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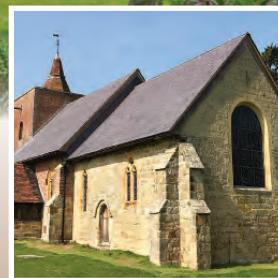


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GARDEN NOTES

The days may be shorter, but autumn is still full of colour. Look out for bright stems, glossy berries and colourful foliage. Now is the time to keep busy with jobs that remind us of the spring to come, such as planting tulip bulbs or bare-root shrubs and trees. It's also a good time to tidy up and put the garden to bed for winter.



Grill power

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AUTUMN SUNDAYS

Hole Park Gardens are renowned for their beauty all year round including spectacular autumn colour. Throughout October visitors can enjoy the gardens on Sundays in addition to normal opening days which are Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The magnificent mature trees and Japanese Maples provide striking autumn colour around the 16 acre gardens and 10 acre woodland. Visitors can take the pretty circular walk past a delightful carved wooden sculpture of a family of bears climbing a tree to reach a honey pot and also the renovated 'Ice House' which was built in around 1740 to store ice long before the days of refrigeration. When the ice was cut and stacked it would last for up to three years in this cool environment!

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FRESHLY MINTED

If you enjoy fresh mint why not pot some up to grow indoors over autumn/winter. Simply lift and divide a clump and plant the resulting sections in pots, trimming the stems down to a height of 10-15cm. Set your pots on a sunny windowsill, and instead of going dormant your mint plants will carry on producing leaves for several months.



What to plant now

Sow a row of broad beans for an early harvest next year. Choose one of the autumn varieties, which can withstand low winter temperatures. They'll germinate in a few weeks and the pods will be ready for picking a good two to three weeks earlier than the February-sown varieties next summer. Put in supporting canes and string as the crop emerges. Water immediately after sowing, but after that, only water if it's very dry. Get your broad bean recipes ready for the first pickings in May.

Four star plants for autumn

1. Smoke bush

– at this time of year *Cotinus coggygria* sets borders alight with striking autumn colour.

2. Beauty berry

– *Callicarpa* is the perfect autumn shrub, with bright berries and foliage.

3. Miscanthus nepalensis

– this architectural grass keeps its flowerheads well into autumn.

4. Guernsey lily

– plant *Nerine sarniensis* in spring for bright autumn flowers.



What to do in the garden now

- Repair worn out lawn patches.
- Remove dead plant material from ponds to keep the water fresh.
- Trim hedges to get them ready for next spring's growth.
- Plant perennials now so they can establish their roots before winter.
- Remove diseased leaves from roses.
- Keep watering autumn pots.
- Cut back lavender.
- Deadhead dahlias.
- Tidy up evergreen ferns by removing old fronds to improve the winter display.

Collect and store pumpkins

Cut pumpkins and bring them indoors before the frosts. Keep a long stalk or part of the stem on the top of each fruit. Pick them up from underneath to avoid damaging the stalk, where rot can start from. The skins should have hardened by now, but keep them for a few days in a windowsill or greenhouse bench. They'll store for months in a cool, unheated room with good ventilation and no humidity.



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- Fully insured.
- Adheres to Industry Codes of Best Practice.

Sabre Kent Ltd understand the importance of delivering successful solutions that eliminate infestations and stop the spread of disease. This includes protecting homeowners, commercial clients and the public, and restaurants and schools in their wide trading area.

They work as humanely as possible when removing pests from properties by adhering to current BCPA (British Pest Control Association) regulations. The focus being on the safety of their clients. Their expert team also provides advice on good wildlife management for customers gardens. Not only do they successfully eradicate unwanted pests, they can also help clients in the Maidstone area to create safe havens for native wildlife.

Call 01622 470077 or 07919 262797 for more information, or visit www.sabrekent.co.uk.

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ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

Ornamental grasses are a brilliant alternative to shrubs, many are drought-tolerant, tall enough to use as screening and extend the season in the garden right through the autumn into the winter months.

Autumn is the season to plant many ornamental grasses and the time when they are at their most beautiful. Having stood all summer as part of the border they start to take on autumn hues, standing resplendent as other plants in the garden begin their decline.

Setting seed is the dramatic final performance of many ornamental grasses and as days shorten and sunsets lower these dramatic seed heads shine throughout the garden bringing a beautiful drama to tiring borders.

Unlike many shrubs, ornamental grasses love the wind and even in a soft breeze they bring movement and texture to the garden. They come in many heights and sizes so can be used throughout the borders from the front to the back. When planted with perennials and shrubs or under planted around trees they are brilliant space fillers and very low maintenance.

Ornamental grasses are not just visually appealing; they also offer ecological benefits. They provide habitat and food for wildlife, including birds and beneficial insects. Once



ORNAMENTAL GRASSES BLEND SEAMLESSLY WITH OTHER PLANTS, MAKING THEM IDEAL FOR MIXED BORDERS.

established, they require minimal watering, no fertilisation, and only occasional trimming to remove dead foliage. Most ornamental grasses are also resistant to pests and diseases. Incorporating them into your garden landscape is the perfect way to enhance its beauty, texture, and ecological value whilst extending the season right through to spring.

They are suitable for traditional borders mixed with herbaceous plants but also happy as a feature plant in gravel gardens, as screens, in full sun and even in shade, it's all about choosing the right grass for the area you need.

Choosing the right grass:

Use low-growing grasses like *Festuca glauca* (full sun) or *Carex* (shade/part shade) to create soft, flowing borders that define garden beds and pathways, or for dotting between pavers in the gravel garden. Their fine texture contrasts beautifully with broad-leaved plants, adding a sense of refinement and order to the garden.

Tall, dramatic grasses such as *Miscanthus sinensis* (full sun) or *Panicum virgatum* can be used as focal points in the landscape. Plant them in groups or as single specimens to draw the eye and create a sense of height and movement. Their towering plumes catch the light beautifully and sway gracefully in the wind, adding dynamic energy to the garden. For a tall vertical screen in sun or part shade try *Calamagrostis Karl Foerster*, it's a cool-season



grass so earlier to emerge in the spring and turns a golden barley colour in the autumn (just cut back to 20cm at the beginning of March each year). Plant with tall perennials such as *Verbena bonariensis*.

Ornamental grasses blend seamlessly with other plants, making them ideal for mixed borders. Pair them with late flowering perennials like *Rudbeckia*, *Salvia Amistad* or *Echinacea* for a vibrant, colourful display through autumn into the winter. Leave the seedheads of the plants on the stems until the end of February; they create habitats for insects in the coldest months and look beautiful in the low sunlight of the shortest days. For a more naturalistic approach, consider creating a prairie-style garden with a mix of ornamental grasses and wildflowers. Grasses



like *Deschampsia cespitosa* (part shade) and *Schizachyrium scoparium* (full sun) are ideal for this purpose, creating a tapestry of colour and texture that changes with the seasons. This style of gardening is particularly well-suited to larger landscapes or borders and is a great way to attract wildlife to your garden.

Many ornamental grasses can also be grown in containers. Smaller varieties like *Hakonechloa macra* and *Pennisetum setaceum* thrive in pots and can be used to add height and interest to patios, balconies, or small gardens. Containers allow you to experiment with different grasses and easily move them around to suit your design needs.

Caring for your ornamental grasses:

Although most grasses are very drought tolerant, newly planted grasses need regular watering until they are established.

In late winter or early spring, cut back the previous season's growth to allow new shoots to emerge. This is particularly important for deciduous grasses, which die back in winter. Evergreen grasses may only need a light trim to remove dead or damaged foliage.

