

CONSERVATION NEWS

West Kent & The Weald

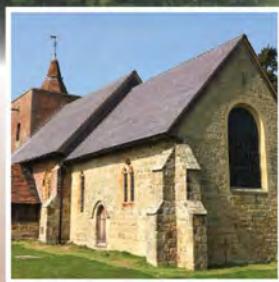
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SUMMER 2025



CONSERVATION NEWS

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Publisher
Conservation News

Contributors

Rowena Hawtin
Susan Hubbard
Liz Norton
Louise Tomlin

Cover
talkingtables.co.uk
Design
Lynn @ Dandelion Design
Editor
Dawn Long
Sales Manager
Nadene Weed
Tel: 07515 157795
nadene@conservationnews.co.uk



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Ah Summer: A wonderful season. The sky is blue, the air is warm, and people just seem to be that little bit happier. If you're anything like me then you'll be relishing the warmer weather, and taking every opportunity to explore the outdoors; from brilliant beaches, to wonderful woodlands, and all the amazing spaces and events that Kent has to offer.

Of course all that exploring can be tiring, so when you decide it's time for a break, then how about settling down in the garden with a pitcher of something cold, and a copy of Conservation News!

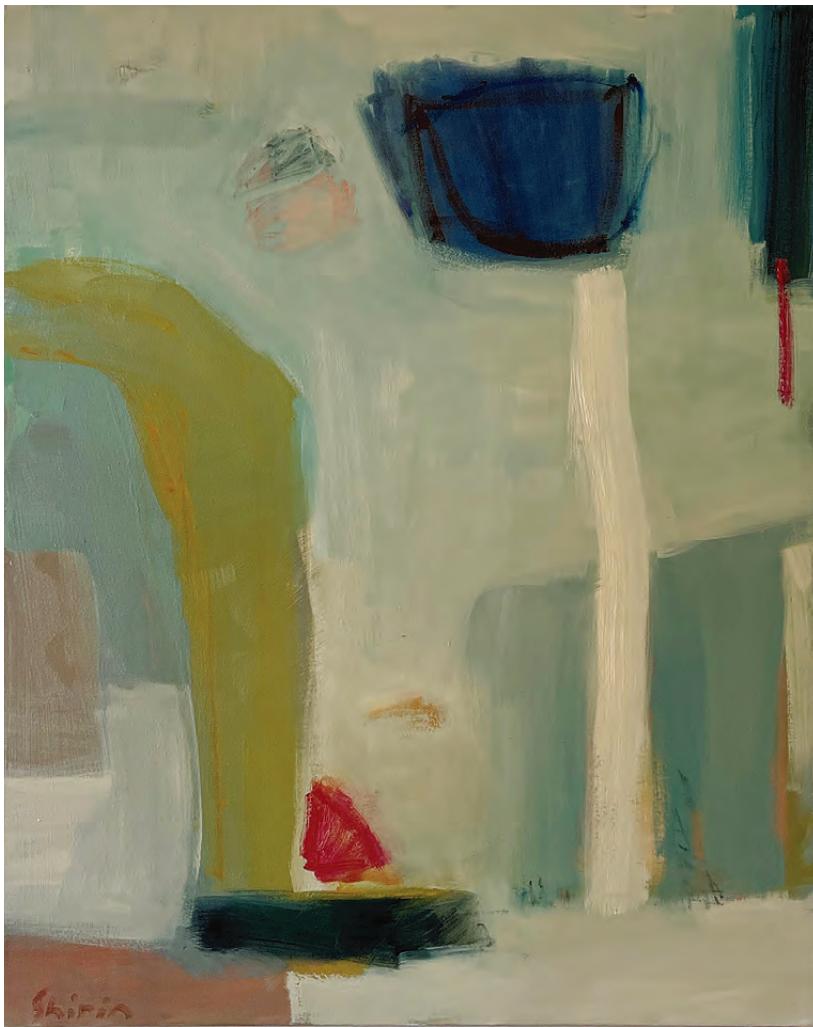
This month we've got our usual mix of local businesses, gardening tips, gorgeous recipes and county wide events, plus great articles on home improvement, including top tips for cleaning your home's exterior, and upgrading your outdoor lighting and heating. So make the most of the season and soak up the sun, Conservation News by your side.

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A sunny outlook

Otherwise known as the 'butterfly bush', buddleia is one of the best nectar shrubs you can plant for butterflies. It attracts a wide variety of species, including red admiral, peacock and small tortoiseshell. Buddlejas are easy-going shrubs that will quickly grow three metres high in any sunny spot. They are available in a variety of different shades of pink and purple. Prune back hard in spring for the best flower display.

WATER EFFECTIVELY

One of the biggest differences you can make to your garden in summer is to stay on top of the watering. Don't waste time watering little and often. Doing this will encourage weeds and also cause plants to form roots near the surface of the soil. Instead, water the soil surrounding your plants really thoroughly, making little pools around them so the water can really soak in.



GARDEN NOTES

Summer is well and truly on the way, bringing with it warmer weather and the opportunity to enjoy our gardens more often. Add in the fact that we're all in the habit of using our gardens to socialise these days, and it's definitely a great idea to keep your garden looking good.



DANDELION TIME

This summer help raise funds to provide nature-based therapy for children with challenging emotional issues across Kent by opening your garden and enjoying the outdoors together. Hold your Summer Gardens event any time between 1st May and 31st August 2025. There are plenty of ways to get involved – whether it's hosting a garden party with friends and family, or opening your garden to fellow gardening enthusiasts.

For more information visit www.dandeliontime.org.uk/summer-gardens-2025





Pond in a pot

Get all the benefits of a pond, with minimal fuss and effort, by creating one in a pot. This container showcases the charming flowers of water lilies in a dedicated lily pot – choose smaller varieties for best results. *Nymphaea 'Marliacea Albida'* requires at least 30cm of water above the top of its aquatic basket, so a deep container is essential. *Nymphaea 'Pygmaea Helvola'* needs less depth (10-20cm), so pop a brick under its pot to elevate it.

Mind the gap

As we head into summer there are still plenty of plants you can pop into your pots and borders to fill gaps for the next few months.

ROSES GALORE

There are so many to choose from; look for the perfect pairing for other plants in your garden.

HAPPY HYDRANGEAS

In shades of pure white to deep pink, they are generally easy to grow and are a long-lived shrub.

DAY OF THE DAHLIAS

Another classic flowering beauty, ideal for potting up now to last for the next few months. Keep them deadheaded and they will reward you with more blooms.



What to do in the garden

- Hoe and hand-weed borders often, so weeds don't have time to set seed.
- Plant autumn bulbs in pots and borders.
- Feed and deadhead roses to keep them flowering.
- Take softwood cuttings from shrubs.
- Water thirsty plants such as celery, beans, peas, courgettes, pumpkins and tomatoes regularly.
- Open greenhouse vents and doors on warm days to improve air circulation.
- Thin out heavy crops of apples, pears and plums, and remove any malformed, damaged or undersized fruits.

Grow it, eat it!

Growing tomatoes is a fun and rewarding task, resulting in masses of fresh, nutritious tomatoes that taste better than anything you can buy in the shops. Tomatoes are easy to grow and taste best when grown in full sun.

There are many different varieties of tomato to grow, including cherry, plum and beefsteak, each with its own distinctive shaped fruit, flavour and culinary uses.



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WARMTH & GLOW:

TRANSFORMING YOUR GARDEN WITH OUTDOOR HEATING AND LIGHTING

There's something magical about a garden after dark – the gentle flicker of lights, the warmth of a fire pit, and the promise of alfresco evenings under the stars.



PRACTICALITY AND STYLE

Outdoor lighting isn't just about functionality – it's also about atmosphere. A well-lit garden balances practicality with style, helping you extend the use of your space into the evening while showcasing your landscaping and design.

thesolarcentre.co.uk

Whether you're hosting friends, enjoying a quiet glass of wine, or creating a cosy nook for family time, the right combination of outdoor heating and lighting can turn your garden into a year-round sanctuary.

LAYER YOUR LIGHTING

Just like interiors, gardens benefit from layered lighting. Combine three key types:

- Ambient lighting provides general illumination – think wall-mounted lights, outdoor lanterns, or festoon lights strung across a patio.
- Task lighting is practical – ideal for outdoor kitchens, BBQ areas, or paths. Look for spotlights or downlights over work areas.
- Accent lighting adds drama and charm – use it to highlight trees, water features, or architectural details.

The interplay between these layers adds depth and warmth while avoiding harsh glare.

SOLAR POWER & SUSTAINABILITY

Solar garden lights have come a long way. Modern designs are brighter, longer-lasting, and energy-efficient. They're ideal for lining pathways or placing among flower beds – and best of all, they require no wiring or electricity. For eco-conscious households, LED lights are a must. They consume up to 90% less power than traditional bulbs and last much longer, which means fewer replacements.

OUTDOOR HEATING OPTIONS

Let's face it – the weather isn't always on our side. But with the right heating, your garden can be a warm retreat in spring, autumn, and even into winter.

