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Contents



6 **Spring gardening**
What to do in the garden now

9 **Alfresco living**
The art of designing your dream outdoor kitchen

17 **Kitchen gardens**
How to create yours

28 **The gateway to your perfect home**
Choosing the perfect gate

36 **Doors, porches and canopies**
Transform your living space

45 **Artist profile**
We talk to Art Conservator, Rachel Witt

49 **The rise of media walls**
Transforming homes into entertainment havens

60 **Upscale vanity units**
...for period homes

88 **Farmers' markets**
Shop fresh and local this spring

90 **Spring recipes**
Two recipes from Kitchen Sanctuary by Nicky Corbishley

94 **Rowena's wine column**
The Tudor Peacock, Chilham





The delights of wild garlic

When picking wild garlic, try to pick the leaves (the bulbs have no culinary purpose). After you've brought your freshly picked wild garlic home give it a quick wash, pat the leaves dry and then refrigerate in a sealed bag. Use within a couple of days. The early shoots work as salad leaves; the stem can be used like a thick chive; the flowers make a beautiful garnish and the seed pods can be added to a salad.



PARSNIP PLANNING

A fantastic winter veg, roast dinners wouldn't be the same without parsnips. March – April is the best time to sow parsnips. You need deep, free-draining soil, preferably sandy. If your soil isn't suitable, consider growing in raised beds. You can start to harvest roots as soon as they reach 2cm across, from July/August onwards, but leave the majority for winter.

Garden notes

Whether you're a seasoned pro or green-fingered novice, prepping your garden for spring is a pretty joyous experience. Between March and April is the perfect time to begin spring gardening and to slowly awaken your plot from its winter slumber.



Delphiniums at Godinton

8th - 23rd June: A celebration of Godinton's magnificent Delphinium collection in the Walled Garden. Members of the Delphinium Society will be on hand to offer expert advice and have plants for sale between 1pm and 4pm. Entry tickets are priced at £8 for adults (under 16s go free) godintonhouse.co.uk

KENT GARDEN SHOW

The Kent Garden Show will take place on Saturday, Sunday & Bank holiday Monday 25th, 26th & 27th May 2024. The show will feature around 300 exhibitors. Main features will include the floral marquees with their stunning displays, including medal winners from Chelsea. As well as the numerous nurseries in attendance there will be exhibitors selling garden furniture, water features, garden sheds and buildings, tools, sculptures, pots, bbqs, metalwork and more. (kentgardenshow.com)



What to plant now

Annual gazanias can be sown from seed in March in pots or trays filled up with seed compost. Since the seeds require heat to germinate, you will need to place them either in a heated propagator or wrap the pots in clear plastic bags (seated on a warm windowsill). Once the seedlings have grown big enough to handle, you can transplant them into individual pots and leave them to harden off outdoors during the warmer days. Planting them outside should be done after the last frosts.

Sweet perfection

Few annual flowers have the lasting appeal of sweet peas. They make great flowers for gardens and bouquets. Sweet peas are happiest with their heads in the sun and their roots in deep cool, moist soil. When possible plant low-growing annuals in front of them to shade their roots. Prior to planting dig a nice deep compost trench of about 4 inches in depth. Soak the seeds in water for 24 hours, then nick them with a nail file before planting to speed sprouting. Once out in the open they will need support. Feed and cut them almost every day in May and June.



What to do in the garden now

- Clear up flower beds and borders
- Clean your greenhouse
- Sow seeds that need a longer season
- Tie your trees
- Plant primulas, polyanthus, pansies or dwarf irises and mini daffs – they are all hard enough to be outdoors now
- Keep on top of weeds while the beds are still empty
- Plant shrubs and perennials
- Cut your lawn – put the mower on a high cut for the first few times, gradually lowering the height as the grass grows more
- Don't be tempted to buy summer bedding just yet, as a late frost could kill them. Wait to give your plants a better chance.

Divide & rule

Now is the perfect time to divide water lilies – something you need to do every few years to maintain their vigour. Remove the tubers from the basket and cut them into 8-10cm lengths, making sure each section has at least one bud. Repot in aquatic compost and you'll soon have new plants.





Newnham Court Shopping Village

Spring project Inspiration at Newnham Court Shopping Village

Let's start with your garden, patio or balcony, get ready in style with an extensive range of gardening essentials at Notcutts. From flowers, seeds, bulbs, shrubs, plants and trees to lawn care, they have everything you need. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just starting out, knowledgeable staff are on hand to offer expert advice and guidance.

Is your pond in need of some tender loving care? Look no further than the dedicated staff at Maidenhead Aquatics, where you'll find all you need to keep your pond pristine and your fish happy. From water treatments, pumps and liners to plants. There's a huge selection of fish too.

Dreaming of a beautiful conservatory or orangery? Visit the show centres and gain expert advice with quality installations you can trust from Fineline Windows, Doors and Conservatories.



Explore the range of garden buildings & offices at Johnsons large show centre. And for the ultimate in luxury, why not indulge in a hot tub too?! Turn your garden into a private paradise and unwind in style. For decking materials and fencing see Timberjacks Fencing. Their installation services help you create a stunning outdoor retreat that's perfect for relaxing and entertaining.

Transform your kitchen or bathroom today! Visit the Granite Transformations showroom inside the village for worktops that are made to perfectly cover your existing worktop with no disruption or demolition.

Assisted Bathing & Disabled Bathroom
Experts AHM Installations are the specialists in accessible bathrooms, with expert advice and design detail for stylish, accessible bathrooms.

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**Newnham Court
Shopping Village**

ALFRESCO LIVING

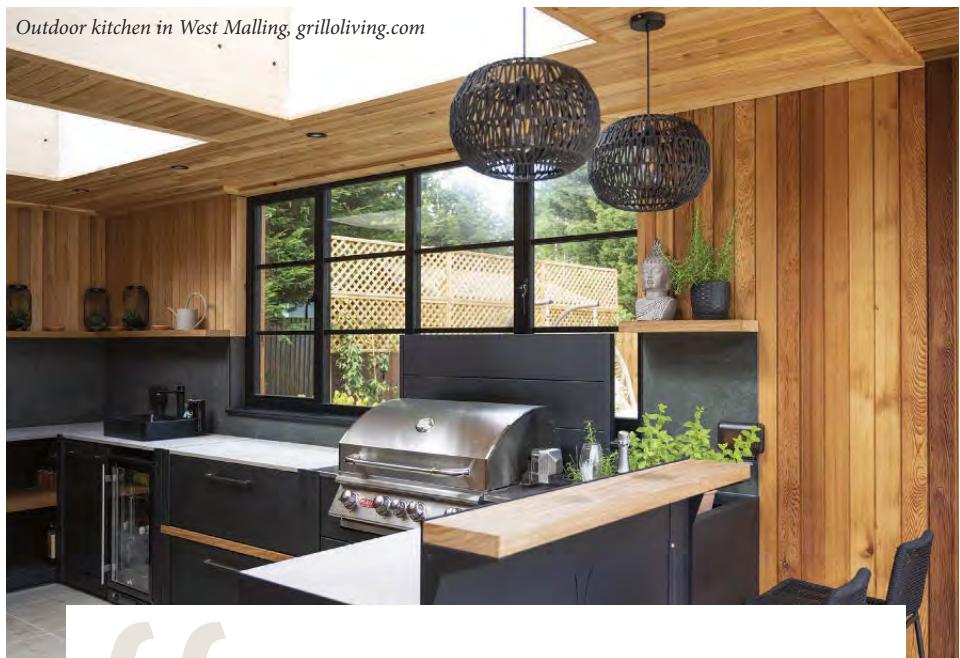
The art of designing your dream outdoor kitchen

In recent years the popularity of outdoor kitchens has soared,
transforming backyards into culinary sanctuaries.



Above: gardenhousedesign.co.uk

Left: Big Green Egg, macknade.com



6

OUTDOOR KITCHENS OR BBQ KITCHENS ARE THE VERY BEST WAY TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR OUTSIDE SPACE AND THE TIME WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY.



From sizzling barbecues and wood-fired ovens to stylish furniture, resilient worktops, and thoughtful accessories, this article explores the key elements that elevate your outdoor kitchen experience, turning it into a haven where gastronomy meets nature. Outdoor kitchens or BBQ kitchens are the very best way to make the most of your outside space and the time with your friends and family.

