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WINTER 2023



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*Publisher*  
Conservation News

*Contributors*  
Susan Hubbard  
Liz Norton  
Louise Tomlin  
Rowena Hawtin

*Cover:*  
[gardentrading.co.uk](http://gardentrading.co.uk)  
*Design*  
Lynn Fasulo  
*Editor*  
Dawn Long  
*Sales Manager*  
Nadene Weed  
Tel: 07515 157795  
[nadene@conservationnews.co.uk](mailto:nadene@conservationnews.co.uk)



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# WINTER 2023

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## Caring for your pointsettia

Poinsettias like lots of bright, indirect sunlight and prefer humid conditions. As for watering, let the soil dry out between watering; it should be dry to the touch. Be sure not to let the plants pot stand in water at the plants base or saucer. Poinsettias are sensitive to extreme temperature, so don't place your plant next to a heater or near a drafty window or doorway.



## FORCING RHUBARB

You can force rhubarb anytime from late December until March when rhubarb is dormant. However, December and January tend to be the most popular time to begin, with a crop ready to harvest around 7 to 8 weeks later. If you start early, forcing rhubarb can produce an earlier crop, as depending on the rhubarb variety.

# Garden notes

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



## Treat yourself to snowdrops

If your garden needs a shot of colour, head to the garden centre for some pots of snowdrops or winter aconites. They're a great quick fix, although you could order larger quantities of 'in the green bulbs' for later on in spring. Plant them in light shade and humus-rich soil and they will reward you for years to come. Split them every few years to increase your collection.

To see a beautiful display why not visit Spring Platt in Maidstone. It consists of a one acre garden under continual development with panoramic views of the Weald and over 650 varieties of snowdrop grown in tiered display beds with spring flowers in borders. Dates to view start in January and booking is essential.

Visit [www.kentsnowdrops.com](http://www.kentsnowdrops.com) for more information and to book.



## Winter romance

Camellia sasanqua 'Crimson King' is a medium-sized evergreen shrub of open and spreading habit, with fragrant, single bright rose-red flowers to 10cm in width. To get the best from them they need an acid soil. They also cope well in a pot. This variety is sometimes overlooked, which is a mistake as it flowers before Christmas. It also has the same gloriously glossy-green leaves as the Japanese ones, but it is a little smaller, so is good in front gardens. A few of these scented flowers floating in a bowl of water will bring a little romance to your winter.

## Feed the birds

Make your own fat balls. High in protein they will provide birds with plenty of energy. Mix two parts fat – usually lard or suet to one part dry ingredients – this includes good quality bird seed, along with nuts, raisins, grated cheese, mealworms and sunflower hearts.

Use a mould, such as a yoghurt pot or cupcake case with string running through the middle like a wick in a candle.

Alternatively use a biscuit cutter. Leave to set in the fridge for an hour before hanging out.



## What to do in the garden now

- Dead-head autumn-flowering plants and prune summer-flowering shrubs.
- Avoid walking on your lawn or you will damage it fairly easily.
- Add cloches to winter salads to protect from the weather and pests, and wrap pots of half-hardy plants in bubble wrap or fleece.
- Put feeders out. Birds will appreciate nuts, seeds and fat balls. Remember to freshen up water regularly and ensure it doesn't freeze.
- There's still time to get bulbs in the ground in November to guarantee winter colour from January onwards.
- Tidy and clean your garden tools.
- Winter prune apple trees.

## Mistletoe magic

Enjoy kissing under the mistletoe? If you have a mature apple tree you can grow your own!

Pick mistletoe berries in February, squeeze out the sticky seeds and lodge them in crevices on a medium-large branches of your tree. If they germinate you'll have your own source of mistletoe sprigs in a year or two.



# Relax in style with our beautiful heartwood teak furniture



Visit our showroom to experience the real comfort of our luxurious teak furniture for yourself. Our beautiful chairs, tables and benches are perfect for any garden or patio setting and with minimal maintenance, you really can sit back and enjoy your garden in style. Our designs are made from A-Grade sustainable heartwood plantation teak and use stronger, thicker wood that will withstand the British weather for many years to come.

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## Christmas gifts unwrapped

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## Tradition meets quality

The Butcher of Brogdale combines quality and value to provide the finest meats for your holiday feasts.

Discover delicious foods, drinks, chocolates, preserves and sweet treats in Notcutts Christmas Shop.

## Step into a world of style

Visit Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Klass, Bonmarché and Pavers and find your perfect outfit for those special holiday gatherings.

## Indulge your senses

For a warm welcome visit the team at Pure Beauty and Hair. Skilled stylists will have you looking and feeling your best for all the festive celebrations.

## Sip, savour, and socialise

Relax and recharge at Bricks Coffee House with a warming latte or a sweet treat. For breakfast, morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea find Coffee Corner Café at the heart of the Village.

## Festive fun for little ones

Parents, rejoice! Pennies Kids Club make school holidays stress-free. With exciting activities, your little elves will be entertained with themed days, trips out and one-off events.

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# GOING GREEN

Why not bring evergreen boughs, pinecones and winter berries into your home this winter and create beautiful and sustainable arrangements using flowers and foliage?



**F**rom tall conifers to dwarf evergreens, many varieties come in a range of silvers or golds that work well in winter seasonal arrangements. Traditional options, like trimmed boughs of blue spruce, look great in wreaths and tabletop decorations. The flexible branches of juniper are ropy and its silvery berries add a nice texture to evergreen garlands.

Among the many choices, the most commonly planted evergreens are eucalyptus, cypress, pine, cedar, spruce and juniper.

For the freshest greenery, check out farmers' markets and garden centres.

You can also try foraging for items – take a walk through your neighbourhood or local woods and scoop up fallen pinecones, branches from evergreens or holly bushes, and use them in your arrangement.



Once you've got them home you'll want to rehydrate your branches. This step helps your greenery last longer. Before making wreaths or garlands, fill buckets with room-temperature water. Using a hand pruner, make diagonal cuts through the stems (this allows more water to be absorbed), then gently crush the exposed end with a small hammer. Stand them in water for a few hours before working with the plants.

#### **Use varieties that last the entire season**

After they have been cut, some varieties stay fresh longer than others. Short-needed pines are very attractive, but a few days after they are cut they will begin to lose leaves. If you need something that will last go for long-needed pines.

Whether greenery is hung in the heat of your house or the cold air outside, these winter environments are intensely dry, and the plant has no source of moisture. Fresh greenery will last indoors for about two weeks, and longer outdoors in cold climates. Display greenery out of direct sunlight and away from heat sources; mist with water daily to help the cuttings last.

#### **Select greenery that's fragrant**

If fragrance is of the utmost importance to you, select a combination of aromatic evergreens for your garlands and wreaths. A mix of pine, cedar, eucalyptus, balsam and juniper will result in a uniquely wintry scent. A daily misting of water will help keep evergreens smelling fresh.



## WHAT TO USE

**Juniper:** Especially good for use in outdoor garlands as it won't survive long indoors – heat makes its needles turn brittle.

**Pine:** Ideal for outdoor decorations, garlands, and arrangements.

**Blue Spruce:** This variety is good for outdoor garlands and wreaths. Take care when hanging ornaments, as the needles are sharp.

**Eucalyptus:** It dries quickly but makes attractive, scented cut arrangements and outdoor garlands.

### Non-Variegated English Holly:

A prickly holiday standard that's ideal for use in garlands and wreaths, this variety lasts up to one week indoors, longer in cut arrangements.

### Variegated English Holly:

This one is popular in cut arrangements, garlands, and wreaths. It lasts up to one week indoors. It's available nationwide.

**Boxwood:** A lush addition to cut arrangements, boxwood is ideal for decorating indoors and out.

**Bay:** Incorporate bay into your indoor and outdoor displays – its fragrant smell will be welcome no matter where the seasonal greenery is placed.

Embellish with dried orange slices, cinnamon sticks, pinecones and seasonal decorative elements.



### Table centrepiece

For a stunning centrepiece check out your cupboards or antique or charity shops for interesting props to use: think fruit bowls, terrines and even condiment bottles. Keep whatever you use topped up with water to maximise longevity. Combine winter evergreen with hellebores, pinecones, buxus and skimmia. Add elegant, tall dinner candles for the final finishing touch.