THE CLASSIC FIRE PIT

Few things beat the primal appeal of gathering around an open flame. Fire pits are a

centrepiece in many outdoor setups, combining heat, light, and ambience. Choose from rustic wood-burning styles for authenticity or sleek gas versions for convenience and smoke-free warmth.

Pro tip: Place some comfy seating around your fire pit, add throws and cushions, and you've got a backyard campfire vibe that guests will love.

CHIMINEAS

With their sculptural shape and old-world charm, chimineas are a stylish alternative to fire pits. Traditionally made from clay but now available in cast iron and steel, they radiate heat efficiently and add a Mediterranean feel to your space. Chimineas are ideal for smaller patios or decks, as they direct smoke up and away from guests.





FESTIVE TOUCHES

Fairy lights and string bulbs can create a festival-like charm. Draped through pergolas or trees, or zigzagged across open areas, they're a simple way to create a cosy, inviting mood. For a more permanent feature, consider outdoor pendant lights or weatherproof chandeliers over dining areas.

lights4fun.co.uk

PATIO HEATERS

Freestanding or wall-mounted, patio heaters are a go-to solution for instant warmth. Gas heaters are powerful and portable, while electric options offer sleek design and easy control. Many newer models also feature smart controls and eco-modes for efficiency.

Just make sure your heater is positioned safely, with good ventilation, and always follow manufacturer instructions.

HEATED FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES

For the ultimate in garden luxury, explore heated seating, warming cushions, or even under-table heaters. These innovations are particularly handy for compact spaces where floor-standing heaters may not be practical.

DESIGN TIPS

Creating a warm, well-lit garden doesn't mean cluttering it with gadgets. Here's how to keep things stylish and cohesive:

- **Co-ordinate finishes** – Match your lights and heaters with your outdoor décor.
- Use hidden cables or solar options to avoid visual clutter.
- **Create zones** – Use lighting and heating to define spaces. A softly lit dining area here, a fire-warmed lounge corner there – it all helps structure your garden.
- **Mind the elements** – Always choose weatherproof lighting and heating products rated for outdoor use.

Investing in outdoor lighting and heating is about more than aesthetics. It's about turning your garden into an extension of your home, a place to laugh, dine, unwind, and connect, long after the sun goes down. With the right setup, even the chilliest nights can be transformed into something cosy and memorable. So grab a blanket, light those lanterns, and step into the glow of your beautiful outdoor retreat.



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Beyond their aesthetic appeal, outdoor spaces and gardens can enhance mental wellbeing by reducing stress and boosting your mood. Whether you're gardening, reading, or simply soaking in the natural surroundings, your outdoor space should provide a peaceful retreat from the busy world.

A well-maintained garden is more than just a feast for the eyes; it's a sanctuary for pollinators like bees and butterflies, supporting the ecological balance essential for healthy ecosystems. Thoughtful landscaping can also, improve air quality and provide us with fresh produce and herbs, fostering self-sufficiency. Overall gardens can also promote biodiversity and contribute to sustainable living.

At Pearson's landscapes we specialise in delivering comprehensive gardening

maintenance and landscaping services, tailored to meet the unique needs of our clients and their gardens. With years of experience in the industry our team is dedicated to creating and maintaining beautiful, functional outdoor spaces. Our expertise includes lawn care, plant and shrub pruning, seasonal clean-ups, landscape design, and hardscaping features such as patios and walkways.

As climate change continues to challenge us, we prioritise sustainable practices and use eco-friendly products to ensure healthy, thriving gardens. It's not merely about beautification but about creating resilient environments that serve both human and ecological health.

Whether it's transforming a blank canvas into a stunning outdoor retreat or maintaining a lush, manicured landscape, we are committed to quality, attention to detail, and customer

satisfaction. Trust Pearson's Landscapes to bring your outdoor vision to life with professional care and expertise. There is nothing more satisfying to our teams to see a physical transformation of a garden into a new outdoor space for our clients. Watching our clients' joyful reactions along with their extreme gratitude and excitement is a powerful motivator. Each project is unique and allows our teams to be creative through design, plant selection and layout.

A well-executed project can become a living portfolio. It can lead to word-of-mouth referral, glowing reviews, and a stronger brand presence. Completing a project successfully boosts morale and team cohesion. Everyone involved can take pride in the shared achievement.

Over the years Pearson's Landscapes have had the opportunity to support community involvement in gardening projects which has helped cultivate a sense of pride and ownership, transforming local public spaces into vibrant, sustainable communities. Whether you have a backdoor garden or a small balcony, everyone can partake in the joys and benefits of gardening.

Ultimately, embracing sustainable landscaping and gardening is an act of care for us, our communities, and the planet. Let Pearson's nurture your outdoor spaces and help cultivate beauty and sustainability for generations to come.

Should you be planning a gardening project, whether it be a simple rework or tidy up or a complete overhaul, Pearson's Landscapes would love to assist you with

creating your vision, site analysis, design, material selection and planting strategy, lighting and ambience, sustainability with the ending result ultimately encompassing personal touches to make this your own sanctuary to cherish and love.

Making time to enjoy your garden regularly can bring a sense of accomplishment and joy. It's an investment in your happiness and health – so step outside, breathe deeply, and savour all that your garden has to offer.

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Outdoor dining is easy to achieve with a stylish garden table and chairs. Even the most bijou of gardens has room for an outdoor dining set for two. Give small courtyards a facelift with a painted wall and add a garden mirror to increase the sense of space.

When hosting big family dinners, flexible patio furniture that can be moved around makes life easier. Two smaller tables rather than one large, plus a mix of chairs, benches, and a children's picnic table let you create the perfect setup every time.

Do you enjoy having coffee in the morning sun? Or are you more of a sunset person? Before deciding the layout of your outdoor space, make a list of your family's activities and the sun and shade patterns on your patio throughout the day.

If you prioritise easy serving and cleaning, it might be a good idea to set up the outdoor dining area close to the barbecue or your indoor kitchen.

When extending your indoors to the outdoors, you'll still want privacy. Gardens can be overlooked by neighbours, so use subtle screening. Pergolas offer a sense of enclosure, cosiness and privacy, particularly if you grow climbing plants over them. Clematis is a great choice and can offer a year-round shot of garden colour. Climbing roses, grapevines (enjoy their hanging fruit in summer) and beautifully fragrant honeysuckle are other choices. Add trellis panels to support their growth and also to give you extra shelter and privacy. Retractable awnings and large garden umbrellas also offer privacy and shelter from the sun or adverse weather.



THE OUTDOOR ROOM

When designing the zone, take into account the need for protection from not just the sun, but inclement weather. Doing so will significantly increase how often you use it.



sophieallport.com

DRESS FOR DINNER

Dress your outdoor table as you would for an indoor occasion, with a simple tablecloth, fresh flowers or greenery and glassware and flatware in shades of green.



SHADE WITH STYLE

Enhance a sun-trap spot with a parasol. Go for colours that fit in with your garden scheme for a subtle look, or emphasise the sunshine with bright, zingy tones.

PERGOLA CHIC

A beautifully dressed tent will create the festival mood at home. Personalise with draped fabrics, garlands, lanterns, tea lights and cushions.





FIRESIDE AFFAIR

A warming fire is the ultimate centrepiece for gathering as the sun goes down.

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ADD A COSY FIRE PIT

The popularity of fire pits has increased over the last few years and are available as both free-standing and permanent structures in a variety of different materials. Though woodburning fire pits remain popular, there are also other options such as propane, gel fuel and natural gas fire pits. Woodburning pits tend to be the most cost-effective.



LIGHT YOUR OUTSIDE SPACE

Lighting not only creates a relaxing atmosphere, but also transforms your plot into an evening retreat. It can completely change the way you look at your outdoor space. It'll also make it more inviting and accessible, turning it into a social place to enjoy summer evenings with friends.

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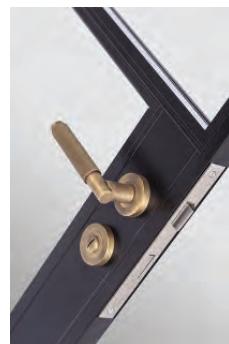
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Traditionally separated from the main house, classic conservatory or sunroom ideas remain popular additions, particularly to a period property.

Recently, a more modern approach, in the form of a flexible, fully integrated open-plan space, is becoming popular. As a multi-functional space, a conservatory can accommodate a variety of key room types, including the kitchen, living room or dining area.

DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

To make additions or changes to the features of your listed property, you must first apply for listed building consent from your local planning authority. This works similarly to the planning application you would make for a normal home extension.

You must be granted listed building consent before starting your building project. A local authority should give a response to your application within eight weeks.

Be warned that carrying out works to a listed building without prior consent is considered a criminal offence. Not only could you be prosecuted, but you may also have to undo any work carried out. Unauthorised works on a listed property can also throw up problems later down the line if you try to sell.

THE BUILD AND ITS DESIGN

There are many reasons why you might want to add an extension or conservatory to your home. But what does it mean when your property is listed? Are there restrictions on what it can look like or the building materials you can use?





valegardenhouses.co.uk

Well, yes. But a little consideration before your application should mean these issues are dealt with before they have a chance to arise. The key here is to consider the property's setting. What will your extension or conservatory look like when complete? It's important that it doesn't dominate the building's appearance and should take up less than a majority share of the building's total footprint.