BBQs: grilling with flare

The heart of any outdoor kitchen is undoubtedly the cooking medium. If you're a fan of the traditional smoky tastes associated with outdoor dining, then you can do no better than a good old-fashioned BBQ. From the simplicity of charcoal to the precision of gas and the aromatic charm of pellet grills, the choices are as diverse as your culinary aspirations. Imagine the symphony of flavours emanating from a well-seasoned steak on a charcoal grill or the convenience of a gas grill firing up at the push of a button. Modern BBQs go beyond mere functionality, incorporating smart technology for temperature control, ensuring your grilling endeavours are a seamless, delectable success. Customisation options abound, allowing you to match your BBQ to the aesthetic of your outdoor space, ensuring that the culinary centrepiece of your kitchen reflects both your style and grilling preferences.

Outdoor ovens: a culinary renaissance

For those who yearn for the artisanal touch in their outdoor culinary adventures, the outdoor oven is a fantastic addition. The enchanting dance of flames in a wood-fired oven lends a cosy, exotic atmosphere to any party, and

transforms pizza-making into an art form, rendering crispy crusts and perfectly melted cheese. Of course, although a popular choice, the outdoor oven is not limited to pizza; its multifunctional capabilities extend to roasting, baking, and even smoking, bringing versatility to your open-air kitchen. Considerations in installation, fuel sources, and maintenance play crucial roles in selecting the right outdoor oven for your space, so we recommend consulting an expert, and engaging the services of professional installers.

Furniture: where comfort

meets alfresco elegance

Dining alfresco reaches new heights with carefully chosen outdoor furniture. From expansive dining sets for communal feasts, to cosy lounges that invite relaxation, your choices in outdoor furniture set the stage for memorable gatherings. Weather-resistant materials such as teak, wrought iron, or durable synthetics ensure longevity, while cushions and textiles add a touch of luxury. Stylish storage solutions, like cabinets and shelves, not only provide organisation but also enhance the aesthetic appeal of your outdoor kitchen. If you intend to get a lot of use from your outdoor furniture, then it really is worth splashing out on bespoke furniture from a master craftsman. This allows you to tailor the look and feel of your outdoor space, creating an atmosphere that seamlessly blends comfort with elegance.

Worktops: crafting aesthetic

and practical surfaces

The worktop, a rarely considered yet crucial component of your outdoor kitchen, dictates the functionality and aesthetic coherence of your space. Granite, with its timeless allure,

adds sophistication, while stainless steel embraces modernity with a sleek finish. Concrete, versatile and resilient, offers a contemporary touch. The choice of material depends on your preferences and the demands of your culinary adventures. Maintaining worktops is vital to ensuring longevity and visual appeal, with each material requiring specific care. Consider factors like heat resistance, ease of cleaning, and visual appeal when selecting the worktop that best complements your outdoor kitchen design. If you're opting for something less weatherproof (which can give you that delightful 'indoor dining outdoors' feel) then you'll do well to ensure that your outdoor kitchen is covered all year round, and protected from the elements. This will also allow you to get greater use from the space, even when the British weather is being characteristically unpredictable.

Accessories: the finishing touches

Transforming your outdoor kitchen into a complete oasis involves carefully curated accessories. Illuminate your culinary haven with outdoor lighting, creating an ambience that seamlessly transitions from day to night. To allow use of the area throughout more of the year, take a look at outdoor heating options as well. Essential refrigeration keep beverages cool and ingredients fresh, ensuring you're always prepared to whip up a culinary masterpiece. Quality utensils and tools, designed for



Above: avivastonegranite.co.uk Below: huckleberryhome.co.uk



outdoor use, become an extension of your culinary skills. To elevate the atmosphere, consider integrating audio-visual elements, allowing you to cook to your favourite tunes. Finally, add a touch of nature with greenery and carefully chosen décor, completing the picture of an outdoor kitchen that is as visually appealing as it is functional.

With careful consideration and a touch of creativity, your outdoor kitchen will not only be a space for culinary delights but a testament to your lifestyle, seamlessly blending the joy of cooking with the beauty of the great outdoors. Cheers to the art of outdoor living!



Above and right: northbarbeque.co.uk
Below: charlieoven.com



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Our range of Santa Maria Barbecues

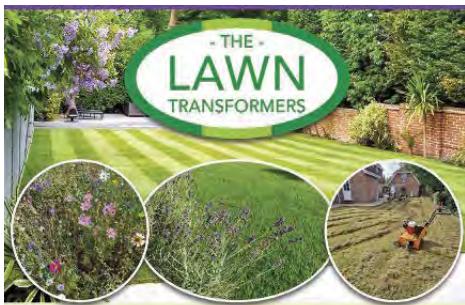


The beauty of the Santa Maria Grill is that the grilling grate can be raised or lowered by a hand crank mechanism to control the temperature whilst cooking.

These steel barbecues are modular, giving you a variety of different ways to enjoy an outdoor fire.



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THERE'S A NEW STYLE KITCHEN GARDEN IN TOWN

sarah @ TheGardenCreative

Photographs by Jacqui Hurst @jacqui.hurst.photography

It's wonderful to grow your own fruit, vegetables and herbs in a traditional potager or kitchen garden but many urban gardens don't readily offer the necessary space required and many of us wish to prioritise socialising, entertaining and relaxation over cultivation.



Even if we have a larger garden we may wish to have an outdoor kitchen as part of our socialising space. Like the kitchen in your house, it creates a central zone for gathering and a warm and relaxing space to spend time in.

There are many options for creating an outdoor kitchen from something quite simple using a freestanding BBQ with a built-in worktop to much more extravagant designs with sink, gas grills, pizza ovens and plenty of storage.

I was fortunate to receive a brief from a professional chef who wanted an outdoor kitchen as part of a new garden design. Being a chef he had a clear idea of how the kitchen

should be, and it was a pleasure to learn about how the kitchen would be best designed to create the perfect cooking area to create some fantastic feasts for friends and family in the great outdoors.

The house was part of a terrace so the garden was typically long and narrow with back access. It angled sharply away from the house though and narrowed even further towards the end. The original layout only accentuated this with long beds following the fence line either side and a skinny lawn in the middle. A new approach was needed, and my clients had lots of ideas as well as a beautifully stylish house that they had spent the last few years lovingly restoring, so a new garden was next on the cards.

Taking an angled line across the garden helped to extend the eye outwards, making the space feel wider and this helped also to bring the garden back into focus and minimise the 'kick out' that had seemed very obvious before. Following this line allowed us to have triangular raised beds with planks of paving through decorative shingle. Away went the lawn in favour of prairie planting with ornamental grasses and perennials.

The whole space needed to feel like a place for socialising and entertaining but also allow for solace, quiet contemplation and relaxation. By building in seating at either end of the garden we could create an area near to the outdoor kitchen with raised seating, a breakfast bar and dining table on the deck, while at the other end of the garden a lounge area was created, with matching seating but set lower with a low coffee table creating a quieter place to catch the last of the evening sun with a nice cold drink on a summer's night.

By keeping the colour palette to just 3 or 4 colours and choosing evergreen planting with pops of colour coming through seasonally, the all important aspect of harmony is achieved making the garden a place you want to spend time in throughout the year.

The resulting garden has been a triumph for the whole family to enjoy and complements the house beautifully. It shows that having a well-designed garden gives another whole space for the warmer months of the year and is generally a much cheaper alternative to a building extension. It provides all-year-round interest and is a place that is loved by the clients as well as the visiting wildlife. A stylish kitchen garden for the 21st century.

THERE ARE MANY OPTIONS FOR CREATING AN OUTDOOR KITCHEN FROM SOMETHING QUITE SIMPLE USING A FREESTANDING BBQ WITH A BUILT-IN WORKTOP TO MUCH MORE EXTRAVAGANT DESIGNS...





TIPS FOR CREATING THE PERFECT OUTDOOR KITCHEN GARDEN

Seating is a must – think about the seat backs and the cushions, it has to be comfy. How much cooking do you want to do? You could splash out on a pizza oven, they are great for roasting meats too, or are you more of a BBQ chef, in which case a worktop built up to your freestanding grill may create the perfect kitchen for you.

Shelves and storage – think about what you'll need to hand. You'll certainly need fuel for the fire, be it timber or bags of charcoal, building in some cupboards or shelves allows space for this as well as for condiments, crockery, cutlery and potted herbs, and stacked logs look great as a feature at any time. Site it somewhere near the house where it's easy to get to. The last thing you want to be doing is trekking to the end of the garden only to have forgotten something and having to go back inside!