Over time, some grasses can become crowded or outgrow their space. Dividing the clumps every few years helps to rejuvenate the plants and encourages healthy growth. This is best done in spring before new growth begins.

Apply a layer of organic mulch around the base of the grasses to help conserve moisture, suppress weeds, and improve soil health. Avoid piling mulch directly against the stems, as this can lead to rot. Mulch the



borders in early spring after cutting back last season's growth. Mulch can be straw or gravel, compost, well-rotted manure or leafmould.

My favourite gardens to see ornamental grasses this autumn:

Beth Chatto Gardens, Clacton Road, Elmstead Market, Colchester CO7 7DB; RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Creep hedge Lane, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex; Knoll Gardens Ltd, Stapehill Road, Hampreston, Wimborne BH21 7ND; Hauser & Wirth Somerset Durslade Farm, Dropping Ln, Bruton BA10 0NL.

If you would like to discuss a garden or border design for your garden please get in touch. I would love to work with you.

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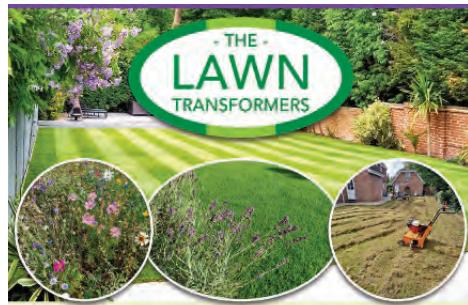
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HOW TO... MAINTAIN TIMBER BEAMS



Few historic features can infuse a property with quite as much wow factor as timber beams. You'll find exposed ceiling joists in a host of properties, from medieval barn conversions to cottages built in the 1900s. Exposing the unique character of the timber may involve removing paint and finishes that have been slapped on top, or even carrying out more involved repairs.

CHECKLIST:

- Look for signs of beetle infestation
- Note timbers that have been cut or altered
- Tackle rot and decay
- Check timber is not taking up moisture
- Deal with damp problems at source

Look out for evidence of woodworm, which can be treated using insecticide. If the beam plays a structural role and has been significantly damaged by infestation, you'll need to call in a structural engineer to evaluate the extent of the damage and advise on what repairs will be needed.

To reinstate a rustic look, strip back and remove paint or glossy finishes from the timber. Whichever product you are using as a paint stripper, be sure to test it on a small area of wood to make sure it works effectively

and doesn't damage the grain. Sanding is also effective, but this can be time-consuming and messy. Once the beams have been stripped back, they can be finished with a wood stain, varnish or oil.

Regular cleaning is an essential preventive measure to keep your wood beams in great condition. By removing dirt and dust regularly, you prevent them from settling and potentially causing damage over time.

When cleaning wood beams, it is important to use the right tools and techniques to avoid causing any harm. Soft brushes or microfibre cloths are ideal for gently removing dirt and dust without scratching the surface of the wood. Avoid using harsh chemicals or abrasive cleaners, as they can strip the protective finish and damage the wood.

FULLY IN THE FRAME

An unusually close collaboration between artist and framer has resulted in a collection of paintings with a unique twist.

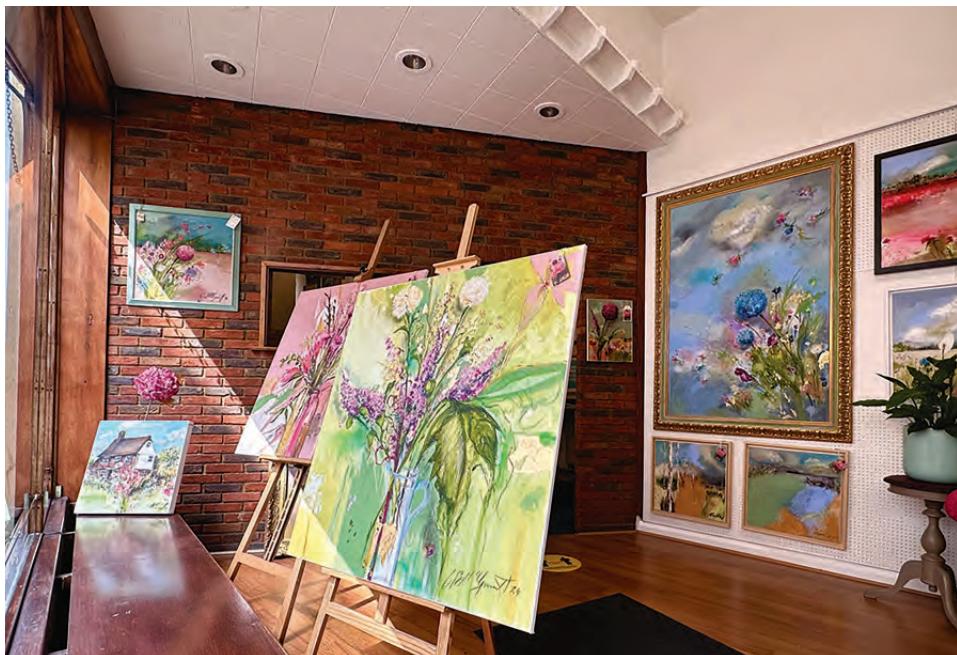
Cathy McClymont has been working for over ten years as a professional artist, producing landscapes, floral and fauna paintings in oil and mixed media, while Anthony Saward has been selecting the frames for the pictures. So far, so fairly normal...

But in this collaboration, the frame is selected before the painting is even started. Cathy works with the frame and paints her florals to suit it. Colours and composition work together. If it's a woodland scene, for example, a strong simple vertical frame is chosen and often painted to suit the colours within the picture. Likewise, in a very ornate frame with detailing and a vintage feel, the painting will echo the classic nature of the frame.

"More often than not, one can see a wonderful painting that has been framed with no consideration or connection with the colour or composition or subject matter," says Cathy. "Here with us, that does not apply."

The partnership is an absolute success. "We would like to reach out to readers to come and take a look at the Anthony Saward Gallery in Medway Street, Maidstone," says Cathy. "We are sure you will like what you see." Commissions are very welcome, and Cathy is only too happy





to discuss what you would like to suit your interior. For Anthony, no framing job is too small or too big and he is pleased to work with clients to get the best results. His business has been running for over 20 years and is one of the few family-run businesses left in Maidstone.

The Anthony Saward Gallery and Picture Framers is a family business established in the early 80s by Anthony Saward and is now run by his son in law Anthony Bishop. He offer a wide range in framing for your traditional landscapes, family portraits , certificates to memorabilia , football shirts , boxing gloves etc. with a large selection of mouldings to choose from.

The Anthony Saward Gallery are pleased to exhibit Cathy's amazing oil painting after a long working relationship together.

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TIMELESS HARMONY

Mixing antiques with contemporary pieces for a unique aesthetic

When decorating a period home, the allure of history is undeniable. Antique pieces tell stories, exuding charm and character that modern replicas often lack. However, exclusively furnishing with antiques can sometimes feel overwhelming or outdated.



The key to creating a visually appealing and harmonious space lies in blending the old with the new. By mixing antiques with contemporary pieces, you can craft a unique aesthetic that pays homage to the past while embracing the present.

The beauty of contrast

One of the primary benefits of combining antiques with modern furniture is the striking contrast it creates. This juxtaposition can highlight the beauty of both styles, allowing each piece to stand out, while contributing to a cohesive look. For instance, placing a sleek,

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minimalist sofa next to a Victorian-era side table can emphasise the ornate details of the antique piece while providing a fresh, clean canvas for the eye.