### Dress a feature fireplace

Mantelpieces offer a huge number of design options. For a show-stopping arrangement, place soaked Oasis foam in trays along the length of your mantelpiece and then begin creating the overall shape with foliage. Eucalyptus is a top foliage for this time of year – it smells delicious and still looks beautiful when it dries. Variegated ivy, berried ivy and berried eucalyptus are also perfect. Fill the Oasis with foliage so you cannot see any gaps, putting taller pieces at the back and off to the sides and shorter lengths in the middle, with trailing bits cascading at the front. Use evergreen branches secured with wire.

Weave candles in a variety of heights between flowers. If you want fresh flowers, fill huge jardinieres or wicker baskets with forced narcissi or hyacinths. Cover the soil with moss and spike in twigs to add support and drama.

Always be careful when adding designs to mantels, ensuring everything is a safe distance from any lit fire.



# Gifts for Gardeners...

Beautiful decorations and gifts hand-picked to give you the finest treats for your home and garden.



UK Grown Christmas Trees in centre from 20th November.



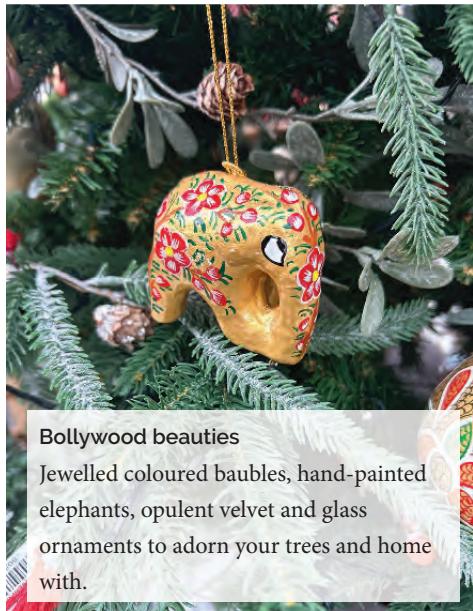
## Christmas Fair in the Glasshouse

2nd-3rd December | 10am-4pm

Over 35 stalls featuring food, gifts and crafts from local artists. Visit our website for further details.

# FESTIVE COMFORT AND JOY

This year, the team at Coblands Garden Centre have picked a selection of their favourite decorations and themes for your home.





## SAVE THE DATE

**Coblands Christmas Fair** in the glasshouse returns on the 2nd & 3rd December with local artists, crafters and small businesses. Displaying their ranges of unique and handmade treats for Christmas, including chocolate, felted decorations, jewellery, pottery, locally made gin, wine and venison.

### Felted friends

Charming and traditional, our robins and dogs will add colour and interest as they dart and scamper under your tree branches.

### Folded finery

These handmade paper decorations add festive charm in a simple and nostalgic style. Lightweight and decorative, the intricate flower shapes unfold revealing a cut pattern effect.

### Traditional treats

Featuring the beloved classic red and white theme across various textures and finishes. You will find Santa, reindeers, gnomes, and nutcrackers having winter fun.

### Festive foliage

Christmas trees form the centrepieces of all festive celebrations, their decorations are often handed down as part of family traditions. Each tree takes about 12 years to grow to maturity and is hand pruned to retain the traditional shape.

The team can help you pick your tree, net it and carry it to the car for you. (Trees and wreaths in centre from the 20th November.)

### Glamourous glass

These handmade baubles and decorations will add some old school glamour to your tree, as the clear and pearlescent baubles twinkle gently beneath your tree lights.



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# DAVID ATKINS

## Capturing the beauty of The Ashdown and Camber Sands

Renowned artist David Atkins has created a breathtaking series of new oil paintings that immerse viewers in the captivating landscapes of The Ashdown Forest and Camber Sands during the enchanting autumn season.

**W**ith his keen eye for detail and masterful strokes, Atkins invites us to experience the drama of

Autumn skies through his artistic lens.

David Atkins' artistic journey has been closely intertwined with the Fairfax Gallery since its opening in 1995, and their collaboration has thrived with over 15 successful Solo Exhibitions of his works. In recent years, Atkins has turned his focus towards The Ashdown Forest, spending weeks in the great outdoors, painting en plein air to capture the region's stunning Autumnal palette and the warm evening skies that grace its landscape. His depictions of this natural wonder, along with his coastal paintings

*Autumn Sunset on Ashdown 30x30cm*



inspired by Rye Bay, have garnered admiration and found a special place in the hearts of the Fairfax Gallery's clientele.

Born in Greenwich, London, in 1964, David Atkins' artistic journey began with his studies in painting at St Martins School of Art, London, and Winchester School of Art, where he achieved a 1st Class Honours Degree in painting. Following his studies, he returned to London, teaching part-time while continuing to pursue his passion for painting. After success with the Fairfax Gallery, Atkins held his first London solo show at the Albemarle Gallery in London in 2002. His remarkable talent has been recognised with several prestigious awards, including the Horan Prize for painting at the NEAC Exhibition in London, the Façade International Prize for Painting at the Discerning Eye Exhibition in London, and the Baltic Exchange Prize 2018 for painting at the RMSA Exhibition at the Mall Galleries in London.

David Atkins says of his paintings: "Painting plein air in the landscape means I am faced with a subject that continually changes and transforms throughout my time there, which I find inspiring. The weather, too, plays a very important part. This can change what may seem a dull scene into a place of sublime beauty. I work fast and will rework an entire painting to capture these dramatic changes."



*Evening in October, Camber Sands Oil on Board 61x 66cm*

The Ashdown and Camber Sands hold sentimental value, memories, and emotions for me. I have returned there to paint for over thirty years, hoping to capture and express something of their unique qualities in paint.

I hope my artworks give a sense of my joy in the locations I chose and the act of painting them. I want the paintings to be alive so the viewer can discover something new every time they look at them.” – David Atkins, 2023.

Don't miss the opportunity to immerse yourself in the artistry of David Atkins as he unveils his latest creations. You can view these paintings in person at the Fairfax Gallery, located at 23 The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells.



I HOPE MY ARTWORKS GIVE  
A SENSE OF MY JOY IN THE  
LOCATIONS I CHOSE AND THE  
ACT OF PAINTING THEM. I WANT  
THE PAINTINGS TO BE ALIVE SO  
THE VIEWER CAN DISCOVER  
SOMETHING NEW EVERY TIME  
THEY LOOK AT THEM.



*Towards Evening, Camber Sands Oil on Canvas 80x110cm*



*Autumn Sunset on Ashdown Forest Oil on Board 66x76cm*

Alternatively, you can explore his works at [www.fairfaxgallery.com](http://www.fairfaxgallery.com), and experience the magic of The Ashdown & Camber Sands through the eyes of David Atkins.

David Atkins' paintings are a testament to the power of art to evoke emotions, preserve memories, and capture the essence of the natural world. We invite you to be a part of this artistic journey and discover the beauty that lies within these exquisite landscapes and maybe treat yourself to a wonderful piece of original art.

#### **EXHIBITION DETAILS:**

- Location: Fairfax Gallery, 23 The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells
- Website: [www.fairfaxgallery.com](http://www.fairfaxgallery.com)

Note: Please check the gallery's website for exhibition dates and opening hours.

# Graham Clarke



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# UNDER THE HAMMER

Clifford Lansberry has worked in the Antiques and Fine Art Auction Business for over thirty years and in that time has seen plenty of changes.

**E**ven ten years ago a call to a house where the owner wanted to downsize would usually result in much of the contents being suitable for sale at auction.

How things have changed. Today many of the solid sellers from previous decades are now left behind as unsaleable.

Twenty years' ago a standard George III mahogany bureau was worth about £1,000. Today, well it's certainly under £100 with many proving too low in value to be worth offering. Victoriana was all the rage with pot lids, copper warming pans and Staffordshire flatback figures all in demand and American buyers flying in on buying trips to snap up cranberry glassware and walnut whatnots. These days Victoriana is in the doldrums, a half century after the swinging sixties when it was equally out of favour.

