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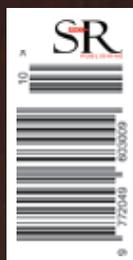
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SYLVIA HOWE
EDITOR

Welcome to a sparkling preview of our new magazine

We are all delighted to bring you the first truly independent magazine for smart people who live in Sussex. It's full of festive flavour: we've scoured the county for interesting people to talk to, houses to visit, fashion that suits the season.

Turn down the television, turn up the warmth, and settle down to savour:

- interviews with Winchelsea **winemakers Sally and Mason Palmer**, photographed by Chris Dawes on a day blazing with the colours of autumn and **eco-campaigner Eliza Pearson**, the daughter of Viscount Cowdray, who lives on her parents' Cowdray Estate
- The first of **Sarah Beeny's** regular property pieces
- **Kelly Hoppen's** advice on **interior design**
- **Simon Smith, our business guru**, overview of Blend Collective, a new and successful small Sussex business, whose owners sensibly took his financial advice
- local cook **Sarah Saunders'** exploration of **local food and drink**. This month she has also interviewed the **two members of a family business**: Ian Standen and his daughter Melissa, of estate agent Standen Hodgson. Well known and respected, they are the only two in the county who both have a Chartered Surveyor qualification from Cirencester
- Our **beauty** pages are ravishing. Beauty Editor **Amelia Simmons** shows off three luminous looks, and also shares her **passion for delicious scent** with Sussex-born **Roja Dove, parfumeur extraordinaire**

- **Fiona Duncan, the Telegraph's Travel Guru**, writes about special Sussex hotels she recommends
- Nick Keith's property pages give you the lowdown on letting and our **Pick of the Properties** highlights some of the best houses available in the area
- There's technology from **Nik Taylor**, motoring with **Annie Oulton, our Woman on Wheels**, cosmetic surgery (did you know what bariatrics were? I didn't) and **Sarah Bird** gives some sensible emotional support if you need some.

There. What more could you ask for?

Well, if there is anything, we would be happy to hear from you. There is so much going on all the time in Sussex that we are working hard to feature it on our pages, and we invite all our readers to let us know if we have missed anything. Please email editorial@sandrpublishing.co.uk with any news you'd like to share.

We all wish you a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and peaceful New Year.

We'll be back with our bumper March issue – bigger, better, and even more interesting...

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Image from PRshots.com, brand: Next,
Black lace dress, £60, Feather Clutch
Bag £24, Embellished Courts £40

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OPEN SEVEN DAYS

The Jerwood drawing prize

The Jerwood drawing prize 2012 is the largest and longest-running open exhibition for drawing in the UK.

The judging panel consists of members of the British Museum, artists, professors at Slade School of Fine Art and curators.

The prize money this year has gone up from a casual £11,000 to a whopping £17,000!

With around 3,000 entries, the selectors have brought together an extensive selection of 78 works by 75 artists, established as well as newcomers and students from college.

This touring exhibition will be visiting Jerwood, Hastings Gallery in December.

What: Jerwood Drawing Prize 2012.

Where: Jerwood Gallery, Rock-a-Nore Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 3DW.

When: Til January 6 2013.

Open: Tuesday - Friday 11am-4pm, Saturday and Sunday 11am-6pm.

More information:
www.jerwoodgallery.org

The Big Book Group

A brand new show. Best-selling authors Kate Mosse (Sepulchre, Labyrinth) and Sophie Hannah (Little Face, Hurting Distance), as well as lots of Christmas reading and present ideas plus The Big Book Group Quiz and literary *bon mots* of the season with 12 local authors.

Where: Studio Theatre, Brighton Dome

When: December 11

How much: £12

Time: 7.30pm

More information:

01273 709 709

www.brightondome.com

The art of Christine Munro

Christine Munro is the first female artist featured in the art project at Brighton's Underground Theatre since it opened WHEN? She's a local prizewinning artist and works in oils, pastels and watercolours.

Her work is inspired by the natural world of the New Forest, Pembrokeshire, Sussex and even Scotland, her exhibition will depict beautiful landscapes, seascapes and intimate details of trees, plants, hills and valleys as well as her own lovingly tended Eastbourne garden.



Where: The Underground Theatre.

(beneath Central Library) Grove Road, BN2 14TL

When: Friday 23 November- Saturday 29 December. Fridays and Saturdays 10am- 4pm.

How much: free entry.

More information: 01323 732778.
www.undergroundtheatre.org

Have a Deco at art

Unique presents with a difference. All kinds of Art Deco objects for sale! Browse the many stalls of jewellery, accessories, mirrors, clocks, books, furniture and all sorts and make a real impression round the tree this Christmas. Beats another useful pair of gloves, doesn't it?



Where: Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove BN34AH.

When: Sunday 16 December.

What time?: 10am-4pm.

How much?: £3 entry

Walks for wellbeing: along the festive landscape of the South Downs

The days are getting shorter and the geese are getting fat. Not just the geese, either, if my waistline's anything to go by. This five-mile festive walk may be just the answer: keep your spirits up and your weight down by joining us for a ramble along the Downs by Steyning, ending with tea at the welcoming Sussex Produce Company Cafe. Oh dear, that's all the good work undone!

Where: meeting at Steyning Health Centre car park, Tanyard Lane, BN44 3RJ.

When: Saturday 15 December. 1pm-6.30pm.

How much: £6.

More information: www.solesandsouls.co.uk

The Swann Gallery's Christmas exhibition

Some of the resident artists are Jeffrey Pratt, Mike Bernard, Moira Huntley, Sarah Elder and Chris Daynes.

Town centre by Mike Bernard

Where: The Swann Gallery, Mermaid Street, Rye

When: Saturday 27 November and Monday 31 December 4 - 5.30pm

More information: www.swanngallery.co.uk



Christmas songs on the Prom

Every year, the Eastbourne Silver Band under the directorship of Geoff Broom plays merry festive tunes. It wouldn't be the same without them!

Before you settle down for lunch and after the effort of opening all those presents, take in some sea air and wear out the children - if you can... Always packed and very merry!

When: Christmas Day 10.45am-12.15am.

More information:

www.eastbournebandstand.co.uk



Visit the National Cat Centre

Set in delightful woodland, a trip to the National Cat Centre is a memorable experience for all the family and, what's more, **it's free to visit.**

Come and meet our gorgeous cats and kittens looking for new loving homes.

The centre includes a **café and gift shop, nature trail and picnic area.**

Open daily **10am – 4pm**



National Cat Centre (on the A275),
Chelwood Gate, Haywards Heath, RH17 7TT

T : 01825 741 330

W: www.cats.org.uk/ncac

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Funny Women in Brighton

With help from a loyal crew based down in Brighton, Komedia will be bringing you the best of female comedy on a regular basis - it's a good excuse for these ladies to in London to come and enjoy a night of laughter with us by the seaside. With the likes of Aisling Bea (So You Think You're Funny Award 2012), Gabby Best (Funny Woman Award 2012) and Sooz Kempner (The Short and Girlie Show).

What: Funny Women
Where: Komedia Comedy Club.
When: December 21, 8pm (doors 7.30)
How much: £10/£8 concessions.
More information: ages 18+
 0845 239 8480 www.komedia.co.uk

STOMP presents the Lost and Found Orchestra

Add a little dash of STOMP's radical rhythm, some astonishing physical theatre and more than a healthy dose of tongue-in-cheek comedy and what do you get? The world's most anarchic orchestra - festive fun for families, music aficionados and anyone who likes their theatrics lively and loud.

Where: Brighton Dome Concert Hall.
When: Thursday 20 November -
 Saturday 29 December (not 24, 25, 26)
How much: £15 - £27.50

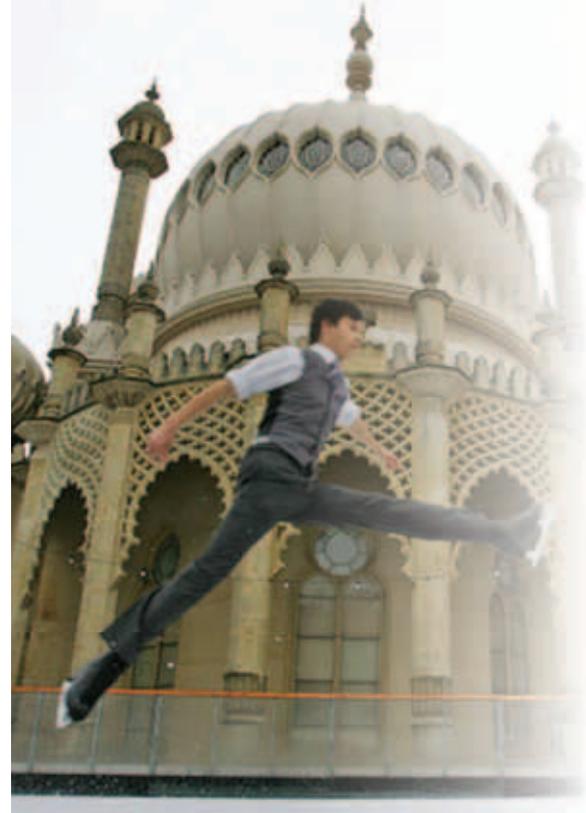
IN SUSSEX

Get your skates on, Jamie

The South East's most beautiful ice rink is back at Brighton's Royal Pavilion. And this year there's an extra twist: a popup rinkside Jamie Oliver's Fabulous Feasts restaurant and bar.

This is a partnership between Jamie and fresh food expert Nigel Harris. Enjoy their hearty, honest Christmas dishes from dawn to dusk.

Where: Royal Pavilion Ice Rink
When: November 10 - January 20.
 10am-10.15pm every day
More information from:
 www.ticketmaster.co.uk
 08448472352.



A Vintage Christmas in Lewes - it's a wonderful life!

This year as part of the Lewes Christmas late night shopping event, The Wild Pearl will holding a vintage-inspired Christmas fair. She will be decking the halls with boutique stalls selling vintage gifts, frocks and finery, covetable bric a brac, homewares, unusual jewellery, gingerbreads, old fashioned sweet treats and crafts with a designer touch.

As usual at Wild Pearl events, the night is not just a shopping trip: you can visit our cocktail lounge and sip a Classic Christmas Cocktail, brought to you by suited and booted bartenders: anyone for a snowball? Jazz singer Louise Almeida will be singing the vintage melodies that make Christmas truly magical. While you listen, hand over your presents for wrapping by one of our talented Pearlettes.

Five minutes from Lewes train station, just across the road from Union Music store who will be providing acoustic entertainment in their inimitable US style.

Where: All Saints, Friars Walk, Lewes
When: 5-10pm December 6.
 Free Entry
Further information: Michelle Porter
 wildpearlvintage@gmail.com

Festive food from festive farmers

Sussex's best local produce - breads, cheeses, preserves, meats, eggs, honey, homemade cakes. Perfect for gifts and seasonal cooking!

What: Christmas Farmers Market
Where: Clinton Hall, Seaford
When: Thursdays 10am- 4pm
More information:
 cathy@seafordfarmersmarket.co.uk
 www.seafordfarmersmarket.co.uk
 07984 021442



MOLLY CATON-JONES

I am a born Londoner of 22, although having lived in many places such as Los Angeles, New York, Ireland and briefly in France. Moved to Brighton four years ago to study fashion and fashion history at Brighton University. Studying to become an editorial stylist with the British College of Professional Styling. I hope one day to live in Paris.

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Mason and Sally Palmer have just launched their first vintage bottles of English sparkling wine, made from the vines they have planted at medieval Wickham Manor Farm. **Sylvia Howe** visited them one blowy autumn day

Over the seven centuries of its existence, Wickham Manor Farm's fields have grown a fair few different crops.

The latest? Grapes.

Mason Palmer and his family – wife Sally, and two children Catherine and Robert – moved to Wickham Manor 14 years ago, leasing the ancient house and its 750 acres from the National Trust.

The beautiful old building was built in 1580, the first outside the walls of Winchelsea Town. Its land rolls over flat fields and gentle slopes, and in the distance

the sea sparkles on a sunny day. Various medieval ruins are dotted about, and some rounded hillocks indicate where other houses once existed.

Not all its history is recorded, but we do know that it was the home of William Penn, before he crossed the Atlantic to found the state of Pennsylvania in 1682. He would probably recognise many of the views from the rooms upstairs, over the lawns, flowerbeds, fruit trees and hedges to the fields beyond.

Mason has farmed all his life, starting with his brother on his family farm in West

Photos: Chris Dawes



I decided to take his idea further. There is climate change to consider, and I saw that English wines were winning awards too

Sussex when he was 20. He trained as an engineer before he returned to the land. He was delighted to find Wickham Manor and to meet the farm manager who had been there since the 1950s.

‘John Dunk carried on part time with us for 10 years. He told me priceless things he had learnt over years of going round the farm. It was a great help. We know this land.’

At Wickham Manor, the Palmers have 80 beef suckler cows (with calves), 500 ewes, and 360 acres of wheat, rape, maize and oats.

Now the vineyard...

Mason realised the soil in this part of the South of England is perfect for Pinot Noir Chardonnay vines – a sandy loam high in calcium, similar to that in Rheims and Burgundy, where some of the world’s best



wine is produced so he planted five acres.

Their daughter Catherine’s boyfriend was the first to encourage Mason to consider planting a vineyard.

‘He is trained in viticulture and he suggested it. Farmers are always looking to diversify, and after a bit of thought, and research, I decided to take his idea further. There is climate change to consider, and I saw that English wines were winning awards too,’ says Mason.

Family and friends got down on their hands and knees in 2006 to plant the first vines and build supporting trellis using their own farm equipment.

Local winemaker Will Davenport, was consulted; he now makes the Palmers’ sparkling wines on contract. He works at his own Limney Vineyard in Rotherfield, so the grapes are pressed within two hours of being picked. →

The wine is top quality

The wine is top quality – ‘we were looking for a distinctive style, fine, light, at the top end of the market,’ says Mason. ‘We use only the best fruit, which means we leave a lot on the vines.’

‘There are good years and bad years. We have had powdery mildew on half our grapes, so then we left them where they were. We will maintain our quality, so the quantity we produce will vary every year.’

Their first (2009) vintage has just appeared: 956 bottles of 2009 sparkling wine, well balanced, and very well received. The labels are individually numbered and signed by Mason, and a bottle will set you back £55.

The Ship in Winchelsea Beach is serving it with their starter at one of their popular monthly wine nights, and it is available at Olde Worlde Wines in Rye.

