'.

After around 10 years I feel like I've started to find my own style, though needless to say I've had to be versatile as no two clients want the same thing. One day you're making a traditionally forged gate for a Queen Anne period listed house, the next you're making mid-century minimalist handrails.

The hardest bit of the job is when a client

knows they need a piece of ironwork, but have little idea of what they want it to look like. You have to use your judgement to design what you think would suit their property best and hope they like your proposal. I have always thought that metal bending is the easiest part of the job; it's the designing and quoting that are the hard parts. I get a lot of repeat custom, so I must be doing something right.

"For me, my work isn't just my job, it's the thing that gives my life direction".

The Arts and Crafts movement has provided a lot of inspiration to me, but I never like to simply copy existing ideas, and instead prefer to subtly blend architectural styles to create my own fingerprint. For example, I love the visual strength of industrial rivets next to gentle curves. Originality is important to me, but I always remain respectful of a client's property and never design ironwork for the look of the ironwork alone: to my mind it's always about complementing the client's property with a piece of ironwork that's unique, but stylistically appropriate.

Knowing a few basic principles of how the material moves allows me to create, with confidence, pieces I've never tried before. Unlike wood, there's no grain or knots determining the direction you've got to work in, so I can scale my knowledge up or down to create designs of all shapes and sizes to reliably get the result I want. I have, for example, made a 5-feet tall bear sculpture, but I've also made acorn key rings the size of a pound coin.



Gates, handrails and house signs have always been my main work, though I have made several animal sculptures too. Making two-dimensional work like gates is highly satisfying, but I definitely feel like another part of my brain is engaged when I make three-dimensional sculptures.

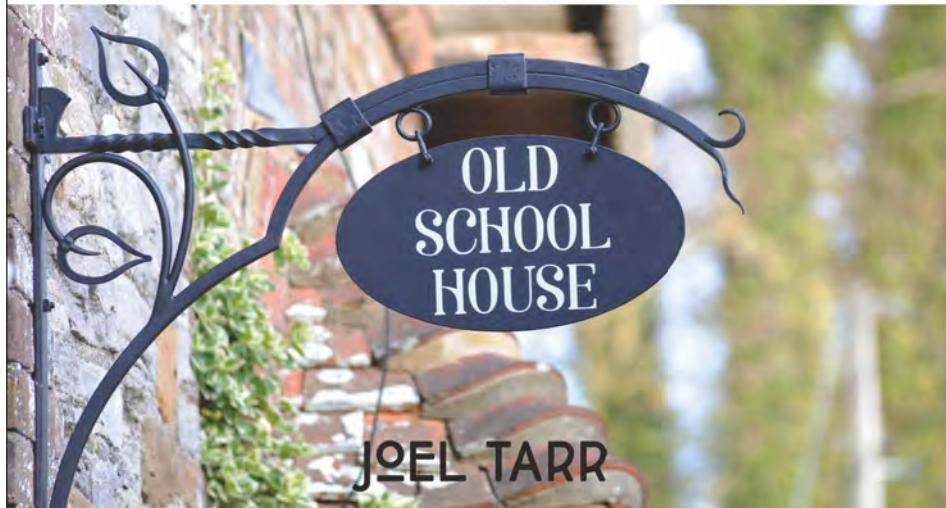
The variety of the craft keeps me entertained and on my game, as even the simplest of jobs have nuances to catch you out – water pipes where a handrail post would naturally go, sloping driveways that mean a gate has to open in a certain way, crumbly old brickwork that's not strong enough to support a gate hinge.

It's not easy building a business from scratch when you're learning on the job and have a health condition to hinder you, but I've worked hard to build a solid portfolio of work that clearly



demonstrates my skills to new clients. Nowadays I'm lucky that most of my work comes from recommendations and word of mouth, so it's always personally and professionally satisfying when someone rings saying they've seen my work and want me to make them something, because there's no boundary between me and my work. *To find out more, contact Joel on 07714 631202 or visit www.joeltarr.co.uk.*

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WILD ABOUT garden ponds



NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL, ADDING A POND TO YOUR GARDEN WILL PROVE INVALUABLE FOR WILDLIFE.

A pond is an attractive addition to any garden and, with careful thought about its design and construction, can be a haven for local wildlife. During the last one hundred, over 50 percent of ponds have been lost from the UK countryside, meaning garden ponds and water features now play an increasingly important role.

DO I NEED TO ADD THE WILDLIFE? Wildlife tends to find a new pond surprisingly quickly. Pond skaters and diving beetles usually arrive within a few days or weeks, and amphibians could be on the scene within the year. Tempting as it is to move frogspawn, pond sediment or even pond water from one pond to another this is not a good idea.



Depending on the size of your pond you can expect to see anything from frogs, toads and newts to waterfowl, including mallard ducks, and moorhens.

DESIGNING YOUR POND

Try to incorporate at least one side of the pond with a long, shallow slope to allow easy access for wildlife. In general, the larger the pond the more wildlife you can expect to attract. But even a mini pond will provide a habitat and water source for wildlife.

Try to incorporate some shade over part of your pond as it will help reduce build up of algae. Try to ensure that part of the pond is in full sun which will make it more attractive to spawning frogs and toads.

ADJACENT HABITAT

A pond doesn't just work in isolation – it is part of a network of habitats. It's a good idea to let grass grow along one edge of the pond, or perhaps grow some shrubs at one side. Keep at least one section of the pond perimeter open and sunny.

FISH

Don't put fish in your pond if you want to attract wildlife, they will eat all the insects before you can even get started attracting other species and their waste can cause water quality problems. If you have inherited a pond with lots of fish, see if you can find them a new home in a fish pond or, if that's not possible, why not make a new pond elsewhere in the garden.

Managing your pond for wildlife

TOPPING UP

Don't be too hasty to top up your pond in dry weather. Seasonal ponds are more natural, filling up in winter and occasionally drying out in summer. This can favour certain animals such as newts which can survive in the mud. Where additional water needs to be added try to use rainwater. Use tap water as a last resort.

WEED AND ALGAE CONTROL

Extensive open water is not essential for a good wildlife pond; most creatures prefer an underwater maze of plants. If you do need to do some removal don't remove too much at once.

SILTING UP

If sediment removal is necessary do this in early autumn and try to remove only half at a time in order to minimise the loss of mud-dwelling creatures and their habitat.

CUTTING BACK

If you have allowed grass to grow long along one edge of the pond, strim and mow it in late autumn after young amphibians have had a chance to escape. And delay cutting back marginals until late winter to help give maximum protection.

REMOVING LEAVES

Don't worry if a few leaves fall into your pond as there is little evidence this is bad for pondlife. However, if it is excessive, fish out with a net before they sink to the bottom.

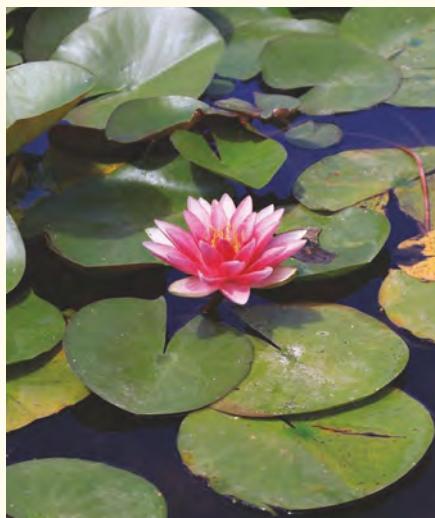
FOUNTAINS

Consider adding a fountain, as this will help to attract birds and frogs. Some have pumps that will help aerate the water or choose a solar design that floats on the surface. If you are installing a pump, make sure it has an integrated wildlife protection system in place.

Which plants should I choose?

Water plants are not just for decoration – they play an important role in maintaining water quality and balance. Firstly, keep the plants you choose in check; pond plants can very quickly take over, so don't plant too many at the beginning.

OFFER SHELTER WITH LILIES



Surface-leaved plants, such as waterlilies help to prevent algae and offer shelter for wildlife. Hardy waterlilies (*Nymphaea*) are known as deep-water aquatics. They have floating leaves and flowers, some of which stand proud of the water.

Choose good-quality, hardy lilies that have been stored in aquatic baskets. Also, make sure the rhizome (root stem) is hard to the touch and there are roots emerging from the sides.

Look for signs of root growth outside the aquatic pot, which indicates the plant has been grown correctly in the proper container and not just recently potted up.

OXYGENATORS

Oxygenators grow quickly and help to maintain a healthy nitrate level in your pond. The foliage of oxygenators is fully submerged, which means they absorb carbon dioxide during daylight hours and release oxygen into the water.

They're usually sold in bunches tied at one end with a small weight. If you prefer, you can plant them into aquatic baskets topped with gravel. Oxygenators such as hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) or water starwort (*Callitrichia autumnalis*) give tadpoles and other larvae plenty of underwater cover from predators.

MARGINALS

Marginal plants are those that grow around the shallower edges of the pond, and can tolerate waterlogged soil or having their crown submerged all year. Good examples include lesser spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) to attract bees and hoverflies in summer.

FLOATING PLANTS

Floating plants provide valuable cover and protection for ponds. They cut down sunlight and help prevent green algae growth and blanket weed problems. Two thirds of your pond should have floating, submerged and oxygenating plants.

PRE-PLANTED COIR LOGS OR MATS

Some suppliers offer coir logs or mats pre-planted with native pond plants such as soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*). These are great for anchoring to bare margins of new wildlife ponds or even stream or river banks if your garden happens to back onto these.







Newnham Court Shopping Village

There's something for everyone at Newnham Court Shopping Village. Stress-free out of town shopping bursting with quality home and garden inspiration and FREE parking!

Longer, lighter days means that it's the perfect time to nurture our gardens back to their full glory and injecting new life into our homes.

Bring the outside in with a Fineline conservatory, orangery or replacement windows and doors. With expert advice visit their large show area outside and displays inside the main centre for inspiration. There's also Johnsons Garden Rooms and Hot Tubs, an expansive range of buildings in a variety of sizes and styles, all fully furnished to let your imagination run wild.

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If it's outdoor inspiration that you're looking for then Notcutts experts are always on hand to give you friendly advice whether you have a small patio or large garden. There's tools, plants, seeds, ornaments, garden furniture and gifts. They also have a fabulous display of BBQ's and with a visit to The Butcher of Brogdale for some mouth-watering quality meats you'll be set to go!

For anyone with mobility issues, life is not always easy but assisted living solutions provided by Charterwood Mobility and AHM Installations specialists can really transform quality of life inside and outside the home. Visitors to Newnham Court Shopping Village are also able to book the use of a wheelchair or powered scooter as part of the free shopmobility scheme to help get around the shops.

Now in its fortieth year, Newnham Court Shopping Village is open every day and offers a superb range of businesses, services and shops, coffee shop and restaurant. There's quality brands and a fantastic experience for all the family on one convenient level with plenty of free parking. Just off junction 7 of the M20, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5LH.