## So what has happened?

It's all about taste and the requirements of modern living. Most of my clients tell me that "we have offered it to the children and they just don't want anything". Their cherished antiques do not suit the lifestyles and homes of their children. And it's not just the 30-40 year olds. Most of us have swapped the more formal arrangements of the 20th century for something more relaxed.



The cut glass, dinner services, silverware and mahogany dining tables of dinner parties past have been replaced with more informal dining options, often around the kitchen table with more contemporary accessories. So those once much desired and expensive dining accoutrements have fallen out of demand and therefore are much reduced in value. The same applies to the other furnishings of the past.



## So is it all bad news?

Well that depends upon what you have to sell and what you want to buy. The drop in value of many traditional antiques means that formerly highly priced articles are now veritable bargains. If you like antique furniture then now is the time to buy and get far more for your money than ever before.

From the vendors viewpoint, well the traditional may have fallen down but a whole host of items have soared in value, many of them things that were totally overlooked in the past. Vintage and industrial is in; from stripped metal office furniture to chemists cabinets. Garden ornaments and furniture are much wanted – the contents of the garden often holds more value than that of the house. Collectables from coins and stamps to watches, toys and ephemera have boomed in the past ten years driven by the ease of buying and selling online along with new buyers tempted in whilst sat at home during the covid lockdown. Asian art remains highly sought after, mainly being bought by Chinese buyers. We see 80% of buyers at our Asian sales now coming from China. And finally regarding that dining furniture, back in the 1950's and 60's most people bought antique or reproduction furniture. Those that made the bold choice to buy Scandinavian designer furniture are reaping the rewards; mid-century furniture is in short supply but high demand. The 30 and 40 year old 'children' that don't want their parents stuffy old antiques love the charms of Ercol, Eames and 1950's Danish design.



So take some hope from the ashes of brown furniture. It's not all bad news. Treasures often lie in less expected places and as experienced valuers and auctioneers we are able to advise where they might be found as well as helping with that old brown furniture.

Granny's treasured mantel clock might not strike your fortune but those old postcards in the dresser might just make up for it.

*Clifford Lansberry, Managing Partner  
clifford@gorringes.co.uk*





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*The English Chimneypiece*

# A WARM EMBRACE

In the heart of a period home, the fireplace serves as a portal to the past, a functional work of art, and a cosy sanctuary during chilly winters. The stories of fireplaces, fire surrounds, fires, heating, radiators, and Agas are interwoven with the history of architecture, interior design, and the way we have heated our homes over the centuries.

In period living, the fireplace takes centre stage. It's not just a source of warmth but a testament to craftsmanship and design. Across the centuries, fireplaces have evolved from simple, utilitarian structures to intricate pieces of art. In the medieval period, they were often found in the centre of the room, radiating heat and providing a communal gathering point. As architecture evolved,

fireplaces found their place against walls, giving rise to the quintessential fire surround. Today, period homeowners cherish these features for their historical and aesthetic significance. The design of fire surrounds has followed the trends of the era. From Tudor oak carvings to the Georgian's neoclassical symmetry, and the Victorian era's ornate details, each period boasts its own unique charm.



### Different types of fire

Fireplaces, of course, are nothing without the fires that bring them to life. Wood-burning, gas, electric, and even bioethanol fires offer diverse options to fit the style and needs of any period living space.

Traditionalists often favour wood-burning fires, which provide not only warmth but the delightful aroma of burning logs. These fires hark back to a time when gathering firewood was a daily task and the hearth was the heart of the home. Modern wood-burning stoves and fireplaces, with their elegant cast-iron designs, offer the same ambience with added efficiency. It's important to keep your wood-burning fire well-maintained, to avoid the potential risks that come with soot build-up etc. A chimney sweep or maintenance company is a must, as is ethically-sourced fuel (many areas have now banned the use of 'green' or wet wood).

Gas fires offer convenience without sacrificing style. They provide instant heat and are easily controlled, making them popular choices for those who want both beauty and functionality. Electric fires have come a long way in mimicking the glow and crackle of a real fire. They are ideal for those who appreciate the aesthetics of a fireplace, but don't want the hassle of maintenance. These alternative burners can be custom-made to fit perfectly into your décor and are very realistic: the Tudors who built your house would barely notice the difference.

### The evolution of home heating

Before the general adoption of central heating, homes relied on fireplaces and stoves for warmth. In grand period homes, these were often supplemented by ornate radiators. Cast-iron radiators, once considered a symbol of wealth and

*Whitstable Stove Shop*



luxury, were, painstakingly designed to blend seamlessly with the room's decor. They were as much about form as they were about function, serving as exquisite examples of Victorian engineering and design.

With the introduction of central heating, the reliance on fireplaces diminished and radiators took on a more utilitarian role. In the modern era, however, cast-iron radiators have made a resurgence in period homes, celebrated for their vintage charm and even heat distribution. Restored originals or faithful reproductions are prized for their aesthetic contribution to period interiors.

#### Aga: The enduring icon of period kitchens

The Aga cooker is a beloved fixture in period kitchens, particularly in country homes. The brainchild of Swedish scientist Gustaf Dalén, Agas have been gracing kitchens since the 1920s, embodying the perfect blend of form and function. These iconic cookers are known for their distinctive cast-iron construction, radiant heat, and slow-cooking capabilities.

Agas often serve as focal points in the kitchen, with their classic design adding a touch of timeless elegance. They come in a range of colours, allowing homeowners to customise their Aga to suit the aesthetic of their period kitchen.



[agaliving.com](http://agaliving.com)





*Cast iron radiators, from £276, [thevictorianhouse.co.uk](http://thevictorianhouse.co.uk)*



### **The revival of period heating elements**

In the 21st century, period living has seen a resurgence in the appreciation of traditional heating elements. Many homeowners are retrofitting their homes with the elegance of the past while incorporating modern technology for efficiency.

High-efficiency wood burning models emit fewer emissions and provide an environmentally responsible way to heat a period home.

Radiators, too, are making their mark, both as functional heating elements and decorative accents. Modern cast-iron radiators offer the best of both worlds, marrying historic charm with contemporary heating technology. They are energy-efficient, ensuring that your period living space is cosy and environmentally responsible.

IN PERIOD LIVING, THE FIREPLACE TAKES CENTRE STAGE. IT'S NOT JUST A SOURCE OF WARMTH BUT A TESTAMENT TO CRAFTSMANSHIP AND DESIGN.

In summary, fireplaces play a vital role in creating the perfect period living space. Their timeless designs and rich histories make them not only functional but also deeply meaningful elements of your home. As we embrace the past while looking to the future, these iconic features continue to offer warmth, comfort, and a tangible connection to the generations that have come before us.

In their warm embrace we find a piece of history, an artistic masterpiece, and the very heart of a period home.

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# P OT T S

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# BETWEEN THE LINES

Despite the priority being on functionality, galley kitchens can also be beautiful spaces brimming with character.



Tall cupboards and wall units on both sides increase the feeling of being boxed in, but leaving one side low can be ideal if it opens into a wider living space. But that's not to say that you can't incorporate tall cabinets into one wall. In narrow rooms you need to utilise all available space.

**N**ot everyone is fortunate enough to have a large dining kitchen or an open-plan extension, but that doesn't mean that a small kitchen can't look great.

Most commonly found in Victorian terraced houses, galley kitchens are seen in homes up and down the country.

The name historically comes from the galleys of ships, and the compact galley-style kitchen can still be found on boats, submarines, and aircraft today. Their design principles are ergonomic, optimising the minimal space to maximise storage and work areas, making it easy to move around.



Pale, light-reflecting colours such as white and cream look best in a galley kitchen. However, this doesn't necessarily mean an all-white kitchen is the only option. Soft shades, like sage green, duck egg or soft neutrals work well in a small kitchen.

*Photo: Hogwood House*



Colours, materials, and finishes are important in any kitchen, but especially so when you're trying to enhance a tiny space like a classic galley kitchen. Common trends for kitchens of all sizes include light and neutral colour schemes, with natural materials like warm woods and granite or quartz.