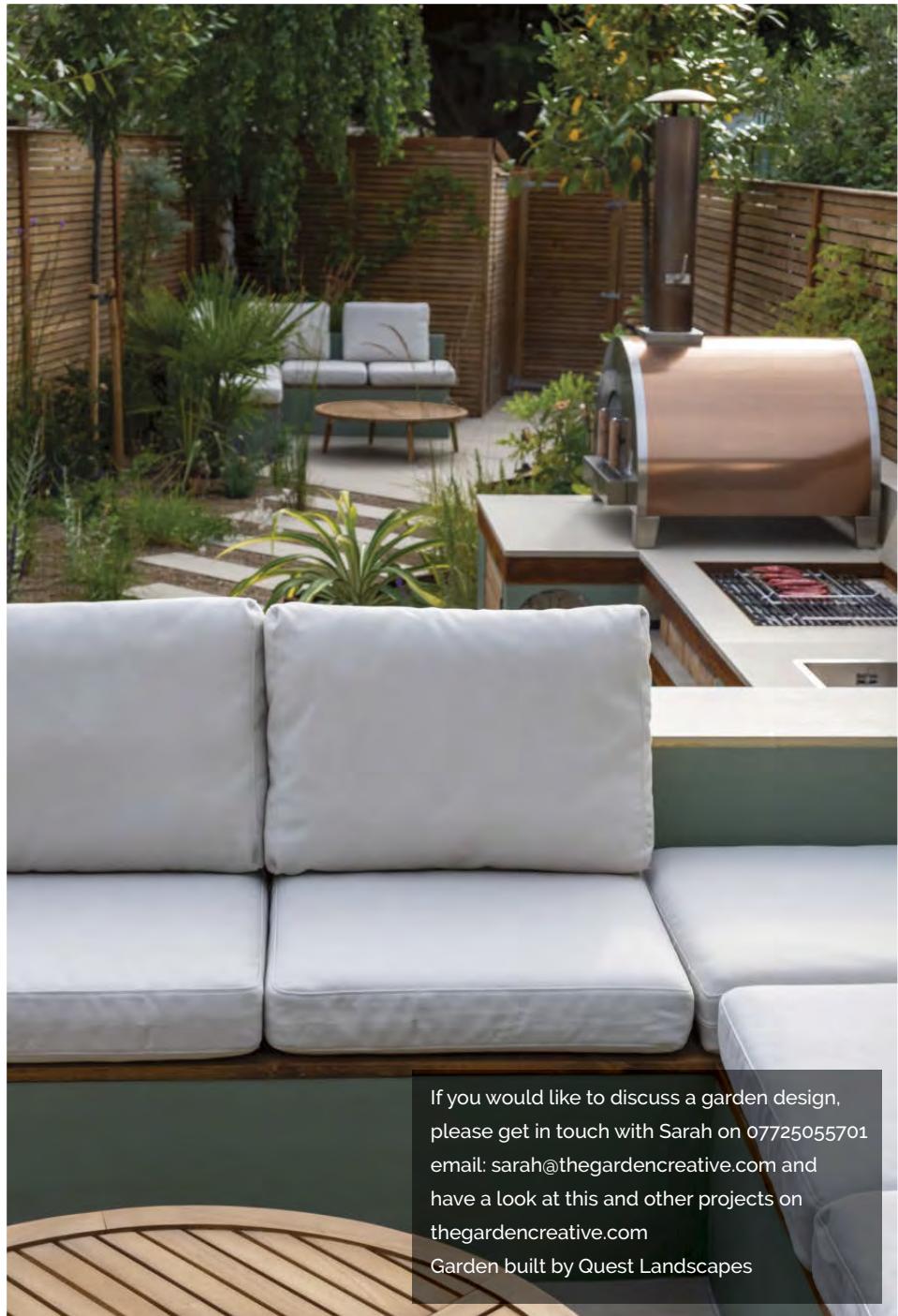
Lighting – you'll most probably be cooking

into the evening so lighting will be important. If you don't already have electricity in the garden, consider solar lights that will come on automatically as it gets dark. There are a number of LED lights available now for gardens that can be plugged into outdoor sockets and controlled by apps. They offer many options and are a good alternative to wired electrics fitted by an electrician.

Water – would you like a sink? It's handy for rinsing and cleaning up afterwards. The overflow can water the plants too, there's no need for a connected waste pipe.

Remember to cover your outdoor kitchen in the winter to protect your appliances from heavy rain and freezing temperatures.

Think about plants that you will use in cooking and plant these close to your kitchen; herbs are easy to grow and can be incorporated into flower beds alongside more decorative plants or placed in pots on the kitchen worktop.



If you would like to discuss a garden design,
please get in touch with Sarah on 07725055701
email: sarah@thegardencreative.com and
have a look at this and other projects on
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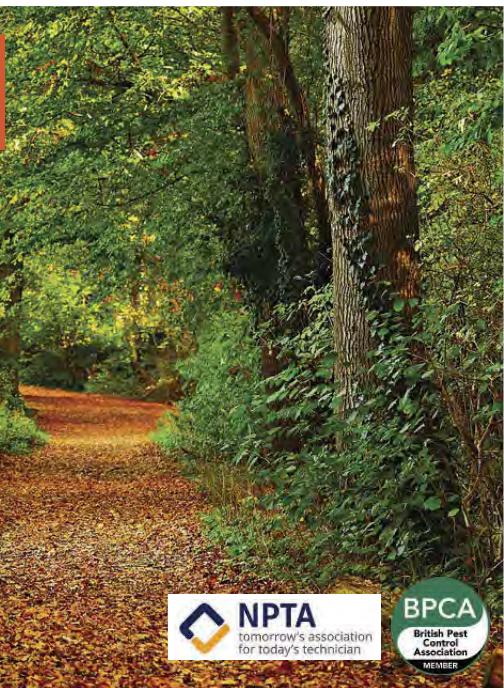
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Showroom visits are by appointment only.
Call Steve on 07973 791620 or email
steve@kentgardenfurniture.co.uk to book.

Kent Garden Furniture

01843 594454 or 07973 791620

www.kentgardenfurniture.co.uk

1 Nicholas Drive, Clifffsend, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5JS

RELAX IN STYLE AND **'TEAK' IT EASY...**

If you are looking for classic, comfortable premium quality garden furniture, that's fantastic value and that will stay looking good for years and years, we've found the solution.

As the daylight hours increase we can all breathe a sigh of relief as we look towards the spring and brighter warmer days, quite naturally our thoughts turn to spending more quality time in the garden. But how are things looking out there after the harsh winter weather that can cause havoc to plants, trees and garden furniture alike? Hopefully not

too much damage has been done to the former and the greenery will recover and grow back. But what of the latter, has your current garden dining set or bench gone well beyond their best before date? Will the 'spring spruce up' just not cut the mustard this year? It could be time to face up to reality and accept that what was once lovely has reached the point of no return, and it's time to start afresh.



Instead of looking for your new garden furniture from one of the many big brand garden centre outlets that have a large choice of mass produced products of varying quality and value, how about considering a supplier that is closer to home. One that can offer good old fashioned personal service, premium quality, sustainably sourced garden furniture, fast and efficient delivery and beautiful, classic timeless designs made from stronger and thicker wood, that will withstand the harshest winter weather and will stay looking good for many years to come.

That's a pretty tall order, but we've found a niche company that ticks all those boxes. Kent Garden Furniture is a family run business based in Ramsgate, Kent. Steve Major and his team have been supplying solid teak garden and patio furniture to discerning customers in the Kent and Sussex areas in search of high quality at refreshingly affordable prices since 1997.

The name 'teak' may well ring warning bells for some people because of sustainability issues around buying tropical hardwood due to the indiscriminate logging of the rainforest, and quite rightly so. However, the teak used in Kent Garden Furniture's beautiful products only ever comes from Indonesia, where a strict policy of sustainable forestry is enforced. The commercial plantations in Indonesia producing teak are replanted and managed to produce sustainable supplies.

Kent Garden Furniture's range is manufactured from high quality, kiln dried grade-A teak, which is naturally rich in oils that help protect it from damage caused by weather, and make it highly resistant to warping and rotting. Unlike many softwoods that are used to produce garden furniture sold in this country, teak products will last for many years without



THE COMPANY'S RANGE OF TABLES, CHAIRS AND BENCHES ARE CUSTOM-MADE IN INDONESIA, AND FEATURE CLASSIC DESIGNS THAT WILL ADD GRACE AND STYLE TO ANY GARDEN.

any special treatment or preservatives making it almost maintenance free. As it weathers, the teak will turn a beautiful silvery colour after a year or so outside. All that's required is to keep it clean and free of dust, and you can decide to apply a very sparing amount of oil, should that be your personal preference. This won't extend the life of the wood, as it's purely for cosmetic purposes.

The company's range of tables, chairs and benches are custom-made in Indonesia, and feature classic designs that will add grace and style to any garden. The pieces have been designed with thicker and stronger wood, enhancing their durability and giving them a luxurious and lasting appeal. By importing direct from Indonesia and by keeping administration overheads to a minimum Kent Garden Furniture is able to offer solid teak garden furniture of high quality but at very affordable prices. However, lower prices do not mean that quality has been compromised – every piece is individually inspected before being sold.