‘And of course people can buy directly from us. We are obviously wanting our wine to sell, but we don’t make enough to meet a large demand, so we are choosing our outlets carefully,’ says Sally.

Telephone: 01797 226216
info@wickhammanor.co.uk

See page 80 for other special places to stay in and around Sussex



Mason and Sally outside their ancient farmhouse, with Harry the dog (top)
All in the family: their son Robert is working with them on the farm after graduating from agricultural college (right)

“People like it here, and come back a lot”

Bed and breakfast

She too takes diversification seriously. She started a Bed and Breakfast business in January 2009, making the most of some of the Manor’s eight bedrooms: visitors now have the choice of two double rooms with en suite bathrooms, and one double with a private bath across the corridor.

She is busy from April to October but during the winter ‘I am chief gate opener,’ she says. ‘It’s muddy, and looking after the farm is very labour intensive.’

She is thinking of running a few farm/vineyard weekends for about three couples, with dinner and wine. Having guests is hard work but their presence is unobtrusive.



‘This house has three staircases, so sometimes the family have no idea there are people staying. People like it here, and come back a lot. There is so much to see and do around here – National Trust houses, the sea, Rye, Hastings, the countryside...’

And of course the vineyard

The plan is for production to reach about 7,000 bottles a year, still a small output, but there will be no compromise on quality.

We raise a glass to their efforts and wish them every success.



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NATURAL WOMAN



She's the viscount's daughter and eco-campaigner whose marriage ceremony was officiated by a druid.

Andrea Childs meets unconventional heiress, Eliza Pearson

Lime satin vintage dress, above in treehouse, with multicolour ribbon tie, £295, Zoe Lloyd Vintage, Rye; www.zoelloyd.co.uk

Photographs Wendy Carrig at A&R Photographic. Styling Karena Callen at A&R Photographic. Hair and make-up Sarah Batt

Eliza Pearson, daughter of Viscount Cowdray, leans precariously from the doorway of a tree house on her father's estate, her satin dress fluttering in the breeze. It's a freeze-frame moment; a snapshot that sums up the contradictory influences and passions that have formed the 24-year-old's life so far.

The image suggests both her privileged background and the closeness of her family (the tree house was built by her brothers); her love of the outdoors and an

appreciation of fashion. She knows that her youth, her beauty and her wealth, not to mention the newspaper columns written on her recent divorce or who she might now be dating, prompt people to make assumptions about her. But Eliza seems to be entirely her own woman.

'I aspire to become more myself; to be more self-aware and authentic,' she says. 'It's scary to be honest and express yourself, but to lose that fear is the ultimate for me.'

Eliza is a committed advocate of sustainable agriculture, having set up the UK franchise of RegenAG, a worldwide organisation that aims to educate farmers on how to use practical, natural and energy-efficient methods to regenerate the soil and landscape. At the beginning of this year, she and a close group of friends created an Incredible Edible Permaculture Garden on the Cowdray Estate, demonstrating how to grow your own food and medicines. She is also in the midst of organising a weekend festival with the Sustainable Food Trust, to be held at Cowdray next spring. There will be a lecture series from food movement pioneers, cooking workshops, a street food market showcasing the best in British food, and live music.

'When I first began working in the garden, I was a disaster. I didn't even know how to plant a seed,' she laughs. 'I was brought up with a love of nature – as children, my siblings and I were encouraged to go off and make dens in the woods. But I didn't know how to grow my own food, and I just thought that was crazy. Maybe it's a survival thing; I wanted to know how to support myself at a fundamental level.'

Eliza says reading *The Ecologist* magazine in her teens opened her up to the idea that modern farming practices were unsustainable. But it was when her father gave her a book on permaculture when she

was 21 – the idea that we can use natural ecosystems to make modern agriculture more productive and sustainable – that she found a channel for her interests.

‘I’d been studying the effects of globalization in India and Tanzania. Compared with the traditional way of life of the local people, it seemed that the industrialised food system was one of the most destructive influences globally on the environment,’ she says. ‘I read *Permaculture in a Nutshell* by Patrick Whitefield (Permanent Publications, £4.95) and it just blew me away. I signed up for a permaculture design course with Aranya Gardens in Devon, which I found deeply inspiring and insightful, and from there I went to stay with communities of people who are farming organically and putting permaculture into practice.’

The residents of Steward Wood and Landmatters, two of the permaculture projects Eliza visited, may not have expected to see a viscount’s daughter in their midst.

‘But I wanted to learn by experience,’ she says. ‘They live mostly off the land and their homes are benders made of all sorts of recycled things, like old telegraph poles used for the foundations. It was an incredible time. Of course I was nervous about how they would react to me, because people do treat you differently if they see you have money or come from a fortunate family like mine. I just introduced myself as Eliza. The only difference they noticed was that I arrived in my car, which looking back was a no-no! But it taught me I should take the train more.’

It was a flight to the British Virgin Islands and a holiday with her friend, the US actress Daryl Hannah, which started Eliza on the next leg of her environmental journey.

‘Daryl told me she was going to Australia to the 10th annual permaculture convergence. She was signed up for this amazing course with Darren Doherty, the founder of RegenAG, and she said I had to come to meet this guy.’

Eliza travelled to Australia with her new husband, Richard Branson’s nephew, Ned Rocknroll (they divorced two years later, in 2011).

‘I knew permaculture worked on a small scale, but this showed me that the principles can be integrated into commercial farming,’ she says. On her return, not only did she set up a series of permaculture courses →

Eliza Pearson’s make-up How to get the look



SARAH BATT
MAKE-UP ARTIST

Skin: I wanted to keep the skin looking as natural as possible, a no-foundatin look but at the same time evening out the skin tone.

To achieve this it’s important to use a primer to smooth out the skin and reduce the appearance of any open pores – I used The Pore Professional by Benefit.

To give an even skin tone I applied a mixture of Sheer Finish Tinted Moisturiser SPF 15 by Arbonne in Medium and Warm Beige.

Arbonne products are great because they have a high concentration of pigment, are botanically based, suitable for sensitive and problem skins and are not tested on animals.

Eliza only needed a tiny amount of Studio Finish Concealer by MAC for the odd blemish. For the under eye concealer I used Eye Roll On by Garnier – the pigment is slightly peachy which counteracts slight under-eye darkness.

To give a bit of a glow I applied some Arbonne Sheer Glow Highlighter to the top of the cheek bones. The make-up was then set with Corn Silk semi matt loose powder – a favourite of mine because it never looks cakey, feels light on the skin and keeps the make-up in place.

Bronzer & cheeks: To keep the make-up looking fresh and dewy I used a bronzer with a slight shimmer to it. I applied to the face where the sunlight would naturally fall and then brushed on a peachy pink blusher to the cheek bones.

Eyes: The eye lashes were curled and then a very pale shimmering peach shadow applied over the whole lid and onto the brow bone. To define the eye I used ‘Fame’ by Bare Minerals. This is a fabulous colour of dark shimmering aubergine – It really made Eliza’s eyes ‘pop’ and come alive. Black mascara was applied to the lashes and ‘Ebony’ eyeliner by Arbonne dotted closely into the roots of the lashes, both top and bottom. The brows were defined with a taupe shadow making sure it matched closely to Eliza’s natural colouring.

Lips: For a sheer natural look with a little shimmer, I applied L’Oreal Glam Shine no. 103.

Hair: The hair was sectioned off and loose curls were created using GHD straightening irons. To give a little more volume the roots were backcombed at the crown and around the side sections using a teasing brush. Later in the day we created more defined waves with heated waving irons.



Denim shorts (customised by Eliza), £22, TopShop; www.topshop.co.uk
 White cotton vest, £25, Whistles at John Lewis; www.johnlewis.com.
 Frye leather biker boots, £250, Cordelia James, Hawkhurst and Rye; www.cordeliajames.co.uk

My parents have always let me be creative and pursue my own interests and, as a result, I've been able to find my own passion. I grew up in a very spiritual family and part of that is being close to the natural world

around the UK, she convinced her father to begin trialling permaculture's holistic management on the already organic Cowdray Estate.

Eliza's parents – her father Michael, the fourth Viscount Cowdray, and her mother Marina – have been huge influences on her.

'They've always let me be creative and pursue my own interests and, as a result, I've been able to find my own passion,' she says. 'They've also always questioned their own societal conditioning and the way we do things. I grew up in a very spiritual family and part of that is being close to the natural world.'

Eliza was taught transcendental meditation at the age of six and says the Nepalese guru His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa is 'like a godfather' to her.

'His whole philosophy is 'live to love'. He taught me to deepen my compassion and understanding of human nature.'

Another great influence was the nanny she had at the age of 11.

'Annie had travelled the world and was a bit of a hippy,' Eliza recalls. 'She really taught me to trust in the goodness of people, and to look inside myself. How we see the world is a reflection of ourselves, so to solve our problems, we have to look within.'

Belief into action

Day-to-day life for Eliza is a quest to put her beliefs into action. 'I'm vegetarian, almost vegan, and I try to eat organic food most of the time,' she says. 'But I also don't have rules, as it can become dogmatic and impractical.' She prefers to wear vintage clothes, knowing second-hand is more sustainable than most designer fashions, and admits that buying ethically isn't always easy. 'My ideal is to wear lovely organic natural clothes that have been made by local people who have poured their hearts and creativity into them, but it's difficult. But one of my favourite dresses was made for me from hemp silk by a friend in Australia. She comes up with these amazing designs in her little wooden workshop.'

Eliza is aware that this spiritual, questioning approach to life, and her passion for sustainability, can set her apart.

'I have lots of groups of friends from different places. Some of them wouldn't go near any mud and they laugh at the idea of me farming, which is wonderful. Other friends can't wait to get their hands dirty,' she says. 'I have the friends I grew up and went to school with and we share that history and different joys in life; others I've chosen as I've got older because I can relate to them on other levels.'

New friends or old, you're more likely to find Eliza swimming or going on bike rides than hitting the social scene. 'I really don't like clubbing,' she says. 'I'd rather listen to someone drumming on the beach and spend time with my friends in more intimate environments.'

Though recently back from The Burning Man Festival in Nevada Eliza is a real home bird. She will eat meals with her parents and spend time running or cycling with her siblings. And she is always busy; always self-improving. Now her current crop of environmental projects is complete, she's taking time out to learn to kite surf, as well as starting a yoga teaching training course. 'The last year has been full-on, so I'm making space for fun things I haven't had time for,' she says. We think she's gathering her energies for her next big idea.

Eliza Pearson is a force of nature...

To find out more about RegenAG, go to www.regenerativeagriculture.co.uk

style and elegance



[tfl]

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Stand out in style



Advertising Feature

Toni is the owner and designer at Getwaisted. Her professional tailoring background can be seen in her 'signature' items. Whilst creating clothes for a range of occasions, Get Waisted designs can frequently be seen to take their inspiration from an age of elegance - reflecting 1950's tailoring and silhouettes. She believes in creating designs that complement and enhance the feminine form. She likes to use sumptuous, flowing fabrics combined with a sophisticated approach to draping. The end result is a clothing range that simultaneously makes an impact and leaves the wearer feeling really special. Stylish and surprisingly affordable. Friendly and relaxed. Consultations and fittings at a time and place to suit you.



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Country comment

Diversification is the way forward
says farmer Carola Godman Irvine

Not very long ago a friend told me he thought I was a typical old-fashioned farmer - stubborn and unlikely to accept help and advice.

This well-meaning rebuke got me thinking. The farming fraternity comes in all shapes and sizes and our aspirations, ambitions and abilities vary hugely.

My friend's comments could well have described many farmers in the past who did indeed tend to keep themselves to themselves. Most would rather die than admit they needed help – their pride stood in the way.

Fortunately things have started to change. Nowadays not only do we work more closely and exchange ideas amongst the farming community, we are also quick to help our neighbours when we see a need. However there are still too many farmers who are not prepared to ask for help.

This year arable farmers have struggled as a lack of sunshine and too much rain has made it almost impossible to sow winter corn, which does not bode well for next year's harvest.

Livestock farmers are coping with the huge increase in animal feed prices due to the poor grain harvest. Many are in despair as they struggle to pay their feed bills and some are already worried that they will run short of winter fodder as the wet ground conditions forced them to bring their cattle in early.

Livestock have already consumed much of the winter rations of silage, hay and straw and some dairy farmers still struggle to harvest their maize crop in mid November.

So, as the year comes to an end, arable farmers face empty fields and livestock farmers face escalating feed costs and rapidly emptying barns.

It is at times like these that we must notice what is happening behind farm gates.

Farming close to urban conurbations can have its advantages and disadvantages. Small family farms survive by introducing various forms of diversification, most of which involve people.

Farm shops, tea rooms, converted buildings offering storage or offices, equestrian centres, wedding venues and corporate hospitality. These all help to boost the income of farms which struggle to make ends meet through traditional farms which struggle to make ends meet.

The opportunity to take advantage of the population on our doorstep in the South East is a huge advantage, but in times of austerity it is less easy. We can only be successful if we offer products and services which are seen as good value and different from those in the high street.

Visiting farm shops, business parks and farmhouse venues for weddings and corporate events, it is inspiring to see the care which has gone into offering something unique and appealing.

The other great advantage is that most of these businesses are run and managed by members of the family; they offer that personal touch which is appreciated by satisfied customers.

We are all branching out into various areas of diversification which would probably have our forefathers turning in their graves!

But it is my belief that farmers have

adapted sensibly and radically to the circumstances we find ourselves in, none more so than in Sussex.

I have huge respect and admiration for those who have recognised that unless we change our way of life, start alternative businesses, gain additional skills and in some cases re-train and keep up with modern technology.

To take advantage of our location, infrastructure and the closeness of the huge potential market on their doorstep is vital to ensure we will survive. It is encouraging to see the public embracing and supporting these local businesses.

Farmers like all businesses face the growing demand of EU regulations.

Those who draw them up have little or no understanding of the damage caused to the productivity and viability of many farms and agricultural-related businesses. Despite talk, there is no sign of this cart load of bureaucratic nonsense and red tape reducing.

Was I offended by my friend's comments? Of course not. He is right - I am a less than perfect farmer. I think the advice to accept help from my neighbours is good. But my tendency to be a bit of a dinosaur I suspect will never change!