The reflective nature of high gloss kitchen cabinets makes them an ideal choice for small kitchens, and galley kitchens are no exception. Alternatively, if you'd like your cabinetry to have a little more texture, Shaker-style kitchen cabinets can add some character. They're decorative enough to create visual interest without being overly ornamental or clashing with other décor, and Shaker kitchens are perfect for neutral palettes.

*Photos: Above - potts.ltd.uk*

*Right: whitecliffkitchens.co.uk*





*Photo: Bedroom & Kitchen Flair ([www.bedroomflair.co.uk](http://www.bedroomflair.co.uk))*

With a galley kitchen, you need to maximise every square inch of storage space. Consider open shelving like in the lovely galley kitchen shown above.

Just because your galley kitchen is small doesn't mean you can't create a calm and sophisticated atmosphere with carefully selected colours and materials. Too much detail can make a small kitchen feel cluttered even when the counters are clear,

so you'll need to put some thought into planning your fittings and accessories. Light is vital in making a narrow galley kitchen seem larger than it really is. Never underestimate the influence of strategic lighting. Layer your lights by installing task lighting in key areas – like spotlights or downlights underneath cupboards or shelves, or plinth lights at the base.

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# ELEVATING YOUR SLEEP EXPERIENCE

Beds are more than just pieces of furniture; they are the sanctuaries where we spend a significant portion of our lives. Our choice of beds, bedsteads, mattresses, and bedding has a profound impact on the quality of our sleep and, consequently, our overall well-being.



*Coniston four poster bed from £2,775 [neptune.com](http://neptune.com)*

In this comprehensive guide, we will delve into the world of beds and bedsteads, including mattresses and bedding, to help you make informed decisions that will transform your sleep experience into a blissful journey of relaxation and rejuvenation.

#### The Foundation: bedsteads

Let's start with the foundation of any comfortable bed - the bedstead. Bedsteads are not only functional but also contribute to the aesthetic appeal of your bedroom. They come in various styles, materials, and designs, catering to a wide range of tastes.

Wooden bedsteads are timeless and versatile, lending a warm and inviting feel to any bedroom. Whether you prefer the rustic charm of oak or the sleek lines of teak, wooden

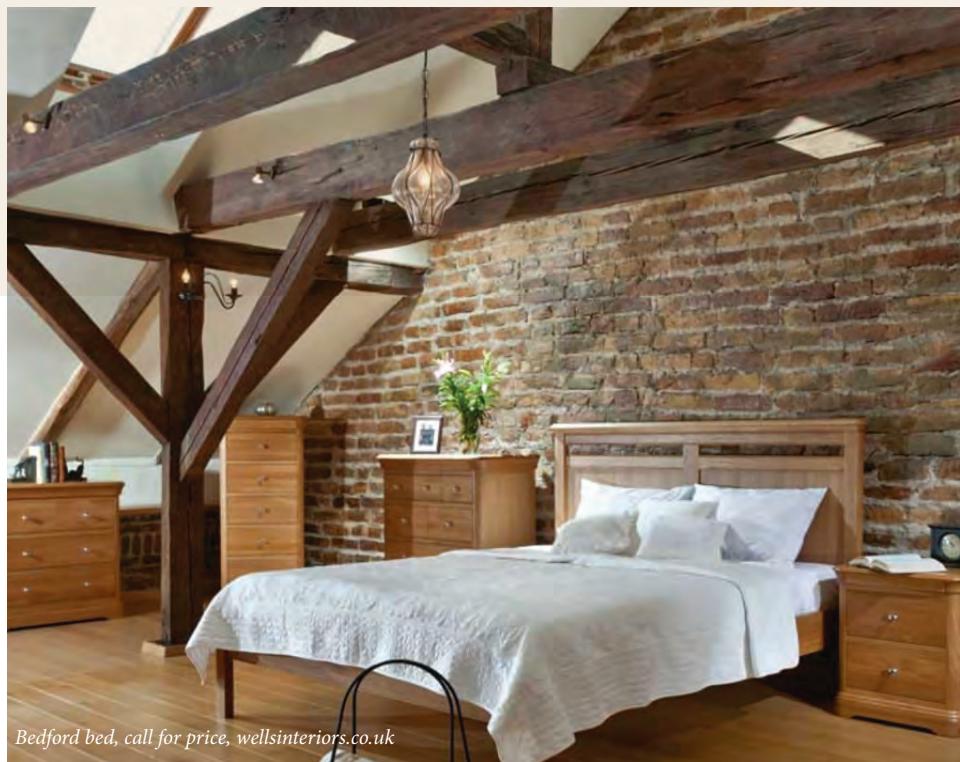
bedsteads can transform your sleeping space into a cosy, period-living friendly retreat.

For those with a penchant for modern aesthetics, metal bedsteads offer a sleek and minimalist design. The clean lines and durability of metal bedsteads make them a popular choice in contemporary bedrooms and provide an interesting contrast to the wood and beams of your period home.

Upholstered bedsteads add a touch of luxury and comfort to your bedroom. Choose from a variety of fabrics, colours, and textures to complement your interior design while enjoying the plushness they offer.

#### Mattresses: the key to comfort

While bedsteads set the stage, it's the mattress that plays the starring role in ensuring a good



*Bedford bed, call for price, wellsinteriors.co.uk*



*Ranger bed from £849, designerbeds ltd.co.uk*



*Ultimate mattress from £399, the-bedpost.co.uk*

night's sleep. Your choice of mattress can make or break your sleep quality, so it's essential to consider various factors.

Innerspring mattresses, with their coil support systems, offer excellent support and are known for their durability. They are available in various firmness levels to suit individual preferences.

Memory Foam Mattresses conform to your body's shape, providing exceptional comfort and support. They are particularly useful for relieving pressure points and minimising disturbances from a restless partner.

Combining the best of both worlds, hybrid mattresses feature a combination of innerspring coils and foam layers. This results in a comfortable, supportive, and responsive sleeping surface.

Testing a mattress before purchase is essential. Although you may have spotted a 'bargain' online, this is really not a product you can buy sight unseen. Find a quality business with an extensive showroom and take full advantage of their advice and trial periods before committing.

#### The importance of bedding

Once you've chosen your bedstead and mattress, it's time to consider bedding to complete the equation. High-quality bedding not only adds to the aesthetic appeal of your bed but also contributes to your overall sleep comfort.

Invest in high-thread-count sheets made from natural fibres like cotton or linen. They are not only soft and breathable but also durable, ensuring your sheets stay comfortable and last a long time.

The right pillow can make a world of difference in your sleep quality. Consider your

YOUR BED IS MORE THAN JUST A PIECE OF FURNITURE; IT'S WHERE YOU REJUVENATE AND RESTORE YOUR BODY AND MIND.

sleeping position when choosing the perfect pillow – side sleepers benefit from firm pillows, while back or stomach sleepers may prefer softer options.

Select duvets or comforters that provide the right amount of warmth and insulation for the season. Lightweight options are suitable for summer, while heavier ones are perfect for cooler nights.

Enhance your mattress's comfort with a mattress topper. Memory foam or feather toppers can add a luxurious layer of cushioning, while cooling toppers are perfect for those who suffer from hot flashes.

#### Creating your sleep oasis

With your bedstead, mattress, and bedding in place, it's time to turn your bedroom into a sleep oasis. Consider these additional elements to maximise your sleep quality:

#### LIGHTING:

Invest in dimmable, warm-coloured lighting to create a relaxing ambiance in the evening.

#### ROOM TEMPERATURE:

Maintain a cool, comfortable room temperature for optimal sleep.

#### DECLUTTER:

A tidy, clutter-free bedroom promotes a sense of calm and relaxation.

*Edie bedspread from £200 neptune.com*



*frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk*

Your bed is more than just a piece of furniture; it's where you rejuvenate and restore your body and mind. Making informed choices about your bedstead, mattress, and bedding can greatly enhance your sleep experience, leaving you refreshed and ready to face the day. So, when you next retire to your bedroom, remember that it's not just a place to sleep but a sanctuary of comfort and relaxation that you've carefully crafted to meet your unique needs and style.