The style of the conservatory doesn't need to mimic historical examples but it does need to match the character of your home.

A considered, tailored design can allow classic features to sit in harmony with modern building techniques. It can accentuate the charm of historical architectural design, while providing all of the perks of today's buildings, such as better insulation and reduced energy costs.



WHAT SHOULD MY CONSERVATORY LOOK LIKE?

The side or rear are usually the best locations. Victorian conservatories were often sited in shady places, depending on the type of plants they contained.

As with any extension, look carefully at the scale, character and surroundings of your house. Understanding what is special about it will help you decide the best place for the conservatory, and help with choices of materials, size and style. It's important that the

conservatory does not dominate your house. If your house is very small any extension, even a conservatory, could spoil its character, unless it can be located out of sight.

The style of the conservatory need not copy historical examples, and a contemporary design may work well. A bespoke design is usually the best solution for an old house. Good options include building a plinth in the same material as your house, with a frame for the glazing given a painted finish, in colours to complement old stone or brick.



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HOW TO... MAINTAIN WOODEN WINDOWS



ORIGINAL WINDOWS ARE OFTEN A PERIOD HOME'S MOST TREASURED FEATURES. LEARN HOW TO REPAIR AND MAINTAIN TIMBER DESIGNS.

Sash and casement windows are among the most important architectural features of a house, and also play a vital role in letting in light and fresh air. If you're wondering how to maintain wooden windows, when to treat them or how often to clean them, here are some helpful tips and suggestions to ensure you get the best out of your timber windows.

Due to the natural properties and flexibility of wood, timber windows need to be protected and strengthened with the correct paints, stains, varnishes or sealants. Even with these protective layers, it's not indestructible and there will be natural movement over time.

However, it is possible to increase the longevity of your timber windows with regular maintenance. You should clean your timber windows once or twice a year (usually in the drier, summer months) and this regular inspection will allow you to spot any potential problems that might need attention.

How much maintenance your windows will need depends on how they are used and how they have been treated.

A professional finish (such as three layered coats with a quality opaque paint or varnish) should last around 5-10 years, depending on the day-to-day exposure to weather or the location of the property.

A seafront property finished in white paint, for example, may need more frequent maintenance than a low-level home in a sheltered environment. A translucent stain may have a lesser lifespan – around 3 to 4

years. The manufacturer's instructions for your choice of stain or paint will give you an idea of how many coats are required and how long it should last.

For stained wood, you may even want to re-stain the windows each year to maintain a strong colour tone and ensure complete water resistance.

Even if you don't feel confident about repainting your timber windows completely, you may be able to take care of small chips or scratches yourself, to increase the time needed between professional treatments. Scratches or chips should be re-painted or re-stained as soon as you see them – any marks in the frame may expose the timber to moisture.

MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

- Note any peeling, bubbling or cracked paintwork and exposed timber
- Check for failing putty
- Investigate the cause of sticking, binding and rattling
- Look for rot, decay and loose joints
- Replace broken sash cords
- Ensure all latches and hinges are working correctly
- Consider draught proofing windows.

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

Always try to retain as much of the existing windows as possible, including ironmongery, and think carefully about whether any work, such as paint stripping is completely necessary. Remember that consent may be required if the house is listed or in a Conservation Area. Think about whether you have the skills required, or if professional assistance is needed.

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STYLE, PRACTICALITY, AND PURE INDULGENCE

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STAPLE IN CONTEMPORARY INTERIOR DESIGN.



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Blending function and flair, these open-plan, fully waterproofed bathroom spaces are revolutionising the way we think about washing, wellness, and home aesthetics. Whether you're planning a luxurious renovation or optimising a compact en-suite, here's how to make a splash with your wet room or bathroom.

WHAT IS A WET ROOM?

A wet room is essentially a waterproofed bathroom where the shower area is level with the rest of the floor, and there's no traditional shower tray or enclosure. Water drains through a subtle gradient in the floor into a built-in drain. The result? Seamless surfaces, easier access, and a sleek, modern feel.

Unlike standard bathrooms that separate dry and wet areas, wet rooms embrace an open-plan look that's ideal for minimalist interiors. But with the right styling, they can also feel cozy, opulent, or even rustic.

WHY CHOOSE A WET ROOM?

Wet rooms aren't just about aesthetics – they also offer numerous practical advantages:

- **Accessibility:** With no steps or raised shower trays, wet rooms are perfect for people with mobility issues or anyone planning for future-proof living.
- **Easy to clean:** Fewer corners, doors, and fixtures mean less grime buildup and simpler maintenance.
- **Space-saving:** Wet rooms are a smart choice for small bathrooms, making compact spaces feel larger and more open.

LAYOUT AND PLANNING

Planning is critical when designing a wet

room. Professional waterproofing (also known as tanking) is essential to prevent leaks and long-term water damage. Underfloor heating is a smart addition too – it helps dry out the floor faster and adds a touch of comfort.

Positioning the shower to minimise splash zones is key. In larger wet rooms, you might still include a partial glass screen to define space and keep towels and toilet areas dry. Good drainage is non-negotiable, so ensure your installer factors in sufficient gradient and flow capacity.

STYLISH IDEAS FOR WET ROOMS

Wet rooms offer a blank canvas to create something unique. Here are a few style inspirations to get you started:

1. Minimalist and Monochrome

Go ultra-modern with large format tiles in shades of grey, black, or white. Pair matte tiles with brushed steel fixtures and recessed LED lighting for a sleek, spa-like effect. Keep accessories minimal — a floating basin, built-in niche shelving, and a rain shower head complete the look.

2. Natural and Organic

Embrace earthy tones and raw textures for a calming, nature-inspired retreat. Think wood-effect tiles, pebble flooring, and bamboo storage. Add some leafy green plants and warm lighting to soften the space.

3. Vintage Glamour

Give your wet room a touch of old-world elegance with patterned encaustic tiles, brass fixtures, and a classic pedestal sink. A freestanding roll-top bath can even be integrated into a larger wet room design for that perfect fusion of luxury and function.

4. Bold and Colourful

Why play it safe? A wet room is a great opportunity to experiment with dramatic colors or statement tiles. Try deep navy walls with gold accents, emerald green mosaics, or Moroccan tiles. These visual statements make the space feel vibrant and personalised.

MATERIALS THAT WORK

Because wet rooms are constantly exposed to moisture, choosing the right materials is essential. Here are some reliable options:

- **Tiles:** Porcelain and ceramic tiles are ideal for walls and floors. They're non-porous, durable, and available in a huge range of styles.

- **Microcement:** This seamless material offers a contemporary finish and can be applied in different colours and textures.

- **Glass:** Frameless glass panels can add structure without sacrificing the open feel of the room.

- **Stone:** Slate or marble tiles elevate the luxury factor, but require proper sealing and care.

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Your choice of fittings can reinforce your chosen style:

- **Showers:** Rainfall shower heads are a popular pick for wet rooms. Thermostatic mixers and concealed valves help maintain clean lines.



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- **Storage:** Recessed shelves, wall-mounted cabinets, and floating vanities help keep clutter at bay while maintaining an airy feel.
- **Lighting:** Layered lighting is key – think dimmable overheads, accent lights around mirrors, and under-shelf LEDs for mood and functionality.

WET ROOM VS. TRADITIONAL BATHROOM

While wet rooms are stylish and practical, they might not suit every household. Families with young children may prefer a bathtub for practicality. However, hybrid designs are

increasingly common – a glass-enclosed wet zone next to a freestanding tub can offer the best of both worlds.

Whether you're drawn to the luxurious appeal of a designer spa or the everyday practicality of easy-to-clean surfaces, a wet room can elevate your bathroom into a space of serenity and style. It's a bold statement – but when done well, it's a smart and timeless investment in your home and your well-being.

So why not step away from the ordinary and immerse yourself in the refreshing world of wet room design?

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ART DECO

A STYLE GUIDE

In our previous issue of guides on Period Property to help you easily identify key features and architectural styles, we concentrated on the refreshing and elegant Edwardian era. It's now time to focus on the architectural and artistic movement that was a major influence in Europe and the United States post WW1.





It was a period of vast change, characterised by geometric, sleek, modernist design that embodied the energy of societal shifts, industrialisation, new mass-produced materials and innovation that permeated a world changed forever by the destruction wrought by a world war.

There is often confusion associated with the term Art Deco, as it's intertwined with another artistic movement that being Art Nouveau, in fact many people mention them in the same breath, as if they are one and the same. However, we can make a clear distinction here to help un-muddy the waters. Art Nouveau was a movement we covered in our previous Edwardian style guide, and is a feature of late Victorian and Edwardian periods, definitely pre-WW1. Art Nouveau is inspired by the natural, curving lines and shapes of plants with

colours harking to the greens of leaves and subtle shades of flowers. There is a tendency to asymmetrical design, think of the highly stylised stained glass used in windows and door panels, and the free-flowing, more curvaceous design we mentioned in the refreshing Edwardian era.