Carola Godman Irvine farms in both East and West Sussex. She has been Chairman of the South of England Agricultural Society. Ote Hall Farms, 01444 232179 07802 374222 otehall@aol.com

Erika Knight

Erika Knight is a knitwear and craft designer who believes in the importance of treading lightly on the earth and celebrating and supporting traditional British skills.

She spoke to **Sarah Bird** about her passion for natural yarns and her new collection



Design and fashion forecasting work for a range of top brands (Marks & Spencer, Nicole Farhi, H & M, Whistles, Rowan Yarns, Coats PLC) followed. Alongside, there were always projects that celebrated what she really cared about - the craft element of design. She is inspired by the very human scale and pace of knitting or crocheting unique, personal, treasures, and the need to respect the natural world and sustain its resources.

Erika has published more than 16 knitting books with the aim of engaging people with the process of creating something individual; she was founding editor of the first UK consumer magazine dedicated to Organic Life,

Erika has gathered a group of people with the skills, know-how and, most importantly, commitment to producing beautiful, natural, British yarns.

Erika started out as a fine art student in Brighton but couldn't keep from raiding the stores in the fashion department in search of textiles. She went with the flow and, armed with 'massive ignorance and enthusiasm', co-launched what became a successful hand-knit label: Molto.



and has been at the forefront of exploring the development of alternative natural yarns: hemp, bamboo or milk protein.

And through all these endeavours has run her guiding conviction that it's time to re-examine the fashion industry and try to spread the word that the investment that yields the greatest return is the time and care and sense of self that you put into a garment.

And so to the launch of the erika knight yarn collection; the ignorance has gone but the massive enthusiasm is clear, and Erika is doing what she has always wanted to do.

The sheep graze the British countryside; the fleece is shorn and selected, then sent to be scoured, carded, spun, dyed, hanked and hand-tied, all within 37 miles of a heritage mill in Yorkshire. The mill uses the very latest in high-tech engineering, while the processes themselves respect traditional methods such as double steaming to produce an exceptionally soft yarn with a high loft so it is a delight to work with and a joy to wear.

There are three yarns – Fur, Maxi, and Vintage wool with a retro twist. Everything about the yarns and colours is carefully considered. This season sees a palette of neutral colours and three, update-your-wardrobe-instantly, high fashion shades.

The yarn comes with a label to sew into your finished work and is supported by easy-to-follow, hand-drawn pattern leaflets that focus on accessories and projects using just one or two hanks that you can start and finish in a few hours, even if it's the first time you've picked up a pair of needles.

*Erika started out
as a fine art student
in Brighton but couldn't keep
from raiding the stores
in the fashion department
in search of textiles*

TEN

Christmas *fashion* COMMANDMENTS

Here are Ten Christmas Fashion Commandment from our fashion editor **Amelia Simmons** to take you through the festive season. Break them at your peril!



1 Load up on texture

Sumptuous velvets in charcoal and oxblood, chunky knits and sequined cardigans will carry you through the season

2 Don't go home!

Go straight from office to the party with some clever substitutions. Switch a drab suit jacket for a velvet or embellished jacket, and exchange a briefcase for a gorgeous neat clutch. Pick up the bold Red Lips clutch, £295, Lulu Guinness

3 Expand your colour palette

beyond the traditional festive colours. Red is for Rudolph's nose; instead seek out jewel tones in teal, deepest plum, and ruby

4 Liven up your legs

Black tights are bland. Instead, add interest to your outfit with an unexpected pop of colour. Mulberry, mustard or even dove grey tights will pull together your outfit perfectly

5 Wear the right shoes

Uggs may not carry any fashion clout (even though they are spotted on the trendiest tootsies, even today), but they rate highly in the comfort and warmth stakes. Likewise, slip on a pair of bright shiny Hunters instead of traipsing up muddy lanes in your best boots



6 Don't always fall back on black

instead, opt for flattering navy tones to add depth to your outfit

7 Wear the trousers

Swap traditional party dresses for glorious, gleaming trophy trousers instead. Try these antique gold Precious Trousers (left), £149, from Hobbs

8 Don't be afraid of leather

Trousers, pencil skirts, jackets; all can look classic and polished providing you choose the right fit (never too tight). Balance them with cashmere sweaters and dress down the rest of your outfit to pull off the leather look

9 Sleeveless works for everyone - honestly

Simply add an embellished cardigan if you're self-conscious about arms. See the cover-up as part of the outfit, rather than a practical piece. Shine on in the Shelby Sequin Jacket, £249, by Reiss

10 Don't get mistaken for the Christmas tree

If you've overindulged on accessories, take Coco Chanel's tip and simply remove the last item you put on - it always works!

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SPIRIT *of* the season

Amelia Simmons
has her finger on the
festive fashion pulse



Scarf, £30,
Urban Outfitters,
Brighton



Trench coat,
£95, Next



Spica boot, £159.00,
Bertie, Brighton



Winstar bag,
£249, Hobbs

DAY

Just because it's Christmas, it doesn't mean all dress sense flies out of the window. We still need to dress well and look good. The antlers and flashing bow ties can come out (if they have to) at the office party, but here we show you how to look cool, crisp and fit for purpose

Photo: Mint Velvet

Get the look



Limited Edition
Tweed trench mac,
£89, M&S



To show you know

The occasional ethnic print - think scarf, not Inca priestess

Leather trousers or skirts

Boots are high or low on the leg, heels ditto.

Main colours: grey, white, black, beige, cream, with an explosion of bright uncompromising colour to make it all come together with a snap

OFFICE TO PARTY

The season is bubbling with parties, and often there's no time to go home to put the glad rags on. So here we show you the knack of transforming day into night. You have a choice - leather trousers perhaps, or an embellished jersey, a sparkly skirt. Add a pair of high heeled studded boots that cry out 'taxi', and you are hot to trot

Valencia feather trim jumper, £55, Monsoon



Olivia gold skirt, £69, Monsoon



Del Rey bag in black forest, £895, Mulberry, Hoopers in Tunbridge Wells



Ninetta shoe boot, £110, Dune



Get the look



To show you know

Velvet tailoring

Embroidery and embellishment
- you don't need me to tell you,
less is more

Body shape - nothing vulgar, but
a well turned ankle or nipped in
waist works wonders

PARTY And if you do have the luxury of Getting Ready Time, here's how to use it to look a million dollars, very elegant, very glamorous, very now



Astrid dress, £159, Monsoon



Blood red silk velvet ruched wrap dress, £119, Mint Velvet



18ct gold vermeil and white topaz feather drops, £145, Dower & Hall, From W.Bruford, Eastbourne and Simon Milne, Rye



Kurt Geiger Elliot shoes, £220

Get the look



Danica dress
in stone, £169,
Reiss



Primrose clutch,
£45, Monsoon



To show you know

Neat clutch bags de luxe
sequins and sparkles

Elegantly flickering earrings:
diamanté (or diamonds, of
course)

Ice cool colours fit for a snow
queen or rich deep velvet,
wrapped and folder

Stiletto heels



Experience the beauty of cashmere with
Pure Collection



Satin maxi skirt - £129
Silk knit t-shirt, black - £69
www.purecollection.com



Jersey maxi dress in merlot, £99
www.purecollection.com



Alpine white cable tunic £179
Grey wool blazer £199
Merino cashmere textured scarf £79
www.purecollection.com



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Pure Collection

CASHMERE

delicious
stylish
and very pure

We have our own quality control team of local people in Inner Mongolia and we are the only brand today that openly (states) the specification of fibre used

Think of cashmere. What comes into your mind? Softness, luxury, warmth, elegance. Tradition – and, to be honest, a tiny touch of twinset and pearls?

Think again. This is where Pure Collection comes in.

In 2002, Nick Falkingham and Adam Holdsworth combined their knowledge of cashmere and retail to create a mail-order service which became the first incarnation of Pure Collection. They were convinced they could produce stylish knitwear with a

Amelia Simmons headed to Pure Collection's beautiful Tunbridge Wells store to help celebrate their 10th anniversary, and take a look at their soft and delicious new collection

modern twist, of the best quality that didn't cost the earth, or damage it. Ten years on, they have boutique stores in Tunbridge Wells and York, and have recently expanded to the States.

In the fashion industry, longevity is something to be cherished, and Pure have made a name for themselves producing cashmere of the finest quality, at prices that are not stratospheric. Wandering the store it isn't hard to see why they have built themselves such a loyal customer base. Shelves are stacked with deliciously tactile jumpers, buttery soft leather trousers, and oversized sweeping scarves.

From goat to garment

I asked Nick what makes the brand stand out, in a climate where disposable fashion is still unfortunately going strong.

In 2002, the choice of cashmere on offer was limited. Prices on the high street were low, but so was the standard of design. For anything more interesting customers had to pay designer prices.

There was a space for good affordable design. Nick explained how he and Adam cut out the middle man, working directly with suppliers who take care of the process directly from goat to garment.

'The factories we work with have goat-herds who not only use hair from their own goats but also buy it from local Nomadic herders.'

His quality control team is made up of local Inner Mongolians, who understand the wool, and control every Pure garment. There's no random dyeing or dip sampling - every single item is checked for size and quality, which is unusual in the fashion industry.

'We combine the best quality of cashmere knitwear with contemporary design, at sensible prices. We cut out the middle man, so we deal directly with family-run businesses in Inner Mongolia, that are taking care of the process from goat to garment.'

The Pure Customer

'We do follow trends, but we see ourselves as a trusted custodian for our customers - we tend to curate what's coming in from the catwalks.'

Collections are designed with the customer in mind, and the team takes an in-depth look each season at their best and worst sellers, adjusting their collections accordingly.

Pure knows their customer.

'It's difficult to be too specific, but I'd say she is a stylish woman who likes clothes, knows about fashion, but likes to interpret it for herself and her own style,' says Nick.

'She certainly doesn't adopt every trend, and is looking for a well-dressed look but not a dressed-up one. She's between 40 and 45, she understands value and won't throw her money around. She invests in designer items, maybe handbags, but she's more interested in the overall look than which labels she's wearing.'

Quality first

Nick and his team are demanding when it comes to determining the quality of cashmere:

'We've always specified the same grade of cashmere fibre, the best that is appropriate for the type of yarn that we produce.'

'I think we're the only brand today open about the exact specification of the fibre we use; the industry is known for blending different qualities, but we do not. We have always specified 34-36mm fibre, 15.5 microns (the diameter) and always white for white and pale garments.'

'For the darker shades we use a darker cashmere fibre. The more dye you put on, the rougher it will feel, so we try to put on only as much dye as is needed for the garment to keep its colour for its lifetime.'

From drawing board to wardrobe

'Our chief designer and brand director (who has spent some time in trend predictions) put together seasonal trends. Working from moodboards our designers and brand director condense these down into the looks we're going to follow and incorporate into our collection.'

'Then the merchandising and the buying team put together a range plan, based on our knowledge of our customers and our experience of what they like and don't like, what fits and what doesn't. The designers go off and design into that range plan, but they also look at what's going on in the wider world, and take their influence from there.'

The Pure team look inwards, focussing on the quality of the wool and the workmanship, but looks outwards too. They raise their eyes to the horizon and bring in what's going on in the wider world: sometimes repeating a style that has worked well and sometimes adding something completely new.

'It's about creating looks we think are appropriate for our customer,' says Nick. 'We've created a collection that we think of as a pyramid: at the bottom we've got the wardrobe basics, then in the middle there is a bit more design, something a little more current. At the top, we have the iconic, forever pieces that reflect the season's trends, but will stand the test of time.'

Pure Collection is a boutique brand with dedicated customers, and global appeal. Its philosophy is perfect for women conscious of both budget and style.

Pure Collection has been a success since 2002, and we wish it just the same for the next 10 years.

Classic? Yes, but chic, and never fusty.

Our customer is a stylish woman ... contemporary and current, who doesn't automatically adopt every single trend that emerges



PURE
COLLECTION

and beyond, the importance of the yarn, how the fibre takes colour, the importance of drape, the need for stretch. Because we know you can relax and leave it all up to Pure.

CELEBRATING
10 years

SCENTS *of my life*

Amelia Simmons takes a deep breath

It started young, like many addictions. In the cradle perhaps.

I have lost count of the bottles I got through, even as a child.

Gleaming, each exotically named, miniature luggage labels from distant lands, all swirly fonts and gold lettering.

I remember standing beside my mother, counter at nose-level, eyes wide, drinking it all in, intoxicated by the opulence. I am about six years old and we are in my favourite place in the whole world: the darkened recesses of an old-fashioned perfume emporium. Heaven on Earth.

It didn't stop at six. Growing up a little, I hankered after perfumes quite unsuitable for a young girl, the darkly heady variety that whispered huskily 'vamp', in Art Deco flacons with glass stoppers the size of gobstoppers. Not for me the pretty princess delicate fragrances, like Nina Ricci's *L'Air du Temps*, which my contemporaries adored but did nothing for me. No light florals for me – I lusted after bumper bottles of Chanel's *Coco*. No armbands for me, I wanted to jump straight in to the deepest end of the pool and sink or swim.

In the early days I dallied with the classics, working my way through everything that Chanel and Guerlain had to offer. I graduated to the hugely brash 80s fragrances of *Opium* and *Poison* - a slap in the face with a suede gauntlet as a prelude to a duel at dawn.

I wanted to be sent into a heady spin by my perfume. I longed for crowds to part before me and gasp



in my wake as my fragrance trail coiled itself around them.

The early nineties was a shocking time for us decadent Orientals; all salty ozones and unisex blandness. The horror! Then came that big-hitter, the monster that is Thierry Mugler's *Angel*, which I should have loved but could only admire in theory, as it didn't suit me at all. I wasn't searching for that elusive Signature Scent that every woman is supposed to make her own, it was more about adding coals to stoke the fire of my passion. Trying new perfumes all the time, learning about the old masters of perfumery forever seeking more, more, more!



This constant need for a new perfume comes from my mother.

Her signature perfume Clinique's beautiful *Aromatics Elixir*, and the merest whiff of it brought me to tears when I started University and someone whisked past me in the hallway wearing it.

A punch in the ribs, that keen sense of loss and homesickness of those first few days adrift in the Big Wide World. My mother, signature scent or no, still enjoys trying new perfumes all the time, her nose clamped to her wrist as she experiments with yet another.

Addicted, moi? Most definitely. Like mother like daughter (or son!)