Contrast can also be achieved through colour and texture. An antique wooden armoire with rich, dark tones can serve as a stunning focal point against a backdrop of light, neutral walls and contemporary decor. Similarly, the smooth,



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polished surfaces of modern furnishings can beautifully offset the patina and intricate carvings of antiques.

Creating balance

To successfully mix antiques with modern pieces, balance is crucial. One effective approach is the 80/20 rule: dedicate 80% of your decor to one style and 20% to the other. For example, if your primary aesthetic is contemporary, introduce antiques as accent pieces. A single antique mirror, a set of vintage chairs, or a classical chandelier can add depth and interest to a predominantly modern room. Conversely, if your home is filled with period details and antique furniture, infuse it with a few contemporary touches. Modern art, sleek lighting fixtures, or a chic coffee table can provide a refreshing contrast and prevent the space from feeling overly traditional.

Harmonising styles

While contrast is important, creating a sense of harmony between the old and new is equally essential. This can be achieved by finding common elements that tie the pieces together. Look for complementary colours, materials, and shapes that can bridge the gap between different styles.

For instance, if you have an antique mahogany dining table, consider pairing it with modern chairs that have wooden accents or similar finishes. This creates a visual link that unites the disparate elements. Similarly, a contemporary sofa with clean lines can be adorned with vintage-inspired cushions or throws to create cohesion.

Layering is another effective technique for harmonising styles. Combine antique rugs with modern furniture, or mix vintage and



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contemporary artwork on the same wall. These layers add depth and richness to the space, creating a well-rounded and visually appealing environment.

Highlighting unique pieces

Lighting plays a crucial role in highlighting your antiques. Use strategically placed lamps or spotlights to accentuate the details of a cherished antique piece. This not only adds drama and focus, but also helps integrate the antique into the overall design scheme.

Functional integration

While aesthetics are important, functionality should not be overlooked.



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Integrating antiques into your daily life can be both practical and stylish. Repurpose antique furniture for modern uses – an old wooden chest can serve as a coffee table with ample storage, while a vintage dresser can be transformed into a chic bathroom vanity.

When selecting antiques, consider how they can enhance your lifestyle. Antique cabinets and sideboards offer excellent storage solutions, while vintage armchairs can provide comfortable seating with a touch of elegance. By ensuring that your antiques are not just decorative but also functional, you create a space that is both beautiful and liveable.

Personal expression

Mixing antiques with modern pieces allows for a high degree of personal expression. This

eclectic approach gives you the freedom to showcase your unique taste and personality. Your home becomes a reflection of your journey, blending inherited heirlooms with contemporary finds to tell your story.

Take your time in curating your collection. Visit antique shops and markets to discover pieces that resonate with you. Pair these treasures with modern items that complement your lifestyle and aesthetic. The result will be a home that feels authentic, inviting, and uniquely yours.

By thoughtfully blending old and new, you can create a home that is timeless yet contemporary, full of character yet functional. Embrace the beauty of both worlds, and let your space tell a story that spans generations.

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A brief history of...

THE BUTLER SINK



Image: Hogwood House

In Victorian times, Butler sinks were also known as London sinks due to the locality in which they were commonly found. They are different from Belfast sinks as they do not come fitted with a Weir overflow. London didn't have an abundant supply of water available like Belfast did. This was because London was further inland along the Thames and had higher costs in obtaining fresh water for its large population than Belfast. To allow for the same provision of water in a bowl, a wider design was developed, which in reality had more practical uses. This was when the Butler sink was born.

As the years went on by, water supply became less of an issue and kitchens got bigger. Some modern butler sinks are now as deep as Belfast sinks, where Belfast sinks have evolved to be wider with the typical double bowl. The sink

is as wide as a Butler and almost as deep as a Belfast with a ceramic partition in the middle.

Butler sinks can be chosen in a variety of sizes depending on the space and the needs of the homeowner, for example a small sink may just be to rinse items or wash hands. Or for larger homes it provides a place to wash down small dogs, pre-soak clothes or anything else you can think of.

Butler sinks aren't just perfect for boot and utility rooms though, they are also ideal for scullery rooms, prep kitchens and more traditional kitchens that reside in older properties. A butler sink in a scullery or prep kitchen for example will help when clearing away after large gatherings or dinner parties as the dishes can be tucked in the sink out of sight or rinsed then loaded straight into an dishwasher for maximum convenience.



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THE HUMBLE HALLWAY

Hallway decor may not seem exciting, but there's no reason to relegate this utilitarian area to a boring pass-through space.

– LOUISE TOMLIN –



I wonder if many people actually know the origins of the name hall or hallway, after all it's one of those parts of your house that can easily be dismissed as a bit boring, or an after-thought, when considering redecorating your home, and getting excited about the latest new colour schemes. However, when you take a moment to realise that it's usually the first glimpse that visitors get of your home as they cross your threshold, it's possibly deserving of more thought and attention than it may be getting, and not just a place to store coats, brollies and hats...

So let's take a look at the history of where the term hall comes from, and also, bring things up the present day by exploring a few ideas for giving halls a bit of boost up the pecking order of important rooms in our homes. The name hall or hallway derives from the medieval 'hall house', we've often referred to these in our articles, when covering properties from this period that are being renovated. The hall house could easily be mistaken on first sight for a large barn, usually timber framed with wattle and daub, later stone was also used, with a thatched roof.

The interior was an open plan area that housed all the residents from the family to their servants. All of the necessary day-to-day goings-on took place in this space, although it was most probably zoned. It is thought the important folk would have a separate table at the 'high end' whilst at the other end of the building - the 'low end' would be where the retainers carried out the tasks of servicing the household, and housed important storage areas. Screening would have been introduced to allow for more privacy and to help keep draughts away, this would be made from cloth, tapestries and eventually made more permanent by the use of wood. By partitioning

off this long narrow area between the hall's two doorways, a passageway was created, or a hallway.

The hallway naturally changed throughout the subsequent centuries, dependent on the architectural changes and the fashions of the day, however it was always there. One of the most notable evolutions came when it arrived at the front and centre of the house, leading from the front door directly through to the back, with principal rooms off the each side, and in the case of the most prestigious homes, to a staircase to the upper floor, when the fashion for entertaining visitors moved the principal rooms up a floor.

It must be said that the importance and relevance for the majority of our readers comes with later developments, not many of us are lucky enough to have medieval mansion, or vast country house, so a quick dip in to the following eras through the 18th century to present day, is more appropriate.

The Georgian era saw the introduction of terraced housing for many classes, apart for the wealthiest. Lack of space meant the usual layout was to have the staircase at the rear of the hallway, which was most probably a fairly narrow passageway leading to the dining room and parlour. The introduction of the fanlight above the front door helped to bring a bit more light and offered a touch of elegance. In grander properties the introduction of wooden paneling, decorative mouldings, fretwork and other extravagant embellishments were highly fashionable and in line with the neo-classical architectural style, this included black and white geometric ceramic floor tiles.

In the Victorian era, the hall grew in importance. It normally ran down the centre of





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the house connecting all the other rooms, which were separate from each other. This was a time of industrialisation, economic boom and mass production, which allowed the middle-classes to indulge in decorating their homes, aping the styles of the upper classes, by ordering from pattern books and catalogues.

There was a tendency towards more somber colours and also a leaning towards rather

over-doing it with ornaments, bric-a-brac and, sad to say, clutter! Technological advances saw the introduction of mass produced colourful encaustic tiles, which were widely used as flooring in the Victorian hallway, sometimes even on the pathway leading up to front door, many have been restored these days and have become a ubiquitous and stylish element in many a Victorian refurbished modern home.