Art Deco is a distinctly different 'animal' altogether; it developed in the post war period that was embracing a modern world of slick, angular and geometric mass-produced design. It is a pared-down, cleaner, more streamlined minimalist view, with bold straight lines, symmetrical compositions that made use of glossy materials, like steel and glass in innovative ways. The period we're focusing on is roughly the 1920s through to the later 1940s, however there's some wiggle room in those dates, and nothing is strictly definitive.

KEY FEATURES

Exterior

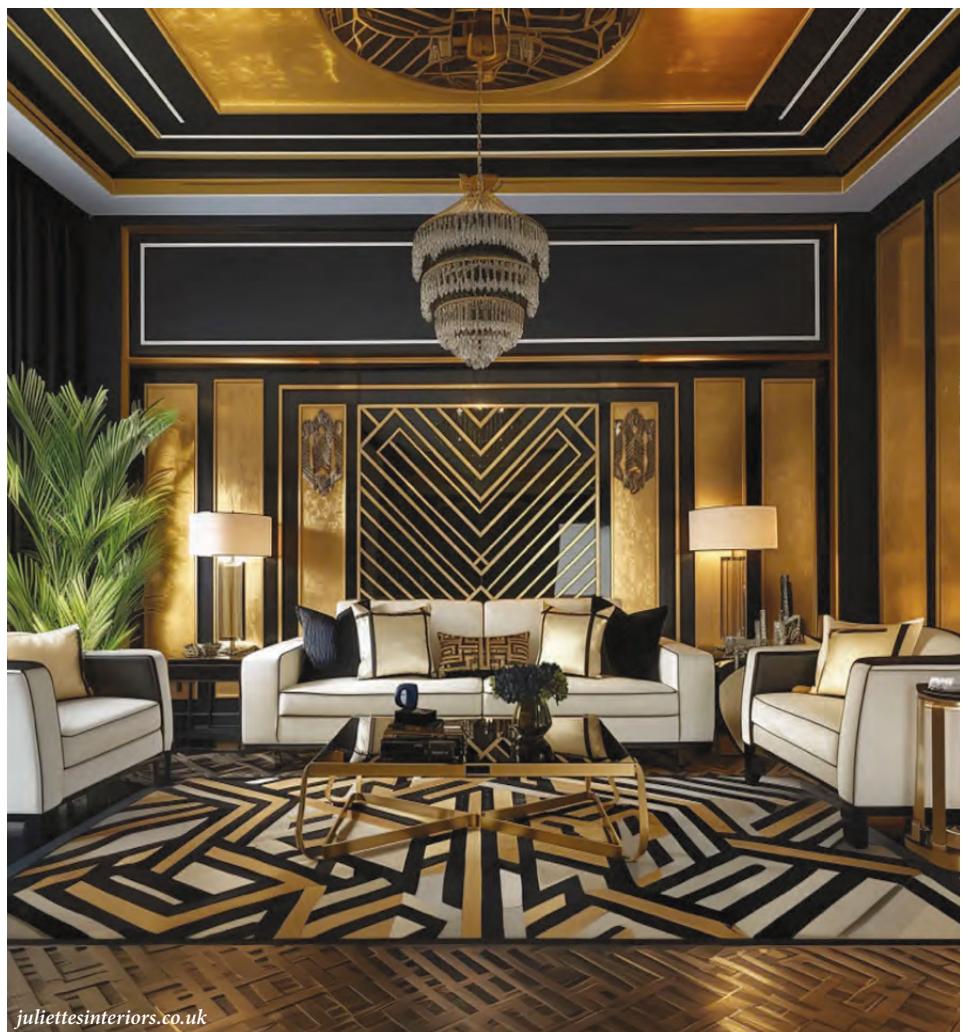
Stunning white render on the exterior of a building is a typical finish for an Art Deco building, along with strong horizontal and vertical lines, often with very dark, or black contrasting accents, on doors, window frames, balustrades and balcony railings. Of course that doesn't mean every Art Deco building is white, they can be any colour and made use of many

modern materials typically glass and metals.

Although we said geometric and angular design were key hallmarks of Art Deco, there is a place for an occasional curve in this era too.

'Curve' Appeal

Once you become aware that one of the traits of this style was the use of a beautiful gentle curve on the corner of a building, you notice this as a flag for Art Deco. When this was used, it acts as a great way of emphasising the other



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clean-cut lines of the building. Look out for glamour and elegance, stunning porticos and sometimes more than a passing resemblance to ocean liners in the times of the 'roaring twenties', the Great Gatsby and the glittering architecture of the Empire State Building.

The 'Invisible' Roof

In contrast to the steeply sloping roofs of the previous eras, the typical Art Deco building had a roof that was flat, so as not to ruin the geometric design of the overall building.

Windows

Windows are usually large to let in maximum light, with clean, unfussy thin dark frames ideal for contrasting with the light coloured render. However the ocean liner theme quite often allowed for fun windows shaped like portholes, and also the use of stained glass featuring geometric designs and motifs.

Motifs

The use of motifs on the exterior and interior of Art Deco buildings was commonplace. They can seem rather kitsch, but were a way of accentuating the bold, modernist lines of the time. Characteristically these were made of geometric shapes like chevrons, fans or triangles and sunbursts or sunrise designs.

Doors and Entrances

A fresh and modern approach to the look of doors, to match the new fashion in architecture saw the inclusion of strong colours, more geometric shapes, and the use of the classic and now very popular motifs, as previously described. The iconic 'sunrise', with shaped stained glass mimicking the rays of the sun and similar designs became the trend.

Highly decorative door furniture, usually with a chrome finish was typical to maximise the glamour of the period.

Interior Spaces and Décor

Luxury and glamour were the watch-words of this period incorporating the clean lines of the new modern era, but obviously not everyone was fabulously wealthy or owned a mansion. However the less affluent house owner could adopt the look by copying the style, assisted by the availability of mass-produced, factory made items, with high gloss finishes, polished metal, clean-lined mouldings and by doing their best to create large, stripped down and light filled rooms.

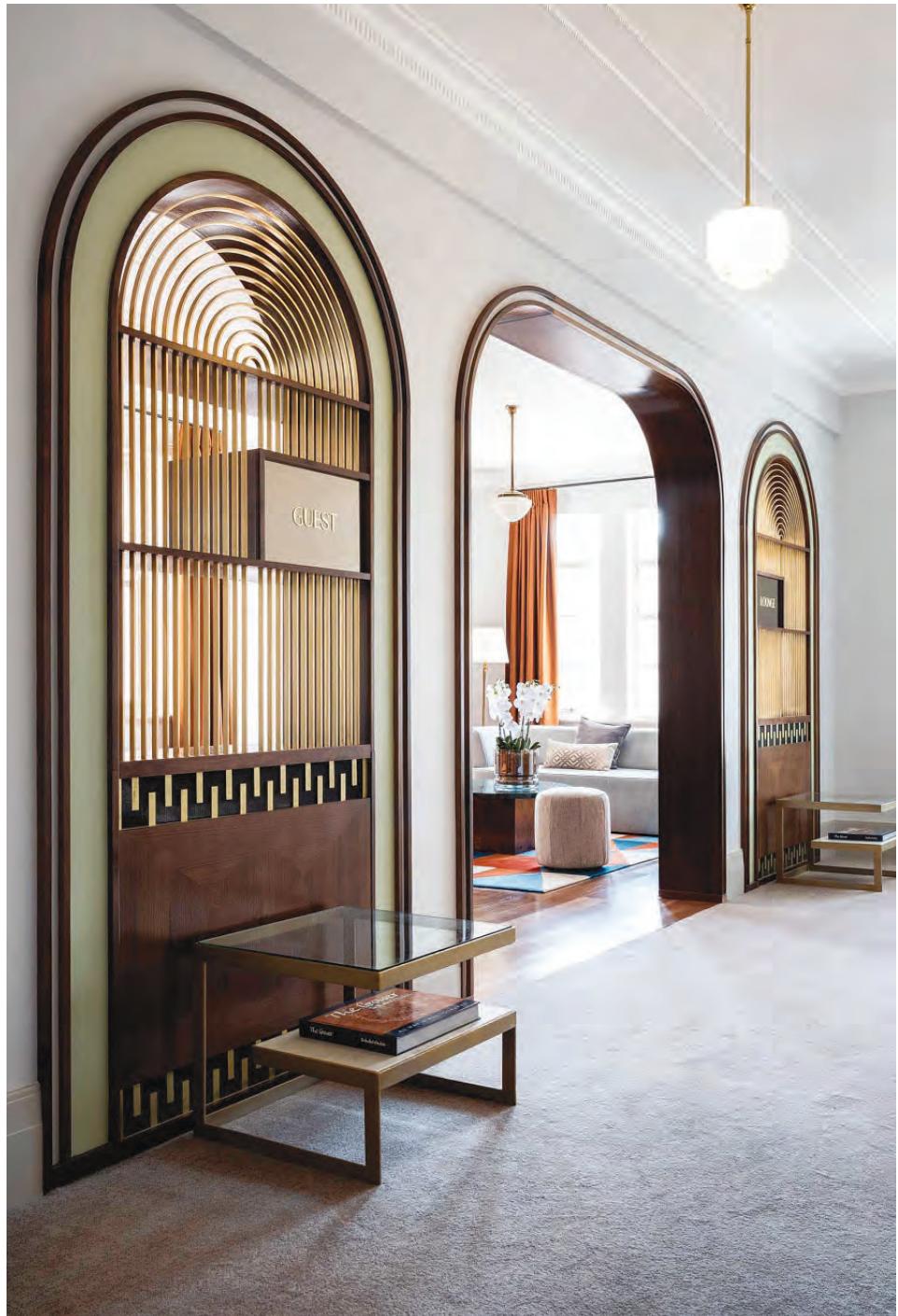
Fireplaces

Predictably, all the modern geometric designs already referred to throughout the Art Deco home are represented in the focal point of the living spaces of the homes of this period. The fireplace becomes a prominent feature created from geometric coloured tiles, often with cream or buff base tiles, incorporating stronger and contrasting coloured patterns, designs and the popular motifs of the era.