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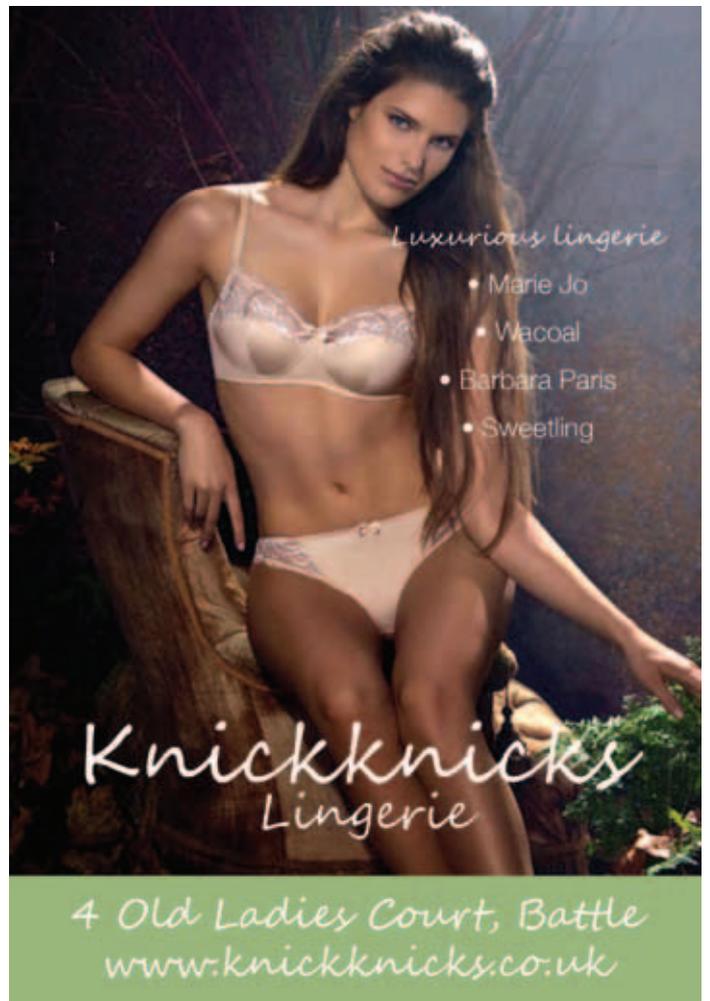
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A fragrant personality

A conversation with Roja Dove parfumeur extraordinaire

Roja Dove is the owner of the exclusive Roja Dove Haute Parfumerie. He is probably the world's leading fragrance specialist, perfume historian and perhaps the most famous 'nose' of our generation.

Intrigued with this Sussex boy's early obsession with perfume, and the link with his mother, I asked Roja to describe to us his earliest fragrant memory.

'It was when I was a small boy of about five or six. My mother came to kiss me goodnight: I remember her standing in my doorway wearing a gold lamé cocktail dress,

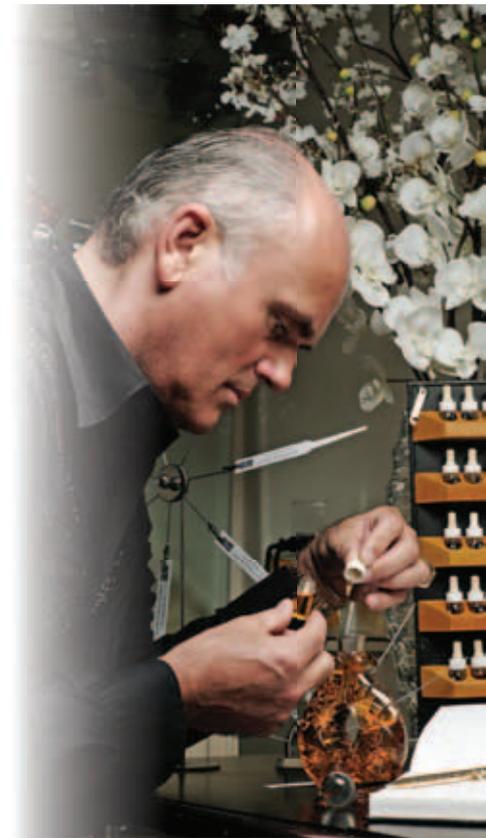
lit from behind, as if she had a corona around her.

'I had only seen such an image in a book, maybe as a picture of something magical. As she kissed me, her scent finished the metamorphosis and determined my destiny. From an early age I was intrigued by beautiful perfume bottles and would always save money to buy some. I hunted out unusual bottles at markets, and started my collection - still growing to this day.

'Before I opened the Haute Parfumerie, I had already started creating bespoke fragrances for an elite clientele: the first one was auctioned at Christies for a charity



*It was when
I was a small boy
of about five or six.
My mother came to kiss me
goodnight.
I remember her standing
in my doorway wearing
a gold lamé cocktail dress,
lit from behind,
as if she had a corona
around her*



and fetched the highest price, which told me there was a demand. When I opened the perfumery, many people thought I was sitting there blending fragrances, which of course was not the case. That said, so many people came asking for my fragrances that I created a floral: *Scandal*, a chypre: *Unspoken*, and an oriental: *Enslaved*. They were a huge success.

‘Many stores around the globe have asked to stock them, but I have always said no as we were not set up to cater for such a demand. We have launched the Roja Parfums counter on the ground floor of Harrods, offering the Roja Parfums scents



to many new customers daily – there are seven female fragrances, three unisex *Extraits*, three *Aouds*, 15 candles and three fragrances for men.’

Roja Parfums has also opened in Russia, Switzerland and the Middle East.

So there you are. Roja Dove, a little Sussex boy who gazed in wonder at multicoloured perfume bottles has become the world’s only *Professeur de Parfums*, with a burgeoning fragrance empire. The seeds are sown early with sensory adventurers – do you recognise yourself?

Three very different
BEAUTY LOOKS
FOR

WINTER
2012

Neo-Gothic

The Gothic look is updated by keeping skin dewy, eyes clean and lips fresh with a layer of gloss



Uptown Neon

A classic grey smoky eye is made fresh with a pop of neon pink lipstick

Heritage

Milkmaid braids and flushed cheeks add youthful charm to this Romantic look

Photographer: Parisa Walklett
Makeup Artist: Marie-Isabel Kennedy
Hair: Stephanie Hayes
Stylist: Amelia Florence Simmons
Model: Hannah Murrell @ Select Model Management
Jewellery: Jolita Jewellery



Infusion, Not Injection

If you're looking for a way to weather the stress of the festive season without resorting to drastic measures, then look no further than new beauty innovation Wrinkle MD. Applied as patches to the eye area, the system infuses Hyaluronic Acid deep into the skin to greatly reduce wrinkles. Available at Harrods, £130.



AMELIA SIMMONS

Hair hero: Philip Kingsley Elasticizer, £26.25

As the festive season commences, so does hair torture: straightening, curling, blow-drying and endless twisting into a variety of styles. Combat exhausted, dehydrated hair with Philip Kingsley's wonder product Elasticizer, which will restore volume, shine and health to sickly hair in no time.



Heating up

Winging It

Heavy duty black winged liner comes direct from Lanvin's catwalk. Don't be afraid to add lashings of liner

PIO

AKA, Pile It On. When it comes to hair accessories and headbands, give yourself free reign

Keep It Fresh

Let dewy skin, flushed cheeks and the natural look carry you through the festive season

Cooling down

Curling Tongs

Take inspiration from Prada and Diane von Furstenburg with a sleek, low ponytail

TOWIE Tans

Bypass the weather-beaten handbag look and opt for a subtle glow instead

Tweezers

Strong brows are showing no sign of abating, so exchange your tweezers for a decent brow brush and groom, don't pluck

Nail the trend with Mavala

Keen to adopt a trend featured in our beauty story but not sure where to start? Try a flash of colour on the nails; it's the easiest way to try a new look without committing. Mavala produce a variety of on trend colours with fantastic coverage and long-lasting results, all priced at £4.30:



1. For the Neo-Gothic look, try the deliciously deep Black Oyster
2. Keep it clean for the Heritage look with the sable toned Rose Dust
3. Achieve our Uptown Neon look with the electric Candy Pink

AIMING for the *perfect cleavage*

Not everyone wants to be noticed, but everyone wants to feel good about their body. Many women choose to enlarge their breasts, a decision that can literally change their lives. Whatever the reasons for plumping for surgery, everyone needs support

Breast surgery comes in many different disguises. Patients don't always want to tell the world they have had an enlargement or a reduction for that matter, while others want nothing more than to be compared to Jordan and Heidi Montag and admired for the makeover.

Speculation will always be rife when it comes to celebrities about who has had what done. Victoria Beckham kept very quiet for a long time before coming clean and admitting to Vogue UK that she had had her breast implants removed.

A good surgical procedure in terms of identification should always go undetected. People should notice, of course, but without coming to the conclusion that there has been surgical intervention: perhaps you've been on holiday or had your hair cut differently. A rest is as good as a change!

'A good facelift should be between you, your consultant and the hairdresser,' says Nick Parkhouse, a consultant plastic surgeon at McIndoe Surgical Centre.

Breast surgery is the most popular procedure performed in the UK. Every surgeon will have slightly different techniques for the process from consultation right up to surgery day. Mr Parkhouse found out from his practice that over 50% of women believed the most important view of their breasts was looking down from above and not head on in the mirror, so this is now discussed at consultation when size and shape is being considered.

Celebrities often influence trends in cosmetic surgery; one who has helped breast enlargement stay at number one is Christina Hendricks from Mad Men. Her voluptuous cleavage has been coveted by women and admired by men up and down the country for five seasons, inspiring countless breast enlargements. The number shows no signs of declining despite the recent PIP scandal.

Surgeons at McIndoe are no strangers to celebrities coming through the doors, from famous faces who sidle in the back way to the much-publicised men and women from reality shows such as Embarrassing Bodies.

It makes no difference to us. Everyone is treated exactly the same. This is a major decision, and can result in huge physical changes, with emotional side effects.

We make sure our patients receive the respect they deserve throughout the process – while they are deciding and discussing, during the process, and afterwards too.

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A weighty issue

Official figures released this summer show that demand for weight-loss surgery, through gastric bands or bypass, is at an all time high, with bariatric procedures up by as much as 500%.

Bariatric surgery covers all aspects of obesity surgery and includes gastric balloons and banding, as well as gastric sleeves and bypass. All are safe, but sleeve and bypass procedures are considered to be larger operations.

Once the preserve of the rich and famous, this surgery is now widely available, but it's not for everyone.

'Being overweight or obese increases health risks and can significantly reduce life expectancy. It also increases the chance of developing high blood pressure, heart disease and many forms of cancer. Obesity can cause cirrhosis of the liver, diabetes, infertility, osteoarthritis and early failure of hip or knee joints. Of course, the psychological issues of being overweight, such as low self esteem and social isolation, can also have

We all know that being overweight or obese isn't healthy, but just how bad for us is it? Is the answer bariatric?

an enormous impact on quality of life,' explains Ahmed Hamouda.

'Bariatric surgery is not a cosmetic procedure and should not be undertaken lightly. Every attempt must be made to lose weight, and I suggest approaching your GP for dieting and advice, who can provide medical help if you need it. If these measures fail, after a reasonable length of time, surgical assistance to lose weight can then be considered.

'With a gastric balloon, a balloon the size of a rugby ball is placed in the stomach for six months, limiting food intake. With banding, a band is placed around the top of the stomach to create an hour-glass effect; intake of food is flexible and will require regular adjustments. With bypass, the surgeon will create a small pouch, attached to a bypassed segment of bowel, which not only restricts food intake, but also decreases absorption.'

He continues: 'Patients can expect to achieve a 50-80% weight loss according to the type of procedure, and they will see a sustained effect in direct comparison with exercise or diet.'

There will be a lot to think about before and after the operation. There will be a regime to follow and this will affect people's lifestyle.

Mr Hamouda paints a realistic picture of the whole procedure, and it is clear that it is no picnic.



BY CONSULTANT SURGEON, MR AHMED HAMOUDA

'Patients are required to go on a fat-free diet in the run up to surgery in order to reduce the size of the liver and to allow the operation to be technically possible. For bypass patients, a long term programme of vitamins and minerals will need to be followed, and blood tests taken at regular intervals in the years following the operation. Gastric bands need follow-ups every six to eight weeks for adjustment. Whatever procedure is undertaken, patients must not be under any illusion that bariatric surgery is an easy option.'

If you think you need to investigate bariatric procedures

- Always seek an opinion from your GP
- An experienced consultant is essential. Individual consultations should always be offered, and this will give you an opportunity to discuss, in confidence, your individual requirements as well as quiz your consultant about his experience and success rates
- Make sure that the facility you choose is reputable, and offers a full pre and post-operative care package as well as on-site clinical support, should it be required.
- Don't rush into it. The decision to have any surgery is a big one - take your time and make sure you know what you're getting into.

Consultant surgeons:
Mr Hamouda, FRCS, FRCS (G. Surg), MD; Mr Ali, FRCS, FRCS (G. Surg), MD; and Professor Nisar MBBS, FRCS (Glasg.), FRCSI, FRCS all practise at The Wells Suite at The Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury.
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THE LESSONS *of* Life & Law

Pam Loch is Managing Partner of an employment law firm. She passes on to *Sussex Style* the lessons she has learnt over the last 20 years

My son was born 20 years ago, and I suddenly realised recently that I have worked ever since his birth. It's been a busy and fruitful time: I've relocated from Scotland and worked for various types of law firms before setting up the two businesses that I now manage, Loch Associates Employment Lawyers and HR Advise Me.

So what I have I learnt?

First, the importance of support – from family and friends. This has helped me maintain the right balance and perspective. Parents have so much to teach us – my husband and I have lost three between us and I now appreciate what we have learnt from them. (I'm still persuading my son about this though!)

Second, if you do want to change something in your life (your career perhaps), then you should go for it. I originally had an honours degree in accountancy and economics before becoming a graduate trainee with a large insurance company. With a three year old son, I decided to return to University and join a group of other mature students - as we were known then.

Some of them had had previous careers too. One had been a headmaster of a school and at 58, came to do a law degree. He is now practising law – which he had always wanted to do.

While I was training, my husband was promoted, which meant we had to move to England. This was a shake-up but not a terrible one. We both recognised the opportunities that could come from my becoming re-qualified as an English lawyer. I had to return to studying again, this time remotely, with a full time job at a law firm

and looking after the family at the same time. The third thing I've learnt therefore is that being organised is critical.