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Make a beautiful Spring wreath

From spring planters to summer floral crowns and autumn vase arrangements to winter wreaths; life is better with flowers all year round. With clear, step-by-step instructions, expert florist Ashlee Jane leads you through her inspirational ideas for floral designs to bring the calming presence of flowers and foliage into your home.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 30-cm (12-in) wreath base (this could be a wire base, rattan base, or one you've created yourself from pliable branches such as clematis vine or willow)
- mossing wire or twine
- sphagnum moss
- water vials
- 3 muscari bulbs
- 2 hyacinth bulbs
- 1 small white primrose plant
- 1 small white pansy plant
- 10 fritillaria
- 3 double white tulips
- 4 daffodil 'Paperwhite'
- 6 hellebores
- 1 bunch olive stems
- 1 bunch pittosporum
- $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch rosemary
- 6 pussy willow stems
- 2 contorted willow branches
- 3 blossom stems
- a handful of blown quail's eggs
- glue gun (optional)

METHOD

- Attach the wire or twine to the wreath base. If you're using a wire frame (as I have), it's a good idea to create a zig zag pattern with the wire or twine to make a base for the sphagnum moss to sit on.
- Add a chunky layer of sphagnum moss to the wreath base and secure it by taking the wire over and under the frame the whole way around. Keep the wire attached to the wreath.
- Separate the bulbs, shake off any compost



and run the roots under a tepid tap to remove any remaining compost. Lay the bulbs onto the wreath in a formation you're happy with. Keep in mind that the bulbs may grow taller, so consider the height they will grow to when positioning them.

- Meander the wire around the tapered point of the bulbs – you may need to lift some of the foliage to avoid damage. Take your time and ensure they are secure. Once they're all attached, leave the wire attached to the wreath.
- Wrap the bases of the primrose and pansy plants in a little damp sphagnum moss and attach to the wreath base using the wire.
- Fill the water vials two-thirds full with fresh, tepid water and place the lids back on. Choose the flowers you'd like to add to your wreath and gently push the stems into the vials. You can insert more than one stem into each vial at varying heights – if you need to make the hole in the lid a little bigger, simply cut a small slit.
- Position the flowers on top of the wreath base, filling in the gaps between the bulbs and plants. Cover the vials with a little sphagnum moss and then use the wire to secure.
- Once all of the flowers, bulbs and plants are secure, fill any gaps with the foliage. Cut the foliage down to lengths of around 15–20cm (6–8in) and insert the stems directly into the wreath base at a slight angle.
- Stand back and check you are happy with the shape and fullness, making any adjustments as necessary. Cut the pussy willow and contorted willow branches down to the desired size and insert into the sphagnum moss at an angle in the same direction as the foliage.



- To attach the quail's eggs you can either use a glue gun, or wire them like I have here. Simply poke the wire carefully through the egg, bring the lengths of wire down, twist them around each other as close to the egg as possible and then insert the lengths of wire into the wreath base.
- Finally, attach a length of twine to the top of the wreath for hanging.
- Generously spritz the back of the wreath directly onto the sphagnum moss every 2–3 days to keep the foliage hydrated and the bulbs growing. The water vials can be topped up using a long-spouted watering can. Once the flowers have gone over, they can easily be removed and replaced with fresh flowers

TOP TIPS

- This is a messy wreath to make, so give yourself plenty of room and have the compost bin close by so you can tidy as you're working.
- I prefer to work in a clockwise direction around the wreath and insert the stem sat an angle to create a circular shape accordingly.



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Debbie Fairbrass is a Kent-based artist, specialising in decorative arts using copper and cold porcelain along with gold leaf and oil paints. She lives in a little cottage in the country with her husband and young family, surrounded by wildlife, birds, fruit trees and beautiful English countryside, with each day bringing new inspiration. Some of her favourite things are the early morning sunlight, foraging wild flowers to make bouquets and wildling wreaths, visiting old castles and antique bookstores and home baking with fruit from her garden.

One of the many reasons she loves working with copper is its ability to transform over time, from a glossy bright auburn to a deep ochre or the vivid green patina that comes with weathering and age. Like a long lost treasure uncovered after years of being forgotten, copper only seems to become more beautiful with time.





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A warm welcome

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR HALLWAY

You don't get a second chance to make a first impression, so getting your hallway décor spot-on is really important. However, because they are often small, dark, awkwardly shaped or simply too well-used, hallways often get neglected when it comes to design.

We come in from a long day and drop shoes and keys or pile up dog leads in our eagerness to settle down or tend to the rest of the house, and the hallway becomes a sort of dumping ground. Hallways deserve more of our attention, so we've put together some top tips to get you inspired to give your space an update.

Making it 'life proof'

From kids to dogs to guests, the hallway sees a lot of traffic so making your walls and floors hardy and easy to clean is the number one priority.

This makes tiles ideal: not only are they a practical flooring choice for hallways (they're easy to clean, hide dirt and scuffs, and are ideal for high traffic areas) they can be very attractive. Give a traditional Victorian floor a modern twist by opting for monochrome and keep the rest of the space really simple so the flooring doesn't feel too busy.

For walls, it can be worth experimenting with darker colours. Yes, the hallway is often small and dark, especially in period homes, but there are other ways to bring light into the area (more on that later) and dark colours can hide a multitude of sins. If you really don't want too much dark paint in the hallway, consider installing a dado rail and painting dark colours below it, with lighter colours above (we recommend putting the rail at muddy dog height!).

As for what paint you use: a good quality, wipe-down paint is the best bet. It's all very well plumping for that gorgeous suede-effect paint or designer wallpaper, but when you're trying to wipe off the mud from your latest gardening exploits, you may come to regret it.

Let there be light!

How do you bring light back into the hallway if you're using darker paint or tiles?

First of all, you don't need to rely on just your



Neptune.com

ceiling light – wall sconces look gorgeous when mixed with simple vintage décor, while halls without room for a table can benefit from a standard lamp. You can make lighting the main feature of your hallway, with a bold statement floor-lamp or ornate ceiling light.

Another way to add light is with mirrors. A large one placed to reflect light from windows or the front door will flood the area with light and make it seem bigger. (Not to mention it's great for last-minute hair touch-ups before hitting the town!)

Add a console table

A console table is the perfect addition to a hallway as it allows you to display fresh flowers from the garden, your favourite sculpture that you want your guests to see, or a seasonal arrangement to mark the passing of the seasons. Make sure the table has a drawer or cupboard compartment and you'll have somewhere easily accessible to pop your keys or wallet so they don't clutter the area.



Dunelm



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Add a feature wall

If you are decorating a narrow hallway, or you are otherwise squeezed for space, feature walls are a great way to add plenty of personality without taking up any square footage. It can simply be one that's painted a different

colour, but why not make it more personal?

Get your kids' drawings professionally framed and labelled as if the hall were an art gallery, or print out landscape photos from your favourite holidays to create a timeline of your family adventures.

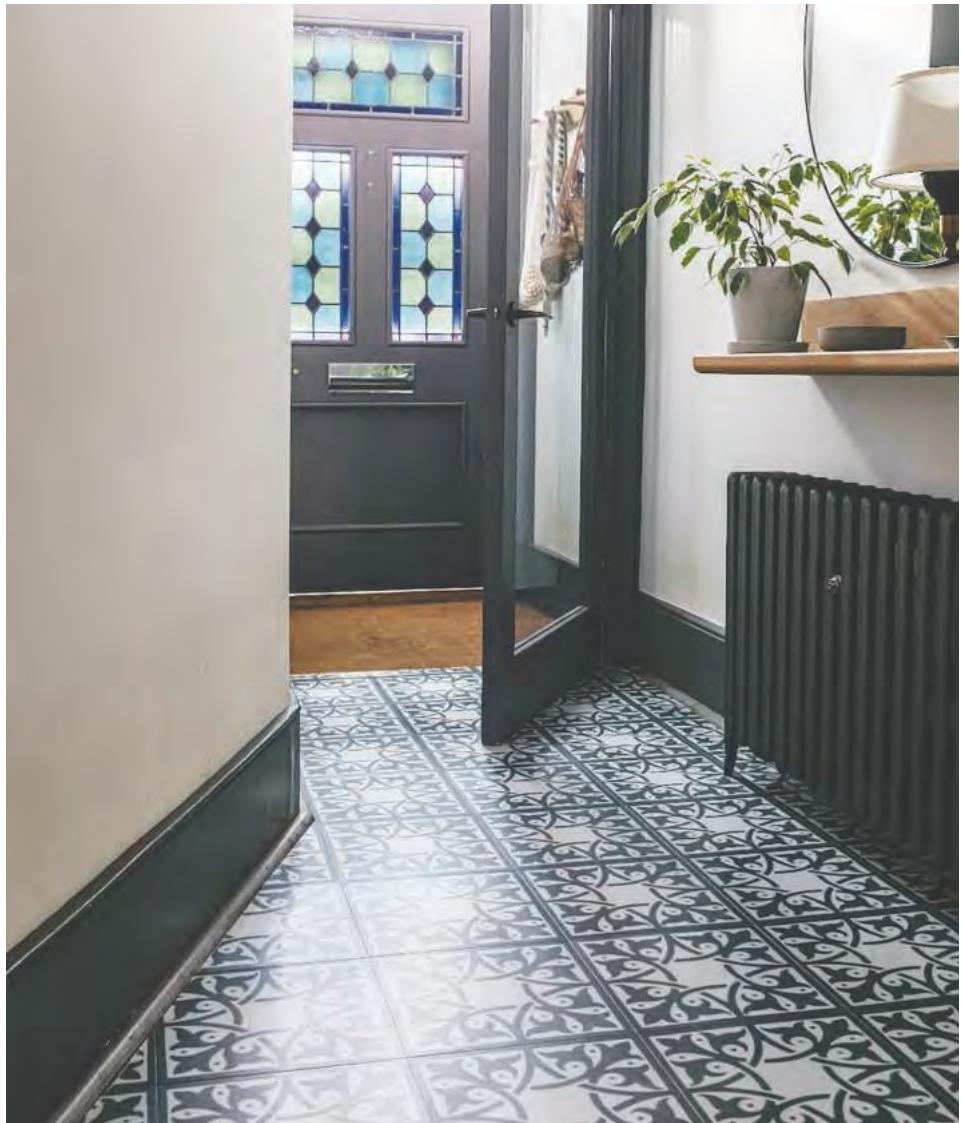


Make use of storage space

The space under the stairs is prime real estate for storage, but don't let it become just a dumping ground for shoes and bags, make it part of the design. If you need to use it for less aesthetically-pleasing items like shoes and umbrellas, opt for built-in closed storage that fits seamlessly into the space. You could make it a feature by wallpapering or painting the doors. If you have shoe storage elsewhere, why

not go for a beautiful bookcase? Display books, candles, plants and more to turn that boring space into a real feature.