Flooring

What better place to make a statement and show off the jazzy symmetry, geometric designs and the bold contrasting colours of this era than on the floor? Tiles, marble, herringbone style and parquet floors were some of the more expensive and luxurious flooring options. Cheaper options for floor coverings with the invention of Lino in the mid 1800s, and similar products developed in the 1920s meant home-owners in this period could really go to town with style!





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- DESIGN ICONS -

TIFFANY LAMPS



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In 1848, Louis Comfort Tiffany was born in New York City. As the son of Charles Lewis Tiffany, the founder of jewellery retailer Tiffany & Co., Tiffany was exposed to decorative art and design at a young age. This influence culminated in a career that spanned several different disciplines.

Tiffany was originally trained as a painter. In his 20s, however, he became interested in glassmaking after observing a collection of Roman glass at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company was established in 1885. As a glass producer, Tiffany experimented with tone, texture, and even method. With the glass of Ancient Rome in mind, he strived to create colourful pieces without the use of paint or enamel. To achieve this, he developed two important innovations: favrile glass and the copper foil technique.

In 1902, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company became Tiffany Studio. By this point, the firm was extremely successful and predominantly known for its stained glass lamps, which were handcrafted by a team of over 300 artisans.

TIFFANY LAMPS TODAY
While Tiffany lamps fell out of fashion (and

even ceased production) by 1913, they saw a resurgence in the 1950s. Since then, they have become collector's items, appearing in private collections, auction houses, fine art museums, and, for some lucky thrifers, even unassuming antique shops and flea markets.

For more than a century, Tiffany lamps have captivated collectors and design enthusiasts with their intricate leaded glass designs and rich, brilliant colours.

These iconic lamps are more than just sources of light; they are artifacts that embody the ingenuity of the Art Nouveau movement. If you're considering starting or expanding your collection, start by understanding the nuances and history of Tiffany lamps.

The lamps use a unique copper foil technology, which allows coloured glass pieces to be welded after being wrapped with copper foil to form complex and delicate patterns.

The use of this technology not only enhances the beauty of the lamps, but also improves their overall sophistication. Over time, the artistic value and collection value of Tiffany lamps have continued to grow, becoming works of art in many museums and private collections.



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WALL PANELLING

WALL PANELLING IS A GREAT WAY OF ADDING CHARACTER TO AN INTERIOR
AND WORKS EQUALY WELL IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN SETTINGS.



Wall panelling is a great way to transform all sorts of different interior spaces, from a modern living room to a small bathroom or a historic home renovation. Luckily when it comes to panelling there are so many styles out there to suit your house and personal aesthetic. Panelling can often be associated with historic homes or country houses but we have seen a renaissance of panelling in a variety of more contemporary spaces. It is an easy and effective way to add texture and depth to any space and a simple way to add shape into a featureless room.

As early as the 13th century, wooden panels were used to add insulation to a room, but quickly became a decorative feature in their own right.

It can be used to add Georgian-style grandeur to a room, lend a feeling of cosy cabin chic, or simply add some character and intrigue to an otherwise blank wall. Some of the most ingenious examples of wall panelling include a concealed cupboard or wardrobe, cleverly hidden behind decorative panels.

Wall panelling has a place both in modern and traditional homes, as long as you choose the right style according to your home's aesthetic. If your home decor style falls into the more traditional category, then the classic tongue and groove panelling is the way to go, whether it's for a hallway or bedroom wall panelling idea.

To draw the eye upwards and create the appearance of a taller ceiling, panelling with vertical lines such as tongue and groove style panels are great.

WILL WALL PANELLING

MAKE MY ROOM LOOK SMALLER?

There are several different factors that can contribute to this – the height of the wall panels, the amount of natural daylight your room receives and the shade in which you decide to paint your panels and the rest of the room. When it comes to selecting a height for your wall panels, a larger room is better for floor to ceiling installations. In a room where you only receive an average amount of natural daylight it would be best to keep the tones neutral to maximise the feeling of space. Ultimately, if you're looking to make a small room appear bigger it would be preferable to use a lighter shade.

If you want to mix it up a little, you can combine wallpaper and wall panels. If you're looking for an attention-grabbing combination, a lively print merged with the uniform design of the wall panelling is a really stylish way of breathing life into your home.

HOW MUCH DOES IT

COST TO DO WALL PANELLING?

It's hard to say without knowing the space of the area you're panelling but typically for solid oak panels it's usually around the £300 to £400 per square metre mark. This doesn't include installation. With MDF panelling being the more cost-effective solution you can expect to pay around £20 – £50 per square metre, however you will need to pay for adhesive, primer and paint on top of this price. Whichever option you choose, always ensure you go to a reputable supplier, scour their reviews and discuss the best options for your living space.



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HOW TO REINSTATE ORIGINAL WALL PANELLING

If you live in an old building where the original panelling has been removed, it can be difficult to know how to reinstate it.

Look for other original joinery elements that survive in your home. Skirtings, architraves, shutters, picture rails and dado rails can provide clues. If you live in a Georgian or early Victorian house, do not assume that the details found in the living room are the same in the rest of the house. Interior details varied

according to the status of the room so compare as many different rooms as possible.

Pull back modern wall coverings and look for traces of lost panelling left in old wallpaper or paint schemes, or appearing in scars in the plaster where the fixings went in. By doing this you can often work out if the panelling was wainscot (low level) or full height.

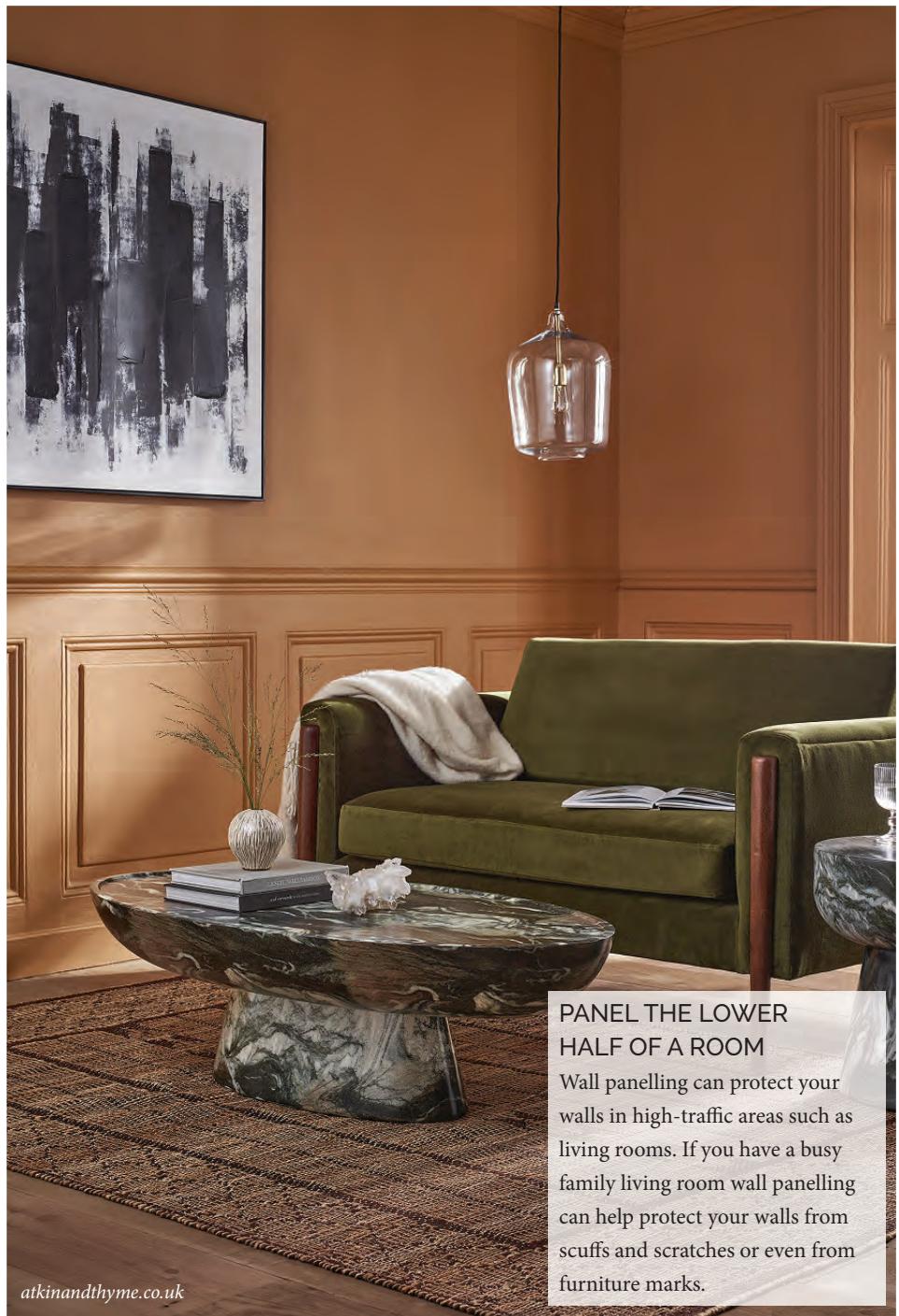
Visit neighbouring houses of a similar age and style and ask to carry out a survey. Take photographs and measurements to record proportions and moulding profiles.