The range includes standard dining chairs to match the tables on offer, with variations like high back carvers, a companion set, a Canterbury rocking chair and a wonderful Adirondak style lounger with footstool.

Tables come in varying sizes and shapes to fit any need, from a beautiful 12 seat, rectangular dining table through to smaller square or circular

versions, right down to handy occasional folding coffee tables or mini-wedge shaped tables.

There are five beautifully made benches in the range; the Wimbledon and Classic are simply stylish with traditional lines, the Bexley and the Contemporary benches have a more modern twist, and the luxurious Lutyens bench, that encapsulates the exquisite elegance of this timeless design classic. They are all

designed for ultimate relaxation and enjoyable comfortable sitting that will make the most of any situation in your garden, be it a shady spot for leisurely contemplation or an inviting focal point in a sunny corner or a welcoming haven under an arbour or pergola.

Call today make a one to one appointment to visit the showroom on 01843 594454 or 07973 791620 or go to kentgardenfurniture.co.uk





THE GATEWAY TO YOUR PERFECT HOME

Gates are not just functional barriers; they are also the first impression your home makes. Whether you're looking to enhance the aesthetics of your property, boost security, or add a touch of convenience to your lifestyle, there are myriad options.

This quarter we're taking a look at the charm and functionality of wooden gates, the intricate beauty of ornamental metal gates, the robust security features of security gates, and the cutting-edge technology behind automated gates. Additionally, we'll provide valuable tips on choosing, buying, and installing.

WOODEN GATES

Wooden gates exude a timeless elegance that can transform the entrance of any home. The warm and natural appeal of wood blends seamlessly with various architectural styles and is the perfect aesthetic complement to a period home.

When selecting a wooden gate, consider the type of wood, its durability, and maintenance requirements. Hardwoods like teak and mahogany are excellent choices for longevity and resistance to weathering.



fwilliamsjoinery.co.uk

Tips for buying and installing wooden gates
Choose quality wood: Opt for hardwoods that are known for their durability and resistance to decay.

Proper sealing and finishing: Apply a high-quality sealant and finish to protect the wood from moisture and UV rays.

Professional installation: Ensure your gate is installed by experienced professionals to guarantee stability and longevity.

ORNAMENTAL METAL GATES

If you're looking to make a bold statement, ornamental metal gates are the way to go. Crafted with intricate designs, these gates serve as artistic focal points while providing a good level of security. Common metals used for ornamental gates include wrought iron, aluminium, and steel. The versatility of metal allows for customisation to match the aesthetic of your property.





metalmastercanterbury.com

Tips for buying and installing ornamental metal gates

Choose the right metal: Consider the climate and maintenance requirements when selecting the metal for your gate.

Design customisation: Work with a skilled metalworker to create a design that complements the architectural style of your home.

Rust prevention: Apply a rust-resistant coating to ensure the longevity of your ornamental gate.

SECURITY GATES

For those prioritising safety and protection, security gates are an excellent investment.

These gates are designed to deter intruders and provide an additional layer of defence for your property. Security gates come in various materials, including steel and wrought iron, with features such as anti-climb designs, and electronic access control systems. We recommend that you not only speak to a



metalmastercanterbury.com

specialist design and fitting company, but also confer with your current security provider (who may be able to do the work themselves) as well as your home insurance provider, as additional security may reduce your current premiums.

Tips for buying and installing security gates

Prioritise strength and durability: Choose a gate made from robust materials like steel for enhanced security.

Electronic access systems: Consider integrating electronic access control for added convenience and monitoring.

Professional installation: Security gates require precise installation for optimal functionality, so enlist the services of a professional.

AUTOMATED GATES

Embrace the future with automated gates that add a touch of luxury and convenience to your lifestyle. Automated gates can be operated through remote control, keypad entry, or even apps. They offer not only security but also ease of access without the need to leave your vehicle.



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Tips for buying and installing automated gates

Choose the right automation system: Consider your preferences and budget when selecting an automation system.

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Routine maintenance: Regularly inspect and maintain the automated components to ensure longevity and optimal performance.

Gates are more than just barriers; they are a reflection of your lifestyle and personal taste. Whether you opt for the classic charm of wooden gates, the intricate beauty of ornamental metal gates, the robust security of security gates, or the convenience of automated gates, there's a perfect option for every home.

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DOORS, PORCHES AND CANOPIES

Your home is more than just a shelter; it's a reflection of your personality, taste, and style. Often overlooked, doors, porches, and canopies play a crucial role in enhancing the overall aesthetic appeal and functionality of your property



In this article, we will explore how these elements can transform your living space into a welcoming haven, combining practicality with elegance.

Doors: The gateway to style and security

The entrance to your home sets the tone for what lies beyond. Investing in a well-designed and secure door not only boosts curb appeal but also adds an extra layer of protection. Consider options like solid wood, fibreglass, or steel doors, each offering a unique blend of durability and style. A beautifully crafted front door with intricate details or a pop of colour can instantly elevate the exterior of your home, making a lasting impression on visitors and passers-by alike.

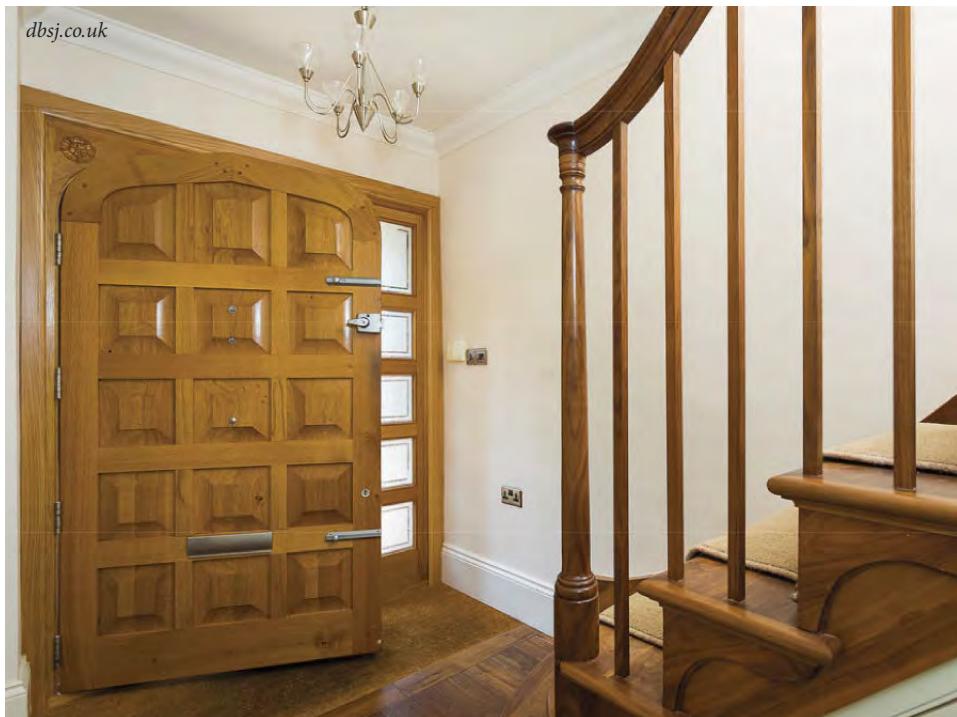
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A BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED FRONT DOOR WITH INTRICATE DETAILS OR A POP OF COLOUR CAN INSTANTLY ELEVATE THE EXTERIOR OF YOUR HOME...

Do you want period appeal with modern durability? A composite door can be crafted to look like wood, while still offering excellent security. Consider stable doors, ornate hardware or decorative glass accents to take your frontage to the next level.

Beyond aesthetics, modern doors are equipped with advanced security features, ensuring the safety of your loved ones and



belongings. Smart door locks, video intercoms, and keyless entry systems provide a seamless blend of convenience and security, bringing your historic home into the 21st century, without looking out of place.

A professional installer can advise you on the best options for your home and security needs, so make sure you ask around to locate your finest local businesses.

Porches: Creating inviting outdoor spaces
A well-designed porch serves as an extension of your living space, offering a transitional zone between the indoors and outdoors. Whether you have a small, cosy stoop or a spacious wrap-around porch, this area presents endless opportunities for relaxation and even socialisation.



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Consider furnishing your porch with comfortable seating, vibrant cushions, and potted plants to create a welcoming atmosphere. Add a touch of personality with decorative lighting or hanging lanterns, turning your porch into a charming space to unwind after a long day or host intimate gatherings with friends and family.