It can be quite difficult at times to see a distinction between late Victorian and early Edwardian hallways, and the evolution is somewhat blurred, however what eventually emerged was the hallway being seen as having its own identity. It wasn't always just a place to impress visitors whilst they passed through to the principal rooms, it became a room in its own right. The living hall became a space to entertain guests, do hobbies or read. Out went the clutter of the previous era, cleanliness and simplicity ruled. Health, hygiene and sunlight became hugely important, a definite uplifting

change from the previous rather dingy Victorian forerunner of the hallway.

Throughout the 20th century and now into the 21st century, modern housing has evolved with more generous dimensions and many more design and architectural trends than we can cover here. For those of you with a more modern home, you can set your imagination free, and go for whatever style you fancy, it's a chance to reveal your character and give your visitors a glimpse of your personal style as they cross your threshold, go for it and create your Heavenly Hallway.

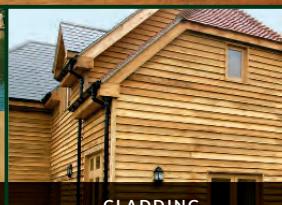
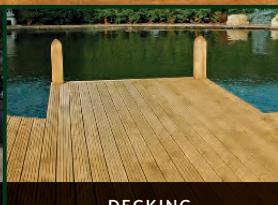
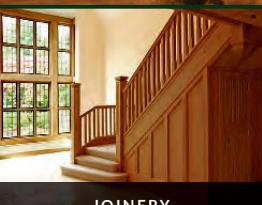
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ADD VALUE to your period property

Whether or not you plan to sell in the near future, it always pays to make good choices when it comes to improving your period property.

We look at the key areas worth investing in.



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Period homes hold a unique charm, characterised by their timeless beauty and historical significance. Owning a period home is like being the custodian of a piece of history. However, maintaining and enhancing these properties requires thoughtful care and a keen eye for detail. Whether you're planning to sell or simply want to enrich your living environment, adding value to your period home can be achieved through various strategic approaches...

RESTORING ORIGINAL FEATURES

Restoring original features is one of the most effective ways to add value to your period home. These elements not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also preserve the historical integrity of the property.

Fireplace: The fireplace often serves as the focal point in period homes. Restoring it to its former glory can enhance the character of your living space. Take a look at our article starting on page 60 for more detail.

Front door: The front door offers people their first impression of your home. Restoring an original door can dramatically enhance curb appeal. Strip away layers of old paint to reveal the wood beneath, then sand and refinish it to showcase its natural beauty. Adding period-appropriate hardware, such as brass knockers and handles, can further enhance its charm.

Using paint to create an authentic feel:

Paint is a powerful tool in creating an authentic

period feel in your home. Choosing the right colours and finish can evoke the style of the era in which your home was built.

Colour schemes: Research the typical colour palettes of your home's period. Georgian homes, for instance, often featured soft, muted tones like sage green, dusky blue and warm neutrals. Victorian homes favoured richer, deeper colours such as burgundy, forest green, and mustard yellow. By using historically



Flooring: Original flooring, whether hardwood, stone, or tile, can significantly increase the value of your home. If your floors are covered with modern materials, consider uncovering and restoring the original flooring underneath. Sanding and refinishing wooden floors can bring back their natural beauty. For stone or tile, professional cleaning and sealing can rejuvenate their appearance. (photo: reclaimedflooring.co.uk)



Photo: Gary Miller Decorations

accurate colours, you can create a cohesive and authentic look.

Finishes: The type of paint finish is equally important. Matte and eggshell finishes were commonly used in period homes, offering a more subdued and authentic appearance compared to modern high-gloss finishes. Additionally, consider using traditional paint types, such as lime wash or distemper, which were popular in earlier centuries.

Details: Pay attention to the details, such as mouldings, trims, and ceilings. Painting these elements in contrasting or complementary colours can highlight architectural features and add depth to your rooms.

TIDYING THE GARDEN

A well-maintained garden not only enhances the beauty of your home but also adds significant value. The garden should reflect the style and period of your property, creating a seamless transition from the exterior to the interior.



Photo: thegardencreative.com

Heating systems: Upgrade your heating system to a more efficient model. Consider installing a modern boiler or underfloor heating, which can be more energy-efficient and discreet. Retain original radiators if possible, as they can often be refurbished and re-integrated into a modern heating system.



Cast iron radiators: The Victorian House is your go-to source for bespoke items that add a touch of Victorian elegance to your property. The stunning Low to the Ground Victorian Radiators, are a perfect blend of classic design and modern functionality. Their products are handcrafted with care and precision, ensuring that each one is a unique piece of art that will add timeless elegance to your home. (*Photo: thevictorianhouse.co.uk*)

ADDING VALUE TO YOUR PERIOD HOME INVOLVES A THOUGHTFUL BLEND OF RESTORATION, MODERNISATION, AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH.

Making the property energy-efficient

While preserving historical authenticity is crucial, modern homeowners also value energy efficiency. Upgrading your period home to be more energy efficient can add value and improve comfort without compromising its character. It's essential to consult an expert when improving your home's energy efficiency: especially if your property is a listed building.

Insulation: Proper insulation is essential for maintaining a comfortable indoor temperature and reducing energy costs. Consider adding insulation to the attic, walls, and floors. Use materials that are sympathetic to the building's fabric, such as sheep's wool or cellulose, which are breathable and less likely to cause issues.

Windows: Original windows are highly prized features that beautiful, and where they are intact you should make every effort to preserve them. Even if they are in a poor state of repair, you will be surprised at the difference a professional restoration can make. Refurbish existing windows by repairing any damaged frames, replacing broken panes, and adding weather stripping. If replacement is necessary, choose a company with expertise in heritage and listed buildings that embrace sustainable timber sourcing.

Research the era it was built in

Understanding the historical context of your period home is essential for making informed



Photo: dolmenjoinery.co.uk

restoration and decoration choices. Researching the era in which your home was built can provide valuable insights and inspiration.

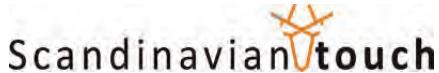
Architectural style: Identify the architectural style of your home and its defining characteristics. This knowledge can guide your restoration efforts and help you make authentic design decisions. Resources such as architectural history books, online databases, and local heritage organisations can be invaluable.

Historical records: Explore historical records, such as old maps, photographs, and building plans, to uncover details about your home's original features and layout. Local archives, libraries, and historical societies often hold these records and can offer fascinating insights into your home's past.



Extend your space: Though the most expensive way to add value, extending will yield the biggest return on your investment. It can also make a huge difference to your life at home, as even just adding a very modest extension can transform the usability of a space. The best options for increasing value are enlarging the kitchen to create a family-friendly room with access to the garden.

Adding value to your period home involves a thoughtful blend of restoration, modernisation, and historical research. By restoring original features, you can enhance both the aesthetic and monetary value of your home. Embrace the journey of preserving and enhancing your period property, and enjoy the unique charm and character that it brings to your life.



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DISPLAYING AUTUMN RUST!

Autumn is probably the season that seems to pass by most quickly in the garden. It's a slide towards the first serious frosts that kill off most of the perennials and certainly all of the annuals.

In a good year (depending on how you define 'good'), this can be as late as the start of winter but can equally strike very early in the season – such is the unpredictability of gardening. What is certain is that along the way, as the temperature cools and the threat of frost looms closer, the garden undergoes a beautiful paint job: deep

reds, silky browns and the richest orange-rust are autumn's gift.

Early autumn light has a purity and a sort of mellowness that's lost at the height of summer. In those first few weeks of the season, planting glows, as though softly illuminated by a flickering bonfire, and clear skies bring a cool clarity to the intense colour happening all over the garden.