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# WATCH THIS SPACE

## The art of household storage



Sideboard, £1225, [coxandcox.co.uk](http://coxandcox.co.uk)

In the fast-paced world we live in, the art of decluttering and organising your living space has become more crucial than ever. A well-organised home not only exudes a sense of tranquillity and order but also enhances the aesthetics of your living space. Household storage solutions like wardrobes, sideboards, cupboards, and under-bed storage play pivotal roles in achieving this harmony.

#### **Wardrobes: The heart of your bedroom**

Wardrobes are the unsung heroes of bedroom storage. They provide the ideal space for clothing, accessories and more, keeping your bedroom tidy and serene. When selecting a wardrobe, consider size, style, and functionality.

For smaller bedrooms, opt for a built-in wardrobe that maximises every inch of available space. Mirrored wardrobe doors can visually expand the room, making it feel more

spacious. Choose a style that complements your bedroom decor, be it classic, modern or rustic. Additionally, a combination of shelves, drawers and hanging space provides versatility in organisation.

There are a number of excellent companies in Kent who offer bespoke storage solutions. Options include reclaimed wood and authentic period styles, and the quality of these pieces is second to none.

#### **Sideboards: the art of display**

Sideboards are not only functional but also add elegance to your living room or dining area. These versatile pieces of furniture offer a perfect blend of storage and display space.

Invest in a sideboard that matches your interior design, whether it's cosy cottage core, gorgeous Georgian, or timeless Tudor! The top of the sideboard can be used for displaying





[neptune.com](http://neptune.com)

decorative items, family photos, or artwork, while the cupboards and drawers below keep your essentials hidden from view.

A well-organised sideboard can also serve as a bar or a buffet, making it a versatile addition to your home. Use trays and decorative containers to keep the interior neat and organised, and keep glassware, dishes, and table linens at your fingertips for entertaining.

#### Cupboards: hidden treasure troves

When we say cupboards, we mean anything from kitchen cupboards for dinnerware to linen cupboards in the bathroom. Utilise these spaces to their full potential by optimising the interior layout.

Kitchen cupboards can become a battleground for clutter if not organised properly. Use shelf dividers to separate pots,



*London Road Furniture*

pans and dishes. Install pull-out drawers for easy access. In a pantry cupboard, use transparent containers to keep dry goods visible and accessible. Label shelves to ensure items have a designated home.

Bathroom cupboards can house a mix of beauty and grooming supplies. Use clear containers to keep smaller items like makeup and toiletries visible and add a lazy Susan to help you access products in the back of deep cupboards with ease.

#### **Under-bed storage: a space-saving solution**

Under the bed is often either untapped space or a cacophony of clutter. Investing in under-bed storage containers or drawers to make the most of this space is an absolute game-changer. These storage solutions are perfect for items that are not used frequently, such as seasonal clothing, extra bedding, or off-season sports equipment.

Consider using storage containers with

wheels for easy access. If your bed is too low to accommodate storage containers, you can purchase bed risers to create additional space underneath. Additionally, invest in a bed skirt that conceals the containers and adds an elegant touch to your bedroom decor.

#### **Tips for effective household storage**

- **Declutter:** To maintain an organised home, periodically assess and declutter your belongings. Donate or sell items you no longer need.
- **Label everything:** Labelling is the secret to maintaining an organised household. Invest in a label maker or use stylish labels to ensure everything has a designated place. It's a big job to start with, but a truly worthwhile use of your time in the long run.
- **Maximise vertical space:** Install shelves or use wall-mounted storage units to make the most of vertical space. This is particularly effective in small rooms.



*Wells Interiors*

- **Multi-functional furniture:** Consider furniture pieces with hidden storage, like ottomans with storage compartments, coffee tables with built-in shelving, or tables that fold up into the wall.
- **Create zones:** Designate specific zones for different types of items. For example, create a postal station near your front door to handle incoming and outgoing post.

It can be tough juggling home life, work life and your best life! Household storage is not just about hiding clutter, it's about enhancing your living space and simplifying your daily life. With the right storage solutions, you can turn your home from chaos to calm. Organise, declutter, and make the most of your space, and you'll find that a well-organised home is a haven of peace and productivity.



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### YOU WILL NEED:

- Ladder • Stiff-bristled brush • Secateurs
- Binoculars • Drill • Screwdriver • Gutter grid and clips • Scissors

#### ■ SWEEP AWAY MOSS

Sweep the build up away with a stiff-bristled brush once a year.

#### ■ CUT BACK CLIMBING PLANTS

Keep climbing plants in check. If left to grow, rambling roses creep between tiles and ivy can disturb and dislodge tiles.

#### ■ INSPECT ROOF WITH BINOCULARS

Look for slipped tiles and check the ridge carefully. Try to spot any compromised flashing and mortar.

#### ■ DEAL WITH SLIPPED TILES

It can be easier to move slipped tiles by inserting wooden wedges to raise, then lift the nib of the broken tile clear of the batten.

#### ■ CHECK WHEN RAINING

Watch how the roof copes. Make a note of where there are sagging gutters and interruptions to the flow of water.

#### ■ CLEAR DEBRIS IN GUTTERS

First stuff a rag into the gutter outlet to stop debris going into the downpipe. A plastic bottle shaped into a scoop is ideal for clearing waste. If rain cascades from the top of a downpipe, lift out the litter from the gutter outlet rather than pushing it down. When you've fished out what you can, take a short length of hosepipe and push it into the downpipe to make sure no blockages remain.

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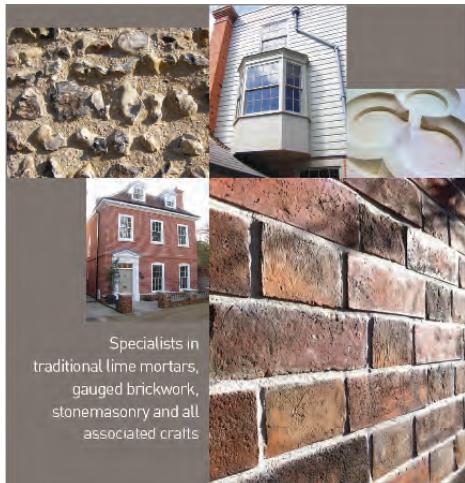
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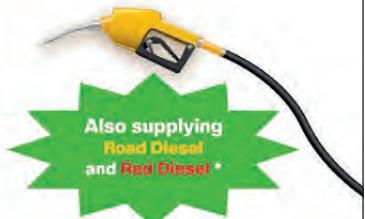
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# Can I be stopped from seeing my grandchild?



With so much financial pressure on parents of children and the fact that in the UK, we pay more for our childcare as a proportion of income than anywhere else in the world, never have extended family been a more important part of raising our young. Grandparents and grandchildren can have exceptionally strong bonds and a very different enriching relationship with each other.

In circumstances where parents are separating, one reoccurring question arises: what do grandparents do when they want to enjoy the same quality of time with their grandchildren and they experience resistance from one or both parents?

It is tempting for many people to reach first

for the obvious answer – that this is something which can be resolved efficiently by a court. However, particularly within the last five years, a number of disadvantages have become apparent as the way these matters are handled within the legal system has changed:

- Simple contact matters are commonly dealt with by Magistrates who have no specific legal training. Allied with this, it can be difficult to request a transfer of a case to a Judge. Often cases before Magistrates are not handled efficiently;
- In some areas of the country at present, hearings can be removed from the diary up until the day of the hearing. This can cause a lot of stress and wasted costs. It is

predominantly because there aren't enough Judges of Magistrates to hear matters;

- Cases are taking longer and longer to get to hearings and it is harder to process paperwork for cases or track progress as the Ministry of Justice seek to save costs in a variety of ways.

Added with this, going to court to try to discuss contact matters in any circumstances can be an experience where it is common for all parties to feel like their relationship is worse after proceedings than before it. This is largely because the court system by nature pits one party against the other. Parents and grandparents are left free, or even encouraged to raise allegations and air their grievances which can be difficult to heal when the court building is firmly in the rear-view mirror.