USE SPECIALISTS

Consult with specialist joinery companies and suppliers. They have extensive knowledge of the various joinery details used in the different architectural periods and will be able to advise on what is appropriate for your home. If you are installing wood panelling in a listed building, you may need to replicate original materials and detailing methods.

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PANEL THE LOWER HALF OF A ROOM

Wall panelling can protect your walls in high-traffic areas such as living rooms. If you have a busy family living room wall panelling can help protect your walls from scuffs and scratches or even from furniture marks.



KEEP IT TRADITIONAL

Traditional styles such as shaker panelling will always remain timeless. For those who love the classic English country style, tongue and groove panels are an elegant and versatile option that have a quaint and rustic appeal.



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The Heritage Heart of Dover beats again

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Louise Tomlin visited the project before the grand opening for a preview of progress as it reaches a conclusion.

I've always been rather intrigued by the Maison Dieu in Dover, having heard the name of this substantial building in the town centre, I presumed it was, or had once been a church as the literal translation from French is House of God. Now, years later as someone who writes about

our heritage and historic buildings, I've been fortunate to be given the opportunity to discover the truth about its name, its fascinating history, and to witness what is a major re-imagining of this iconic Grade I Listed building, as the project to create a sustainable future by bringing it back to a useful purpose reaches its conclusion this spring.

This is thanks to a £4.27m grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, along with



The William Burges Neo-gothic decorative scheme in the Connaught Hall, reinstated by Arte Conservation



Detail of chimney breast decoration in the Mayor's Parlour



Arte conservators stencilling the Connaught Hall ceiling



*Stained-glass detail in the Connaught Hall.
Designed by Horatio Walter Lonsdale*

funding from Dover District Council, Dover Town Council, The Dover Society and The Wolfson Foundation, totalling approximately £10 million, not to mention several years of hard work and dedication from the team of professionals and volunteers, who have executed the plan which has seen Maison Dieu open permanently to the public for the first time in its 800 year history.

There is so much to the story, but first let's explain the name, and go back to circa

1200 when the earliest parts of the building were constructed by Hubert de Burgh, the Constable of Dover Castle, for the purposes of offering hospitality to pilgrims on the way from the continent to visit the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. The accommodation would have been fairly rudimentary probably a large hall with a kitchen and sleeping quarters. This was the hospital of St. Mary, Domus Dei, or Maison Dieu, with a chapel added in 1227, in the reign



Arte conservator stencilling a roundel on the Connaught Hall balcony

of Henry III. The King became the patron of the hospital and the building developed.

As with many of our iconic religious buildings, the dissolution of the monasteries in the mid 16th century, during the reign of Henry VIII had an impact, and saw the building become the property of the Crown. It became a victualling yard for the Royal Navy and continued to be used for this purpose until 1825. In the 1830s it was purchased by the Corporation of Dover to become Dover Town Hall, with renovations that saw the addition of civic offices, Courthouse and a Gaol. This extensive restoration was carried out to the designs of local architect, Ambrose Poynter and later, the renowned Gothic Revival architect and designer, William Burges instigated extensive remodelling, designing interior schemes and creating notable decorative bespoke furniture and fittings, including the impressive Connaught Hall assembly room.

Now, after two and half years of meticulous conservation works and creative upgrades this historic building has been sympathetically brought up to date and will welcome visitors seven days a week. It is a journey that a dedicated team of specialists and volunteers, along with Coniston Ltd the major contractor, have worked tirelessly to bring to fruition.

I was shown round by Martin Crowther, (Maison Dieu Engagement Officer) who has been a museum curator for many years and has a specialism in community engagement and heritage learning. His passion for the project was evident as he took time to show me around and to explain the many stages the restoration had been through to return this hidden gem of a building to a new, meaningful and sustainable future.

High on the list of priorities is the improved accessibility, with a new street-level entrance, including a lift, which will mean areas that had

previously been inaccessible are no longer off-limits. Engagement is paramount to this project, by bringing the rich history and heritage to the forefront for the local community, making it available to a diverse range of local audiences and likewise visitors from further afield, Maison Dieu will put the town of Dover well and truly back on the map of 'must-see' places to visit in the south-east of England.

Amongst the treasures on show, visitors can enjoy the spectacular work by William Burges on the interior of the building, and also the wealth of restored paintings, fixtures, fittings and arms and armour on display. Hours of careful conservation on these and the stunning stained-glass windows that now create a kaleidoscopic light show when sunlight shines into the building. In line with the theme of audience engagement, nine films, audio points and touch-screen interactive have been installed at key points throughout the building. These display film and audio highlights informing and educating visitors of all ages on the rich and colourful history of the building, these also have a selection of fun activities for children to get involved in to enhance their visit experience.

It is so exciting to see just how much has already taken place to bring the redundant spaces in Maison Dieu into the 21st century to enjoy a new and sustainable future. So much thought has gone into creating an inclusive experience for the larger community in Dover. When the call went out for volunteer guides to apply to become involved the organisers were inundated with applications from locals keen to get involved. The volunteer guides have now been trained and are proudly showing visitors the delights of the building including some I haven't yet mentioned like the restored Mayor's

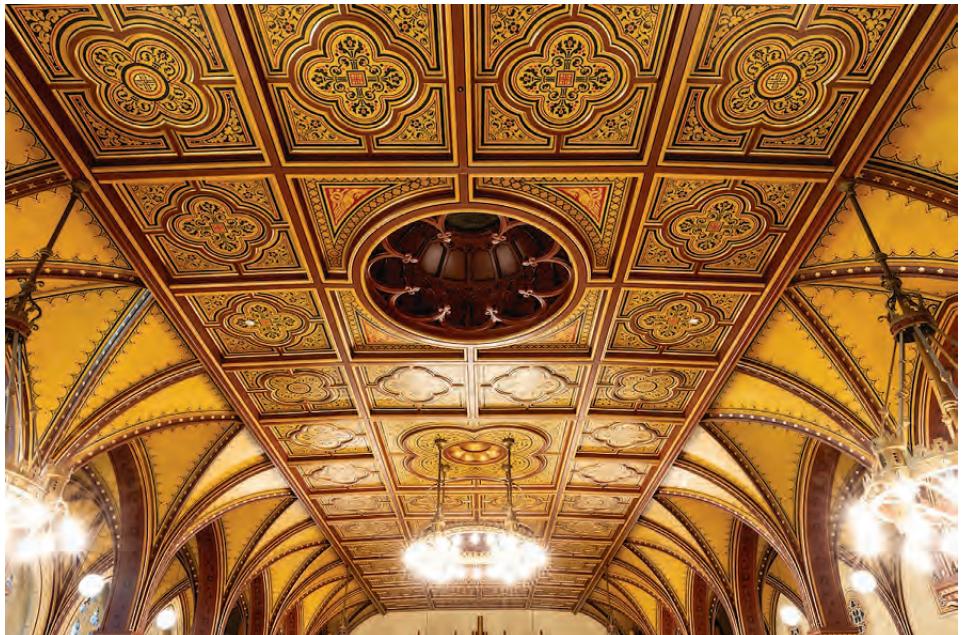
Parlour, which is now accommodation that can be let in conjunction with The Landmark Trust. The list continues with the Connaught Hall, the Stone Hall and Council Chamber, which will be hosting community events, and are also available to hire for private functions, meetings, weddings or similar. And the fascinatingly quirky café, which is planned in what was previously the Victorian gaol cells.

I was staggered to see the amount of activity taking place when I visited a few weeks before the grand opening weekend planned for the 10th and 11th May. I'm very grateful to Martin and the team for being so generous with their time, showing me around with the opening looming on the horizon. Newly conserved, items of furniture, paintings and armoury, were being expertly repositioned and displayed by the team. It was hugely impressive, to see the whole building begin to take shape and become an Aladdin's cave of treasure and artifacts that will add the finishing touches to a masterpiece of a building that has become a homage to Dover's heritage.