This is a time when many of the most fiery annuals and perennials are having their moment: heleniums, crocosmias, dahlias and sunflowers (*Helianthus*) create blazing displays as the days slowly start to shorten, and, all across the garden, there's a sense that it's giving one last performance before its annual retreat.

Later in the season, we are sometimes tempted to cut back perennials as soon as the temperature starts to drop and plants begin to look a bit subdued, but the colour, texture and structural value of some faded perennials in the autumn and winter garden should not be underestimated. In autumn, if left in the ground, the nutmeg-coloured seedheads of Turkish sage (*Phlomis russeliana*) look extremely decorative and provide welcome interest. Rudbeckias and heleniums have much the same effect, leaving behind cones of beautiful, chocolate-coloured seedheads that look particularly effective rising through ornamental grasses. Inside, these seedheads are an excellent material for autumn display. This is the time of year when we adjust our expectations of what we can display inside. We leave the blousy bounty of spring and summer behind and look towards a more sober, but still very beautiful, palette of cut flowers.



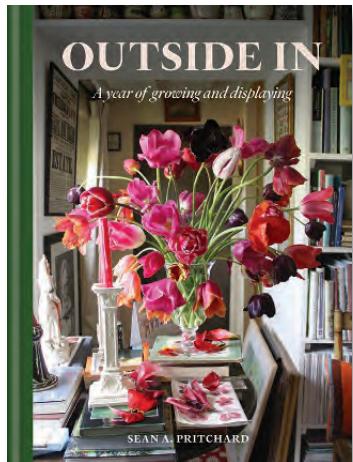


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MOMENT.



All around me in Somerset, some of my favourite outdoor autumn displays come not from flower-packed gardens, but from fruiting orchards. Like walled gardens, there's something about the feeling of enclosure within an orchard that I find alluring; a comforting sense of being enveloped by nature. Ancient cider apple trees are decorated with endless baubles – apples that range from scarlet red to the crispest green – and, as they fall, a multicoloured carpet is created that glitters in the delicate autumn light. There's also the smell: an intense earthy sweetness that permeates the air as apples both ripen and rot; an aroma that's so evocative to me and so rooted in my mind as specific to the area in which I live. These productive orchards represent the conclusion of another growing year. As the sun grows weaker and the light more scarce, they bring a satisfying sense of closure to months of hard work in the garden.



*This is an excerpt from Outside In: A year of growing and displaying by Sean A. Pritchard.
Published by Mitchell Beazley.
Photography: Sean A. Pritchard*





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THE ROLE OF THE FIREPLACE IN PERIOD HOMES

Historically the fireplace was the heart of the home, providing essential heat and a place for cooking.

Today, it continues to serve as a focal point, offering both aesthetic charm and functional value.



Whether you are selecting a new fireplace, refurbishing an original, or simply decorating for the holidays, understanding the role of the fireplace in period homes is the key to maintaining the character and enhancing the ambience of your living space.

Choosing the right fireplace for your home

When choosing a fireplace for your period home, it's important to consider the architectural style and historical context of your property. Each period has distinct fireplace designs that complement their unique aesthetic. For example, Georgian fireplaces often feature symmetrical designs with elegant mouldings and marble surrounds, reflecting the era's classical influence. Victorian fireplaces, on the other hand, are known for their ornate cast iron inserts and intricate tilework. Edwardian fireplaces may blend both Victorian and Arts and Crafts elements, showcasing simpler lines with decorative accents.

To select the right fireplace, start by researching the architectural style of your home and identifying which period elements resonate with you. Local antique shops, salvage yards and architectural showrooms can provide inspiration and insight into the types of fireplaces available. Additionally, consulting with a restoration specialist can help ensure that your chosen fireplace not only matches the period style, but also meets modern safety standards.

Materials for fireplaces

The choice of materials plays a crucial role in defining the character and authenticity of a period fireplace. Traditional materials include

GTO SELECT THE RIGHT FIREPLACE, START BY RESEARCHING THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OF YOUR HOME AND IDENTIFYING WHICH PERIOD ELEMENTS RESONATE WITH YOU.

stone, marble, brick and cast iron, each bringing its own texture, colour and feel to the room.

Stone: Stone fireplaces, particularly those made from limestone or sandstone, offer a rustic and timeless appeal. These materials are often associated with Tudor and country-style homes. Their natural textures and tones provide a sturdy, grounded presence in any room.

Marble: Marble was a popular choice in Georgian and Regency periods, valued for its elegant and refined appearance. Marble fireplaces can range from pristine white to richly veined varieties, adding a touch of luxury and sophistication.

Brick: Brick fireplaces, common in Victorian and industrial-era homes, bring a sense of warmth and tradition. The natural red and brown hues of brick can create a cosy, inviting atmosphere.

Cast Iron: Cast iron became widely used during the Victorian era because of its durability and the craftsmen's ability to produce intricate designs in the material. Cast iron fireplaces often feature decorative motifs, tiles and elaborate grates, making them a focal point of any room.

When choosing materials, consider both the historical context of your home and the practical aspects of installation, such as maintenance and heat efficiency. Combining different materials, such as a marble surround



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with a cast iron insert, can also create a unique and personalised look.

Refurbishing original fireplaces

Restoring an original fireplace can be a rewarding project, preserving the historical integrity of your home while enhancing its charm and value. The process typically involves

several steps, including cleaning, repairing and sometimes replacing damaged parts.

Cleaning: Begin by thoroughly cleaning the fireplace to remove soot, grime and rust.

For stone and brick, gentle scrubbing with a mixture of water and mild detergent can work, while metal surfaces may require specialised



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cleaners. Avoid harsh chemicals that could damage the materials.

Repairing: Inspect the fireplace for any structural issues or damage. Cracks in stone or brick can often be repaired with appropriate fillers, while damaged tiles may need to be carefully replaced. For cast iron fireplaces, minor rust can be removed with steel wool, but more significant damage might require welding or professional restoration.

Replacing parts: In some cases, missing or

irreparable parts such as grates, tiles or mantels may need to be sourced and replaced. Look for salvage yards or antique dealers who specialise in period pieces. Custom fabrication is also an option if original parts are unavailable. Consulting with a professional restorer can ensure that the refurbishment process respects the historical accuracy and integrity of the fireplace, maintaining its role as a central feature of your home.

Decorating for Christmas

With the festive season approaching, the fireplace takes on even more significance so here are the top 5 tips for maximising that yuletide glow:



• **Mantel decor:** Start with the mantel, using garlands, candles and seasonal ornaments. For a traditional look, evergreen garlands mixed with berries, pinecones and fairy lights create a classic festive feel. Add candles in varying heights and styles, from vintage holders to

modern LED options, for a warm glow.

• **Stockings:** Hanging stockings is a timeless tradition. Choose stockings that complement the style of your period home, whether knitted, velvet, or hand-embroidered. Ensure they are securely fastened to avoid accidents!

- **Fireplace Surround:** Decorate the fireplace surround with wreaths, ribbons and seasonal floral arrangements. A large wreath above the mantel can serve as a striking focal point, while smaller accents around the hearth can add balance and charm.
- **Hearth Display:** The hearth itself can be adorned with festive elements such as lanterns, baskets of firewood or a decorative log display. If you have a non-working

fireplace, consider filling it with candles or fairy lights to create a warm, flickering effect.

- **Personal Touches:** Incorporate personal touches like family heirlooms, vintage ornaments, or handmade crafts to make your holiday decor unique and meaningful.