If your hallway is really tight then use a wall-mounted shelf to save space. Make sure it's thoroughly secured to stop it toppling and try to find one with rounded corners in case of bumps. Hallways can be busy spaces, particularly in family homes, so making sure it's robust is a must.



Harvey Maria check slate, De Witts

Use rugs not carpet

Carpets aren't practical for a hallway, but you can add some softness underfoot by throwing down a rug. A single runner is great for lengthening a narrow room or go for a few shorter mismatching rugs dotted along the space for a more laid-back look.

Rugs can add a splash of colour and personality to a plain hallway, are easy to wash (if you get the right ones) and cheaper to replace than carpet. They can be easily stored so you can have several and swap them around for a different look each season.



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OPEN SHELVING

IN THE KITCHEN, MORE AND MORE OF US ARE CHOOSING TO USE OPEN SHELVING TO PUT OUR CUTE AND QUIRKY MUGS, PLATES AND DINNERWARE ON SHOW RATHER THAN KEEPING THEM OUT OF SIGHT IN CUPBOARDS.



It's fair to say that kitchens are opening up, with a kitchen open shelf in more demand. Modern kitchen design is moving away from ceiling high kitchen cabinets and enclosed spaces. They make kitchens feel cramped. Simply placing a floating shelf in place of an upper cabinet can change the dynamics and create a feeling of more space. There is an appearance of more light, and a kitchen shelf can do a great job of breaking lines.

Open kitchen shelves essentially have two different purposes. They can be purely decorative...placing

Image: Dunelm

carefully selected kitchen items to deliver a certain image, or they can be functional. Basically, anything you would have placed in a closed cabinets is on display on the shelf. Generally, commonly used items like dishware are perfect for a shelving unit as they offer easy access.

They give a feeling of space, especially in a small kitchen, and are very functional with their open storage and flexibility in kitchen storage. They will remain in style and are here to stay, regardless of whether you have a rustic kitchen, farmhouse kitchen or a more contemporary kitchen.

A great aesthetic benefit of open shelving is that it presents the opportunity to introduce new textures and materials into your scheme.

Wood-effect kitchen shelves are the most popular option as the warming tones complement classic farmhouse style kitchens and add a warm, rustic touch to modern designs. However, if you're opting for a modern kitchen style, you could opt for a metallic finish for your kitchen shelves.

Open shelves are much cheaper than cabinets. When you compare the cost of a shelf against a cabinet unit, the cupboard doors and fittings, you see that there is a big difference. A wood shelf in

comparison is cheap and more flexible.

Aside from the cost aspects, the functional benefits are many. This is why open shelving on a wall cannot be considered a fad or a passing trend. From a design perspective, they work well too.

DESIGN TIPS

Arrange objects in a range of sizes and shapes for added interest. If you're worried that a long run of shelving will look untidy, separate the shelf into sections by placing items in groups of three or five.

Image: Allisa Jacobs





Image: The National Trust

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CREATING A BOOT ROOM

One of the latest and biggest design trends, a boot room is an extremely practical space, created to house muddy boots and wet coats as well as to hose down mucky pups, both those with fur and those without!

Similar to utility rooms, boot rooms tend to be less about laundry and more about stopping muddy foot and paw prints entering the house – but really can be any space you can dedicate to connecting your home to the outdoors.

The boot room ideas we've collected below should help you maximise your storage, curb the clutter and keep your home clean and pristine.

What exactly is a boot room?

A boot room is a space that connects the outside to the inside, and should ideally be accessed directly from the front, side or back of your home. It is a dedicated space to take off boots, shoes and coats before entering the house, as well as a place to store them all. Often a boot room doubles as utility space, too, or it could be an extended porch.

What if you don't have a usable porch or other dedicated room?

If you've no space for an entire room for coats and boots, how about turning a corner of your hallway or utility

room into a mini boot room? A peg rail hung on the wall will provide ample space for coats and jackets, while boots can be neatly lined up besides free-standing storage. If you have dogs that regularly need walking, create a little 'station' with all the things you'll need such as leads, treats and balls, all stored in easy-to-access baskets.

An alcove in a kitchen, hallway or utility room can be quickly turned into the perfect place to store boots and coats by building a floor-to-ceiling cupboard. While open shelves are often the most popular choice for alcoves, a cupboard with doors means you can hide muddy boots and old coats from sight. Fix a rail inside your cupboard to hang coats on hangers and keep boots on a rack so they can be stored upside down. This will prevent muddy puddles forming.

Making the most of the space

Boot rooms don't tend to be particularly spacious, so storage is essential. To maximise space, consider made-to-measure units. Going for



Hush Kitchens



SELECT STATEMENT BOOT ROOM FLOORING

A stone floor might be the default option for a country-style room but luxury vinyl tiles in an on-trend pattern are ideal for giving a hall or kitchen with an adjacent boot room a contemporary feel.

Photo: Harvey Maria, De Witt Flooring

made-to-measure cupboards and seating means you'll have a space for everything – plus the kitchen sink (a sink is a really handy thing to have in a boot room!) and you won't be trying to shoe-horn your things into off-the-peg units. This ensures you maximise space and don't waste money on storage that doesn't work for your home.

If your boot room is blessed with high ceilings, maximise the full storage potential by taking a vertical approach to cabinetry. Fitting overhead cupboards above a seating area is an efficient solution for items that aren't used daily.

As you'll potentially be putting on walking gear, or towelling-off pets, it's a really good idea to have some seating in your boot room. Not only can you add storage above it, but you can also opt for a seat with built-in storage for yet more space-saving.

Keep it simple

Don't overcrowd a small space: just have the essentials and maybe a few houseplants. Pack away anything you don't use often and keep shoes, boots and coats that you wear most days easily accessible.



The Cotswold Company



dormyhouse.com

Stop your boot room becoming a dumping ground for all sorts of sporting attire, footwear and seasonal clothing by meticulously plotting storage provisions using the tips above. Think carefully about what you are storing and ensure every item has a home. Don't forget smaller items like gloves and torches, which are easier to locate in dedicated drawers.

Factor in a small heater or radiator. If you're constantly drying things in the boot room, you'll need a little heat in winter, plus adequate ventilation to prevent condensation.

Consider your décor

Boot rooms are most often positioned next to a kitchen, so it makes sense to replicate the same colours and designs for a seamless transition.

However, if you are wanting to have some fun, these rooms make great spaces in which to experiment with colour. Perhaps you have a favourite colour or shade, or feel like trying something bold but don't want to do it in your main kitchen area? Well, this is the room to try it in.



Sims Hilditch

If your boot room is part of another room, then you can either blend the décor to make it as unobtrusive as possible or make a feature of it with contrasting colours and even faux dividers.

Create a puppy parlour

It might seem a bit extreme, but a dog shower can make a lot of sense. If you're fed up with your pooch traipsing mud through the house after their walk, or are done with having to wrestle them upstairs to the bath, then a dog

shower could be the answer.

Failing that, a sink is a welcome addition to a boot room and can help with muddy paws. Make sure you have lots of storage space for towels and use your boot room for brushing coats and clipping claws, as well to take all the mess away from the main house. If your boot room is sizable you can even make it a cosy haven for dogs, with food bowls, beds and toys to encourage your pet to stay in there until he's fully dry.

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Vale Garden Houses

Should you add a CONSERVATORY?

IN THIS WRITER'S OPINION: YES! ADDING AN EXTRA ROOM TO YOUR PROPERTY CAN DO WONDERS FOR ITS MARKET VALUE AND CREATE EXTRA SPACE FOR YOUR FAMILY.

This is especially true of period homes because it's usually not possible to add an extension. However, whatever age your home; a conservatory or orangery will really give it the wow factor.

DESIGN

In recent years the traditional conservatory

(defined as one with walls made entirely of glass) has been overtaken in popularity by orangeries, which have walls built partially of hardwood or stone, and garden rooms, which have a tiled roof. This is mostly to do with efficiency: elevations with partially solid sides help retain the heat in winter, whilst tiled roofs



Vale Garden Houses

keep out the glaring sun in summer.

Of course efficiency is all well and good, but the difference is small enough that you shouldn't let such concerns about efficiency sway your personal preference.

Not only do you have a range of choices with regards to design, but you can also afford to be picky when it comes to material. The standard for conservatories is UPVC, which is cheaper than wood and extremely durable but, thanks to modern manufacturing methods, UPVC can also be extremely attractive if designed and fitted by an expert. Of course it's difficult to make UPVC fit with a period home.

Whatever age your home; a conservatory or orangery will really give it the wow factor.

The initial outlay involved in achieving a look that is sympathetic to your historic home is usually more with older houses, but the benefits make it well worth the investment.

A good rule of thumb is that any brick work should be in keeping with the existing property and it should be possible for your contractor to match the existing brickwork quite closely. If you don't fancy brick, then a good quality

hardwood can be absolutely stunning, evoking the grand style of the earliest orangeries, first made popular in 17th century Italy.

Advances in technology during the

Renaissance had allowed for the creation of large panels of clear glass, which enabled the wealthy to cultivate exotic plants that would otherwise struggle to thrive in Europe (such as oranges of course, hence the name). Traditional orangeries tended to be quite ornate, as they were a symbol of wealth and power. Although you may not want to go as far as putting a water fountain in yours, most modern orangeries take their cue from their predecessors and provide shelter for entertaining in inclement weather.

DÉCOR

It's important therefore, to consider the décor in your conservatory (a word I shall use as a blanket term for all such buildings from now on) just as carefully as you would any other room in the house.

Although the predominance of glass in traditional conservatories can be limiting due

to a lack of 'proper' wall space, conservatories are extremely versatile when it comes to fabrics, paints and ornamentation. This is particularly the case when it comes to fitting blinds or curtains, as a plain, neutral fabric can be dressed according to changing trends, by adding tie backs or small flourishes.

Whether you keep decoration minimal and put the focus on your exotic plants (orchids are particularly happy in conservatories as long as they're kept sufficiently heated during the winter), or embrace the latest trends with aplomb (a cottagecore conservatory blends indoor and outdoor most seamlessly), you should first consider the intended use of the space.

Is it purely for entertaining? Is it a peaceful haven away from the chaos of the main house? Will it be a children's playroom? Or perhaps a hobby room for one or more household members?



David Salisbury



Above: Acorn Glassline

Below: Vale Garden Houses





David Salisbury

SPACE SAVERS

Whatever the case, you'll undoubtedly want to maximise the given space, and this is where careful planning comes in.

The wall space that's missing in a glass room can be found on the wall of the house itself (the wall onto which the conservatory is built), but if you have large or French doors leading from the house then this space may also be minimal – making it difficult to fit shelves or place larger cabinets etc. In this case consider making the North facing wall of the conservatory solid. This leaves you with all the sunshine afforded by a South facing elevation, but also gives you a full wall for much needed storage.