There's so much to this story that we've only scratched the surface of here, so we'll be re-visiting this special project in a future issue, where we will look at the people involved and the finer details of some of the unique aspects of the project only briefly touched on here, like the Mayor's Parlour which is now holiday accommodation, the Victorian Gaol and much more.

A packed schedule of events are planned in the coming year: guided tours, live music, festivals - you can find out more at: www.maisondieudover.org.uk

*All photos: Copyright Andrew Aitchison/
Maison Dieu.*



The reinstated decorative scheme on the Connaught Hall ceiling. Wyvern dragons and birds jostle for attention with gilded flowers and foliage



Dover's Maison Dieu is now open daily as one of Kent's premier events and heritage venues



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A CLEAN START



WHEN IT COMES TO MAINTAINING A BEAUTIFUL AND INVITING HOME, MOST OF US FOCUS ON THE INTERIORS – ORGANISING CLOSETS, SCRUBBING KITCHEN COUNTERS, OR FLUFFING THROW PILLOWS. HOWEVER, YOUR HOME'S EXTERIOR IS JUST AS IMPORTANT.

Regularly cleaning your home's exterior not only boosts kerb appeal but also preserves the integrity and value of your home. Whether you're getting ready for summer, selling your home, or just want to freshen things up, here's how to approach exterior cleaning.

1. START WITH AN INSPECTION

Before pulling out hoses and scrubbing brushes, take a walk around your home. Look for areas of dirt buildup, mould, mildew, or peeling paint. Note areas where pests may have built nests or where gutters may be clogged. This initial inspection helps you create a cleaning plan and prioritise tasks.

2. GATHER THE RIGHT TOOLS

Effective exterior cleaning requires more than just elbow grease. Here's what you'll need:

- Garden hose or pressure washer (with appropriate settings)
- Stiff-bristled brush or broom
- Bucket and mild detergent (or a specialised house cleaner)



- Soft cloths or microfibre towels
 - Gutter scoop and gloves
 - Ladder for hard-to-reach areas
 - Protective eyewear if using chemicals or a pressure washer
- Always follow safety guidelines, especially when using ladders or pressure washers.

3. CLEANING SIDING AND WALLS

The siding is like your home's skin – it collects everything from dirt and pollen to algae and pollution. The cleaning method depends on the material:

- **Vinyl siding:** Use a mixture of water and mild detergent. Scrub with a soft-bristled brush or use a pressure washer on a low setting. Avoid spraying upward to prevent water from getting behind the siding.

- **Brick or stone:** These are more resilient. A pressure washer works well here, but for stubborn stains, use a solution of water and vinegar or a masonry cleaner.



- **Wood siding:** Be gentle – pressure washers can damage wood. Use a soft brush and wood-safe cleaner. Consider resealing or repainting if the wood looks worn.



4. WINDOWS AND SCREENS

Clean windows do wonders for a home's look – and your view. Clean windows using a mix of vinegar and water or a glass cleaner. A squeegee makes the job easier and leaves a streak-free finish. Don't forget to wipe down the window sills and frames.

5. FOCUS ON THE ROOF AND GUTTERS

Cleaning your roof and gutters is crucial for home maintenance. Debris buildup can lead to water damage, pests, and mold growth.

- **Gutters:** Clear out leaves, twigs, and sludge. Flush the gutters with a hose to ensure water flows freely. Gutter guards can help reduce future buildup.
- **Roof:** Depending on the material, use a broom to sweep away debris or apply a roof-cleaning solution to remove moss and mildew. Avoid walking on the roof unless absolutely necessary; if unsure, hire a professional.

6. DRIVEWAYS, WALKWAYS, AND PATIOS

These areas take a beating from foot traffic, cars, and weather. A pressure washer is your best friend here. Use it to blast away dirt, oil stains, and moss. For stubborn spots, apply a degreaser or specialised concrete cleaner beforehand. For wooden decks, use a deck cleaner and scrub

with a brush, or gently pressure wash, then seal the wood after it dries to protect against moisture.

7. DON'T FORGET DOORS AND FIXTURES

The front door is a focal point so make it shine. Wipe it down with a gentle soap and water solution. Polish any hardware like doorknobs, knockers, and house numbers. Clean porch lights and replace any burnt-out bulbs.

8. TIDY UP LANDSCAPING AND DECOR

Once the surfaces are clean, enhance your home's appeal with tidy landscaping. Trim bushes and trees, weed flower beds, and sweep or edge walkways. Wash outdoor furniture, clean garden statues, and replace worn-out mats or planters.

9. SEASONAL TIPS FOR LASTING RESULTS

To keep your home's exterior looking great year-round:

- Clean gutters in spring and autumn.
- Power wash surfaces at least once a year.
- Touch up peeling paint or caulk to protect from moisture.
- Remove debris after storms.
- Inspect for mould or mildew in humid months.

10. WHEN TO CALL IN THE PROS

Sometimes, a job is too big – or dangerous – to tackle alone. If your home is multi-storey, or you have extensive mold, roof stains, or hard-to-reach grime, it's worth hiring a professional exterior cleaning service. They have the tools and expertise to do it safely and efficiently.

A clean exterior is more than just aesthetics – it's about pride in your home and smart maintenance. With a little effort, the right tools, and a plan, you can transform a grimy façade into a gleaming welcome mat. Make it a seasonal habit, and you'll preserve your home's beauty and value for years to come.

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How will I repay my Interest Only Mortgage... could Equity Release be the answer?

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Local adviser, Sarah Ferrell, specialises in Equity Release and is seeing many more people considering this as a solution to their financial problems. Increasingly, Equity Release is being used to repay Interest Only mortgages.

In these circumstances the interest has been paid, often for many years, but the capital is now due for repayment. Options for repayment include selling the property however, for some, a more attractive option is to re-finance.

The difficulty is that if the borrower has retired, or is over 70, the options become more limited.

Equity Release/Lifetime Mortgages are often the most attractive solution if people do not want to, or are unable to, sell.

Mortgages are highly regulated – does the same apply to Equity Release? Yes, and there is a particular focus on Equity Release due to its long-term nature and the typical customer base.

Equity Release is regulated under the Financial Conduct Authority (like most mortgages), and is also guided by the Equity Release Council. Any reliable Equity Release adviser should be a member of the council.

Ferrell Financial Limited is an Appointed Representative of The Right Mortgage Ltd, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. This is a lifetime mortgage. To understand the features and risks, please ask for a personalised illustration. Check that this mortgage will meet your needs if you want to move or sell your home or you want your family to inherit it. If you are in any doubt, seek independent advice.

There may be a fee for mortgage advice. The precise amount will depend upon your circumstances.

Registration number: 678768

I have always paid my mortgage, and I don't want my debt to increase With the majority of today's plans a regular payment of interest is not only allowed, but also encouraged. With a selection of the newer plans, a reduced interest rate can be secured in return for a commitment to continue to make regular monthly payments.

Now I am semi-retired my income has reduced...is this a problem? The benefit of most Equity Release/Lifetime Mortgage plans is that, unlike a traditional mortgage, the underwriting is NOT based on affordability. Your age and the valuation of your property are the key factors when a lender is assessing how much you can borrow. If you are also able to pay the interest, so much the better!

Whether you decide to pay interest, or not, there are benefits/merits to each depending on individual circumstances. Regardless of the reasons for considering Equity Release, Sarah would strongly recommend seeking advice as to whether this route may be appropriate for your individual circumstances.

There are many plans to choose from. Finding the most appropriate option is important to ensure that your decision is not just suitable at the outset, but, as far as possible, that it remains suitable later in life.



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01622 631372 or 07789 007447
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ELDERFLOWER FORAGING

Elderflower is a sure sign of British summertime and there's nothing lovelier than seeing it blooming amongst the hedgerows in June and July. Its little flowers are creamy, delicate and excellent when harvested and turned into cordial.

ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL RECIPE

YOU WILL NEED:

- 16 freshly picked elderflower clusters,
- 1kg granulated sugar
- two large unwaxed lemons
- 1 litre of freshly boiled water

STEP 1. Squeeze the juice and grate the zest from the lemons and set aside.

STEP 2. Place the sugar in a large pan and add the freshly boiled water. Stir for a few minutes until all of the sugar is completely dissolved.

STEP 3. Add the lemon juice, zest and the leftover pieces of lemon into the sugared water and give a gentle stir.

Gently rinse your elderflowers under the tap, shake off excess water, remove stalks and add into the cordial mixture. Give a good stir until everything is mixed well and leave to soak with a lid on the pan for 24 hours, mixing with a wooden spoon morning and night.

STEP 4. Once your mixture has sat for 24 hours it will be beautifully infused.

STEP 5. Place a muslin cloth over a fine sieve and very slowly and carefully use a ladle to pour the cordial through the cloth into a clean pan to separate the juice from the flowers. Discard the flower and lemon mix and bottle up your extracted cordial. You can recycle gin bottles to be repurposed for cordial, just wash and steep them in boiling water to sterilise them beforehand.