Furthermore, porches provide shelter from the elements, allowing you to enjoy the outdoors regardless of the weather. Rain or shine, a well-designed porch provides a versatile space where you can bask in the beauty of nature without compromising on comfort.

Again your choice of material should be in keeping with your period aesthetic. Wood or composite lend old fashioned charm, while brick build porches can be extremely elegant.

Your porch should be as functional as it is beautiful. If this is where you rid yourself of muddy boots, then ensure that flooring is durable and walls are easy to wipe. If your porch is a designated storage facility, then keep coats and boots out of sight with in-built cupboards.



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Canopies: Functional elegance

Canopies serve as the crowning jewels that tie together the aesthetic appeal of your frontage. These overhead structures not only enhance the visual appeal of your property but also serve a practical purpose by providing shade and protection from the elements.

Canopies come in retractable designs as well, making them ideal for when you want to hide from the midday sun, but allow the fresh morning rays into your home.



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For a more eco-friendly approach, consider incorporating greenery into your canopy design. Pergolas adorned with climbing vines or retractable canopies with built-in planter boxes not only add a touch of nature but also contribute to a sustainable and visually stunning outdoor space.

Doors, porches, and canopies are integral elements that can significantly enhance the overall appeal and functionality of your property. By investing in high-quality, aesthetically pleasing doors, creating inviting porches, and incorporating stylish canopies, you not only elevate the aesthetics of your home but also enhance your lifestyle.

These elements serve as more than mere structural components – they are the gateways to a warm and welcoming home, reflecting your unique style and creating spaces that seamlessly blend the indoors with the outdoors.



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HOW TO... CLEAN A FIREPLACE

■ PREPARE

The first stage of the process is to move furniture, roll up rugs, and protect the floor with dust sheets. Next empty ashes and unburnt wood or coal that is still in the hearth into a bucket. Sweep the fireplace clean or use a vacuum cleaner so you can better examine the fireplace beneath.

■ REPAIR OR REPLENISH FIRE BRICKS

Check the insulating fire bricks to the back and sides of the hearth. Badly deteriorated bricks will need to be replaced but cracks and chips can be made good with fire cement. The brick must be dry and dust-free – use a knife to push the cement in place. Following a repair you may need to light a fire to cure the cement.

■ BURNT BRICK FIREPLACES

If the bricks of the fireplace are burnt, you could try TSP (trisodium phosphate), which is a powerful cleaner. Use with extreme caution. Wear rubber gloves, safety goggles, and a mask and make sure your arms and legs are covered. The room should also be well ventilated. We advise trying gentler cleaning methods first.

■ CAST IRON FIREPLACES

Cast iron is the most common material used to make period fireplaces and can usually be brought back to life where it has deteriorated. Remove loose material and rust using a wire brush. If necessary, you can use a chemical rust remover. Following the manufacturer's instructions, finish the metal with black stove grate polish and burnish with a brush or soft cloth, or use a heat-resistant paint instead. Never use water on cast iron or it will rust.

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RESTORING FORMER GLORIES

Art Conservator, Rachel Witt, is breathing new life into the tired pieces that have been hidden away or just showing their age.

Rachel's experience that spans over two decades, enables her to carefully stabilise the paint layers and uncover the colours to reveal the artist's vision.

Based in Hastings, she is an accredited conservator who loves hearing the stories behind the paintings and bringing them back to their full potential.

Rachel achieved a distinction in her master's degree in the Conservation of Fine Art from the University of Northumbria and in 2011 she became an Accredited Conservator-Restorer (ACR), a professional qualification set up and administered by the Institute of Conservation (ICON). By becoming an ACR she has been through an in-depth assessment to demonstrate that her knowledge and skills meet ICON's professional standards.



Over time she has worked on a wide variety of paintings belonging to private individuals and museum collections in both the UK and overseas. These include paintings of all ages from medieval to contemporary, some by well-known artists but many by unknown painters that have enormous sentimental value to their owners.



Regardless of value, experience enables her to tackle challenging and complex conservation problems including artworks that have been severely damaged in a fire or flood that might be considered beyond repair.

After 10 years in the private sector, Rachel felt drawn to the world of museums and in 2011 she was made Head of the Paintings Section at the Heritage Conservation Centre in Singapore. During her time there she surveyed over 300 paintings selected for display in the fabulous National Gallery of Singapore as well as conserved paintings that now hang on the gallery walls. Another important part of her job with the institution was to consider different aspects of environmental control such as suitable temperature, relative humidity and light levels in the galleries and also to monitor ideal conditions in the storage facilities.

A particular highlight of Rachel's career is the rewarding conservation of the beautiful botanical paintings at The Marianne North Gallery in Kew Gardens, London, where she played a pivotal role in the gallery's transformation. While removing the varnish from one of the artworks, tests to dissolve the surface coating proved to be difficult. Following extensive trials to find a safe method of cleaning, a solvent mixture that was new to her was used. Research into the chemical properties of this mix and the artist's unusual use of materials was published by the British Association of Painting Conservators Restorers (BAPCR) in 2011.

In this throwaway world, Rachel's job of a conservator is to extend the life of something precious and irreplaceable. If you have a painting that you think might need attention, she would be happy to take a look and advise on a suitable treatment.



Visit www.rwconservation.com for more information. To contact Rachel email her on rachel@rwconservation.com or call 07511 073551.

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THE RISE OF MEDIA WALLS

Transforming homes into entertainment havens

In the ever-evolving landscape of home design, one trend has captured the imagination of homeowners and interior designers alike – the media wall.



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Gone are the days of bulky entertainment centres; today, media walls are taking centre stage, seamlessly integrating technology with aesthetics to create a stunning focal point in modern homes. This article explores the growing trend of media walls, their benefits, and the myriad options available for those looking to transform their living spaces.

The evolution of home entertainment

The concept of a dedicated space for home entertainment has come a long way since the era of bulky television cabinets. With the advent of sleek, flat-screen TVs and advancements in audio-visual technology, homeowners are now seeking more sophisticated and integrated solutions for their home entertainment needs. Enter the media wall – a versatile and stylish way to showcase cutting-edge technology while maintaining a harmonious design in any room.

Benefits of media walls

Space optimisation: Media walls are designed to maximise space by eliminating the need for separate entertainment units. With sleek, wall-mounted designs, these setups contribute to a more open and organised living space, ideal in those period homes that may have smaller rooms.

Aesthetic appeal: Media walls are not just functional; they also serve as design statements. Homeowners can choose from a variety of materials, finishes, and styles to complement their interior aesthetics, turning their media wall into a work of art that seamlessly blends with the overall décor, integrating modern designs with a period aesthetic.

Integrated technology: The heart of any media wall is its technology integration. From smart

THE CONCEPT OF A DEDICATED SPACE FOR HOME ENTERTAINMENT HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE ERA OF BULKY TELEVISION CABINETS.

TVs to high-quality sound systems and smart home automation, these walls serve as a hub for all things entertainment. Hidden wiring and built-in speakers contribute to a clean and clutter-free appearance.

Options for media walls

Floating shelves and cabinets: For a modern and minimalist look, consider floating shelves and cabinets. These allow for the integration of audio-visual components, gaming consoles, and streaming devices while maintaining a sleek and uncluttered appearance.

Customised built-ins: Tailor-made media walls offer the ultimate in personalisation. Homeowners can work with designers to create a bespoke solution that fits their unique space, incorporating storage, display areas, and hidden compartments for a clean and seamless appearance.

Feature walls with texture: Textured feature walls add a touch of luxury and visual interest to the media space. Whether it's a wood-panelled accent wall or a stone feature, these elements elevate the design of the room while providing a backdrop for the entertainment centre.

Interactive display walls: The future of media walls lies in interactive displays. With advancements in technology, homeowners can now turn entire walls into interactive touchscreens, perfect for gaming, virtual meetings, or immersive movie nights.



josephmccarthy.co.uk

Artistic media walls: Blend technology and art with media walls that incorporate digital displays for curated artwork or dynamic visuals. When not in use, the wall transforms into a canvas, adding an extra layer of sophistication to the living space.

The trend for media walls is not just about keeping up with the latest in technology; it's a holistic approach to redefining the way we experience entertainment at home. As homeowners increasingly seek a seamless integration of technology and design, media walls have become a symbol of sophistication

and functionality. From customisable built-ins to interactive displays, the options are as diverse as the preferences of those who seek to make a statement in their homes.

As we navigate the future of home design, one thing is clear – the media wall is here to stay, offering a canvas for creativity, a hub for entertainment, and a testament to the seamless integration of technology into our everyday lives. So, whether you're a tech enthusiast or a design aficionado, consider making a media wall the centrepiece of your home, and embark on a journey where style meets functionality in perfect harmony.