Also good for space saving are bi-fold doors. These doors can come in as many as six parts depending upon your requirements. Usually made of aluminium, bi folding doors come in a variety of finishes, including wood effect, helping them to blend seamlessly into the surrounding architecture. Long lasting and lightweight, bi folding doors are the ideal solution for those with limited space as they can fold away to within inches of the frame giving you a feeling of light and spaciousness.

Extra space, increased market value and a wonderful way to bring the garden into your home: conservatories are a beautiful and functional addition to any home.



Above: The Window Sanctuary

Below: westburygardenrooms.com





Gary Miller
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STEPPING OUT

A round up of what's going on in Kent this spring.

18TH & 19TH MARCH

Mother's Day Weekend, Hever Castle

Spoil mum on Mother's Day weekend with a memorable family day out. Treat her to a delicious meal or simply enjoy quality time together in the Castle and Gardens.

www.hevercastle.co.uk

19TH MARCH

Mother's Day, Kent & East Sussex Railway

Travel aboard the special Mothers' Day steam trains for a journey the entire family will enjoy! Choose from a Ploughman's Lunch or a Cream Tea served at your seat in the comfort of our heritage carriages. Your train will travel through the beautiful Rother Valley from the historic Market town of Tenterden to the pretty country station at Bodiam.

www.kesr.org.uk



19TH MARCH

Mother's Day, Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway

Treat mum this Mother's Day, not only will she be able to take a seat and travel along the line being pulled by a world famous steam locomotive but she will also get the chance to drive the train. www.rhdr.org.uk

25TH MARCH

Live and Let Dine, Leeds Castle

Get ready to be transported right into a classic Bond action scene. Throughout the night you will be front and centre as the action unfolds, whilst eating delicious food and savouring themed cocktails, all whilst wearing your best. From £125 per person.

www.leeds-castle.com

27TH MARCH

Spring Wreath Workshop, Belmont House

This two hour workshop is the perfect opportunity to craft a handmade, everlasting wreath with Nancy, Box & Bloom. Nancy will take you through the steps to attach a gorgeous selection of dried foliage and flowers to your wreath ring, helping you to create a stunning hanging wreath, or table centre. £60 per person.

www.belmont-house.org

1ST APRIL

Easter Egg Hunt, Sissinghurst Castle

Hop, skip and jump your way round our fun family Easter egg hunt, with seasonal games and interactive activities along the way. Don't forget to pick up your chocolate egg from the Shop when you're finished! Trails are £3 and can be purchased at Visitor Reception.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

1ST - 6TH APRIL

Easter Adventure, Dover Castle

Join in a cracking adventure quest at Dover Castle this Easter holiday. Explore the castle to hunt for clues and challenges and discover traditional Easter games like egg rolling and the egg and spoon race. Track down the Easter eggs and you'll be rewarded with an adventurer's certificate and a tasty chocolate treat. www.english-heritage.org.uk

1ST - 16TH APRIL

Easter at Leeds Castle

Fill up on warm hot cross buns with melting butter, sneak a pinch of the Easter chocolate, and pop on your scarf, as you get ready to head to Leeds Castle to make new spring memories with the family.

www.leeds-castle.com

1ST - 16TH APRIL

Easter at The Dockyard, Chatham

Dockyard

Spring is in the air, and dozens of mystery eggs have been laid across the Dockyard. Follow their trail and solve the puzzle to gain access to the secret Kraken's Lairy.

www.thedockyard.co.uk



1ST - 16TH APRIL

Spring into Easter, Kent Life Heritage Farm Park

Celebrate Easter and the baby boom that comes with spring. Meet the Kent Life lambs and goat kids and watch a bottle-feeding demonstration. Guests can enjoy a fun farm ride and get creative in the Paint A Pot studio. From Friday 7th to Monday 10th April, the Easter Bunny will be visiting. Don't forget to catch a show in the Big Top tent too.

www.kentlife.org.uk

1ST - 19TH APRIL

Easter Family Fun, Hever Castle

Enjoy family entertainment throughout the Easter holidays including a bunny quest and free craft activities. www.hevercastle.co.uk

7TH - 10TH APRIL

Easter Escapades, Dover Castle

Join performers at Dover Castle for four days of Easter fun. There'll be plenty of opportunity for the whole family to get involved in traditional games, activities and races, along with storytelling sessions throughout the day.

www.english-heritage.org.uk

9TH APRIL

Easter Egg Hunt, Belmont House

Join the Easter fun at Belmont House. Explore the gardens and search for the wooden eggs to win a chocolate treat, then head back to the Orangery to get crafty with Easter themed activities. £6 per child, £3.50 per adult.

www.belmont-house.org

10TH APRIL

Easter Arts & Crafts Fair and Easter

Egg Hunt, Whitstable Castle

Join in the annual Easter Arts and Craft Fair in the castle's beautiful gardens. There's also an Easter Egg Trail 12-3pm (£3.50 per child) and Easter Craft Workshops (donation of £1 per child). The Orangery Tearooms will be open all day serving delicious breakfasts, lunches, cream teas etc. www.whitstablecastle.co.uk

15TH APRIL

Murder Mystery Evening,

Whitstable Castle

As soon as you enter the Castle, colourful and entertaining characters (played by professional actors) welcome you to your tables and into a fictional world of mystery and intrigue. Ticket Price £49.50 per person, includes welcome cocktail & canapes, 2 course meal and first-class entertainment. www.whitstablecastle.co.uk

17TH - 23RD APRIL

Tulip Celebrations, Hever Castle

Be uplifted by 40,000 tulip bulbs proudly standing to attention and providing a visual feast of spring colour. Free daily tours with the gardeners can be enjoyed as well as tulip floral arrangements in the Castle.

www.hevercastle.co.uk

22ND APRIL

Seasonal cooking, Neptune,

Canterbury

Join Sijmon from Macknade Food Hall on the Green Egg. Woolton Farm Winery will be offering samples to complement the food. www.neptune.com/ourstores/uk/canterbury



29TH APRIL - 1ST MAY

May Day Weekend, Hever Castle

Hever Castle's May Day Festival incorporates traditional celebrations to welcome the summer. www.hevercastle.co.uk

6TH MAY

Coronation of King Charles,

Kent Life Heritage Farm Park

Watch the Kings Coronation on a big screen in the Big Top! Sit back and relax as you drink Pimm's, devour a cream tea and take part in other Royal activities across site.

www.kentlife.org.uk

6TH - 8TH MAY

King's Coronation, Hever Castle

Celebrate the King's Coronation in the beautiful grounds of Hever Castle.

www.hevercastle.co.uk

7TH MAY

Steam Event Day,

Wormshill & Bredgar Railway

See the Steam Locos in action, pulling passenger carriages through the parkland and woodland at Bredgar Railway. The Engine

Shed and museum will be open displaying our collection of vintage tractors, locos, engines and cars as well as the hugely popular model railway. The main field showcases the visiting exhibitor engines, the resident American Aerial Ladder Fire truck as well as tractor and trailer rides. www.bwlr.co.uk

18TH - 21ST MAY

Spring Craft Fair, Hever Castle

Discover around 140 exhibitors from the UK's finest designer makers and contemporary artists at this spring craft fair based in the Kentish countryside.

www.hevercastle.co.uk

20TH MAY

How to use watercolour,

Neptune, Canterbury

Join Imogen as she guides you through the art of using water colour. You will bring a photo of your home or favourite building. For

the morning you will be provided with all the tools to create your very own masterpiece whilst sitting and relaxing with refreshments in the showroom.

www.neptune.com/ourstores/uk/canterbury

27TH MAY - 4TH JUNE

May Half Term,

Kent Life Heritage Farm Park

Get up close and personal with nature. Pop on the wellies and join the farm's resident bug hunter for a weekend of creepy crawly fun. Guests will be able to get involved in scavenger hunts, visit critter corner, attend Forest School, listen to campfire stories and so much more. www.kentlife.org.uk

27TH MAY - 4TH JUNE

Monster Crafts, Chatham Dockyard

Weigh anchor and cast your nets for some monstrously crafty fun as you create your very own Monsters of the Deep. www.thedockyard.co.uk

BREDGAR WOOD FAIR

19th & 20th August 2023

A new Wood Fair Weekend with unique demonstrations, exciting exhibits, competitions, activities and stalls. Set in the beautiful woodland and parkland in the heart of the Kent Downs.

Hosted by the Bredgar and Wormshill Light Railway in conjunction with Old English Tools, at Bredgar in Kent (ME9 8AT).

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www.bwlr.co.uk/next-open-day/



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FROM MIGHTY OAKS...

Orlestone Oak is a company with its roots deep within the Kentish woodlands from which its founders hail, in the Kent Weald near Shadoxhurst.

We've shone a spotlight on many companies in the south-east over the last few years, from stained glass makers and roofing specialists to master masons and traditional tile and brick manufacturers. All have their own fascinating stories to tell, and all have a link to period

properties in some shape or form, for instance providing vital services or products aimed at the niche audience of historic house owners or enthusiasts.

Something they all have in common is how much they value the ethics on which they run their company. It's as if by the very nature



of being involved in the 'heritage' world, the importance of doing things beautifully and correctly and with attention to how it impacts on, not just the present but the future too, is instilled into the culture of the company.

Our latest subject is no exception to this roll call:

Orlestone Oak is a company with its roots deep within the Kentish woodlands from which its founders hail, in the Kent Weald near Shadoxhurst. Well over 60 years ago, the father of Barrie Barton, the current Managing Director of Orlestone Oak, was involved in transporting timbers that were mainly props for the mining industry. Barrie became involved in the felling of trees, and the family business that started from humble beginnings has developed from there.

Some years later the company diversified by producing oak beams for the oak frame

buildings' market. The range was further extended as the business grew, becoming one of the first oak frame building companies in the country, manufacturing houses and extensions, garages, porches, gazebos and balconies.

"Jack's passion for the timber at the heart of almost everything they manufacture is evident."

This impressive range doesn't stop there: Orlestone also produces beautiful bespoke joinery including windows, doors, stairs, kitchens and furniture. Added to that is a comprehensive range of solid oak flooring that boasts not just standard width boards but specialist giant boards with widths up to 350mm and 6m long, ideal for historic buildings

or period property projects. All boards are manufactured on site in Kent and exquisitely hand-finished with 30 colour choices.

Exteriors are also well catered for. Orlestone's decking boards are available in up to 4m lengths and come in a variety of grades and profiles.



This is all true for the company's cladding range as well, with a wealth of styles and finishes to enhance both contemporary and traditional houses.

Barrie's son Jack is now a director of the company, having been introduced as a young boy to the business in the time-honoured tradition of all family firms, learning the ropes at his father's side and working his way up from basic jobs like splitting 'rounds' for firewood, to learning how everything is run, including the sawmill, all aspects of production and buying timber. He's justifiably proud to be able to say that at one

time or another, he's worked in every area of the company and knows what each role entails. He believes this is crucial, as it's important when running a business that you never ask anyone to do something you haven't done yourself.