The problems which have arisen within any family dynamic preventing grandparent contact will be unique. As a result, it is worth thinking first about whether anyone trusted by parents and grandparents alike could help 'mediate' a solution, either professionally or more informally. Hopefully, attitudes will not have hardened to make this impossible or too tense an experience to contemplate. If there is only one resistant parent, contact can be managed with the grandparents having contact whilst their own child does, although this isn't ideal. If there is no alternative, normally when both parents resist contact, grandparents can issue proceedings at court. It is worth remembering before embarking on this that grandparents do not have a right to see a grandchild. Therefore, unless court pressure or negotiation can shift attitudes, a court can't force a parent to make a child available to spend time with a grandparent.

Furthermore, in order for an application for contact to succeed to a full hearing, grandparents will need to apply to a Judge for permission to issue an application. At a preliminary hearing, in order to accede to such a request, the court will have to consider:

- The grandparents' relationship with the grandchild
- The nature of the application
- If contact with the grandparents would be harmful in any way to the child
- If continuing the contact with the grandparents would impact negatively on the rest of the family.

It takes extensive practical as well as legal experience to advise comprehensively in these circumstances because the important issues are not wholly legal. Grandparents may ask themselves (as parents do before issuing contact cases in court) 'Do I risk making my relationship worse with my family in applying to court?', and 'Are the dynamics of our family such that more informal ways of discussing things are more likely to work'.

Court proceedings can lead to lasting compromise if the parties are willing and evidence is obtained and presented with the best interests of the child or children involved. The best way to do this is to employ the considerable skill of an expert, to avoid the bear traps along the way.

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# SMALLHYTHE PLACE

## A hidden gem in the heart of Kent

Discover actor Ellen Terry's early 16th-century house, its cottage garden and Barn Theatre in Smallhythe near Tenterden. ([nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/smallhythe-place](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/smallhythe-place))



**T**he dwelling at Smallhythe was originally known as 'Port House'.

It lay close to the River Rother before the river and sea receded, providing a thriving shipyard ('hythe' meaning 'landing place' in Old English). This waterway served the kings Henry V and Henry VIII, who had large ships built there including The Great Gallyon of 1546. Later in the 16th century when the sea-access began silting up so local craftsmen had to look elsewhere for work.

The Tudor house was later bought by leading Victorian actress Ellen Terry in 1899. Ellen gave use of the property's Priest's House to her daughter Edy Craig who followed her mother's path into theatre as a producer and costume designer. Edy also founded and managed the Pioneer Players from 1911 until 1926 – a theatre society staging innovative plays, particularly around the topic of women's suffrage, in London.

The house was opened to the public by Terry's



daughter in 1929, as a memorial to her mother, showcasing both personal mementos as well as letters collected from a national appeal after her mother's death. The National Trust supported Craig in her running of the museum from 1939 and took over the property when she died in 1947. It was designated as a Grade II listed building by English Heritage on 8 May 1950.

### Barn Theatre

A large wooden barn, has been converted to a theatre. The 70-seat theatre hosts around 30 productions a year.

### The Ellen Terry costume collection

In addition to a wealth of personal ephemera, Smallhythe Place also hosts an archive of Terry's role in the Aesthetic Movement and the role she played in the design of her stage wardrobe. The Costume Room displays a selection of sumptuous costumes dating from Terry's time at the Lyceum Theatre, in particular three costumes from Henry Irving's spectacular production of *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Lyceum Theatre and the iridescent beetle-wing dress she wore as Lady Macbeth in 1888 designed by Alice Comyns Carr.



### Dame Ellen Terry

Ellen Terry was one of the first modern stars of the British stage. A contemporary of Eleonora Duse and Sarah Bernhardt, she acted opposite Henry Irving at the Lyceum Theatre. Her portrait was painted by the leading artists of her day, GF Watts and John Singer Sargent. A hard-working performer, she toured the UK and USA with the Lyceum company and later lectured in the UK, USA and Australia on Shakespeare's female characters. A generous-hearted and free-spirited woman, she was ahead of her time in many ways.



## Tanyard and Tanyard Cottage, Boughton Monchelsea

A stunning Grade II listed Wealden Hall house.

This impressive Grade II Listed Hall house occupies an elevated position on a sought-after country lane. Believed to date from the 1500s with later additions the property sits in stunning grounds of approximately 9 acres of lawn, orchard, woodland and a kitchen garden. A detached cottage is included in the estate together with a three-bay garage, workshop, greenhouse and tennis court.

Exposed stone walls, stone inglenook fireplaces with oak bressumer beams, stone hearths and polished stone floors together with oak exposed beams and timbers, wide board

flooring, latch doors and solid wood staircases are among the numerous period features throughout this striking home. Spanning three floors the accommodation consists of a double aspect entrance hall with panelled wood door and brick floor, a double aspect drawing room with open fireplace, sitting room, also with an open fireplace; a double aspect dining room with stone floor which opens into a double aspect snug, a kitchen/breakfast room with Sandstone floor, granite worktops, built-in appliances, a stainless-steel splash back and a door to the terrace. Included on the ground floor there is a cloakroom, a utility room and a





boiler/boot room with door to outside. Two staircases lead to the first floor where there is a principal suite comprising a double aspect double bedroom, dressing room and bath/shower room, there are a further two double aspect double bedrooms each with ensuite bathrooms whilst an additional double bedroom has an ensuite bathroom accessed via a flight of stairs which also leads to an attic store. A further bedroom suite is located on the second floor providing a double bedroom, sitting area and shower room accessed via a further staircase.

A barn was converted to create a detached cottage offering an open-plan ground floor layout of a kitchen/living room, a staircase leads to a double bedroom, a further single bedroom and a family bathroom, ideal for multi-generational living or as a source of income.

## The details

Entrance Hall | Drawing Room | Sitting Room | Dining Room | Snug | Kitchen/Breakfast Room | Utility Room | Cloakroom  
Boiler Room | Principal Bedroom Suite  
Four Further Double Bedrooms, All Ensuite | Attic Store | Detached Cottage | Kitchen/Living Area | Two Bedrooms  
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### SATURDAY: 2nd

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

### SUNDAY: 3rd

Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells

### MONDAY: 4th

Reuthe's (Sevenoaks)

### TUESDAY: 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

### WEDNESDAY: 6th, 13th,

20th & 27th Rye

### THURSDAY: 7th, 14th,

21st & 28th

Hastings; Rolvenden; Shipbourne

### SATURDAY: 9th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells

### SUNDAY: 10th

Elham; Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells; Staplehurst

### SATURDAY: 16th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

### SUNDAY: 17th

Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

### SATURDAY: 23rd

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

### SUNDAY: 24th & 31st

Tunbridge Wells

## JANUARY

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

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

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

Rye

### THURSDAY: 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th

Hastings; Rolvenden; Shipbourne

### SATURDAY: 6th

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend;

Penshurst; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks);

Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

### SUNDAY: 7th

Tunbridge Wells

### SATURDAY: 13th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe;

Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;

Tunbridge Wells

### SUNDAY: 14th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge;

Tunbridge Wells

### SATURDAY: 20th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend;

Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;

Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

### SUNDAY: 21st

Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst;

Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

### SATURDAY: 27th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe;

Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks;

Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

### SUNDAY: 28th

Cliftonville; Tunbridge Wells

## FEBRUARY

### THURSDAY: 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th

Hastings; Rolvenden; Shipbourne

### SATURDAY: 3rd

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

### SUNDAY: 4th

Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells

### SATURDAY: 10th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells

### SUNDAY: 11th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells

### SATURDAY: 17th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

### SUNDAY: 18th

Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

### SATURDAY: 24th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

### SUNDAY: 27th

Cliftonville; Tunbridge Wells





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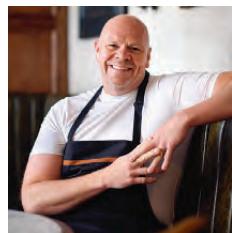
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# PUB KITCHEN

## Tom Kerridge

“British pub food has come so far over the past decade and it’s been really exciting to see. In celebration, I’ve taken the most popular items on the menus in brilliant modern British pubs and given them a few fresh twists. This is food for everyone – it’s the food I’m excited about, it’s the food I like to cook at home, and I hope you enjoy it too.”