WHAT'S IN SEASON

Buying seasonal produce can also mean you save some money. This is because an abundance of produce means shops can offer lower prices and special offers.

With summer comes a bounty of amazingly sweet, ripe summer tomatoes, including some very special heritage varieties, ready to be sliced into bright salads and refreshing gazpacho. Plus, you can expect a glut of the juiciest berries, perfect for summer pavlovas and trifles, and the first of the season's stone fruit.

JUNE: Summer really kicks off in June. It's the best month for broad beans, pak choi, and courgettes, while strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and tomatoes have started to ripen. Haddock and mackerel also come into season.

JULY: Berries are in season and blackberries make their first appearance, along with melons and peaches. Sweetcorn, broccoli, beetroot, and courgettes come into season and seafood lovers can enjoy fresh, seasonal scallops.

AUGUST: Mediterranean vegetables are everywhere in August, berries are still going strong, broccoli is abundant and nectarines are coming into season. Think salads and smoothies. There's lots of fish and seafood around too.

Ever thought about where your food comes from? We've become used to having any food we want at any time of the year. But out-of-season produce means flying it in from overseas or using intensive farming methods such as pesticides and greenhouses to force growth year-round.

Eating local and seasonal food is not only more tasty and healthy, but better for the environment.

It makes for the richest, most delicious and healthy diet... we just need to make a conscious effort to discover it.





Marinating lamb in a spicy yogurt mixture not only helps to tenderize the meat, but also imparts a great flavour when cooking.

EATING OUT

Over 80 modern recipes inspired by the traditional cooking of Greece and Cyprus from popular chef and TV personality Theo Michaels. Fresh ingredients sing from the plate, from juicy watermelon and glossy kalamata olives, to fragrant oregano-roasted lamb and delicate fish wrapped in vine leaves.

SERVES
4

YOU WILL NEED

- 4 tbs Greek yogurt
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- a generous pinch of oregano
- a generous pinch of ground cumin
- 800g lamb leg meat cut into bite sized chunks
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- olive oil for drizzling
- freshly squeezed juice of 1 lemon to serve

- metal skewers or wooden skewers soaked in water 30 minutes first

YOGURT-MARINATED LAMB SOUVLAKI

METHOD

In a large bowl, mix the yogurt, crushed garlic, oregano, cumin, 1 teaspoon salt, a few grinds of pepper and a drizzle of olive oil.

Add the lamb chunks to the bowl and use your hands to massage the marinade into the meat so it is fully coated.

Cover and leave for at least 30 minutes, or overnight if possible.

To cook, skewer the lamb cubes, shaking off the excess marinade, but leaving them lightly coated. Get a barbecue really hot. Unlike the other souvlaki methods, when you place the lamb on the grill over direct heat, you can leave it for a few minutes until charred, before turning it only a couple of times.

Once cooked, let the lamb rest for a few minutes, then finish with a little squeeze of lemon juice and a pinch of salt.

SERVES
4

RICE PUDDING WITH ROSE & PISTACHIOS

YOU WILL NEED

- 190g Arborio rice
- 50g caster/granulated sugar
- 5cm piece of lemon peel (no pith)
- 1.25 litres full-fat milk
- ½ tbs rose water
- rose syrup (such as Monin) for drizzling
- fresh or dried rose petals, to decorate
- 2 tbs pistachio nuts, roughly chopped to decorate

METHOD

Add the rice, sugar, lemon peel and 1 litre/4 cups of the milk to a pan over a low heat. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. You need to keep an eye on this; if you don't stir it enough or have the heat too high, it will stick to the bottom of the pan.

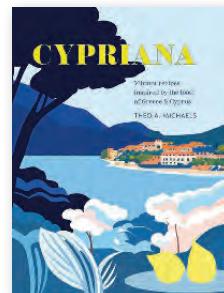
The beautiful soft white mixture won't thicken until the last few minutes of cooking, so stay with it.

Once the rice is just about cooked (you want a little chewiness, but no crunch), fold through the remaining 250ml/1 cup of milk and remove from the heat. Give it a few minutes to cool slightly, then stir in the rose water.

You can serve this warm, or alternatively (and more traditionally), pour into heatproof, sturdy glasses and then leave to chill in the fridge. It does thicken as it sets, so if you prefer a runnier version, add a little extra milk once it's chilled to loosen.

Just before serving, drizzle over some rose syrup and scatter with rose petals and a few broken pistachio nuts to decorate.

Recipes taken from Cypriana by Theo Michaels, published by Ryland Peters & Small; photography by Mowie Kay.



An amalgamation of a few simple ingredients creates a sweet indulgence that has been enjoyed by generations.



WINE PSYCHOLOGY

Did you know that the experience of wine tasting is a complex interplay of sensory, psychological, and contextual factors with expectations, sensory perception, environmental context and individual differences all contributing to the subjective nature of wine and its taste. Understanding these psychological factors can enrich the wine tasting experience, allowing individuals to appreciate the multifaceted nature of wine more deeply.

THE WINE DRINKING EXPERIENCE

According to Charles Spence of Oxford University on whose research this article is based, wine research traditionally tended to focus more on the making of wine such as the importance of growing and cultivating vines and the sensory experience in the winery or the sensory analysis of the colour, depth, length and texture of a wine. However, more recently, there has been a growing interest in 'wine psychology' – that is factors such as wine knowledge, memory, sensation and attention which all affect the wine drinking experience and according to some experts:-

'Tasting wine engages more of our brain than any other human behaviour'

So let's take a look first of all at the context in which we drink wine as it has been



shown to have a profound effect on how a particular wine is perceived. For example, many of us have had the experience of thinking a certain wine on holiday is absolutely fabulous, but when we buy a couple of bottles and drink the same wine at home it often tastes worse, even though it is exactly the same wine. Spence has called this 'The Provencal Rose paradox', which underpins the emotional impact a wine can have at the time of consuming it. Therefore, a person's mood and psychological state at the time of tasting can influence wine perception.

THE VISUAL APPEARANCE

It has long been known that the colour of a wine influences perception of the aroma, taste and flavour, but what is surprising is that it can be relatively easy to fool even experts by deliberately miscolouring a wine. In one study, nearly 200 participants took part in an experiment with those who described themselves as experts to those with intermediate knowledge, to those who described themselves as social drinkers with little or no tasting knowledge and experience. Three wines were tasted – one white, one rosé and one white which had been artificially coloured to resemble a rosé. Results showed that even a number of the experts gave flavour descriptors to the fake rose wine which were more similar to the real rose rather than the white wine such as using red fruit terms rather than white. This study also indicated that the more experienced tasters were more influenced by colour than the beginners because subtle changes in colour have specific flavour expectations for experienced tasters and suggests they were drawing on prior knowledge based on expectations rather than the taste itself.



WINE AND MUSIC

Some of the most interesting research is the effect of music on the wine tasting experience.

When people hear a particular piece of music, it activates or primes related information and memories associated with that particular music. For example, when we hear well-known groups of the 60s or 70s, we think of hippies, flower power and Vietnam and other contextual factors of that time.

With this idea in mind, one psychologist set up a study in a supermarket to play either French or German music to see what effect it had on people's wine purchases. Shoppers were not told that the music was French or German, but by using either accordions (French) or an oompah band (German) this nonetheless primed thoughts of 'Frenchness' or 'Germanness'. Consistent with this priming, French music led to French wine outselling German by five bottles to one, whereas German music led to German wine outselling French by two bottles to one. So music primed certain thoughts and people reacted accordingly although these actions occurred without conscious thought.

This research has demonstrated that consumers can be influenced by the type or quality of wine purchased depending on the type of music played at the time. But if we go one step further, music can also change the perception of a specific wine – that is attempts to match types of music and wine styles which is known as 'sonic seasoning'.

In one study, Spence found that Pouilly fume – a crisp Sauvignon from the Loire was consistently matched with Mozart's Flute Quartet in D major (a lively upbeat piece

of music) as opposed to Tchaikovsky's String quartet number 1 (lyrical and romantic). However, the reverse was shown when participants tasted a Chateau Margaux – a full bodied red from Bordeaux. Further research has demonstrated that playing certain types of music during tasting can influence the perception of taste.

In this particular study, 250 adults tasted just two different wines: either a red wine (Cabernet Sauvignon) or a white wine (Chardonnay) and were allocated to one of five conditions and asked to drink the wine and rate it according to one of four styles of music or no music. These were either: zingy and refreshing, powerful and heavy, mellow and soft or subtle and refined. Results were compared to the not music situation and participants consistently said the wine was more similar to the type of music played rather than in the actual wine itself. The effect of the music was more marked for the red wine compared not to the white wine suggesting that the emotions that the music evoked were stronger than the taste of the wine itself.

(North. A. Herriot Watt University, 2012).

CONCLUSION

This article has just scratched the surface of this fascinating subject, but it gives an insight into the complex effect that wine has on our perception and subsequent enjoyment. The results of many of these studies are useful to companies who want to influence our wine-tasting experience and purchases, but as consumers it is also interesting to be aware of why we might enjoy a particular wine on one occasion and yet that same wine may not seem to give us the same pleasure on another.

Rowena Hawtin Dip WSET



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