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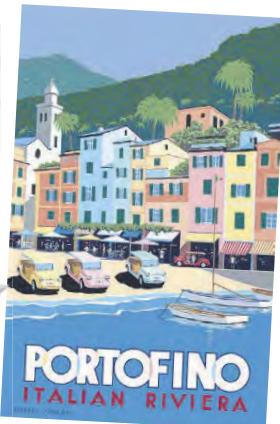
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UPSCALE VANITY UNITS for period homes

Vanity units designed for period homes offer a perfect blend of timeless elegance and modern functionality, transforming bathrooms into luxurious retreats.

In period homes, where historical charm and architectural significance take precedence, choosing the right vanity unit becomes a crucial element in preserving the aesthetic integrity of the space.

Period homes boast unique architectural features and design elements that demand respect and preservation. Upscale vanity units cater to this demand by incorporating exquisite details reminiscent of bygone eras. Intricately carved wood, ornate handles and vintage-inspired finishes create a seamless connection between the vanity unit and the historical essence of the home. Choosing a vanity that complements the period-specific details ensures that the bathroom becomes an extension of the home's rich heritage.

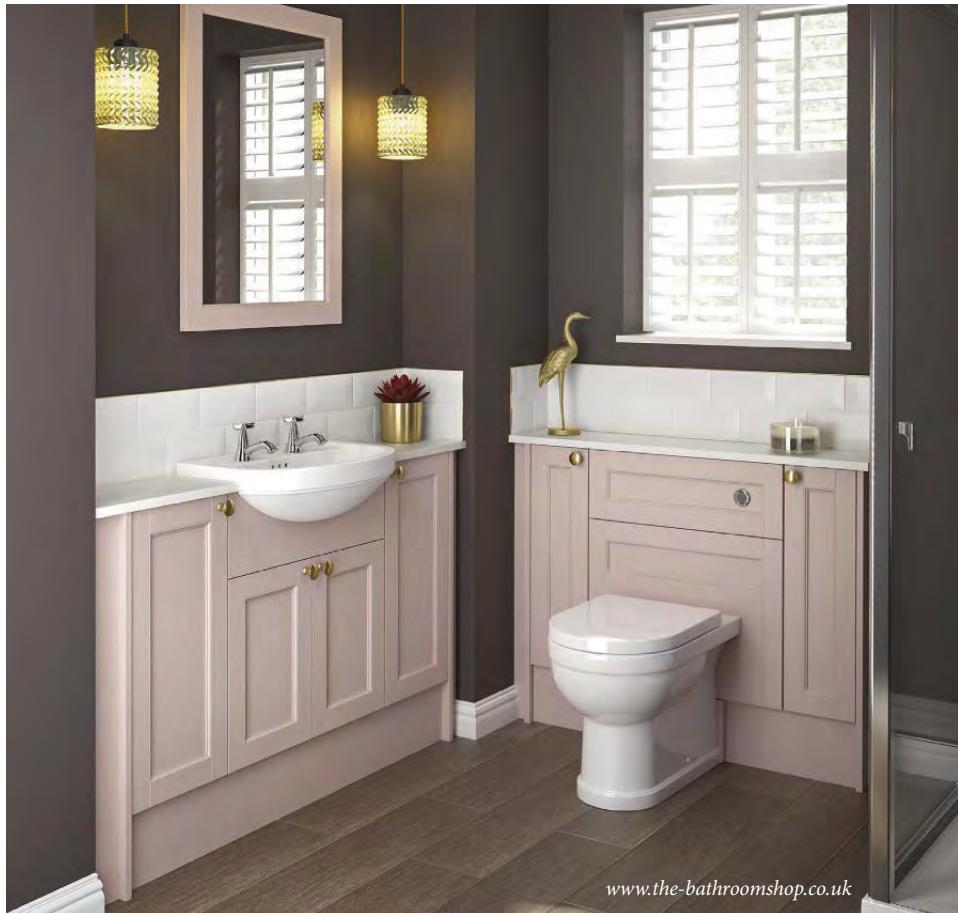
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Customisation for character

One size does not fit all, especially when it comes to period homes. Bespoke vanity units offer a range of customisation options, allowing homeowners to tailor the design to match the unique character of their space. From choosing the right wood finish to selecting hardware that

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complements existing fixtures, customisation ensures that the vanity becomes an integral part of the overall aesthetic.

With period appropriate vanity units, the emphasis is placed on using high-quality, timeless materials that not only exude luxury but also stand the test of time. Solid wood, marble, and granite are often favoured choices, reflecting the enduring elegance of period homes. These materials not only add a touch of opulence but also contribute to the longevity of the vanity, making it an investment in both style and durability. Look into local carpenters and

furniture builders who specialise in reclaimed materials and period designs.

Modern functionality

While preserving the historical charm is paramount, modern functionality is equally important in today's bathrooms. A good vanity unit should seamlessly integrate modern conveniences such as soft-close drawers, hidden storage solutions, and innovative lighting options. This blend of classic aesthetics and contemporary functionality ensures that the bathroom serves as a practical and luxurious space for daily rituals.



Period homes often come with unique spatial challenges. Upscale vanity units are designed with space optimisation in mind, offering compact yet efficient designs that make the most of limited square footage. Clever storage solutions, such as pull-out shelves and built-in organisers, ensure that the vanity becomes a practical addition to the bathroom without compromising on style.

Versatility in design

Vanity units cater to a diverse range of period styles, from 1950s elegance to Tudor rustic

appeal. The versatility in design ensures that homeowners can find a vanity that blends with the specific architectural nuances of their period home. From freestanding units with intricate legs to wall-mounted vanities that evoke a sense of modernity within a historical context, the options are vast, offering a perfect fit for any period-inspired bathroom.

Investing in a bespoke or high-quality vanity unit is not merely a practical decision but a commitment to enhancing the overall aesthetic and value of a period home's bathroom.

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At one of Catherine's valuations at Bagham Barn Antiques, a large atlas was pulled out from a carrier bag which had been found hidden behind a wardrobe in a deceased relative's house. This unassuming atlas, which superficially appeared in poor condition, was a rare elephant folio-sized atlas of the then-known world, published in London (c.1733) by the renowned cartographer Herman Moll and went on to sell for £24,000.

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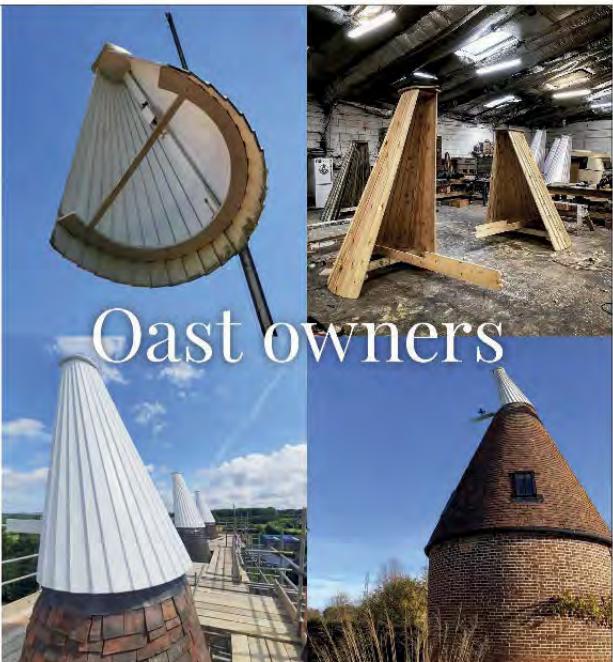
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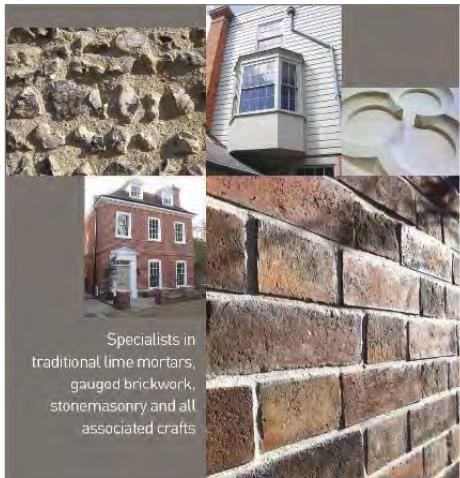
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The significance of having a will

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to put off important tasks, and writing a will is often one of them. However, having a will is crucial for ensuring your wishes are carried out after your death and providing peace of mind to your loved ones.



In this comprehensive guide, we'll explore the importance of having a will, and the steps to take in order to secure your legacy.