I have no regrets about making the move. We were right - there have been more opportunities for us in the South East. Our son has no intention of moving back to Scotland either, although we all enjoy visiting, and I still have clients there.

I have learnt that it's good to push yourself outside your comfort zone and making the move from Scotland was at that time exactly that!

I also moved outside my comfort zone when I set up Loch Associates Employment Lawyers and HR Advise Me in 2007. I spotted a gap for an employment law firm running beside another business providing HR support to employers.

Some of my clients moved with me when I set up the firm and I kept a consultancy arrangement with my existing employer.

All well planned and ready to go – until the credit crunch and the 2007 recession. This had plusses and minuses: an undoubted negative impact on the consultancy work, but an increase in the need for employment law advice.

My gender, looking back, has been neither a hindrance nor a help. When I started out, the assumption was that as a female I would be setting up on my own, with little ambition to grow.

Wrong! We now have three offices with 15 employees and self-employed associates. I don't believe in expansion for expansion's sake but I do believe in expanding around the right people - a philosophy I hope will stand us in good stead to continue to expand the businesses.

One final thing I have noticed over the years are the changes in employment law.



*My gender,
looking back,
has been neither
a hindrance
nor a help*

Twenty years ago nobody had the right to request flexible working. I asked to work part-time and the best I got was a commitment to part-time work until my son was one year old (maternity leave in those days was six months).

There was no paternity or parental leave then, but fathers can also now be far more involved if they want to be. These have been positive changes to help achieve equality. There is still some way to go, but I am trying very hard in our businesses to help take this forward.

Pam Loch, Managing Partner of Loch Associates Employment Lawyers, and Managing Director of HR Advise Me Limited.
www.lochassociates.co.uk
www.hradvise.me

Planning a *successful* business start-up

A Collective case study

I was introduced to Blend Collective through the accountants, Baker Tilly, about two years ago.

'They're a start-up in the natural toiletries business and may need a little help on the finance side of things,' they told me.

And so I met the Blend team of Pippa Bennett and Clive Walker at their office in Ticehurst.

Clive has been Marketing Director of Tisserand, while Pippa is a business polymath, with a background in HR and several successful businesses to her name.

They spent the first 90 minutes explaining their business model. The product was to be aimed at the higher end of the market, virtually 100% natural, with chic packaging and presentation to match.

Initially all the various stages were to be outsourced, starting with the "nose", or to be precise three noses—hence the name Blend Collective - who put together the pure essential oils that make up the core smell or perfume.

Then the packaging and components, design and manufacture, the art work; then the manufacturing and filling process, stability testing and finally the warehousing, distribution and invoicing.

All of it thoroughly worked out.

How much...?

I now had to ask the question "How much is this going to cost?"

"Well we'd thought we'd need about ..."

"Yes, and have you actually added up the expected costs?"

"Well, no . . ."

So we spent another 90 minutes with paper, pencil and rubber working through each of the stages that they had explained, generally guessing and estimating what things might cost. The total came out 30% higher than their original figure.

"Ouch!" said Clive, "but at least we know and it's early enough to find the extra money we need."

So they got down to work.

The three noses came up with three delicious perfume oil ranges, Enlivening, Balancing and Unwinding.

The initial plan was for 18 SKUs (stock keeping unit) or, to you and me, 18 different products, six in each range. But when we got out the dreaded paper, pencil and rubber again we worked out that by reducing the range from 18 to 12, we'd cut out £30,000 of initial costs.

"And" said Clive "we'll have six more products that we can quickly bring forward as the brand develops."

On went the work; packaging and its components, negotiations with the manufacturers and fillers, final work with the design. All was coming together into a classy and distinctive brand.

Pricing

Another long day. Pippa and Clive had thoroughly researched the competition, and the margins generally expected by retailers. We must have gone over the whole process three or four times before we felt we had nailed down all the costs and could put together a price card that gave retailers the margin they would be looking for, would stand up against competition and also gave Blend Collective a reasonable margin.

Getting it right, getting it out there

Of course, as the work continued, money was spent, and there was an increasing nervousness: "would it sell?" I could see that on any essential matter, no compromise had been made. No detail was too small to get absolutely right. The smell, the look, the packaging – all were good. The launch was planned for the London design-led trade fair, Spring Top Drawer in January this year.

We totted up costs about two months before launch and we were £ . . . thousand short to meet all costs. Time to visit the bank . . . but this story I'll keep for another day.



Enough to say that Blend Collective was successfully launched, it has been well received by the trade, the press and the public alike. It has won two awards, the Autumn Top Drawer Best New Wellbeing Product award and the Silver Pentaward for its packaging design.

The key to Blend Collective's success?

It is a complex business model with all stages of the process outsourced, including financial advice. Pippa and Clive have a crystal clear vision, and they know the market place. They know where to compromise and where to stick to their guns. They know their own skills and strengths and when to ask for advice. They are a formidable team.

But the proof is in the product, available at boutiques and shops around Sussex .

Visit www.blendcollective.co.uk to find out where to look.

Simon Smith is a financial consultant who lives in Sussex. His breadth of experience equips him to bring effective support to any business. He can be contacted at simon.smith@assessfinance.co.uk



Lessons we've learned FROM BUSINESS



Classic Consulting founder, recruitment industry specialist Denise Buchan, talks to Sussex Style about her path to business success



Who we work with:

We work with a wide range of businesses of all sizes and sectors throughout the Sussex region. Many companies use us as their sole agency provider and many more choose us time and time again because they know we deliver excellent results and we operate with absolute integrity, all of the time.

Our specialist areas:

- Admin, Secretarial, PA, Legal Support
- HR, Training, IT, Business Development
- Marketing, PR, Digital, Media
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Property
- Customer Service, Call Centre, Market Research

Contact Classic Consulting

Whether you're in business and want to expand your team, or if you're a candidate seeking a new challenge, we'll listen to you and treat you as the individual you are. And that's how we achieve great results.

It's been an impressive first year of trading for the innovative Brighton-based recruitment consultancy, Classic Consulting. Over their first year the company has exceeded expectations, with an anticipated turnover in excess of £1.2m. They have made a significant impression on the local business community working with over 100 regional clients, filling more than 200 permanent positions and having an average of 100 temporary staff a week out on assignment.

Hot on the heels of the Sussex Business Awards, where the company scooped the coveted Most Promising New Business Award, Denise is understandably delighted with how the first year has gone and the impact the company has already made on the Brighton and wider regional business sector.

Right from the start, we've dared to be different

Classic Consulting opened for business in January this year with the mantra of Integrity First, and the primary goal of bringing new levels of commitment, energy and passion to the Sussex business community.

'It's been a fantastic, albeit crazy, first year of trading,' says Denise, enthusiastically. 'A year ago we said that we were creating this innovative new recruitment business to bring fresh thinking and behaviour to an industry in desperate need of a breath of fresh air. Daring to be different has paid off and we've delivered on our promise!'

Build on a strong foundation

Brighton was chosen as the





launch pad for the business, due to its high service sector economy and the calibre of candidates and clients. To add to this foundation, each person in the team was picked for their wealth of local experience and for the fact that they absolutely love what they do.

When this foundation was combined with backing from specialist recruitment venture capitalist, Krypton Capital, the result was always going to be special.

'A strong foundation is everything,' says Denise. 'We knew the cornerstones of our success would be our service-orientated approach, our investment from Krypton Capital, our location, and most importantly, our people. 'Our success to date would not have been possible without the hard work and support of our great team and as we've grown, we've added several highly experienced consultants and support staff to the mix.'

A brand inspired by our customers

Classic Consulting is building on these foundations and rapidly setting new standards in customer service with their commitment to long-term client and candidate relationships.

Denise goes on to say: 'Classic Consulting is a member of the Institute of Business Ethics, and at the heart of our company is an absolute commitment to ethical standards and integrity; with clients, candidates and colleagues.'

Putting their customers first is certainly paying off: more than 50% of their new business already comes from recommendation, and this demonstrates that their fresh, innovative approach is being well received by clients and candidates alike. And if their fast growth, award nominations and testimonials on their website are anything to go by, the company is moving quickly into a league of its own.

Denise is very clear about why this is. 'We are giving our clients and candidates what they want; when they want it. We're genuinely available 24/7 and like to think we are working while others sleep. Times are changing. People respond to us because we respond to them, no matter the time of day, the complexity of the

request or the timeframe they're working to. We're approachable and we serve our customers with integrity and they welcome it. It really is that simple.'

And the future?

There's no doubt Classic Consulting has a bright future. In addition to the Brighton office, they've already opened a satellite in Crawley and expect to open their first London office in 2013.

'Looking back on this year puts our heads in a spin,' Denise told us. 'This time last year people were concerned that we were launching during a recession, yet I believe truly innovative and hard-working businesses will thrive in any economic climate. We have proved that a market exists for something truly different in recruitment, and that 2012 was just the beginning. Watch this space!'

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f 01273 376999
e info@classicconsulting.co.uk
w www.classicconsulting.co.uk



FAMILY *property*

Melissa is bringing more lettings instructions into the business and is building a wide network. Ian has been in the 9-5 of working life for many years, and by his own admission, his daughter is prepared to do a lot more leg work

Working with your family is not always easy. Some people would rather eat glass - but not Melissa Mitchell and her father Ian Standen. They work together so well that they agreed to talk to *Sussex Style* about their collaboration. **Sarah Saunders** met them over an Italian coffee

Property is a family business for Ian Standen. His daughter Melissa Mitchell has joined the team at Standen Hodgson, and his sister Jill contributes her valuable experience too.

A quick interview in Fabio's café opposite their office became a busy lunchtime special. Nobody passed without stopping for a greeting and a chat.

'We're part of the scene' they grin. This obviously helps both business and pleasure.

Ian Standen is a countryman; tall, tweedy, good on the golf and tennis courts, and keen on a day's shooting.

Out of the office Melissa has her sporty interests too. She trains for triathlons, and she is a very competent rider and shot.

Ian has lived and worked in the South of England as a Chartered surveyor since leaving the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester, where Melissa also qualified.

They are both chartered surveyors, the only agents in the region with this qualification. For Melissa this also means she has to prove herself less to her boss.

Same, but different

Has Ian always dreamt of his family continuing the business he started all those years ago?

'Never! My son Jack is into rock 'n' roll He's a talented keyboard player and vocalist, was on tour in the US this year and has a record label in East Sussex. Melissa was working in London. I was looking



for someone and she came on board in February this year. I was very pleased.'

Melissa says she lacked self-confidence when she arrived, and that had affected her output and enjoyment of her job in London.

As we talk, I discover that her confidence has quite clearly grown since she joined Standen Hodgson.

'It's difficult when you're young and inexperienced, despite all the introductions,' she admits. 'It is a massive leg up to work with Dad in the family business. We work well together.'

Melissa is bringing more lettings instructions into the business and is building a wide network. Ian has been in the 9-5 of working life for many years, and by his own admission, his daughter is prepared to do a lot more leg work. Ian benefits from his daughter's generational skills, including technology: 'I've been dragged into the 21st century and the office is functioning much better.'

Working well together - and still learning

Ian says they are very open with each other.

He likes people to get on and do the job and he isn't averse to change. Just as well!

'Melissa changed all the pictures in the office,' he says, with a tinge of nostalgia.

When she started out at Standen Hodgson Melissa found being the bosses' daughter quite tricky with the staff. And clients too.

'They always looked to Dad at the beginning, which was kind of annoying, but over time it is changing.'

She has become a director of the company and obviously deserves the title.

'I'm well qualified so people can see I am able to do the job. Because I'm open

and organised I have been able to get some things changed in the office for the better.

'I can be the middle woman at times, but I think there is less gossip and people find it easier to approach me on some issues than Dad. There is more transparency now and a more relaxed approach between staff. The office is definitely more cohesive now that I'm there and a happier place to work.'

Ian agrees. 'I never really worked on getting together in the office. She is a good manager, and she's getting to grips with a wide range of elements of the business.'

A double act that works

There's no doubt that their double act has benefits. Melissa is a young woman and Ian is an older man. They admit they communicate more successfully with different clients and can also play 'good cop, bad cop' where necessary.

They acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses and agree they learn from each other.

Melissa is more detailed and thorough; Ian is more direct, briefer in his communications and probably the personality clients respond to for sales. Melissa has a modern charm that balances Ian's traditional aura. He is a little blasé about his achievements, and an ambitious streak occasionally peeps above the parapet in Melissa.

There's an interesting rivalry between them, although affection is obvious. They play a sort of comedy duo, that one imagines ends up in a Wimbledon style handshake even if one of them might be biting their lip.

Heritage and continuity

I ask Melissa if being Mrs. Mitchell doesn't defeat the object of working in a business with a family name that her father firmly says is staying.

'In a marketing situation, I just say I am Ian Standen's daughter,' she says, and it is obviously not proving a stumbling block.

It is continuity that is a signature in the Standen business.

Ian says, 'The children of friends of mine are now moving to the area, relocating for the good local schools and quality of life for their new families.' History repeating itself may be good for business.

'Thank goodness for future generations,' says Ian, 'I've been doing this too long.'

'You'll never stop Dad!' Melissa quickly chimes, 'He knows every house in the area

which means we're more than just agents. Not just selling houses, we provide a sort of property advice service which I think is unmatched.'

Property deals have been negotiated off the market because Ian is well respected and knowledgeable in the marketplace. He concedes with a twinkle that putting a deal together is great. They did one recently on a 650-acre estate in Ewhurst Green which was particularly satisfying.

'I've been involved with the property for 40 years. The first brochure I ever did was in 1973, and I sold the house to the current client's father. In 2012 we sold it again for his daughter. Heritage, it's great!'

Family life

It seems that heritage is a keyword in the Standen Hodgson Estate agency, and not just the properties themselves! There is yet more family in the business.

Ben Hodgson MRICS is the son-in-law of Ian's business partner Mark, and Emily, his wife, was at Cirencester with Melissa. Jill Despic, Ian's sister, has 30 years of letting experience and is a consultant to the business. Melissa's husband is in commercial property.

There were 76 surveyors at their wedding in 2010!

'Imagine! seven hours of CPD (continued professional development) having fun!' laughs Melissa.

'Always at work, even going up the aisle to hand my daughter to her future husband!!' says Ian, proudly, tongue in cheek.

Nevertheless, Sunday lunch in the Standen household is a work-free zone.

'If they promise not to talk about horses, I won't talk about houses!' says Ian.