The team seems relatively small, with 15 full-time members in a company that produces such a wide range of high-end and top-quality products, but maybe the emphasis is on quality in the workforce, too, as they are all long-stayers, many having been with Orlestone for over a decade. One team member of particular note, Ron, has been with the company since it



Jack's passion for the timber at the heart of almost everything they manufacture is evident. He mentions his awe when he surveys the mighty oaks that have taken so many years to grow. He says it gives a different perspective on life when seeing the new young trees that are continually planted to ensure there are always mature ones to be harvested - trees that will still be standing tall long after we are gone!

started more than 60 years ago. Jack says, a little reluctantly because he thinks it sounds corny, that the close-knit team is like a big family and they all pull together to create Orlestone products they can be proud of. Nevertheless, the sentiment is there, corny or not! Once again, there's that commitment to heritage and care for quality that shines through in this type of family business.

Barrie and Jack visit forests in northern France and the UK to personally inspect and select the oak trees that end up in the company's sawmill in Kent. They believe this is vital to maintaining the highest quality of finished products. Oak is a naturally resilient hardwood, with an incredibly dense structure, so it doesn't require any chemical treatment to preserve it. Instead, it is kiln-dried, which means the beautifully hand-crafted Orlestone products have a natural longevity.

The oaks are from a managed and sustainable source that is on a grand scale. Orlestone's awareness of trees as a valuable resource speaks of the care taken to minimise their impact on the environment. As they grow the oaks capture harmful carbon, removing it from the atmosphere; it is then locked into the timber that is used to make products. Great care is taken to reduce waste throughout the manufacturing process, making sure everything has a use. Even the sawdust is used in the biomass boiler to run the kilns that dry the timber.

Having said all this, you can see reflected in the beauty of Orlestone Oak's products the honesty and integrity shining through the gorgeous golden-toned, handcrafted wood. If ever the saying 'mighty oaks from little acorns grow' could be applied to a family business, it is justified here. Long may it flourish and stand tall! *For more info go to: orlestoneoak.co.uk*



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Reviving and adapting a Kent barn from agricultural to residential use has so many opportunities as barns can make exceptional open planned family spaces. The challenge in the restoration of a historic building is to bring the benefits of 'modern know how' whilst respecting the spirit of the past through using traditional materials and a focus on the architectural individuality of the property.

Jane Elizabeth Architects have built up over the years a comprehensive knowledge in property conservation. Their expertise enables them to bring imaginative and working solutions to achieve the aspirations of their clients in realising their dream home.

A recent renovation was completed on a mixed period circa 16th /19th threshing barn. A particular feature of traditional Kent barns are that they have internal bays that need to be maintained within the barn's development. This barn was formed of five bays around the original work hall where all of the threshing of crops would have been carried out. In this central space, we were able to create, as seen in the photograph, a spacious and very light kitchen area which is at the heart of this family home. The crucial first step when converting any barn is the detailed timber assessment. All of the timber frame, principal rafters, angle struts and oak collars are carefully recorded and deemed to be repaired

or replaced. There is emphasis on handmade joinery to ensure the craftsmanship of the past is conserved. The attention to detail that JEA produces in their plans and drawings ensured the character and beauty of this 500 year old building is brought to life through its timber in the most stunning way.

Contact us on 01622 884373

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How to better communicate as separated parents

We understand that communication between co-parents can be difficult and tense especially when the relationship did not end on amicable terms.



This is a common cause of children matters ending up in court and results in significant legal costs and causes distress to the entire family.

One way of communicating to reduce any potential conflict is through family Apps. There are more and more of these types of

Apps coming onto the market each year. We recommend these Apps to many of our clients as a safe and secure way of discussing the arrangements for their children to spend time with the other parent or to update each other on any important information that the other parent will need to know – such as changes in

schedule, health concerns, appointments, school trips etc. Judges, justices, and magistrates globally are increasingly ordering families in contested children matters to use such Apps to prevent and reduce conflict and to ensure a secure method of communicating between co-parents and other parties such as grandparents, step-parents etc.

Two apps which many courts have recommended and our clients have used are: AppClose and OurFamilyWizard. Below is a summary of the key features of both Apps:

APP CLOSE:

AppClose has a variety of features such as:

- a calendar to ensure co-parents and family members are aware of any key events occurring;
- a text messenger feature that keeps an accurate record of any communication without it being altered or deleted which can be helpful if any correspondence is needed to be used as evidence in court;
- audio and video calling features for the child to be able to have regular phone/video calls with the other parent - for added security your location is never shared;
- a request's feature which allows you to request any reimbursement of expenses such as medical expenses, extracurricular activities etc.

Also this app is free!

<https://appclose.com/>

OURFAMILYWIZARD (OFW):

OFW offers different types of accounts to suit your needs, such as: parent accounts; third

party accounts for step-parents, grandparents and extended family members; child accounts to allow children to view the family calendars and exchange messages with other family members and practitioner accounts to allow practitioners such as your solicitors, barristers, mediators and family therapists to oversee any communication.

OFW has many features similar to those for app close as well as a Journal section where you are able to document last minute schedule changes or share memories with your co-parent and an information bank where you can keep all important family information in one place such as medical history, insurance information, emergency contacts, school schedule etc.

You are able to sign up to a 1 year subscription starting at £79.

<https://www.ourfamilywizard.co.uk/>

There are of course many other providers on the market and we recommend you do a full search before deciding on using a particular brand to make sure that it meets your and your separated partner's needs.

If you have found any of the information in this article helpful and you would like an initial discussion with someone from our friendly family team, please do not hesitate to get in touch by calling 01622 698000.



The Villa, Ramsgate



A DESIRABLE AND UNIQUE VICTORIAN FIVE-BEDROOM, TWO-BATHROOM HOME IN A HIDDEN LOCATION IN THE SOUGHT AFTER COASTAL TOWN OF RAMSGATE.

This property has bundles of period features including original fireplaces in nearly every room. It's a must see, guide price offers in excess of £575,000. CHAIN FREE

So, what else is on offer at "The Villa"? You are greeted at the driveway with a stunning Grade II listed archway which creates a hidden oasis from the road.

Once inside the hallway all the rooms have high ceilings and original parquet flooring which flows throughout the downstairs.

Downstairs consists of three reception rooms, one for cosy evenings, the other perfect for gin and tonic sundowners it's a spacious room with patio doors overlooking the garden, the third room with its large white fireplace is grand enough for a large dining party.

The kitchen is well crafted and has a farmhouse vibe with oak counter tops with two original butler sinks and a desirable range. The window has a beautiful vista into an established walled garden which really makes this room the heart of the home.





From the hallway there is a door leading into a generously sized recently upgraded shower room.

Upstairs there is a good size landing with wooden balustrades with light flooding in. The main bedroom has an original fireplace and view which overlooks the grand entrance. There are two further double bedrooms one with a beautiful dual vista, all have original fireplaces, and two single rooms. The bathroom has a white suite with bath with a handheld shower and wash hand basin. There is a separate W.C.

The rear garden is beautifully established and well-kept, framed by a tall brick back wall which was part of the original convent. There is a patio area which will allow you to enjoy that morning cup of tea or lay back and relax in the afternoon with your favourite tipple.

There is a garage to the side of the property with access to the rear garden and off-street parking. The property has been upgraded and has gas central heating and double glazing throughout.

The love and warmth this character property provides really makes this property a must see and would make the perfect home.

Should you wish to see for yourself the period features this house exudes, please do feel free to contact us for an appointment/viewing using the details below.

The details

The house is a converted convent, and the arch is grade II, which is the entrance to the property from the road. Hallway | 3 reception rooms | Original fireplaces | Well established walled garden | 5 bedrooms | 2 bathrooms | Garage | Off-street parking. Price £575,000
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A STRIKING DETACHED GRADE II LISTED GEORGIAN FARMHOUSE

Springhill Farm, Benenden

The Georgian facade of this striking Grade II Listed family home is believed to date from the 1820s as an addition to the 18th century core. The features throughout the house are synonymous with the era, such as high ceilings, picture rails, panelled sash windows and decorative fireplaces. A number of exposed floorboards are believed to be reclaimed from the 16th century.

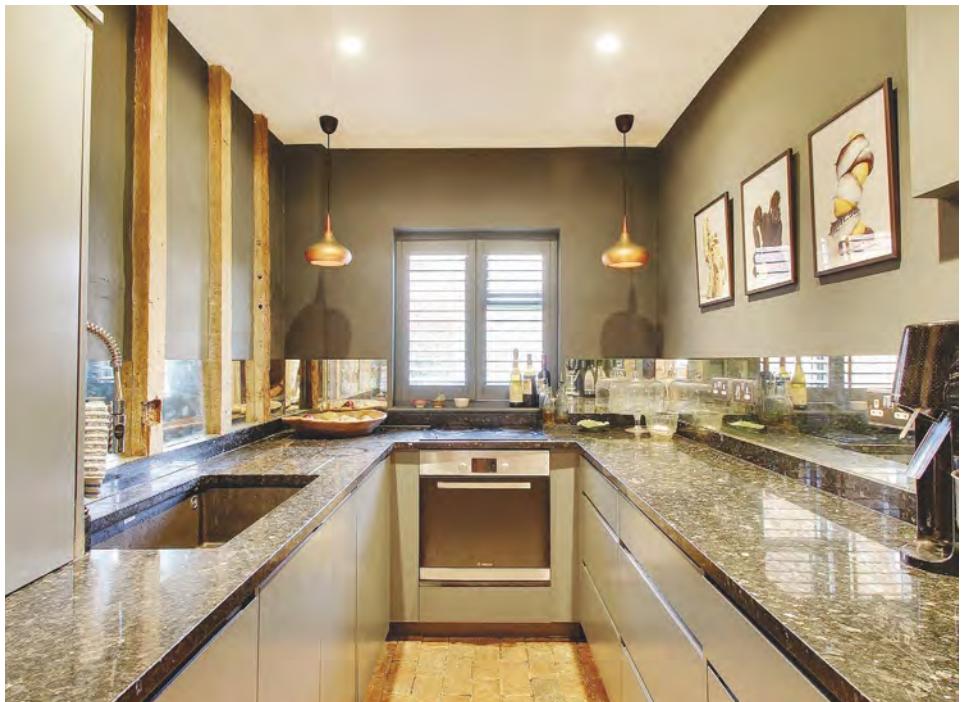
The accommodation is presented in immaculate order throughout and consists of an entrance hall with a 19th century staircase with scroll tread ends, drawing room with decorative fireplace and sixteen panel sash window, double aspect sitting room, double aspect wood panelled study, a triple

aspect kitchen/dining/family room with a supplementary kitchen and pantry, ideal for entertaining; there is also a boot room with doors to the garden, and a cloakroom on the ground floor. A cellar with natural light is used as additional storage.

Two staircases lead to the first floor where a spacious landing provides a seating area and floor to ceiling storage. There is a double aspect principal bedroom with decorative fireplace, dressing room and bath and shower room also with a decorative fireplace, there are four further double bedrooms, one with an ensuite shower room, a family bathroom and a family shower room.