Why do you need a will?

A will is a legal document that outlines how your estate, including your property, money, and possessions, should be distributed after your death. Even if you don't consider yourself wealthy, having a will ensures that your wishes are respected, and your loved ones are taken care of. Without a will, your estate will be distributed according to the intestacy rules, which may not align with your desires.

Benefits of writing a will

Writing a will offers several benefits beyond determining the distribution of your assets. Firstly, if you live with a partner without being

married or in a civil partnership, they won't automatically inherit your estate without a will. Secondly, if you have children, a will allows you to nominate a legal guardian who will care for them in the event of your passing. Additionally, a will enables you to express your funeral wishes and can help mitigate inheritance tax.

Consequences of Dying Without a Will

Dying without a will, also known as dying intestate, can lead to complications and unintended consequences. The rules of intestacy determine how your estate will be distributed, and these rules may not align with your preferences. For example, if you have a spouse and children, your spouse may only receive a portion of your estate, with the remainder divided among your children. In some cases, if you have no surviving relatives, your estate may be claimed by the Crown.

The will-writing process –

gathering information

Before your appointment, it's helpful to gather relevant information that will assist in the will-writing process. This includes details about your assets, such as property, savings, investments, and valuable possessions. You should also consider any debts or liabilities, such as mortgages or loans. Additionally, think about who you would like to appoint as the executor of your will, the person responsible for carrying out your wishes. We will send you a link to an online questionnaire for you to complete, or we can provide a paper copy if you prefer.

Consultation with a legally qualified Adviser During your appointment, we will guide you through the will-writing process. We will ask you a series of questions to understand your wishes and ensure your will accurately reflects your intentions. We will provide advice on legal matters, including inheritance tax implications and any specific considerations based on your unique circumstances. After the consultation, we will draft your will.

Review and signing

Once we have drafted your will, we will provide you with an opportunity to review it thoroughly. It's crucial to carefully read through the document to ensure all your wishes are accurately represented. If any changes or adjustments are necessary, discuss them with your adviser. Once you are satisfied with the final version, you will sign the will in the presence of two witnesses, who will also sign to validate the document.

Planning beyond a will – Power of Attorney

While a will is an essential component of estate planning, it's also important to consider other

aspects of protecting your interests and wishes.

One such measure is establishing a lasting power of attorney. This legal document allows you to appoint a trusted individual to make financial and personal decisions on your behalf if you become incapacitated. By appointing someone you trust as your attorney, you can have peace of mind knowing that your affairs will be handled according to your wishes.

Periodic review and updates

Creating a will is not a one-time task; it requires periodic review and updates. Life circumstances change, and it's essential to ensure that your will accurately reflects your current wishes and circumstances. Significant events such as marriage, divorce, birth, or death in the family may necessitate modifications to your will. It's advisable to review your will regularly and consult with us to make any necessary updates to ensure your legacy is preserved. At Whitehead Monckton we offer our Legal Review Programme which is designed to prompt clients to update their succession planning arrangements when required. Please contact us if you would like more information about this.

Conclusion

Writing a will is a crucial step in securing your legacy and ensuring your wishes are respected. You not only protect your loved ones, but also have the chance to leave a lasting impact by supporting charitable causes.

If you require any advice or assistance, contact us to speak with a member of the team.

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The Old Rectory, Wickhambreaux

A sensational Grade II* listed Queen Anne village house, with exceptional leisure facilities and cottage.

The Old Rectory is quintessentially English, and is one of the finest early-18th century houses in East Kent. Built in 1713 for the then rector of Wickhambreaux, it is a much admired and very fine example of Queen Anne architecture. With symmetrical facades on both the front and rear elevations, the house exudes significant character and has been stylishly and extensively updated in recent years by the current owners.

A short flight of stone steps with iron handrails rises to a very handsome door case

with an ornate fanlight over. The door opens to the reception hall, a beautiful panelled room flooded with light from a pair of tall sash windows. A wide archway leads through to the staircase hall with an elegant, easy rising 18th century staircase, dominated by a full height sash window.

Off the hall to the right is the delightfully sunny study and to the rear of the house is the elegant panelled drawing room, which overlooks the rear garden. A beautiful fireplace is a focal point, and a door with external steps leads out





to the garden. Adjoining the drawing room is the cosy sitting room with two deep sash windows looking out to the rear garden.

A door off the staircase hall leads to the rear hall, where an elegant secondary staircase serves both the upper floors and the lower ground floor. The lower ground floor is, in the main, given over to a large family kitchen/dining room with an adjoining range of ancillary rooms, including a utility room, a laundry room, a pantry, a store room and a wine cellar.

The principal bedroom is situated to the rear and has lovely views over the garden. Its en-suite bathroom is a spacious room, newly fitted with a walk-in shower cubicle, wash basin, WC and a free-standing bath. Across the landing are two guest bedrooms, one with an en-suite bathroom.

A door opens to the rear staircase landing, from where the secondary stairs elegantly lead to the top floor where there are five further bedrooms and a family bathroom.

The Cottage

The attractive and well-appointed period cottage comprises a sitting room, a neatly fitted kitchen, ground floor bathroom and a spacious first floor bedroom. Adjacent to the cottage is a garage, with a separate large workshop and bike store.

Outside

The house is approached by pedestrian access through a wrought iron gate into a formal front garden or, for vehicular access, through electric oak gates, via the gravel driveway to a parking and turning area immediately in front of the garage and cottage.

The stylish swimming pool is tucked away behind the cottage/garage, and has the benefit of its own outdoor Roshults kitchen with fridge and dual BBQ. Beyond is the tennis court, which has a sand-based astro, suitable for a variety of sports.

The partly walled garden has been carefully and sensitively landscaped. As well as the formal lawn, there are terraces beside the house providing a variety of entertaining spaces.

The vegetable garden is located at the far end of the garden, sheltered behind an abundance of lined pleached pear and apple trees which form the orchard, along with grapevines in the Victorian greenhouse.

The details

The Old Rectory:

Reception hall | Drawing room | Sitting room | Dining room | Study | Cloakroom | Kitchen/dining room | Utility room | Pantry | Laundry room | Wine cellar | Store | Principal bedroom with en-suite bathroom | 7 Further bedrooms | 2 Further Bathrooms | Garage | Wood shed | Workshop | Swimming pool | Gym and changing rooms | Tennis court | Greenhouse | EPC rating TBC

The Cottage:

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SUNDAY: 3rd

Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells

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

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

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

THURSDAY: 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th

Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 9th

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

SUNDAY: 10th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 16th

Deal; Gravesend; Reuthe's Sevenoaks; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 17th

Aylesford; Folkestone; Rochester; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 23rd

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

SUNDAY: 24th

Tunbridge Wells

SUNDAY: 31st

Cliftonville; Tunbridge Wells

APRIL

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

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

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

THURSDAY: 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th
Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 6th

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Kent Showground; Penshurst; Reuthe's Sevenoaks; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 7th

Bearsted; 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; Folkestone; Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 27th

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

SUNDAY: 28th

Cliftonville; Tunbridge Wells

MAY

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

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

Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 4th

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Penshurst; Reuthe's Sevenoaks; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 5th

Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 11th

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

SUNDAY: 12th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 18th

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

SUNDAY: 19th

Aylesford; Folkestone; Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 25th

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

SUNDAY: 26th

Cliftonville; Tonbridge Food & Drink Festival; Tunbridge Wells





“This recipe was inspired by a fantastic Indian restaurant I went to where it was served as a starter. The taste was amazing (if a little spicier than my version). This one has all the flavour, but without the heat. If you like the sound of the spicy version though, sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of cayenne pepper onto the lamb cutlets before cooking and add 1-2 jalapenos to the pesto before blending.”

KITCHEN SANCTUARY

Making dinner from scratch can feel like a chore – often half the battle is trying to find something that's quick, nutritious and, most importantly, delicious. But delicious doesn't have to mean demanding. After their debut book, Sunday Times bestseller *It's All About Dinner*, Kitchen Sanctuary is back – this time focusing on quick and easy meals, all made in 30 minutes or less!

SERVES
4

YOU WILL NEED

12 lamb cutlets (chops)
4 tablespoons oil
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
2 teaspoons dried oregano
2 teaspoons paprika
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 batch Coriander pesto

Coriander chilli pesto

50g (1¾oz) bunch of fresh coriander, leaves picked and longer stalks removed
1–2 jalapeños sliced
2 garlic cloves, peeled
zest and juice of ½ lime
3 tablespoons pine nuts
30g (1/3 cup) grated Parmesan

¼ teaspoon sea salt, plus extra to taste if needed
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
90ml olive oil

GRIDDLED LAMB CUTLETS WITH CORIANDER PESTO

METHOD

For the lamb, heat a large griddle pan (grill pan) over a high heat until hot. Brush the lamb cutlets with the oil, then sprinkle all over with the salt, pepper, oregano, paprika and garlic powder.