STANDEN HODGSON

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Tel: 01580 713250

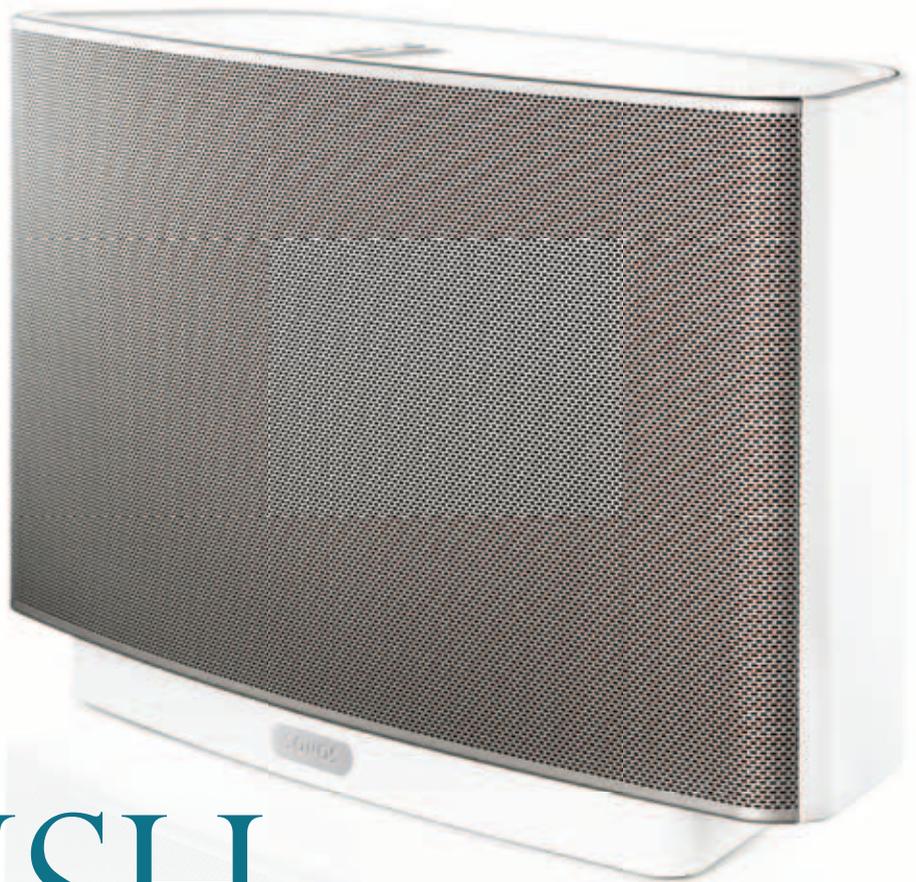
Nik Taylor chooses the best new gadgets and gear

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EAST GRINSTEAD

No rush, no fuss, just easy shopping in a pretty medieval town reports

Caroline Hardy

It's snowing and cold, and going to get colder. Time to beat the winter blues! Online shopping and malls have their place, but when the weather is biting and you're looking for something special, it's often right there, under your nose.

Let me tell you about East Grinstead's High Street. Not the first place that comes to mind, I know, but it's worth a second look.

East Grinstead clings to Sussex by its fingertips, hidden away at the top right corner of the county. People are often lured away by the attractions of bigger, brasher towns, but the medieval market town is full of surprises when it comes to shopping.

The broad, tree-lined High Street is a delight whatever the time of year. Flowerbeds packed with seasonal colour provide an attractive border to the picturesque cluster of timber-framed Tudor buildings running from one end of the street to the other.

And while the economy struggles to recover, and shops up and down the country are putting up the shutters, East Grinstead's High Street has been undergoing something of a renaissance, with more than half a dozen shops opening in the past 18 months – including two in the last three months. Quite an accolade for a small town.

Shopping is delightful, but parking is the problem, isn't it? Not here. You may be able to park right in the centre of the High Street if you are lucky, and if you are not, car parks are only a short distance away.

If it's fashion you're after, East Grinstead's High Street has it all, from vintage and classic to the





latest hot trends. There are several stylish boutiques offering clothes and handbags, alongside the ultimate in accessories.

The recently-opened **Emma Louise** has a range of chic and practical gifts you won't find anywhere else. The shop has already proved a hit, with its stylish range of items that would grace any room in the house.

Just across the road is **Penny Farthing**, where you can find a range of beautiful statement jewellery along with big brand names in watches, for both men and women.

Independent shops offering a first-class personal service line this fascinating High Street and include a bookshop, two art galleries and for children, a boutique and a specialist shoe shop.

A perfect place to spend a happy few hours, and after all

that shopping you'll want something tasty to take home for supper. Call in to the award-winning **Market Square**, a delicatessen, an off licence and an in-store bakery, open seven days a week.

In fact, it's so popular that in November it was voted as having the 'best theatre' – ie the most impressive window display - of any independent retailer in the UK at the Independent Achievers Academy Awards.

If you decide to let someone else do the cooking, there are plenty of restaurants, pubs and coffee houses to choose from with **CJ's** being one of the best – here you can enjoy anything from a latte to a white wine as well as delicious home cooking.

Sink into a squasy sofa and take in the cool and calm atmosphere while you decide what you feel like eating. Whatever you choose, this funky coffee and wine bar will revive you and get you back on your feet again for more shopping!

And if it's a bit of celeb-spotting you're after, East Grinstead can provide that too – superstar singer and local resident Peter André last year opened the first of

his **New York Coffee Bars**, just off the High Street. He can sometimes be spotted serving shoppers and fans – so you never know, you might be lucky enough to get a chorus of *Mysterious Girl* to go with your order!

Save yourself hassle, crowds and irritation. Make it your New Year's resolution to visit this friendliest of towns where service comes with a smile – and maybe a song!



Artychic



CJ's is a relaxed and airy bar housed in an old water bottling factory, amidst one of the longest runs of 14th-century timber-framed houses in England.

The atmosphere in this arty-chic bar is laid-back and comfortable; smouldering candles and Moroccan lanterns throw a soft and relaxed light on its well-worn architectural style.

CJ's is a step back to when wine bars and cafés were less about polished floors and pristine spaces and more about great food, discovering new wines and places to spend time putting the world to rights in the company of friends.

On a warm summer evening the bar overflows on to our outdoor

Olive Terrace, which is very popular with the locals after work. The rustle of olive trees gives a Mediterranean feel and as you sip your wine or a cool beer watching the sun setting over the rooftops you might completely forget where you are.

Gothic House is our boutique guest accommodation upstairs. Two of the rooms look out on to the terrace and the other over our delightful old High Street.

The three rooms are all individually styled – one is English country house, another French and the other in an Italian style. The rooms have added a new dimension to the business, as guests on a long stay get to really appreciate all the good things about CJs.



We believe CJ's has survived the recession because our loyal customers have supported us, and many have become good friends.

We have expanded our evening menu to include steak, salmon and old favourites like locally-sourced bangers and mash, followed by delicious home made desserts. Our new chef is always keen to talk to customers and find out what they would like to see on the menu.

CJ's never rests on its laurels. It is constantly evolving and is happy to be an integral part of East Grinstead's lovely old High Street.

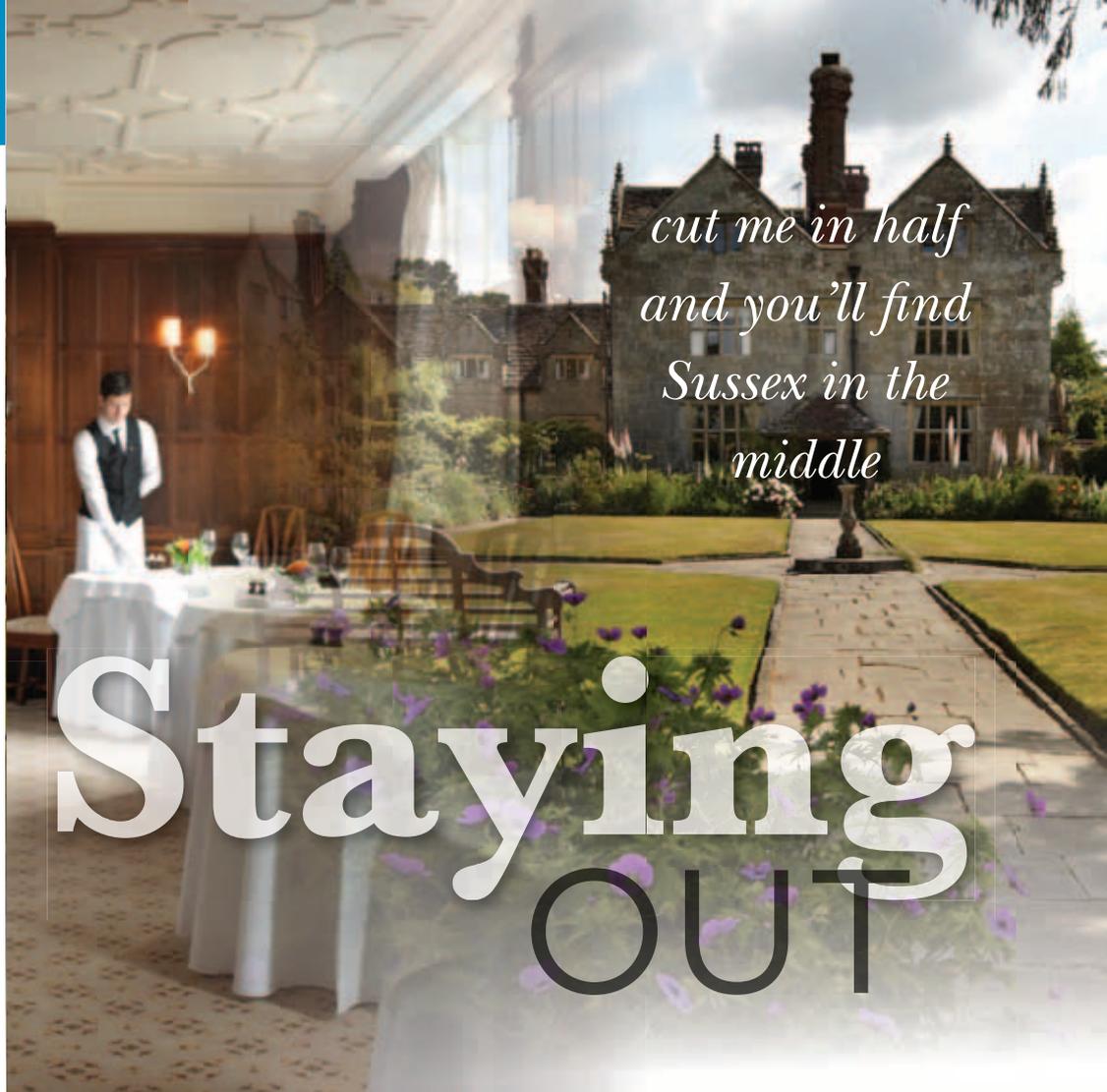
CJ's Café Bar
55/57, High street,
East Grinstead
West Sussex
RH19 3DD



TEL: 01342 301910
Fax: 01342 325984
www.cjs-cafebar.co.uk



Fiona Duncan offers some of her favourite places to stay in Sussex



*cut me in half
and you'll find
Sussex in the
middle*

Staying OUT

Park House, West Sussex

I'd always known of Park House, just outside Midhurst, but never stayed. Once I popped in for lunch, years ago now, and remember admiring the graciousness and gentleness of the place, but also found a menu that was amazingly old fashioned, even for those far off days, and an establishment that was ageing along with its splendid, much-loved owner, Ione O'Brien, brought up in India, passionate about polo, who turned her inherited home into a hotel in 1948.

Now at last, I'm staying the night, and the changes and embellishments that I find, not least to the menu, are a great surprise, but the graciousness, the tranquility and the atmosphere of a family home are all still intact.

There are 21 bedrooms in the main house. In ours, a room recently papered and

curtained with blousy white roses (also with a cool Apple television/computer, digital clock, free wifi and fashionably white-sheeted bed) the windows look down on a flower-covered pergola, a neat croquet lawn, a pair of lawn tennis courts, a professionally designed, very testing six-hole pitch and putt golf course and an emerald putting green, all perfectly maintained.

What's been happening here? After Ione O'Brien died the hotel passed to her grandson, Seamus. Evidently no expense has been spared (though glitz is mercifully absent) in subtly turning what was a quiet, elderly, but always enjoyable hotel into an impressive commercial enterprise.

Park House is a hotel for today that was created yesterday. It has all the elements I look for: a notable location; a sense of its legacy; lack of pretension; high standards and attention to detail. A great find.

Bepton, near Midhurst
01730 819000; www.parkhousehotel.com

Doubles from £160 per night, including breakfast. Specially adapted rooms for guests with disabilities.

Gravetye Manor, West Hoathly, West Sussex

Gravetye Manor, just 30 miles from London, is one of Britain's greatest, and longest lived, country house hotels and also one of my very favourite. It has recently changed hands, now owned by city fund manager Jeremy Hosking.

Built in 1598, Gravetye was the home, from 1884 until he died, of visionary gardener William Robinson, pioneer of natural planting in harmony with the landscape, and the garden he created here is a classic of its kind. In 1958, the 1,000 acre estate was bought by Peter Herbert, who turned the manor into a much loved hotel. On his retirement, it was taken on by devoted general manager and head chef, Andrew Russell and Mark Raffan, but they lacked the necessary investment and it went, suddenly, into administration. It was acquired by Hosking, who had been staying here as a guest with his wife Elizabeth for many years.

Change but no change is the Hoskings's motto, and indeed the new furnishings look elegant, fresh and attractive, but the feel of the place remains the same. Several million pounds have been spent

on background infrastructure, and all 17 bedrooms have been redecorated, with new bathrooms throughout. I wish they'd preserved the wonderful art deco bathroom in Ash, and they'd kept radios by the bed and in the bathrooms as of old; and I could do with more books to leaf through, apart from William Robinson's own titles which are found in every room: a well chosen library downstairs would be just right here.

But that's it. I adore this place: the unhurried calm; the polite, chatty staff (maids in neat black dresses with white aprons); the profusion of beautiful, naturally arranged flowers; the smell of linseed oil and of wood smoke from the great open hearths. In the sober yet stunning dining room no one feels the need to whisper, and the food of Rupert Gleadow is an accomplished delight, with some amusing twists such as a dessert of hot beetroot soufflé with sage ice cream. Best of all, the gardens are being restored, with seven full time gardeners headed by Tom Coward, who has come from Great Dixter. It's already stunning and lunch outdoors will be a real treat.