SERVES  
**2**

### YOU WILL NEED

2 poussins  
30g butter, softened  
4 sage leaves, finely chopped  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

#### *Marsala sauce*

30g butter  
2 banana shallots, finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, thinly sliced  
150ml Marsala  
200ml chicken stock  
8 sage leaves, finely chopped  
200ml double cream

#### *Garnish*

1 tbsp olive oil  
1 tbsp butter  
A handful of sage leaves

### ROASTED POUSSIN WITH MARSALA & SAGE SAUCE

### METHOD

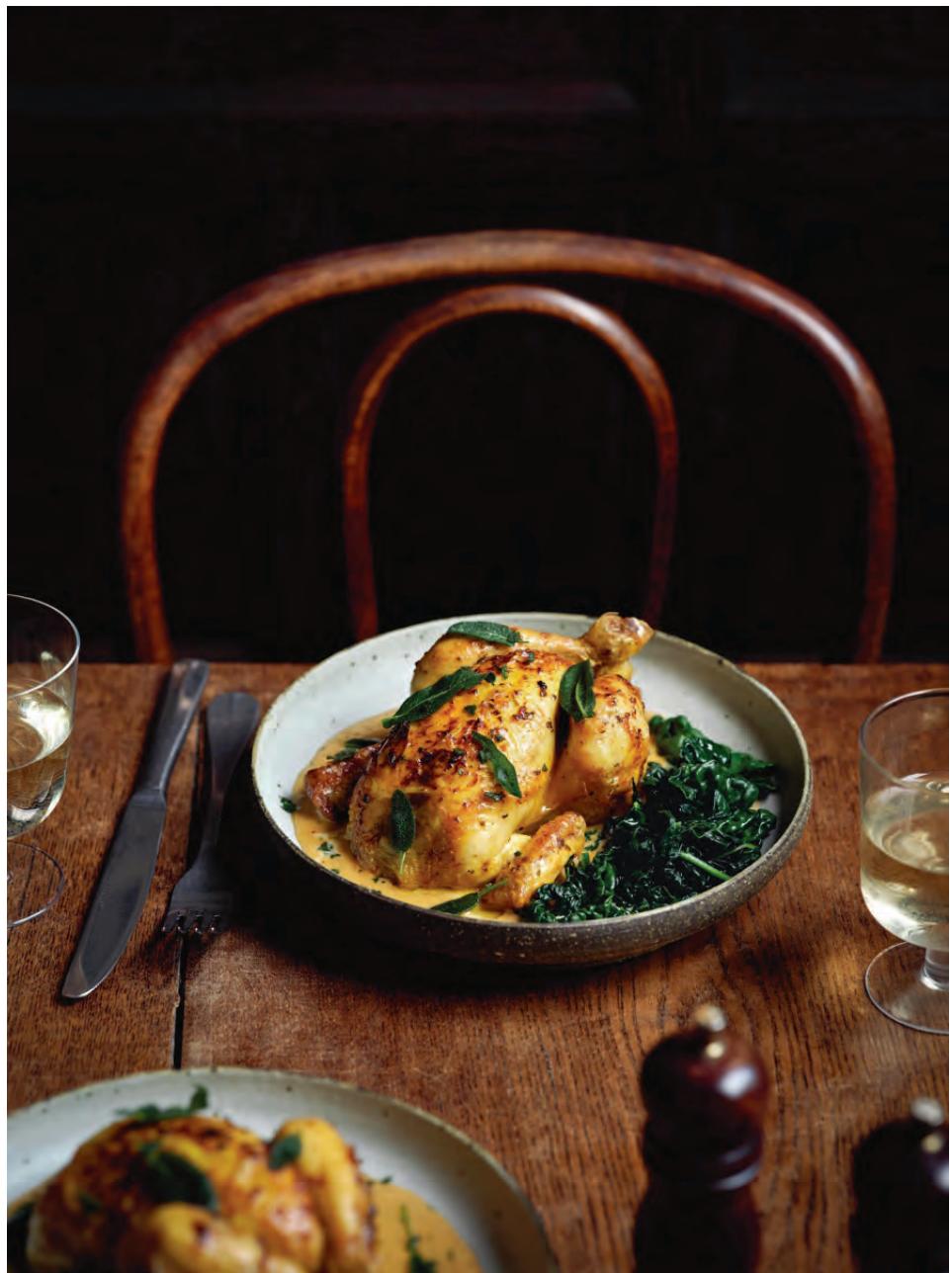
Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6.

Place the poussins in individual oven dishes. Mix the softened butter with the chopped sage and season with salt and pepper. Rub the sage butter all over the poussins. Roast on the middle shelf of the oven for 35-40 minutes or until the skin is golden and crisp and the poussins are cooked through.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. Heat the butter in a sauté pan until melted and foaming, then add the shallots and garlic, stir well and cook for 3-4 minutes to soften. Add the Marsala and simmer until it is reduced by half. Pour in the chicken stock and simmer until the liquor is reduced by half again. Add the chopped sage, stir in the cream and simmer until the sauce thickens. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Remove the poussins from the oven and set aside to rest in a warm place for 5-10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil and butter in a small frying pan over a medium heat. When the butter is melted and foaming, add the sage leaves and cook until crispy. Remove from the heat.

Transfer the poussins to warmed shallow serving bowls, spoon the Marsala sauce around them and scatter over the crispy sage leaves. Serve with some cavolo nero or other leafy green vegetable on the side.



“I love poussins, not least because everyone gets their own little bird. Marsala (a wine fortified with brandy) adds a sweet, nutty note to the creamy sauce and gives the dish a rich, wintry flavour. The crispy sage garnish is a lovely finishing touch.”

Tom Kerridge has spent a lifetime perfecting next-level pub cooking. In *Pub Kitchen* he distils that knowhow into 100 super-tasty recipes for home cooks. Taking inspiration from modern gastropubs, Tom's recipes are simple, contemporary and delicious.

SERVES  
**4**

## YOU WILL NEED

1 tbsp softened butter to grease the dishes  
100g plain white flour, plus 1tbsp to dust  
100ml dark rum  
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda  
150g pitted dates, chopped  
85g vegetable suet  
85g soft dark brown sugar  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
2 large free-range eggs

### *Toffee sauce*

200ml double cream  
100g soft dark brown sugar  
75g butter  
A small pinch of salt

### *To finish*

2 small bananas  
2 tbsp demerara sugar

## STICKY DATE AND BANANA PUDDINGS

## METHOD

Brush 4 individual ovenproof dishes (250ml capacity) with the softened butter and dust lightly with flour, shaking out any excess.

Pour the rum and 100ml water into a saucepan and bring to the boil, then take off the heat and add the bicarbonate of soda and dates. Pop a lid on the pan and leave to standn for 10-15 minutes to allow the dates to soak up the liquid and cool down.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4.

Tip the dates and liquid into a large bowl and add the flour, suet, brown sugar, vanilla extract and eggs. Beat until evenly combined. Spoon the mixture into the prepared dishes and bake in the oven for 30-35 minutes until golden brown.l

Meanwhile, to make the toffee sauce, pour the cream into a saucepan and add the brown sugar, butter and salt. Place over a low heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved, then bring to the boil. Simmer for 2-3 minutes, then remove from the heat.

Peel and thinly slice the bananas. Once you've removed the puddings from the oven, arrange the banana slices, overlapping, around the edge of each dish. Sprinkle the banana slices liberally with demerara sugar and run a cook's blowtorch over them to caramelise the sugar.

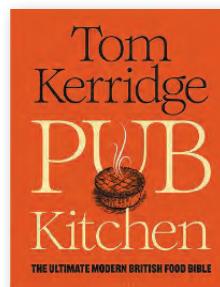
Serve the date and banana puddings with the toffee sauce in a jug on the side.

*Recipes from Pub Kitchen:*

*The Ultimate Modern British Food Bible*

*by Tom Kerridge.*

*Bloomsbury Publishing.*





“This naughty, boozy pud is one of our pub classics. Sticky, caramelised bananas shine alongside a sweet date pudding, and the easy-to-make toffee sauce served alongside takes it to another level of indulgence.”