By thoughtfully decorating your period fireplace, you can create a festive focal point that enhances the warmth and charm of your home during the holiday season.



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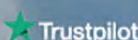
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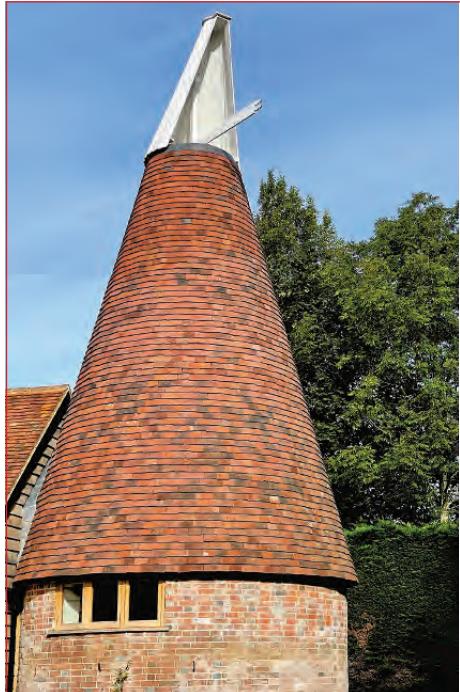
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BRICK BY BRICK

Is it possible to make substantial repairs to the brickwork of a listed property in a conservation area without compromising the historical integrity of the building?

Charles Reilly of Georgian Brickwork, based near Canterbury, explains...



Dolphin Cottage sits proudly at the top of Alfred Square in Deal, and has three street-facing elevations. The property is Grade II listed, and is just over 4 metres wide and 6 metres tall. It was built mainly in yellow stocks, with gauged red rubbers over the windows and front door. The side wall beyond the garden gate was built with red bricks. Originally built in the late 18th century using a lime-based ash mortar, it was repointed with cement during the 20th

century, but when we first visited in 2023 both the brickwork and the mortar were showing signs of decay. Georgian Brickwork supported conversations between the homeowner and the local Conservation Officer to ensure that a sympathetic programme of repairs could take place.

At our initial visit to Dolphin Cottage in July 2023, we found evidence of brick decay across all elevations. Some of the decline was due to natural deterioration over time; however,



GC

THE SUCCESSFUL RESTORATION
OF DOLPHIN COTTAGE IS THE
RESULT OF COLLABORATION
BETWEEN THE HOMEOWNER,
THE CONSERVATION OFFICER
AND GEORGIAN BRICKWORK.



there were also signs of the cement mortar joints exacerbating the problem. The three first floor gauged arches had been rendered and painted. The two ground floor gauged arches were unrendered and both needed repair. In addition, there was evidence of movement on both the side elevations, towards the front of the building.

Following our visit, we recommended a programme of brick repairs and sympathetic repointing to address the deterioration and damage, plus work to stabilise and repair cracks, and repairs to the ground floor gauged arches.

The homeowner led the application for Listed Building Consent (LBC), with Georgian Brickwork providing method statements and annotated photographs showing the areas to be repaired, and attending meetings with the local Conservation Officer. As is common, there was a large amount of paperwork involved in seeking and gaining LBC. There was also a slight Catch

22 element, with some decisions being unable to be confirmed by the Conservation Officer until the scaffold was erected, and the homeowner being understandably reluctant to put up the scaffold until he had secured LBC. Nevertheless, a combination of patience and professionalism from all parties resulted in an acceptable way forward and LBC was granted in December 2023.

The consent was subject to the discharge of specific conditions that necessitated a site visit from the Conservation Officer once the scaffold was up (and shortly before work began) to assess and approve the repointing areas. Additionally, Georgian Brickwork was asked to create a sample panel showing the type of mortar and finish that would be used. In this instance, the local Conservation Officer was exceedingly helpful in not only scheduling a site visit very quickly, but also signing off on the application for the Discharge of Conditions in record time.

Finally, in early May 2024, we were ready to begin the painstaking process of removing the cement mortar from the approved areas. In the hands of an inexperienced contractor the poor use of tools can result in damage to the bricks, but the Georgian Brickwork team uses a specific methodology that reduces the risk of damage.

Once the mortar joints were raked out and cleaned, we moved on to brick repairs. Minor repairs can be done in situ, but where the face of an individual brick was beyond repair it was turned or replaced. The next task was to correct the vertical cracks running through the brickwork on each corner. To address this issue, we installed Helifix bars: these lengths of stainless steel provide a hidden structural repair. They are a good solution on a listed property to strengthen and stabilise cracked brickwork.

Having carried out all the preparation and remedial work, we were finally ready to repoint, using the ash mortar mix that had been approved as part of the LBC process. The Conservation Officer had also noted that the original lime mortar joint had a ruled line, so we recreated this finish on our repointed areas to help them blend in.

Finally, the parapet brickwork was toned down and all elevations were soot-washed to create a more consistent aesthetic across the building. Once the scaffold had been removed, the gauged arches above the front door and ground floor window were repaired and the courtyard garden wall was also repaired.

The successful restoration of Dolphin Cottage is the result of collaboration between the homeowner, the Conservation Officer and Georgian Brickwork. Each party had a slightly different perspective: the Conservation wanting minimum intervention; the homeowner wanting to do whatever was deemed necessary to resolve the current problems, create a pleasing visual finish and secure the future of the building; and Georgian Brickwork wanting a similar outcome plus the professional challenge of sympathetically restoring the brickwork so that the repairs were barely noticeable. Although the process was protracted, the determination, persistence and professionalism of all involved has resulted in a sensitive restoration of a prominent listed building in a much-loved part of town.

If you have a historic home in need of sensitive repairs and restoration, contact Georgian Brickwork georgianbrickwork.co.uk, info@georgianbrickwork.co.uk or call Charlie on 07732 975 349.

DID YOU KNOW?

When the joints between bricks are filled with impermeable cement, the rainwater being absorbed by the bricks cannot escape. If the bricks become sodden in cold wet weather, the water within them will freeze and expand, causing the affected bricks to crack.

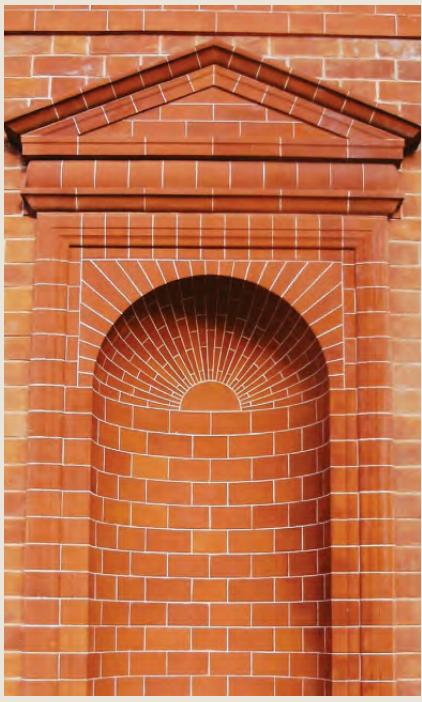
By contrast, a lime-based mortar is softer and more permeable, allowing moisture to naturally evaporate out of the bricks and the mortar joints.

Are you thinking of carrying out brick repairs to your listed property? Are you aware that some repairs may need Listed Building Consent (LBC)?

Here are Georgian Brickwork's tips

- Plan ahead, as getting consent takes time and reputable contractors carrying out specialist restoration work tend to be booked up months in advance.
- Understand that there is a difference between minor 'like-for-like' repairs where LBC may not be needed, and more extensive 'like-for-like' repair projects such as repointing a whole elevation, where the Conservation Officer is much more likely to want to be involved.
- Remember, the cheapest quote may be good for your bank account but may not give you the best outcome for your historic home. Seek quotes from several contractors and ask to see examples of their work, or ask them to create a sample panel so that you can see the finish they can achieve.