There is a drive that leads to the farm hamlet







and garaging and log store. A gate from the shared drive opens onto a gravel drive which sweeps across the front lawn to the house. Sitting in approximately two acres of attractive garden with trimmed hedgerow, mature shrubs and fruit trees. Within the garden there is a swimming pool with paved terrace and pool house. The pool house has been well appointed providing a bar and sitting room, kitchen with door to the terrace, double bedroom and shower room. The bi-fold doors to the front and side of the pool house open onto the terrace creating a stunning alfresco entertaining space. A sauna and hot tub complete the experience.

In addition to the two acres of garden, across the drive, there are approximately 12 acres of agricultural land divided into three paddocks.

The details

Entrance hall | Drawing room | Sitting room | Study | Kitchen/dining/family room | Supplementary kitchen | Pantry | Boot room | Cloakroom | Cellar | 6 bedrooms | 5 bathrooms | Swimming pool | Double garage | Gardens and grounds approximately 14 acres.

Guide price £2,650,000

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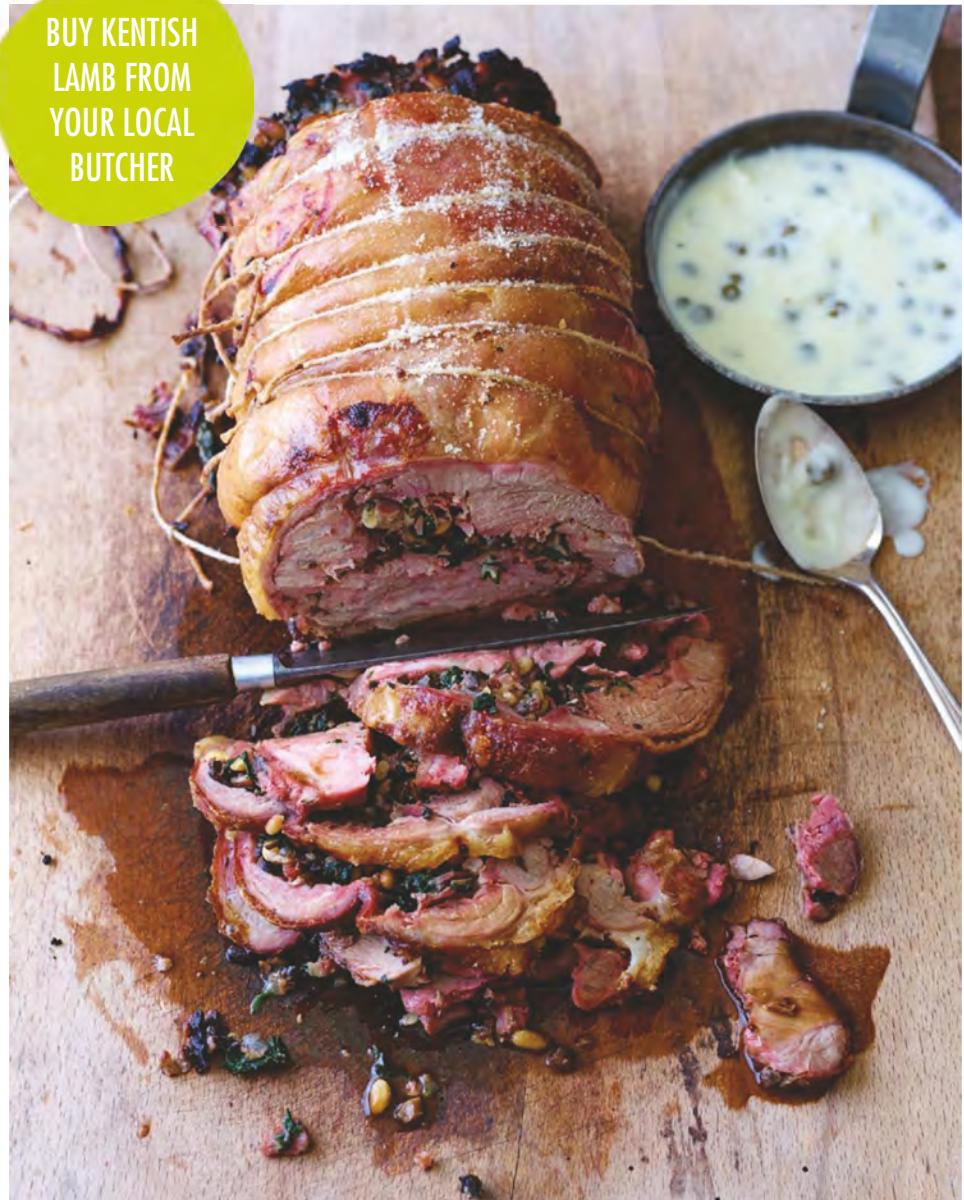
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SERVES
6-8

YOU WILL NEED

For the stuffing

Olive oil
1 onion, chopped
4 rashers streaky bacon, snipped into thin strips
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 sprigs of rosemary
200g chestnut mushrooms, chopped
250g baby spinach, wilted, squeezed dry and chopped
Handful of pine nuts, toasted
Salt and pepper

For the caper sauce

40g butter
40g plain flour
700ml milk
3tbs capers, plus juice
Handful of spinach or wild garlic leaves, thinly shredded (optional)

HINTS AND TIPS

*Redcurrant sauce is a lovely alternative.
Bring 4tbs redcurrant jelly, 4tbs red wine vinegar and 750ml lamb or chicken stock to the boil; simmer until reduced by half. This can be made up to four days ahead, or frozen.*

STUFFED SHOULDER OF KENTISH LAMB WITH CAPER SAUCE

METHOD

Preheat oven to 220°C/180°C fan/gas 7. To make the stuffing, heat a little olive oil in a pan, add the onion and bacon and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened. Add the garlic, rosemary and mushrooms, and fry until all the liquid has evaporated. Add the spinach and pine nuts. Taste and season well. Tip onto a plate and spread out to cool.

Meanwhile, open out the shoulder, skin side down and trim off all excess fat. Butterfly any thicker fleshy bits by slashing and opening them out. When the stuffing is cold, spread over the meat, distributing it into all the nooks and crannies and fold the loose flaps back in, over the stuffing. Roll up tightly and secure with string, starting in the middle and working outwards equally and alternately along each side, at roughly 2.5-4cm intervals. Then tie once along the length of the joint.

Put the lamb into a roasting tin, rub with a little salt and cook for 1 hour 5 minutes. Remove to a cold plate and leave to sit for 10 minutes to stop it cooking. Then keep it somewhere warm to rest for a minimum of 30 minutes. Skim off the fat in the roasting tin and pour the juices into a jug.

To make the sauce, melt the butter in a saucepan, stir in the flour to make a roux and cook for a minute. Gradually whisk in the milk and season. Bring to the boil, stirring or whisking all the time until thickened. Add the capers with a little of their liquid. If the mixture is too thick, thin it down with a little more milk. Cover and set aside.

Just before serving, reheat the sauce adding a little more milk, if necessary, to achieve a pouring consistency, and add any juices from the plate the lamb is resting on. Stir in the spinach or wild garlic leaves and transfer to a serving jug.

Slice the lamb and arrange on a platter, pour over the reserved pan juices and serve with the caper sauce.



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OPENING HOURS

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 Sun: 12 noon - 9pm

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Mon - Fri 12 noon - 4pm & 5pm - 8.15pm

LIVE MUSIC

Sun 12th March Foleys Curious Brew

Sun 19th March Barracouda

Sun 26th March Nightwatch

Sun 2nd April The Lovecats

Sun 9th April VIBES

Sun 16th April Altones

Sun 23rd April Allstars

Sun 7th May Under The Wood

Sun 14th May Squeeze Gut Alley

Sun 21st May Big Orange Head

Sun 28th May Deep River Blues

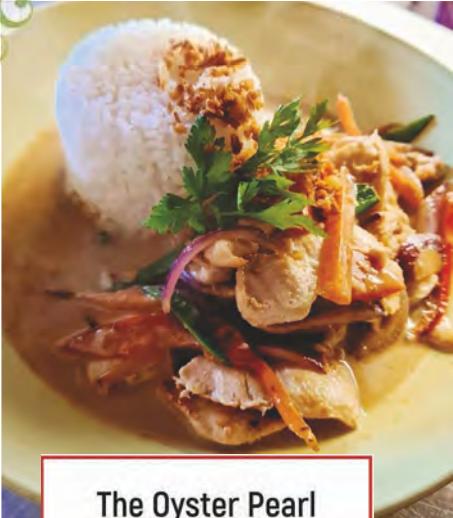
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LAND + SEA TANKERTON

LAND + SEA IS A FOODIE'S HEAVEN, OFFERING GREAT FOOD, USING QUALITY LOCAL INGREDIENTS.

Set on the north Kent coast just minutes away from the main town of Whitstable and seven miles from the beautiful city of Canterbury, Tankerton is Kent's best kept secret to explore and enjoy. Tankerton Road is a vibrant retail and hospitality destination just a few minutes' walk away from the main seafront area with an array of independent shops, restaurants,





cafés and bars. It's here you will find Land + Sea; a foodie's heaven, offering great food, using quality local ingredients.

From brunch, to lunch, to dinner, the restaurant is open for you to try some of the freshest made food whatever the occasion. There is also the choice of the deli counter, so you can enjoy some of these delights from the comfort of your own home. The restaurant is currently open three evenings a week, but from Wednesday 29th March they will be open for four evenings. Land + Sea offer some unique dishes for you to try in a sharing style or your classical multi-course dinner. We decided to give it a try on a busy Saturday night and were not disappointed.

On arrival my dining partner and I were shown to our table by our waitress, Jessica who remained attentive, friendly and informative throughout the evening.

Head Chef Ben Stead proved to be chatty and knowledgeable, keen to share his enthusiasm for the fine details of the food and drink on offer. This is someone who clearly cares deeply about what he's doing, and wants to do it well.

The arrival of our shared starter, Baked Scallops with Nduja butter and lime elicited murmers of approval. The presentation – as proved to be the case with everything we ordered – was immaculate. Stylish crockery and precision plating made for eminently Instagrammable photos.

On to the first of the mains, Chargrilled Local Lamb with Harissa, Carrot and Graceburn. The





lamb was a quality piece of meat, intelligently cooked – pleasantly caramelised on the outside and pink, but overly so, on the inside – a tender, flavoursome delight.

The second main was the Megrin sole (a flatfish that's plentiful around the UK with very pale white, sweet and flavourful flesh) served with mussels, caviar and almonds. I chose an accompaniment of crushed fried potatoes and anchovies. The whole dish was absolutely bang on. The fish was meltingly soft and the accompanying sauce was perfect. The whole lot disappeared, so a definite thumbs up there.