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH WINE

Until the 1980s, producing wine in England was almost unheard of – yes there were a few vineyards in the South East making thin, sharp, white wines, but most of these were not memorable at all.

If you remember the 1980s, the trend in England was for sweet German wines such as Liebfraumilch – yes – I used to be a fan, and so we took a leaf out of their book and added sweetened grape juice to our sharp white wines to make them more palatable. But it didn't really work in the same way did it? Our cool climate and lack of viticultural experience just wasn't hitting the spot.

## The birth of our sparkling wine

But suddenly, in the late 1980s, we discovered that much of the soil in the North and South Downs was very similar to that of Champagne and, with a similar, cool climate too, it was perfect conditions for making top quality sparkling wine. This discovery kickstarted the so-called 'Nyetimber effect', closely followed by Ridgeview and we haven't looked back since. Our sparkling wines quite rapidly started to gain an international reputation, winning numerous awards and we are now seen by the rest of the world as sparkling wine specialists.

Such is the international recognition of our sparkling wines that even the French

have taken an interest in investing in our land with a view to wine production and of course that can only be good news. However, France and the rest of Europe have a very strict system of what grapes can be planted where according to a hierarchy based on price and quality. Britain, at the moment, does not have a tight, regulated system which means that vineyard owners can experiment with grape varieties and blends as there are no specific 'rules' to say what is not allowed and although some might like to see the development of a 'cru' system – it may actually stifle the creativity which we presently enjoy.

Although our still wines don't have quite the same international reputation, they are improving consistently and the domestic following is growing all the time. This has created a new wave of vineyards springing up everywhere from Cornwall to Yorkshire with the greatest concentration in the South East and East Anglia. Today there are nearly 900 vineyards and close to 200 wineries operating in England, with over 10,000 acres of land under vine, an increase of 70 per cent in over just five years – (since 2018).

## How has the climate affected our vines?

We know that the UK has already warmed by 1°C since around the 1950s. We can see this in observations from our land-based weather stations, but there are a lot of other ways we can observe this change:

- Increased temperature in coastal seas around the UK
- Less frost and snow
- Longer and more frequent warm and hot spells
- Shorter and less frequent cold spells
- Breaking many high temperature records

Warmer weather means that varieties like Chardonnay, Bacchus and even Pinot Noir can fully ripen and are now the dominant varieties in our southern vineyards so to a large extent, that is good news. But England, like other parts of Europe, can still be hit by vicious Spring frosts, such as those in 2017, which caused an enormous amount of damage. Spring frost will actually cause a lot more damage to vines that have had a mild winter as opposed to a colder winter as the buds

are more developed and therefore vulnerable.

So, although it seems that the warming up of the climate is good news – caution and expert vineyard management is needed to cope with our somewhat unpredictable climate.

## Location, location, location

When vineyards starting springing up everywhere in the post Nyetimber boom, often it was a patch of farmland that was unused and

so owners thought – oh why not plant some vines? However, a lot of this land was heavy, clay soil, not the best as when it rains, the soil gets waterlogged as it doesn't drain well and this is not good news for vines at all.

Another bad choice is sites that are windy and North facing – all vines in the Northern hemisphere are south facing (except in the warmest regions such as the Douro in Portugal) – maximising the sunlight available. However, over time, would-be vineyard owners became more knowledgeable as to the best sites and locations for vines to flourish and most of the North and South Downs in Southern England is not only a great location, but has some of the best soils for the grape varieties grown.

*Rowena Hawtin DipWset*

### What are the best soils?

A ring of chalk and limestone runs around the Paris basin and extends across the Channel to the cliffs of Dover into southern England. These soils of limestone and chalk not only drain well but reflect heat back to the vine which aids ripening – absolutely perfect. But it is not only limestone and chalk soils, we also have well drained gravel beds – ideal for retaining the heat of the sun as well as greensands and sandy clay which pop up in Kent and Sussex – this new wave of vineyard owners know how to exploit these conditions to produce the best wine possible. English wine has now come of age in producing world class wines and it's set to get better and better. Why not pay a visit to your local vineyard and celebrate our fabulous English wines.

# FESTIVE COCKTAILS

As family and friends come together to eat drink and be merry,  
let this collection of drinks guide you through advent  
right up to the new year. and beyond.



## IRISH FLIP

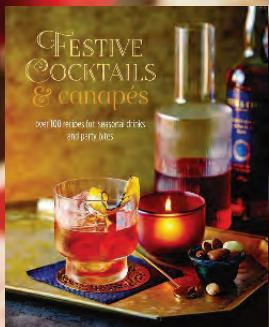
The flip is one of the oldest categories of mixed drinks – here we see an Irish take on the classic. Flips were originally served hot, but this drink works equally well cold. Similar to eggnog, it's a good drink to serve after a meal.

**50ml whiskey**  
**25ml stout reduction syrup**  
**1 whole egg**  
**10ml Pedro Ximenez sherry**  
**freshly grated nutmeg, to garnish**

Add all the drink ingredients to a cocktail shaker with a scoop of ice. Garnish with freshly grated nutmeg.

*\* To make the stout reduction syrup:*  
**500ml dark stout (such as Guinness)**  
**250ml demara sugar.**

Put the stout in a saucepan, and simmer over a medium heat for 30-40 minutes until the volume is reduced. Remove from the heat and allow to cool before bottling and refrigerating. Use as directed and within 1 month.



Recipes taken from *Festive Cocktails & Canapés*, published by Ryland Peters & Small (£14.99). Photography Ryland Peters & Small.

### SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

Forget the milk and gingerbread cookies – this is what Santa really wants to find when he calls at your home this holiday season.

20ml Pedro Ximenez sherry

15ml ginger wine

15ml freshly squeezed orange juice

well-chilled Prosecco, to top

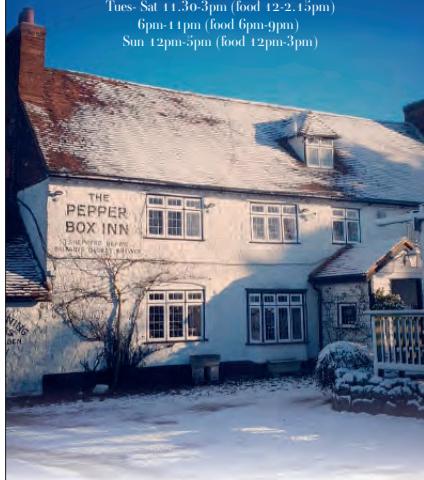
strip of orange zest, to garnish

Put the sherry, ginger wine and orange juice in a cocktail shaker and add a handful of ice cubes. Shake well and strain into a chilled Champagne flute. Top up with Prosecco. Squeeze the orange zest strip in half lengthways so that the essential oils in the skin spritz on to the drink, then drop it in. Serve immediately.

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## MERRY & BRIGHT

Come celebrate the festive season with us. With open log fires and twinkling lights amongst the oak beams, there is nothing quite like Christmas at the Pepperbox Inn.

### STARTERS

Sweet potato, parsnip & ginger soup, crispy shallots  
Potted salmon, pickled cucumber, toast  
Smoked ham croquettes, spiced apple relish  
Baked brie with walnuts, cranberries & honey, toast

### MAIN COURSES

Traditional roast turkey, sausage meat & bacon stuffing, duck fat roast potatoes & gravy  
Pan fried pheasant breast, Brambuie, mushroom & chervil cream sauce, potato terrine  
Slow cooked beef feather blade, red wine sauce, coleslaw mash, parsnip crisps

Pan fried seabass fillet, crab ravioli, dill butter sauce  
Chestnut mushroom & cavolo nero risotto, toasted hazelnuts

### DESSERTS

Christmas pudding & brandy sauce  
Spiced rum glazed pineapple, lime syrup, coconut ice cream  
Chocolate & caramel biscuit truffle torte, baileys ice cream  
Blood orange & amaretti trifle  
Cheeseboard, biscuits, plum chutney (£2 supplement)

### BOOK NOW FOR CHRISTMAS

#### PRICING PER HEAD

2 Course (mid week only) £25.00  
3 Course £33.50

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