- Once you have appointed a contractor, seek their support in securing LBC, for example method statements, mortar mix, sample panels, preliminary meetings with the Conservation Officer.
- Be prepared to compromise. Even though you may feel it would make sense to repoint the whole property whilst the scaffold is up, most Conservation Officers start with the principle of 'minimum intervention', so if an area of cement pointing is not damaging the bricks, they may not consent to it being removed purely for practicalities or aesthetics.



Examples of other projects Georgian Brickwork has been involved in.



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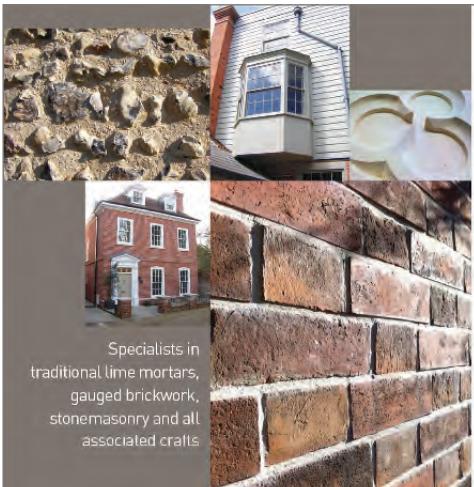


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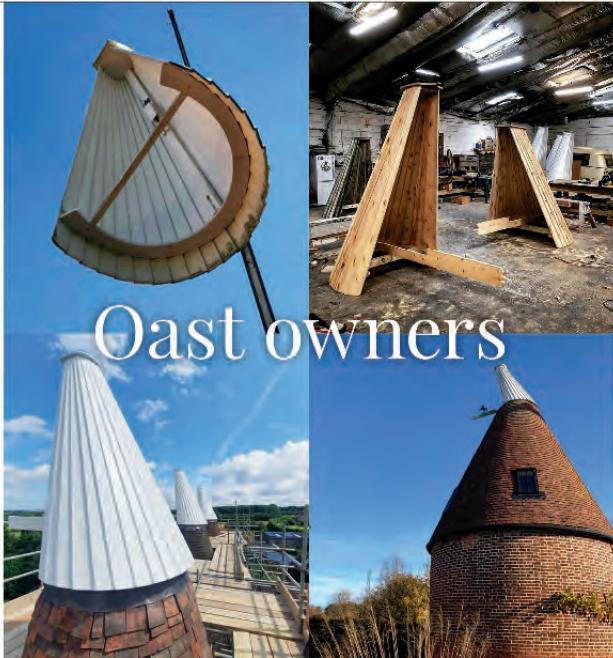
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(Photos: macknade.com; whitstableharbourgin.co.uk; alkhamcourt.co.uk; duckandblade.co.uk)



It's slightly intimidating cooking for your father-in-law, but Bryan is a no-fuss kind of bloke – so it's not surprising this is his favourite meal. You can use the steak of your choice, but my favourites are scotch or rump due to their fat content, as this is where the flavour is. Grass-finished beef tends to have less marbling and fat coverage and has a yellow tinge to it.

THE GOOD FARM COOKBOOK

SERVES
2

YOU WILL NEED

400 g (14 oz) floury potatoes, such as russet, peeled, rinsed and cut into 1.5 cm (5/8 inch) batons

100 ml (31/2 fl oz) extra-virgin olive oil, plus 1 teaspoon extra for cooking the steak

1 teaspoon dried rosemary

2 steaks (eye fillet, scotch fillet, T-bone and rump are excellent choices)

2 tablespoons Black Olive Butter

Black olive butter

150 g (51/2 oz) salted butter

2 garlic cloves, peeled

50 g (13/4 oz) black olives, pitted

2 anchovy fillets

1/4 bunch fresh parsley

BRYAN'S STEAK & CHIPS WITH BLACK OLIVE BUTTER

METHOD

Bring a saucepan of salted water to the boil and drop in the potatoes. Return to the boil before reducing the heat to a steady simmer for 12 minutes. Drain, and lightly toss them in the colander to 'rough up' the surface of the potato. Place in a container (uncovered) and freeze for 1–2 hours.

Once the potatoes have chilled, preheat the oven to 220°C (425°F). Place the olive oil in a baking dish with the dried rosemary and put in the oven for 5 minutes before adding the potatoes.

Return the dish to the oven and bake for 30–40 minutes, or until golden, turning a few times to ensure the chips are evenly crisp. Remove the steaks from the fridge and set aside.

With about 10 minutes left on the chips, place a heavy-based frying pan over high heat. Season both sides of the steaks. Add the extra olive oil to the pan and, once hot, add the steaks. If your steak is about 2 cm (3/4 in) thick, cook them for around 3 minutes on each side for medium rare (adjust the cooking time depending on the thickness of the steak and how you like it cooked). Don't move the steaks for the first 3 minutes – this will create a lovely caramelised crust. Once this has developed, turn them over.

With 1 minute remaining on the steaks, add 1 tablespoon of the butter to the pan and baste the steaks with it.

Once cooked to your liking, remove the steaks from the pan and rest for 2–3 minutes. Remove the chips from the oven and season. Place the steak on a serving plate and top with the remaining butter. Serve with the chips and a green salad, if you like.

For the butter

Combine all the ingredients in a food processor or blender and blitz for 20 seconds or until smooth. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then transfer to an airtight container and store in the fridge for up to 1 month.

SERVES
10-12

APPLE CRUMBLE WITH STAR ANISE & HEMP

YOU WILL NEED

Apples

1.25 kg (2 lb 12 oz) apples, cored and cut into 3 cm (1¼ inch) wedges

2 tablespoons ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground star anise

1 teaspoon ground cardamon

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

2 tablespoons coconut sugar

Topping

2–3 tablespoons coconut sugar, or sugar of your choice

2 cups (130 g) shredded coconut

1 cup (170 g) hemp seeds

1 cup (125 g) slivered almonds

1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

1/2 cup (125 g) salted butter, roughly chopped

METHOD

Place the apple in a large mixing bowl and sprinkle the spices and coconut sugar over the top.

Toss to ensure the apples are evenly coated. Transfer to a saucepan with 300 ml (10 ½ fl oz) water, cover with a lid and place over low heat. Leave the apples to stew gently for about 45 minutes, mixing every 10 minutes or so with a wooden spoon.

Meanwhile, make the topping by combining the sugar, coconut, hemp seeds, almonds and cinnamon and tossing together.

Add the butter and use your hands to rub it into the topping ingredients to form a crumb.

Preheat the oven to 150°C (300°F). Once the apples have softened, remove the pan from the heat and transfer the apple mixture to a baking dish.

Sprinkle the topping over the apples and place in the oven for 15 minutes, or until the topping has browned.

Remove from the oven and enjoy with some home-made ice cream.

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For your chance to win a copy of The Good Farm Cookbook, please email your name, address and telephone number to:

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Closing date: Friday 15th November 2024

This is an extract from The Good Farm Cookbook by Scott Gooding and Matilda Brown (Murdoch Books, £20). Photography by Cath Muscat.





This delicious, warming apple crumble is a far cry from the English apple crumbles I was raised on in the UK. This version has been spiced up and the topping healthified with hemp seeds, which are rich in fatty acids, omega 3 and 6, and high in protein fibre. Plus, the coconut is rich in medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) and antioxidants. Does it even qualify as a dessert?!