You should hurry to Gravetye. As they rightly say, there's been change at Gravetye, but no change.

Vowells Lane, West Hoathly, West Sussex RH19 4LJ
01342 810567;
www.gravetyemanor.co.uk

Doubles from £240 per night, including breakfast.

Not suitable for guests with disabilities.

Burpham Country House, Sussex

What a quiet delight. Not because it's perfect, but because it has charm, a quirky past, a sense of place and above all, a sense of peace. Originally an 18th-century hunting lodge and later a rectory, Burpham Country House is embellished with a wooden veranda picked out in sky blue and decorated with hanging baskets, and an ecclesiastical entrance porch.

'We literally see people's shoulders drop as they come inside', says owner Jackie Penticost. 'Many of our guests live quite nearby – Brighton, say – but love the fact that they can relax so close to home. They'll stay for a few



days and pop back in the middle to do the watering."

That's what a good country hotel should achieve: allow you to change gear, to wind down. But even before you walk in, you'll find that the village of Burpham itself has had a calming effect. Its flint walled houses, century old cricket pitch and picturesque pub are seemingly suspended in time at the end of the road that winds up from the water meadows of the River Arun to the sunny chalk grasslands of the South Downs.

The Penticosts are just the right people to run Burpham Country House.

'Cut me in half and you'll find Sussex in the middle' says Steve, whose family has lived in the area for over 400 years.

It's been a hotel for over 70 years, with aristocratic shooting parties accounting for a large proportion of the guests. Remodelled in Victorian times to make it 'fit for a vicar's wife', its most famous resident was the Reverend Tickner Edwardes who, as well as parish priest, turned his hand to a seminal book on bee-keeping (*Lore of the Honey Bee*) and another on hitch-hiking (*Lift Luck on the Southern Roads*), plus several acclaimed early romantic films in which local village girls had starring roles.

None of these facts make Burpham Country Hotel the pleasing place that it

is, but they help. There are two sitting rooms, one with television, the other with an honesty bar; and an attractive dining room leading off the elegant hallway. Chickens peck on the lawn and the stately house cat plonks itself wherever it may. The 10 modest, comfortable bedrooms are all different, decorated in mild country house style, with an assortment of furniture (including two four posters), fabrics and ornaments. In other hands this place could so easily have become boutiqueified, with scary prices, but the Penticosts have kept things down to earth. Steve is the self-taught chef, and excellent by all accounts (I wasn't able to dine there).

My big gripe came at breakfast, when I wished fervently for good coffee and proper jams rather than those beastly mini pots and mini butter pats and even beastlier sachets of mustard. Surely this isn't the place for such things, modest or not. But it's a calm, friendly, unpretentious hotel in an exceptional place that everyone 'from dukes to dustmen' can enjoy.

The Street, Burpham
01903 882160;
www.burphamcountryhouse.com

Doubles from £80 per night.

Access possible for guests with disabilities.

Fiona Duncan is the hotel critic on The Sunday Telegraph and a series editor on the Charming Small Hotel Guides (www.charmingssmallhotels.co.uk)



Bramley and Teal Holiday Cottages: unique and beautiful self-catering properties in Kent and Sussex



For more information about
holiday cottage rental contact

**Bramley and Teal
Holiday Cottages**

www.bramleyandteal.co.uk
01580 860840

Bramley and Teal Holiday Cottages is a company based in Hurst Green, East Sussex. It specialises in unique self-catering properties in Kent and Sussex, many in idyllic seaside and country locations.

Owner and Director Claire Acock believes the reason for the company's continued success is the highly personal service it offers to both guests and owners;

'As a small independent Bramley and Teal are very picky about the type of properties we manage. We all know all our properties and the local area; we are able to use this intimate knowledge to advise guests about the most suitable property for them.'

Bramley and Teal's team can advise owners on all aspects of

maximising the return from their property. Claire and her team can help at every stage of owning and renting a holiday property. They are frequently approached by people at the very early stages of buying a property for renting, with no previous knowledge of the holiday rental market.

They are able to help owners present their properties in the best possible light: advising on interior decoration and on how to produce video property tours of high quality. Owners can use Claire and her team's experience to avoid common pitfalls and enter the rental market with an excellent investment proposition.

A team of local cleaning and maintenance experts really help to make sure the rental properties are always in first class condition and that any problems are sorted out quickly with minimal disruption.

Claire comments: "Luckily most of the problems we have are small ones and solved quickly with the minimum of fuss, but occasionally there are more unexpected issues that arise. These certainly test our resourcefulness. We like to think we do a great job in dealing with these as many of our guests return year after year!"

The company is always looking to improve their service; it is currently investing in a new website to provide added facilities and features to ensure guests find the information they are seeking quickly and easily.

There is a welcome pack in every property, incorporating top quality local produce that is changed to reflect the seasons: Easter eggs, fresh



mince pies or homemade scones and jams all feature as appropriate. There has also been a growth in the number of guests wishing to take the family pet on holiday with them. As many of our properties also accept pets, our guests can now enjoy spending time together with the whole family.

So what will the New Year bring?

Claire is very optimistic: 'Bookings went extremely well in 2012 and we have had our best year ever. I am confident that in 2013 more people will continue to holiday in the UK, particularly the South East that enjoys the longest number



Advertising Feature



of sunshine hours in the country. Bramley and Teal will continue to build on our current portfolio of properties and our mission continues to be that we only select "houses we'd like to stay in, places we'd like to stay".'



The new Range

Sussex Style's woman on wheels
Annie Oulton has done her research
 and can find only good things to say

Rumour has it that the ultimate experience on wheels is on its way to somewhere near you very soon. If you are a loyal devotee of Range Rover then you will know what I am talking about.

The all new Range Rover 2012 was launched in Paris in September, and will hit the UK in January 2013. Order books in many dealerships are already booming.

As we pull back from the dark days of recession, this is great news for the UK. Sales of this model are set to soar overseas as well as at home. I have it on good authority there is no need to even test drive this car; it is simply the best in the world.

For my own part, I want my ideal car to be like my ideal partner: top notch, 100% reliable in all conditions, prepared to go the extra mile, attractive, smooth, sophisticated and in perfect physical shape, with an appetite for adventure and an understated sense of humour. And a willingness to pamper on demand

The initiated will need no persuading as to the desirability of the new Range Rover. For a mere £70,000 upwards, you will possess the most up-to-date, technically advanced, re-engineered piece of automobile that has ever existed.

The basic premise of the Range Rover model has not altered fundamentally since its debut in 1970. In those days it was the first of its kind, with only the US Jeep Wagoneer able to rival its claims as the original SUV. Designated the Four in One Car, Range Rover already offered the possibility of combining a luxury car, a performance car, an estate car and a cross country car in one, and yet if you were to cast your mind back to those days, you would be reminded of how far things have come since the days of plastic dashboards and vinyl seats, where the first priority was for easy hosing down after a hard day out in the field.

A favourite of gentlemen farmers, it was essentially utility first, comfort second. Second and third generation models upgraded hugely, refining and enhancing performance and interiors, but the re-incarnation of this classic, fourth time round, puts it into a league of its own, surpassing even the S class Mercedes or the 7 series BMW for luxury and performance, and inviting a whole new ownership.

What's so special?

So, what is it about this new version that makes it so different from the last? It is a sleeker, more honed model in every sense. It's still got its imposing front grille, but with body coloured front bumpers, vent blades and door handles. This model has an all-aluminium structure, a first for a SUV, making it considerably lighter than its predecessor, coming in at 420 Kg, which means you use much less fuel. The two diesel engine versions, either the 3-litre V6 turbo diesel, or the 4.4 V8



turbo diesel, and the 5-litre petrol version, are all wedded to an 8-speed automatic transmission. The difference is that the performance of the new 3-litre V6 engine resembles the outgoing V8, as a result of its lighter structure.

The car has permanent intelligent four wheel drive, and a two speed transfer box for high/low options, helping to maintain traction and stability in difficult conditions, on road, off road, or when towing. The new version of the Terrain Response feature has settings for every conceivable surface, including grass, gravel, snow, mud, sand and rock crawl (if you are in the mood for adventure). It does it all for you - instantly reconfiguring transmission, suspension, and traction settings, and the controlled acceleration control slows you up sensibly on your way down hill.

A handy Hill Start Assist control prevents the vehicle from rolling backwards if you forget to put the handbrake on. Not that this would be an issue for me or any of my friends, but it is good to know it's there, all the same.

I asked one of my friends, who has been driving Range Rovers for the last 30 years, what she would most like to see in an updated version. She said more legroom in the rear, and sure enough, this is exactly what the new RR delivers. She liked the idea of wider tracks, and the 20 mm higher ground clearance. This would give

Rover



From chunky beginnings in the Seventies... left... to today's sleek, speedy, more honed model, right and below

her greater confidence to tackle off road conditions in the wilds of Scotland.

The ability to wade through water pools, and deal with any sort of weather also ticked her boxes.

For my own part, I want my ideal car to be like my ideal partner: top notch, 100% reliable in all conditions, prepared to go the extra mile, attractive, smooth, sophisticated and in perfect physical shape, with an appetite for adventure and an understated sense of humour. And a willingness to pamper on demand. Asking too much? Not if we are talking in terms of this James Bond of a car, no; the all new Range Rover delivers on every front.

All this makes the Range Rover sound a bit scary, as if its driver has a lot to live up to. Not so. It is easy and relaxing to drive. On road, it feels tall but more stable than previous models, so you can spot oncoming tractors on narrow country lanes. The ride is smooth, the steering accurate and tight, and – with all that taken care of, you can listen happily to the Meridian music system while having a back massage in your seat. Honestly.

They've thought of everything – and then some. A long way indeed from 1970.



They've thought of everything – and then some

Annie Oulton is a freelance writer and artist, with a background in publishing. Married with four children she has exchanged London life for rural living. Enjoys country pursuits and has many interests in the arts. Loves to be in the driving seat.



SARAH SAUNDERS

Sarah knows Sussex food. She is a Slow Food chef who has lived in the region for 40 years. She really understands great food, locally and in unusual parts of the world.

Sarah's travel business, Taste Adventures, organises bespoke holidays and fun events for food explorers.

"I'm so happy to be able to share some of my food experiences with Sussex Style readers, and would love to hear from you too", she says, so please take her at her word.

sarah@sandrpublishing.co.uk
sarah@tasteadventures.com



Wine at Breaky Bottom

From the top of the downs at Firle, you can see Sussex sheep and cattle and look far out to sea. Hidden in a valley nearby is Breaky Bottom vineyard where Peter Hall makes superb sparkling wine. On a sunny day it all looks serene and bountiful; On a ferociously windy

day, I marvel at the commitment of farmers and fishermen to put food on our tables.

Whiteway Lane Lewes
01273 476 427
www.breakybottom.co.uk

TOP TIP

An Italian chef friend of mine recently made me put all the egg whites in the fridge for some giant pistachio and raspberry meringues we created for Christmas (actually good for any time). I'd never done this before, but he insisted.

'Always, for perfect meringues,' he said firmly.

He was absolutely right.

Do you have a top tip you'd like to share?

Contact me at
sarah@SandRpublishing.co.uk

HAVE A BUTCHER'S

It's always a good sign when a tractor rumbles through a town or village. It means you're close to food.

Where I travel I always check out what's available locally. Where the information map of a town includes a butcher, (the historic 1066 town of Winchelsea, near Rye has Jamie Wickens who is one of Rick Stein's food heroes), you know you're in a foodie destination.

See our feature on Sally and Mason Palmer's Wickham Manor Farm wines on Page 12



THE COODEN BEACH HOTEL

The Hotel on the beach



The perfect choice for your perfect day

The Cooden Beach Hotel sits on the beach with beautiful uninterrupted views along the Sussex coastline. Glorious gardens, stunning sunsets over the sea and an elegant venue provide the perfect backdrop for your wedding.

Your intimate celebration or grand reception will be stylish, romantic and memorable. You can relax knowing that we will take care of every detail and our food is fabulous, fresh and locally sourced.

The Bridal Suite has beautiful panoramic seaviews, a fabulous Jacobean-style four poster bed and ensuite bathroom with double shower. Don't forget to relax in the leisure club too.

The hotel is licensed for civil weddings and partnerships.

To arrange a visit, please contact Jenny Undasan, our highly experienced wedding co-ordinator, who will help you to create the day of your dreams.

“How can we ever thank you enough? It was a dream wedding come true.” Mr & Mrs Bailey



Sussex Food Producer of the Year
 High Weald Dairy, Tremains Farm,
 Treemans Road, Horsted Keynes,
 Haywards Heath Sussex RH17 7EA
 Tel 01825 791636

Cheese COURSE

A hands-on fun one-day course run by world champion Sussex cheesemakers Sarah and Mark Hardy at High Weald Dairy, Horsted Keynes. You get to take home your own cheese, all vacuum packed and professional-looking!



Mark and Sarah Hardy are now running a one day Introduction to Cheese Making course at their dairy, home to a range of award-winning cheeses, such as Duddleswell, Saint Giles, Sussex Slipcote and Ashdown Foresters.

The course is fun and relaxed, and takes place in the cheese barn, above the dairy's cheese maturing rooms.

It covers the making of a soft fresh cheese and a hard cheddar-style cheese. You will be able to do this at home later, using basic utensils.

It is very much hands on (or hands in the curds and whey). Teams of two work together to turn the fresh cows' milk into cheese under the expert direction of Mark Hardy, who has over 20 years of cheese-making experience.

A delicious lunch (based on cheese!) is cooked by

Chris Heyes and at a convenient point, there will be a tour of the dairy to watch cheese-making on a larger scale, as well as a visit to the cheese maturing room.

www.highwealddairy.co.uk

FORAGING FLAVOUR

Wild at Heart cooks Caro and Ginny forage and pick and preserve in the Kent and Sussex countryside, which means that you get the very best of local taste on your toast or scones and so much more. They make all my favourites – including crab apple jelly, medlar jelly (a Gold Taste Award in 2011), wild plum chutney and damson cheese.

Buy online or see their website for local stockists and their good serving suggestions
www.wildatheartfoods.co.uk

RYE SCALLOP WEEK

Rye Bay Scallop Week is the perfect opportunity to indulge in seafood delights from Rye Bay! Our restaurants will be showcasing an array of different scallop dishes and this year there will also be scallop events including cookery schools and demonstrations, live music, quiz nights, art exhibitions and more!