Place on the griddle and cook for 2-3 minutes on each side until well browned. You may need to work in two batches, depending on the size of your pan. If you do, then keep the first batch warm by placing on a board or tray and cover with foil and a tea towel.

Once all the lamb cutlets are cooked, place on a board and cover with foil and a tea towel. Allow to rest for 3 minutes before serving, drizzled with coriander pesto. I like to serve this with steamed new potatoes and peas.

Coriander chilli pesto

Add the coriander, jalapenos, garlic, lime zest and juice, pine nuts, Parmesan, salt and pepper to a food processor and pulse for about 10 seconds to break up the garlic and pine nuts.

Turn the food processor back on and pour in the oil in a steady stream, which should take about 10 seconds. Check for consistency – if you like your pesto a little chunky, it's ready to go. If you like it smoother, whizz for another 10–20 seconds. Taste the pesto and add more lightly crushed sea salt if needed.



Nicky's pro tips

As tasty as they are, lamb cutlets are pretty small (about two bites per cutlet), so if you want more meat, add an extra cutlet or two per person.

SERVES
4

YOU WILL NEED

200g (7oz) cherry tomatoes, sliced in half (multicoloured tomatoes add a nice splash of colour)

1 tablespoon cornflour (cornstarch)

2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced 120ml (½ cup) chicken stock

3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, plus extra to serve

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 lemon, thinly sliced

2 tablespoons capers, drained 200g (7oz) feta, crumbled

4 skinless, boneless basa fillets 1 teaspoon paprika

1 teaspoon dried oregano

½ teaspoon chilli (red pepper) flakes

½ teaspoon garlic powder

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon ground black pepper, plus extra to serve

LEMON FETA BAKED BASA

METHOD

To a large baking dish, add the sliced cherry tomatoes. Sprinkle on the cornflour and toss together, to coat the tomatoes. Add the garlic, stock, parsley and 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and toss everything together.

Add the sliced lemon, capers and feta to the dish and place the basa fillets on top.

Mix together the paprika, oregano, chilli flakes, garlic powder, salt and pepper and sprinkle on the basa fillets.

Drizzle the fish with the remaining tablespoon of oil, then bake in the oven for 15–20 minutes until the fish is cooked through and the tomatoes are tender.

Serve with potatoes, rice or pasta, topped with fresh parsley and black pepper.



Nicky's pro tips

You can replace the basa with other quick-cook thin fillets of fish, such as sole, sea bream or sea bass.

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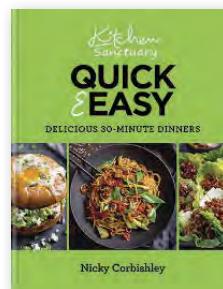
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This is an extract from Kitchen Sanctuary Quick & Easy: Delicious 30-minute Dinners by Nicky Corbishley, RRP £22, Published by Kyle Books, Hardback, out 29th February. Photography by Nicky Corbishley.





"I love a recipe that calls for adding everything to a dish and leaving it to cook with no intervention. This simple fish dish is packed with flavour. My serving suggestions are for potatoes, rice or pasta, but I've got to admit, sometimes I don't even bother cooking a side dish and serve with a big wedge of crusty bread for dipping in the sauce instead."

THE TUDOR PEACOCK

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THE TUDOR PEACOCK

Our wine expert, Rowena Hawtin took a day out to visit The Tudor Peacock, a Kentish wine tasting room, shop and bar in the lovely village of Chilham.

Rowena Hawtin Dip WSET

It was mid-February – one of those days when it was lashing down with rain from dawn until dusk, but that didn’t deter me from looking forward to my visit to the fabulous new wine bar that has just opened in the picturesque village of Chilham – deep in the Kent countryside.

I arrived in the village where The Tudor Peacock stands proud in this medieval square which is on the Pilgrim’s Way – steeped in history and just 18 minutes by road to Canterbury. The old medieval building used to be a Wealden hall and dates back to the 14th century (built roughly between 1370-1410) and the new wine bar takes its name from The Peacock Antique shop and Tudor Lodge which is where the modern wine shop is situated.

Chilham itself has been described as a ‘picture postcard village’ with stunning old timber fronted buildings and includes a castle, a tea shop, a church and two pubs – ideal for a day out at any time of the year. I was very keen to find out more about this wine bar which is very much in keeping with the rest of the village architecture, having Tudor wooden fronting and big beams. I had arranged to meet Sasha – one of the duty managers – and her passion and enthusiasm for the project just bubbled over from the first few minutes. As I began my interview, Sasha felt I would get a more comprehensive view of the development by speaking to Greg Taylor as well – one of the owners – and he joined in our conversation via video link.



How did the Tudor Peacock start as a business?

Greg tells me that back during the covid pandemic he had heard rumours that the Grade II listed building was up for sale and his vision immediately was that it would be absolutely perfect for a wine bar/tasting room right in the heart of this quintessential English village. One of the key ideas about this venture from the start was that it was very much a community project – bringing people together in this beautiful building as a celebration of the old – the history of the building and the village and the new – taste Kentish wines – both from established wineries and smaller, newer ones too. He tells me that the building has undergone extensive renovations – all in keeping with the traditional style of the original building and the surrounding village. Upstairs, it features the 'Crown Post' which is a 'must see' feature which separates the original Tudor Lodge from the antique shop which used to be there. With the community being at the heart of the project, it is no surprise that 22 out of the 40 investors are from the village of Chilham itself which accounts for a 70% stake in the business; 11 more are based in Kent and even in London and these investors include the subsidiary company of Taittinger – Domaine Evremond.

What would you say are some of the biggest challenges in opening a wine shop?

Greg tells me that initially there was some objection from some of the locals and one of the main concerns was about noise levels, but after a few modifications, planning permission was granted and renovations went under way. The venue opened in December 2023 and so far the reviews on TripAdvisor are all 5 star, so the future is looking very positive and it is hoped



that the biggest future challenges will only be which wines to select for their shop and tastings.

What would you say makes your shop unique?

Over to Sasha now – her enthusiasm for Kent wines is just brimming over and she says she can't learn quick enough about 'all things wine'. She goes on to say that the Tudor Peacock is the only wine bar/tasting room that sells all the wines from the Garden of England under one roof and it is ONLY Kent wines. Sasha tells me she has a background in hospitality and she certainly knows a thing or two about making customers feel relaxed and welcome as she glides around the floor telling me about the wines and the features of the building. I was given a grand tour where downstairs chairs and tables are seated in café style – very spacious – and the casement style Tudor windows add to the atmosphere of being taken back in time.

Upstairs, there is a large tasting room which overlooks the square and in the centre is a table that can seat up to 12 people so guests can enjoy their tasting and talk by their wine expert Brian separately from the guests downstairs – perfect. Sasha says that the wine selection together with this unique building create an atmosphere and experience that cannot be found elsewhere in Kent.

How do you decide which wines to stock and feature?

Sasha says at present, they sell all of the wines from members of the Wine Garden of England which includes Balfour, Biddenden, Chapel Down, Gusbourne, Simpsons, Squerryes and Westwell as well as a few wines from smaller vineyards. However, she tells me that they are very keen to stock a wider range of Kent wines – especially from the smaller, lesser known vineyards. They offer a broad range of tastings from local fizz to wines from the Garden of England, to lesser known vineyards as well as lesser known grape varieties. All tastings can be booked from the website and cost £45 pp which includes some lovely local cheeses and charcuterie – what a fabulous gift idea.

How do you keep up to date with future trends and development?

They both tell me that they are always in touch with their suppliers who always have their ears to the ground for changes and developments and of course industry events are a great way to meet others in the trade and exchange news, thoughts and ideas. There are also a number of trade publications that have current news and innovations as to what is happening in Kent as well as news of new vineyards which are springing up all the time. Sasha, who



now works here full time, couldn't be happier spending her time going to trade events, visiting new and up-and-coming vineyards, tasting wines, recommending them to the team as well as managing the Tudor Peacock. She says it's her dream job and couldn't be happier.

Are there any plans for future development?

Sasha says that they may have plans for an oyster bar and at the time of writing they have got an oyster and wine tasting evening this week – the first, I believe, and it sounds like tickets are selling fast. Seating is limited so it's best to book ahead in case of disappointment as the maximum number for tastings is 12 people.

I look forward to returning to the Tudor Peacock and enjoying some of the mouthwatering local wine in this building which has been here for 700 years.

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