The desserts were also absolutely fabulous. The fried bread and butter pudding which incorporated leftover pastries was genius. I have to commend the whole zero waste ethos that Ben is trying to achieve with this dish. The second dessert was a Dark Chocolate Mousse with Rhubarb, Hazelnut and Brownie. Anything with chocolate in is always a winner for me, and this was just sublime. The accompanying rhubarb was tart enough to cut through the



sweetness of the chocolate and made for a delightful combination.

It's true to say that plenty of restaurants pay lip service to the notion of a warm welcome, but this is a place where everyone seems genuinely relaxed and friendly.

There was a delicacy and finesse about all the dishes that suggested that Chef Ben possesses a winning combination of culinary cleverness and unyielding perfectionism.

Handsome good looks and terrific taste combos – job done! If you're planning an evening at this little gem of an eatery (particularly on a Saturday) you would be advised to book as it's getting more and more popular by the day.

OPENING HOURS

Brunch: Mon - Sun: 9:30am - 11:30am

Restaurant: Mon - Sat: 12pm - 3pm

Wed - Sat: 6pm - 9pm

Sun: 12pm - 4pm

landandseatankerton@outlook.com



Located in Faversham, Kent, Duck & Blade Butchery specialise in local seasonal game, from pheasant to wild venison, dry aged beef, English lamb, pork and poultry, including beautiful local turkeys and free-range geese for Christmas.



For enquiries/orders contact us on enquiries@duckandblade.co.uk or 01795 602106

Riggers Gallery • Standard Quay • Faversham ME13 7BS



OPENING TIMES

Lunch: Tue - Sun 12 noon - 2.30pm
Evenings: Tue - Mon 6pm - 9.30pm



Birdies is one of Whitstable's oldest family run restaurants, serving brilliant locally caught fresh fish features alongside great French classics.

41 Harbour Street, Whitstable CT5 1AH Tel: 01227 265337

www.birdiesrestaurant.co.uk

THE PEPPERBOX INN

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Windmill Hill, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1LP
www.thepepperboxinn.co.uk | Tel: 01622 842558





The perfect accompaniment to spring and summer BBQs, this light and fresh salad is a crowd pleaser and will make your heirloom tomatoes the star of the dish. Combined with a creamy, fragrant dressing and crunchy sourdough croutons, this salad comes together in just a few short steps and can be prepped in advance of your get together.

GROW YOUR OWN

spring menu

Growing your own is a great value way to get nutritious food on your dinner table that's packed full of flavour and is good for both you and the environment.

The UK's leading garden centre, Dobbies, has put together two tasty spring dishes to inject some freshness into your mealtimes. Whether you've grown some delicious heirloom tomatoes, vibrant carrots, or fragrant herbs, check out these mouth watering recipes that are perfect for outdoor entertaining and get creative with your crop.

SERVES
4

YOU WILL NEED

For the salad

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 chicken breasts
2 tbsp dried oregano
500g selection of mixed heirloom tomatoes
2 slices sourdough bread, cubed
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1 tbsp small capers
10g fresh dill, chopped

For the dressing

100g Greek yoghurt
4 tbsp mayonnaise
1 clove garlic, crushed
2 tbsp white wine vinegar
10g fresh chives, finely chopped

HEIRLOOM TOMATO, HERB & CHICKEN SALAD

METHOD

Preheat oven to 200c/180c fan assisted. On a baking tray, mix the sourdough with 2 tbsp of olive oil and season well. Bake for 7 minutes or until golden. Remove and let cool.

Slice the chicken into two pieces lengthways. Drizzle with olive oil, season and then add the oregano. BBQ for 4 minutes on an outdoor grill, or use your oven grill, then let cool and slice into pieces.

In a small bowl combine the dressing ingredients and season to taste.

Use a large platter to arrange the tomatoes, sourdough croutons, red onion, capers and chicken. When close to serving, pour over the dressing and sprinkle with the dill and any leftover chopped chives.



When it comes to growing your own, there's nothing more rewarding than cooking a delicious meal with the fruits of your labour, and what better way to enjoy it than with family and friends?

SERVES
4

SMOKED SALMON, CREAM CHEESE & WATERCRESS FILO TART

YOU WILL NEED

For the tart

- 2 red onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 4 long sheets of filo pastry (approx. half of a 270g pack)
- 100g butter, melted
- 100g pack smoked salmon ripped into chunky pieces
- 150g chopped watercress with large stalks removed

For the custard

- 3 eggs
- 100g cream cheese
- 200g double cream
- zest of 1 lemon
- 20g fresh dill, stems removed and leaves chopped

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180c/160c fan assisted and place a flat baking tray in the oven to heat. In a large frying pan, heat the olive oil and then add the onions and some seasoning. Sauté on a medium low heat until caramelised, about 10 minutes.

Brush the sheets of filo with melted butter and drape over a tart tin, leaving the excess to overhang. Continue until you use all the sheets and press the pastry down gently into the tin. Then add in the salmon, onions and watercress.

In a large bowl whisk the custard ingredients with some seasoning and pour the mixture over the tart. Roll up the excess pastry to form a crust around the tart and brush with additional butter. Bake on the hot baking tray for 35 minutes or until golden and set. Remove and let cool and then serve with additional watercress on top.

For more grow your own inspiration or gardening advice, visit dobbies.com.





If you're looking for a showstopping lunch dish that packs a punch and will shine a light on your fresh spring herbs, this delicious smoked salmon, cream cheese and watercress filo tart is the perfect choice. Impress your family with this seasonal delight and watch it become a firm favourite.

CHILHAM SHOP

Farm shop & plant centre

Canterbury Road, Chilham CT4 8DX

Tel: 01227 730348 | chilhamshop.co.uk

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Mon to Sat: 8:30am to 6pm Sun: 9am to 5pm. We also run Chilham Post Office.



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Email: Shop@BullGreenFarm.co.uk

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We have a nicely stocked shop with fresh eggs daily, home grown veg, and a variety of local products such as Kentish honey, jams, and occasionally freshly baked cakes. We also have a freezer packed with locally made pies and tasty treats.





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Love Local

WE AT CONSERVATION NEWS ARE FIRM BELIEVERS IN THE 'SHOP LOCAL' MOVEMENT AND WE THOUGHT WE WOULD USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TELL YOU WHY...

Over the past 15 years or so, the rise in popularity of internet shopping and American-style malls had threatened to decimate local high streets, leaving shops empty and independent traders destitute. However, it seems that in more recent years the British public have come to realise that cheap, mass-produced merchandise can't hold a candle to good old-fashioned, quality craftsmanship and the High Street is well and truly fighting back, despite the toll taken by the pandemic. The rise of what today we would call consumerism actually goes back several centuries, with 'shopping centres' such as the New Exchange in London appearing as early as the 17th century.

However, it wasn't until after the Second World War that consumerism began to take on a form more familiar to modern eyes. An era of safety and prosperity following the hardships of war, coupled with the increased availability of mass-manufactured goods and imports, changed the British shopping scene forever. Over the next few decades this trend continued unabated, and UK shoppers were bombarded with advertisements for cheap food, clothes, household goods and more. Although the number of 'chain stores' had been on the up for many years, it can be suggested that the recession of the 1980s was

responsible for driving an even larger proportion of the country into the arms of high savings and low quality.

Hot on the heels of low-cost imports, e-commerce now poses a worrying threat to our High Streets. Of the approximately 68 million people in the UK, around 60 million are regular online shoppers. However, although internet shopping is still immensely popular, something does appear to have shifted in the British psyche.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Since the pandemic, with a crashing economy and invasive austerity measures, it makes sense that people are looking to save money. However, it seems that, in the same way that the last war brought people together, our shared recent experiences have garnered a sense of community. People are happier than ever to support local sellers, especially after so many went out of business during lockdown, and instead of saving money by buying mass-

produced goods, people are scaling down on quantity in favour of quality. The old adage 'you get what you pay for' has resonated with shoppers and people are happy to spend a little more in order to get quality products and, just as importantly, quality service.

Whatever your income, we all love a bargain and, whilst it's true that you can find some great deals in a supermarket, the fact is that local products from independent retailers aren't actually that much more expensive; they simply suffer when compared with the BOGOF culture perpetrated by larger stores, plus the quality is infinitely better. People from all walks of life are now realising that we need to support our local business owners to save our high

streets and they're absolutely right. In fact, this approach not only makes sense on an individual level, it's also the best way to heal our floundering economy. For every £1 spent locally, approximately 50-70 pence is circulated back into the local economy, supporting the people and services that are so vital to our way of life.

The best thing about shopping with local, independent retailers is that they are part of our community. Whether you're loading up on delicious treats at your nearest farmers' market, buying the perfect gift from a skilled artisan, or decorating your home using a long-established family company, you'll know that every penny you spend locally is supporting a real person in your area, and it's because of this direct relationship between staff and company that you get such a great level of service. Independent retailers know their business inside and out, and can offer you succinct product knowledge with a warm and welcoming attitude.

DUCK & BLADE



Established in 2021 Duck & Blade is an exciting 'new wave' butchers situated in Faversham, offering a wide range of versatile and innovative meal ideas using only quality primal cuts of English beef, pork and lamb. Working in the trade for over 14 years, founder and Managing Director, Owyn Durrant alongside partner Lili are working to provide nothing but quality to local people.

Riggers Gallery, Standard Quay,
Faversham ME13 7BS.

Tel: 01795 6092106 | www.duckandblade.co.uk

FRANKIES FARM SHOP



You will find a wonderful selection of plants, fresh produce, a stunning selection of gifts and their very popular cafe for indoor dining and takeaways; serving breakfast, brunch, lunch, afternoon tea and a delicious selection of cakes and pastries. As well as their famous Poinsettias, they grow Geraniums for summer and Cyclamens for Autumn and a wide variety of other plants, vegetables, herbs and produce. They also offer an online ordering service for grocery orders and will deliver within a 6 mile radius. www.frankiesfarmshop.co.uk

MACKNADE FOOD HALL



Macknade in Faversham is a food lovers paradise. The famous food hall has been in the same family for six generations. Step inside and you will be greeted with row upon row of fresh fruit & veg and hundreds of essential and unusual groceries. The deli has over 200 cheeses and the award-winning butchery is certified Pasture for Life. Don't miss the cosy café, which showcases all of the wonderful ingredients available in their food hall, and the outdoor Food Village open during the summer months.