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Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

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

THURSDAY: 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 7th
Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Penshurst & Wye

SUNDAY: 8th
Lenham; Tonbridge

SATURDAY: 14th
Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Hythe; Tunbridge Wells

SUNDAY: 15th
Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 21st
Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Tunbridge Wells Food & Drink Festival; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 22nd
Tunbridge Wells Food & Drink Festival; New Ash Green

SATURDAY: 28th
Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Hythe; Whitstable

OCTOBER

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

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

THURSDAY: 3rd; 10th; 17th, 24th & 31st
Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 5th
Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Penshurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 6th
Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 12th
Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Hythe

SUNDAY: 13th
Lenham; Tonbridge; New Ash Green

SATURDAY: 19th
Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 20th
Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury; New Ash Green

SATURDAY: 26th
Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Hythe; Knockholt; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 27th
Cliftonville

NOVEMBER

SATURDAY: 2nd
Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Penshurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 3rd
Bearsted; Tunbridge Wells

TUESDAY: 5th; 12th; 19th & 26th
Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

THURSDAY: 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th
Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 9th
Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Hythe

SUNDAY: 10th
Lenham; Tonbridge

SATURDAY: 16th
Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Hastings; Hawkhurst; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 17th
Aylesford; Rochester; Staplehurst; Wateringbury; New Ash Green

SATURDAY: 23rd
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Are you still an ABC?

Chardonnay is one of those grape varieties that seemed to earn itself a reputation, in this case ABC (anything but Chardonnay), and although this was about 30-odd years ago, it seems to have stuck, and many people still associate it with those over-oaked wines of the 80s/90s and can't seem to get past it.

Chardonnay is in fact one of the most versatile grapes on the planet and the most planted (except for Airen in Spain) and I hope this article will encourage you to look at it again, to try a glass or even a bottle. Don't leave it too long, as I promise you there is something for everyone with this grape variety – pricewise, as well as every style of wine imaginable!

Styles of wine

As already mentioned, Chardonnay is extremely versatile and grows anywhere where vines can flourish – warm, moderate or cool climates – and as such, many new wineries and wine growing regions regard it as an 'easy entry' into the wine world.

Chardonnay is essentially a neutral grape, but it has an uncanny ability to express the place where it has been grown as well as taking on the techniques from the winery, which means it can make a very wide range of styles.



In the Old World, Chardonnay can be crisp with fresh citrus and fruity aromas in the cooler areas, but in slightly warmer regions of Europe the flavours take on a more stone fruit character. In the New World, Chardonnay has a more tropical fruit profile with a fuller body, because generally the climate is much warmer. I have heard people say many times that they don't like Chardonnay, but they like Chablis! Chablis is Chardonnay – but the style is crisp and fresh with aromas of green apples and a minerally, steely character and usually unoaked. It's not the grape they don't like, but the style of Chardonnay they tasted.

CHARDONNAY AROUND THE WORLD

Burgundy

Burgundy in France is the homeland of Chardonnay and, according to some, has some of the finest examples – but also some of the most expensive! As mentioned above, Chablis

CHARDONNAY IS ESSENTIALLY A NEUTRAL GRAPE, BUT IT HAS AN UNCANNY ABILITY TO EXPRESS THE PLACE WHERE IT HAS BEEN GROWN...

is a cool region just north of Dijon – hence the characteristic crisp style of wine, but go further south to the Côte d'Or, Côte Chalonnaise and Maconnais and, as it's warmer, the wines are riper and richer. If well-made they are truly delicious. Here they have notes of stone fruit such as peach and apricot and they often have floral aromas such as honeysuckle.

Burgundy has provided a template for winemaking techniques known as 'the Burgundian style' which is often copied around the world to emulate these great wines.

These techniques include MLF (malolactic





fermentation) where the wine undergoes a second fermentation to lower the acidity which, in cooler climates, is common practice and gives the wine a rounder mouthfeel. Secondly, lees stirring (stirring the dead yeast cells after fermentation) which adds creaminess, richness and texture to the wine. Then there is barrel fermentation (as opposed to a steel container) and oak ageing, with various amounts of new and old oak, depending on the style required as well as the price point. Chardonnay has a great affinity for oak which can add subtle vanilla, toast, spice and liquorice notes. Furthermore, top wines can age for decades which can develop flavours of spice, nuts, pear, honey, hay and wax – these wines tend to be very complex and use most of the techniques above to give them the ability to age and develop.

Many of the appellations in the Côte d'Or can be quite expensive, but the wines from further south, such as Maconnais and Côte

Chalonnaise, are less costly but still with many of the characteristics of wines from the Côte d'Or. Why not try a Pouilly Fuisse from Maconnais? It has aromas of minerals, almonds and citrus fruits (lemon and grapefruit) and a touch of pineapple, as it's quite warm here. Slightly less expensive but from the same region are Saint Veran and Vire Clesse with similar characteristics but less intensity.

New Zealand, Australia and Tasmania

New Zealand, for at least two decades, has been known for producing excellent Sauvignon Blanc but it also produces elegant, finely-balanced Chardonnay too. It's crisper than the wines of Australia but with some lovely melon flavours and light tropical fruit such as guava. These wines can be oaked but many are without oak, so the pure, fresh fruit flavours can be enjoyed to the full.

The over-oaked wines of Australia are long gone – those which prompted the backlash

of ABC (Anything but Chardonnay, remember!) Today they are more elegant – less alcoholic and much more restrained on the oak front. Unless a wine has a good deal of age, it should be a pale yellow. A sign of too much oak is if the wine is very yellow when it is very young: this would suggest that it is not a great wine and has been oaked too much to give it some kind of taste. If properly grown and vinified, oak should enhance what is there, not swamp the wine. Some of the best examples come from Western Australia especially Margaret River, where proximity to the Pacific Ocean produces a cooling effect to prevent the grapes from losing acidity and helping them to preserve fruit complexity, rather than overripe fruit and high alcohol.

Tasmania, cooler than Australia, produces some excellent examples of Chardonnay – leaner than the mainland, with stone fruit flavours as opposed to tropical, and excellent value for money as well!

United States of America

Chardonnay is produced in Washington, Oregon, and the New York finger lakes, but it is best known in California, from the cool Carneros region where it's lighter in body with notes of apple and pear, to the warmer vineyards of northern California such as the Napa and Sonoma valleys.

Many of these Chardonnays have a full body due to the warm climate, but the cooling influence of the Pacific Ocean keeps the wines in balance. Many are made using the Burgundian techniques described earlier, such as barrel fermentation, lees stirring and oak ageing. Prices range from very affordable

(around £12 a bottle) to very expensive (over £100).

Chile and Argentina

The Limari valley in the north of the country is arguably the best region in Chile for Chardonnay. The high altitude and pure air give wines that are vibrant, citrusy and bursting with mineral aromas – well worth a try and not expensive either!

Argentina is also well-known for producing excellent quality Chardonnay and the vineyards high up in the Andes can produce grapes that make wines of complexity and longevity. Catena is one of the most well-known producers in the country and offers a range of wines set at various price points.

England

Last, but by no means least, almost every English winery will have an example of Chardonnay, whether it be still or sparkling, and not forgetting that it is an essential component of Champagne and many English sparkling wines in the Champagne style. Just have a look at some of the wineries in Kent such as Simpsons, Chapel Down, Balfour, and Gusbourne to name a few.

Of course, this review has not been exhaustive of the many different styles of Chardonnay available today, but I hope it has demonstrated that this grape comes in many different incarnations and there is a wine to suit most of you – your pockets and your tastes – I encourage you to try a bottle this weekend. Cheers!

Rowena Hawtin DipWset

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