Open daily. ME13 8XF. www.macknade.com

NICHOLAS JAMES



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BULL GREEN FARM SHOP



The Duke family welcome you to Bull Green Farm in Betherden, Kent. We have a nicely stocked shop with fresh eggs daily, home grown veg, and a variety of local products such as Kentish honey, jams, and local fruit juices & occasionally freshly baked cakes. We also have a freezer packed with locally made pies and tasty treats. We are widening our range and sourcing more local produce, as well as selecting the very best fruits from our orchard. We carry seasonal goodies such as plants and shrubs in the spring & summer. www.bullgreenfarm.co.uk

CHILHAM FARM SHOP



We have run Chilham Farm Shop for 40 years and Chilham Post Office for 15 years. We stock a good range of fruit, vegetables and salads, sourced as locally as possible, as well as cut flowers and house plants. We also sell a range of herbaceous perennials and summer bedding plants, many of which are grown at our own nursery; and a range of garden mirrors, ornaments, garden pots, compost and garden sundries. In the shop we have a selection of general groceries and magazines and newspapers. Canterbury Road, Chilham CT4 8DX

LOWER HARDRES



We believe in delivering only the freshest local produce to our customers. Walk into our shop to buy meat from our in-house butchery, or pick your own fruit from our farm during summer. We also stock a variety of local cheeses and milk at great prices. We have a wonderful array of fruits and vegetables throughout the year, sourced from our own farm and other local suppliers. We are committed to providing local and unadulterated food, and we make sure that our produce is affordably priced for our customers. www.lowerhardresfarmshop.co.uk

GILBERTS OF WHITSTABLE



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19 Oxford Street, Whitstable CT5 1DB

HARTLEY COFFEE HOUSE & FARM SHOP

Hartley Coffee house and Farmshop is set amongst the beautiful Kent countryside just on the outskirts of the medieval town of Cranbrook.

A family run business, spanning eight generations and farming 100 acres of award-winning apples, pears and cherries, we are on a mission to champion the best of homegrown and locally sourced produce.

Our in-house butchers offer meats supplied by local farmers; the bakery showcase fresh artisan bread, bespoke cakes and pastries and a fabulous range of local and popular cheeses, cured meats and pies at available from the deli.

Late Spring will reveal a much anticipated re-vamp to our Coffee House with a new menu focusing on seasonal produce and wholesome food.



*Hartley Coffee House and Farmshop
Hartley Road, Cranbrook TN17 3QG
01580 715233 @hartleyfarmkent*



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MARCH

WEDNESDAY: 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th Rye

THURSDAY: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th Rolvenden; Shipbourne

FRIDAY: 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st Tenterden

SATURDAY: 4th

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Groombridge; Penshurst; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 5th

Bearsted; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable Castle

TUESDAY: 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

SATURDAY: 11th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Westerham Valley; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 12th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells; Staplehurst

SATURDAY: 18th

Deal; Gravesend; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Westerham Valley; Wye

SUNDAY: 19th

Aylesford; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 25th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 26th

Cliftonville; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells

APRIL

SATURDAY: 1st

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Groombridge; Kent Showground; Penshurst; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley; Wye

SUNDAY: 2nd

Bearsted; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable Castle

TUESDAY 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th Rye

THURSDAY: 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th Rolvenden; Shipbourne

FRIDAY: 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th Tenterden

SATURDAY: 8th Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley; Whitstable; Dover

SUNDAY: 9th Herne Bay; Lenham; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 15th Deal; Gravesend; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley; Wye

SUNDAY: 16th

Aylesford; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 22nd Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 23rd Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 29th

Deal; Gravesend; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley

SUNDAY: 30th

Cliftonville; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells

MAY

TUESDAY: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st Rye

THURSDAY: 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th Rolvenden; Shipbourne

FRIDAY: 5th Tenterden

SATURDAY: 6th Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Groombridge; Penshurst; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley; Wye

SUNDAY: 7th

Bearsted; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable Castle

FRIDAY: 12th, 19th & 26th Tenterden

SATURDAY: 13th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 14th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 20th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Westerham Valley; Wye

SUNDAY: 21st

Aylesford; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Staplehurst; Tonbridge Food & Drink Festival; Tunbridge Wells; Westerham Valley; Wateringbury; Whitstable

SATURDAY: 27th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 28th

Cliftonville; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tonbridge Food & Drink Festival; Tunbridge Wells



GRAPE VARIETIES

Many of the international grape varieties originated in France. Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece have many indigenous varieties that are not seen outside their country and so help to distinguish their wine in this way. The advantage is that these wines do make a point of difference when making a choice about which wine to buy. This is where New World wines have made such huge inroads into wine consumption in the UK. The Australians started the trend to label the wine by the grape variety and all the other New World countries followed suit which proved extremely popular. This is still the trend today where most consumers choose their wine by grape variety and so over the last decade or so Old World producers make a number of wines where the grape is on the label, which is outside their strict rules, but in order to compete on price and style.

COMPARING OLD AND NEW WORLD WINES

WE OFTEN HEAR THE TERMS 'OLD WORLD AND 'NEW WORLD' WHEN REFERRING TO WINE – BUT WHAT DOES IT ACTUALLY MEAN?

Well – the Old World refers to where modern winemaking originated – in Europe and the New World is outside Europe, e.g. America, South America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand etc. The main differences found are in the style of wine produced which is a result of climate, winemaking techniques and certain traditions which influence the taste and flavour characteristics of the wine.

STYLE OF WINE

Wine from the Old World often reflects the terroir or the place where the vines have been planted and tends to emphasise the surrounding region and the historical/ cultural context of the area. In most European countries, there are strict rules governing which grape variety can be planted in each region along with maximum yields and alcohol levels allowed. This is very important to Old World producers so that their style of wine can be distinguished from other wines with the same grape variety on the basis of 'terroir' as well as winemaking techniques. Old world wine can sometimes, although not always, appear less fruity than its new world counterpart because the sense of

place is often prioritised over making the wine more fruity.

On the other hand, New world wine places the grape itself at the heart of the winemaking – often emphasising the fruitiness in the grape. Since the UK starting importing high volumes of wine from the New world in the 1980s – this style of wine has proved to be very popular – sometimes at the expense of wines from the Old world. New World wines are not governed by the same strict rules that exist in Europe and plant their grapes in regions which are best suited to that particular variety. For example, Riesling grows best in a cooler climate so the best examples in Australia come from the Clare valley, adjacent to the Barossa Valley, but at altitude. Pinot Noir also prefers a cooler climate and some of the best examples come from Tasmania and New Zealand.

However, about twenty years ago, Old world producers were beginning to be left behind by the popularity of New World wines and therefore today are producing more wines outside their respective tight rule boundaries in order to compete. For example, some wines have the grape variety on the label to make them more accessible to the consumer as well

as making them fruitier and easier drinking. Likewise, a number of New world countries such as Chile are creating smaller, premium areas in order to produce wines that reflect the 'terroir' and give a sense of 'place' as such become more distinctive and unique.

BODY OF THE WINE

Many New World countries have a warm climate for much of the year and in wine terms – more warmth means more body in the wine and a higher alcohol level. But, it is not as cut and dried as that because New Zealand has a cool maritime climate as does Tasmania and these regions are not suitable to ripen grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon or Grenache. On the other hand, some regions of France, Spain and Italy can become very warm in summer producing equally full bodied wine and high alcohol levels. However, what can be said is

that in countries such as Australia, warm or even hot weather is consistent or pretty much guaranteed whereas in Europe this is not always the case. A cool year or a bad harvest can seriously spoil the grapes for that year and some may not ripen at all. Too much rain might be a problem in Europe which causes disease to the grapes, but in the New world – the opposite is true – too little rain can be a problem so many vines have to be irrigated to combat this problem which can be expensive.

Here are three comparisons between Old World and New World wines

CHARDONNAY

Chardonnay is an international grape variety grown all over the world and produces a range of different styles from fresh and crisp as in Chablis to full bodied with tropical fruit such

as in Australia. France is considered the home of Chardonnay and some of the best (and most expensive) are produced in the Cote d'Or in Burgundy. These wines tend to be citrusy, with aromas of white peach, honeysuckle, hazelnuts, anise with a delicate creamy texture and a medium body. Many of the best age for decades and develop a great depth of complexity. Tasmania is also known throughout the world as producing high quality Chardonnay; its cool maritime climate is ideal for letting the grapes ripen slowly so they can develop their full flavour profile. These wines use very similar techniques to those in Burgundy



SYRAH/SHIRAZ

All the top Syrahs in France come from the Northern Rhone with Hermitage and Cote Rotie considered among the best in the world. All the Northern Rhone wines have slightly different rules as to whether small amounts of white grapes such as Viognier, Marsanne or Roussanne are allowed in the blend – most are 100% Syrah.

Crozes Hermitage are the most affordable wines in the region, but it seldom has the rich, soft black fruit of Australian Shiraz, nor the complexity and elegance of the more expensive wines of the Northern Rhône. It is medium-bodied, not too headily alcoholic and often seems to combine the scent of black cherries with white pepper, backed by juicy acidity and relatively firm, sometimes slightly green tannins. Aussie Shiraz is full bodied with plenty of ripe red and black fruit, a little black pepper with savoury notes and a rich texture.



such as fermenting and maturing in old oak and battonage (stirring the lees) which produces the rich, creamy texture. Perhaps the main difference is the price; wines from the Côte d'Or can sell for hundreds of pounds and age for decades whilst the wines from Tasmania are not cheap, but do not reach nearly the same price.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

The Haut-Medoc area on the left bank of the Medoc in Bordeaux produces some of the most expensive Cabernet Sauvignon in the world. These wines are complex with high tannins with notes of liquorice, blackberry and spice. Many of the top wines are meant for long term cellaring where the wine keeps evolving, developing more complexity and depth. These wines are always blends with Merlot and Petit Verdot which helps to soften the tannins and

are known all over the world as the 'Bordeaux blend'. In countries such as Australia, South Africa and California in the USA, Cabernet Sauvignon can be made as a varietal (e.g. 100% Cabernet). This is because the climate is warm enough to fully ripen the berries which results in deep, jammy blackcurrant and plum fruit, soft, ripe tannins, a full body, high alcohol often with notes of tobacco leaf.

In this short article, I have summarised the main differences between Old world and New world wine and of course, there are exceptions and variation in the wine profiles due to the reasons mentioned above. Wine can be a complex subject, but just knowing the style of wine you enjoy and where you can find it can really simplify the process!

Rowena Hawtin (DipWSET)

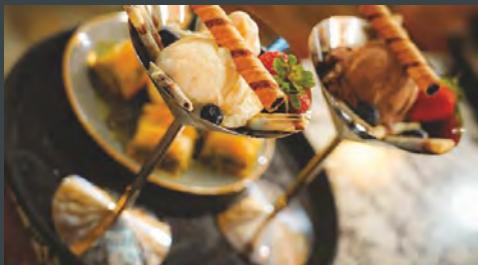
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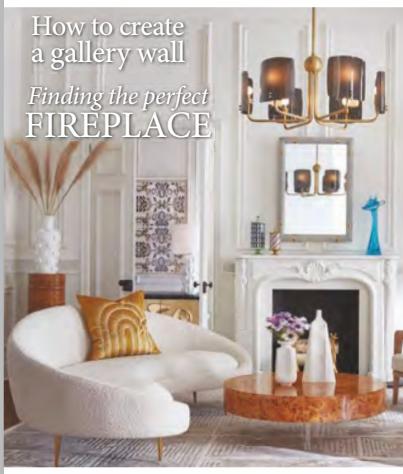
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