RYE SCALLOP FACTS

- "The cheapest sea-towne for provision of fish for our house." King Charles I, speaking of Rye in 1628
- Rye's fishing fleet moors almost two miles from the sea.
- There are more than 300 species of scallop in the world!
- You can tell the age of a scallop by its shell: one ring forms each year
- Scallops can be traced back 300 million years in fossil form
- The scallop is a mollusc and the only bivalve that can swim
- The scallop is an excellent source of protein, calcium, iron and vitamin B12

Rye Bay Scallop Week
 2nd - 10th February 2013



NEW YEAR & JANUARY EVENTS AT EASTWELL MANOR



Eastwell Manor

A S H F O R D

Date for
your Diary ..
WEDDING FAYRE
at Eastwell Manor
Sunday, 24 February
2013

NEW YEARS EVENTS

MANOR: Champagne Reception and Black Tie Dinner Dance with a seven course Dinner, internationally renowned magician, Etienne Pradier and a 'fun' Casino followed by a Piper at Midnight, accommodation and full English Breakfast.
Residential £350.00 pp Non-Residential £175.00 pp

ROSE GARDEN ROOM: Champagne Reception and Black Tie Dinner Dance including a sumptuous Gala Buffet with a 'fun' Casino, music from our Resident Band followed by a Piper at Midnight
£120.00 per person

PAVILION: Champagne Reception followed by a five course Dinner. During the evening our resident DJ will be playing music to suit all tastes and ages and the party continues until 1 a.m.
£80.00 per person (Children under 12 half price)

BURNS NIGHT - Wednesday, 25 January 2013

Enjoy the experience of a traditional Scottish evening and a magnificent five course dinner then dancing until 1am.
£57.50 per person



OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD

By Timberlake Wertenbaker

Monday, 28 January 2013

The Out of Joint Theatre Company Presents
'Our Country's Good' for one night only
prior to it's London run.

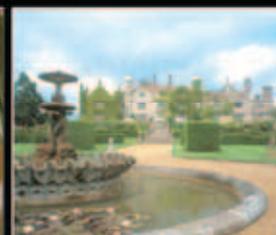
Performance Only - £20.00 per ticket

Afternoon Tea at the Manor & Performance
£35.00 pp

Buffet Supper in The Pavilion & Performance
£35.00 pp

All three packages are half price for children under 12

For more information or to make a booking
please call our Sales Team on 01233 213020 or
email: reservations@eastwellmanor.co.uk our visit
our website [website: www.eastwellmanor.co.uk](http://www.eastwellmanor.co.uk)



RECIPE

PLACES TO EAT

The Tuscan Kitchen

What incredible food!! Not something I say that often, but the attention to olfactory detail at this neat, beamed restaurant in Rye is outstanding. Franco and Jen make their guests feel totally at home and guide them through an authentic Tuscan menu.

The lobster ravioli (my guest's), heavenly truffle tortellini (mine), expertly cooked tagliata or rib eye steak with Parmesan shavings, finishing with a little limoncello gelato and proper coffee.....my friend (and our MD Sean who dropped in just in time for the main course) made it a long lunch in Italian Sussex style, and discussed our good fortune at having the best tastes of Tuscany so close by!

All their ingredients are from local producers or from their family farm and restaurant near San Gimignano, Tuscany (their own peppery olive oil, San Miniato white truffles, and superb antipasti - salami, prosciutto and Tuscan cheese).

They have a superb wine list too.

Bookings are essential...visit www.tuscankitchenrye.co.uk or telephone 01797 223269

Soup-Urb's smoked haddock chowder

Perfect for an easy New Year's Eve starter



Sauté onion in a pan for 5 minutes, add diced bacon and cook until it starts to brown. Add potatoes, cream and chicken stock, bring to boil and simmer for about 15 minutes or until potatoes are soft. Add the fish, simmer for another five minutes, then add sliced spinach and let it wilt in the pan. Season and serve.

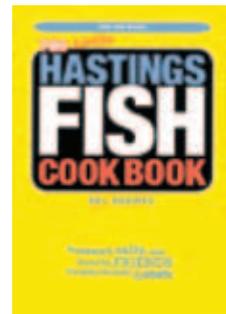
In these days of growing concern over the sustainability and ethicality of our fish stocks it is good to find a cook book that is not only sensitive to these issues but is also hoping to provide a boost for the local finishing industry.

The writers hope this book will encourage people to ask questions about the provenance of the fish they eat and choose the most plentiful, ethically-caught varieties such as gurnard, huss, mackerel, coley, sole and squid. Here are tasty recipes for these less familiar fish that an amateur cook can follow with ease.

Ingredients

- 1 onion, diced
- 15ml olive oil
- 130g smoked bacon, diced
- 2kg cooked potatoes, peeled and diced
- 400ml double cream
- 130ml chicken stock
- 400g undyed smoked haddock, cooked and flaked
- 80g fresh spinach
- salt and black pepper

From Claire Wood, founder of Soup-Urb in Tunbridge Wells and Brighton; www.soup-urb.co.uk.



The Little Hastings Fish Cook Book is published by Sea Saw Books, based in St Leonards, which comprises author Sally Walton, her husband and illustrator Steward Walton, and designer Debi Angel.

Along charming line drawings of Hastings and its environs, it contains 50 delicious, but easy-to-prepare recipes from local experts and national luminaries alike: Rick Stein's Marinated Mounts Bay Sardines sits happily alongside Douglas' Fish Pie.

Some recipes are slow, some spicy, some quick, some homely - but all are a celebration of local fishing

Little Hastings Fish Cookbook
By Sally and Steward Walton
Sea Saw Press £5
www.seasawpress.co.uk

From the Editor: we had a wonderful Christmas lunch there a couple of years ago. My son loved it so much that he asked for his 21st birthday dinner with friends to be there. Fourteen 21-year-olds came out raving about the place, the food, the owners....

Shirley



ERIDGE PARK FARM SHOP

Christmas 2012

*Come and visit us for
all your festive foods*

Local Free Range
Award-winning Bronze Turkey



Rare Breed Gammon and Ham



3 and 5 Bird Roasts



Local Christmas Trees



Christmas Grotto



Fantastic cheese selection



Festive foodie gifts



Well stocked meat counter
supplied by our award winning
tenant farmers



Rare Breed Pork, Beef, Lamb and
Seasonal Game



On site butchers always on hand to
meet your specific requirements



Seasonal fruit and vegetables



Finest selection of local cheeses
and artisan produce

Opening times
Monday – Saturday 9am – 6pm
Sunday – 10am – 4pm

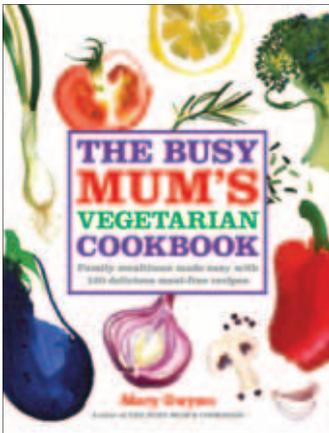
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MARY GWYNN



The Busy Mum's Vegetarian Cookbook is published by Simon & Schuster UK in January 2013, £20

photos: David Mereweather

Quail's egg, wild mushroom and spinach filo wreath

A spectacular centrepiece for the Christmas table with herb-strewn filo 'leaves'. To get ahead, make the filling and cook the eggs the day before and store them, covered, in the fridge. Then the wreath can be assembled several hours ahead on the day, refrigerated and cooked just before you need it.

Serves 6
Prepare 40 minutes
Cook 30 minutes

8 large sheets filo pastry
50g (2oz) butter, melted
fresh bay leaves, rosemary and thyme sprigs, to garnish

For the filling
12 quail's eggs
250g (8oz) basmati rice
350g (12oz) fresh spinach
½ tsp saffron strands
2 tbsp olive oil
2 shallots, finely chopped
50g (2oz) pine nuts, toasted
3–4 slow-roasted tomatoes or semi-dried tomatoes
3 tbsp chopped fresh basil
4 tbsp crème fraîche
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan oven 180°C/Gas Mark 6. Place the quail's eggs in a pan of cold water, bring to the boil and simmer for 3 minutes. Drain and cool under cold running water, then shell.

2 Cook the rice according to the packet instructions, cool under cold running water and drain well. Blanch the spinach for a minute in boiling water, cool quickly under cold water, then drain and pat dry with kitchen paper. Soak the saffron strands in 2 tablespoons boiling water.

3 Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the shallots and cook over a medium heat for 3 minutes until softened. Remove from the heat, add the rice, saffron and its liquid, pine nuts, tomatoes, basil, crème fraîche and seasoning and stir to combine.

4 To assemble the wreath, layer three sheets of filo on top of each other, brushing each one with melted butter. Arrange half the blanched spinach leaves over the top third of the filo, leaving a 2.5cm (1in) border. Spread half the rice mixture over the spinach and place six quail's eggs along the top edge. Roll up the filo, transfer to a large greased baking sheet and shape into a semi-circle.

5 Repeat this process with three more sheets of filo and the rest of the filling ingredients. Tuck the pastry edges of the two semi-circles into each other to form a ring about 28cm (11in) in diameter.

6 Lay one of the two remaining filo sheets on top of the other, fold in half and cut out holly leaves with a metal cutter. Separate the leaves, brush the wreath with melted butter and decorate with the leaves, then brush them with butter. Bake for 35–40 minutes until golden. Transfer to a warm serving dish and decorate with fresh herbs. Serve hot or cold.

126 **meats veggie alternatives**



Mince and cranberry star mince pies

Classic mince pies can be overly sweet – adding cranberries cuts through the sweetness. Make sure you buy vegetarian mince meat, not one made with beef suet. The almond frangipane topping is also a family favourite. Children can have lots of fun getting icing sugar everywhere dusting the star shapes on to the finished mince pies.

➔ Serve with thick cream or the spiced rum and orange butter on page 142.

Makes 24
Prepare 20 minutes
Cook 15 minutes

350g pack ready-made shortcrust pastry made with butter
230g (8oz) vegetarian mince meat
100g (4oz) fresh cranberries
100g (4oz) butter
100g (4oz) caster sugar
2 large free-range eggs
100g (4oz) ground almonds
50g (2oz) flaked almonds

1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/fan oven 170°C/Gas Mark 5. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface and cut out 7.5cm (3in) circles and use to line 24 pie tins. Mix together the mince meat and cranberries and put a spoonful in each case.

2 Cream the butter and sugar together till pale and beat in the egg one at a time. Fold in the ground almonds and spread over the mince meat. Sprinkle with the flaked almonds.

3 Bake for 12–15 minutes until golden. Cool on a wire rack. Dust the mince pies with icing sugar, using stencils to make star patterns (see below). Serve them warm or cold.

How to make the stencils To make the stencils, cut a circle of card the same diameter as the pies and cut a star from the centre of the circle. Dust half the pies with icing sugar using the cardboard star and the other half using the circle stencil.

140 **meats veggie alternatives**





Mary Gwynn has always been a very busy woman, and for much of her life a very busy mum. She lives in Hartfield, on the edge of Ashdown Forest and has just written a sequel to *The Busy Mum's Cookbook*, published by Simon and Schuster in August 2011.

She produced it in answer to repeated requests for 'healthy, budget-conscious food', she told *Sussex Style*, and her new book, *The Busy Mum's Vegetarian Cookbook*, comes out in January.

'It all comes from my experience of working hard as a single mum,' she said. 'Producing healthy good food that children will eat without complaining: packed lunches, dinners, the lot...'

'I realised that people are eating less meat these days, and children often say they have decided to become vegetarian. The recipes are based on a central meal, to which you can add meat if you wish to – this makes catering for picky children that bit easier.'

Her two daughters are now 25 and 22, but she has used them as guinea pigs for her food. All the recipes are completely manageable for someone short on time and not over-long on cash...

'So many people – especially working friends – would ask me if I could give them recipes using ingredients they had in the cupboard. So I concentrated on 10 ingredients or less, that could be made in two or three steps and took half an hour. To prepare, or to serve after shoving the dish in the oven.'

Her pedigree is impressive. Leith's after leaving school, then writing about food on magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Good Food*. She writes recipes for Waitrose, and edited *Vegetarian Good Food* for several years so although she isn't a vegetarian herself she knows what she is talking about.

'I am a great believer in the old adage that the family that eats together stays together, and I hope these books help people produce meals that entice everyone to come to the table.'

SYLVIA HOWE

DESIGNING a room

Interior designer
Kelly Hoppen shares
her experience and flair



KELLY HOPPEN

1 Create a mood board

When I start to think about designing a room, whether that's a living room, dining room or bedroom, I always start with a mood board. It helps me to experiment with different colours, textures and fabrics, finding a good, solid starting point for my design. I lay out my vision and once I see it in front of me, it increases my confidence in what I'm about to create.

2 Plan your space

I tend to break the process down into three parts –

1. the grid forms the lines of a room and creates the backdrop;
2. the zoning defines its function and layout;
3. the flow brings the whole look together.

How you space your room is vital to the final outcome. The grid provides a framework through which you become aware of how to line up the elements of the room, from furniture to fireplaces, and enables you to make a judgment on what you think will work. Zoning defines the function of a room and how it is laid out

– floorplans really help to show you the general zoning. The flow is not just how you move through and around a space, but also how you respond to it emotionally.

Staircases and fireplaces always contribute massively to a room and need to be carefully considered. For example, mantelpieces are perfect for display areas but they should always be kept simple, as you do not want to create clutter. Stairways are part of the intrinsic architecture of the house and can often be used as an inspiring main feature of a room.

3 Light your way

Next is the lighting. Natural light in a room is really important and then the lighting scheme needs to be built around this. I have learnt that to create successful lighting you must achieve a balance of light on all sides of the room.

By using different light sources and bulb types you can create any kind of ambience in a room. I like to use bulbs ranging from blaring white to a mellow yellow to blues and soft greys for a more relaxed atmosphere, perhaps for a living room.



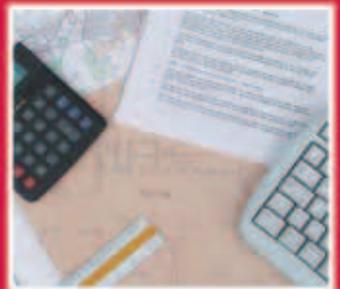
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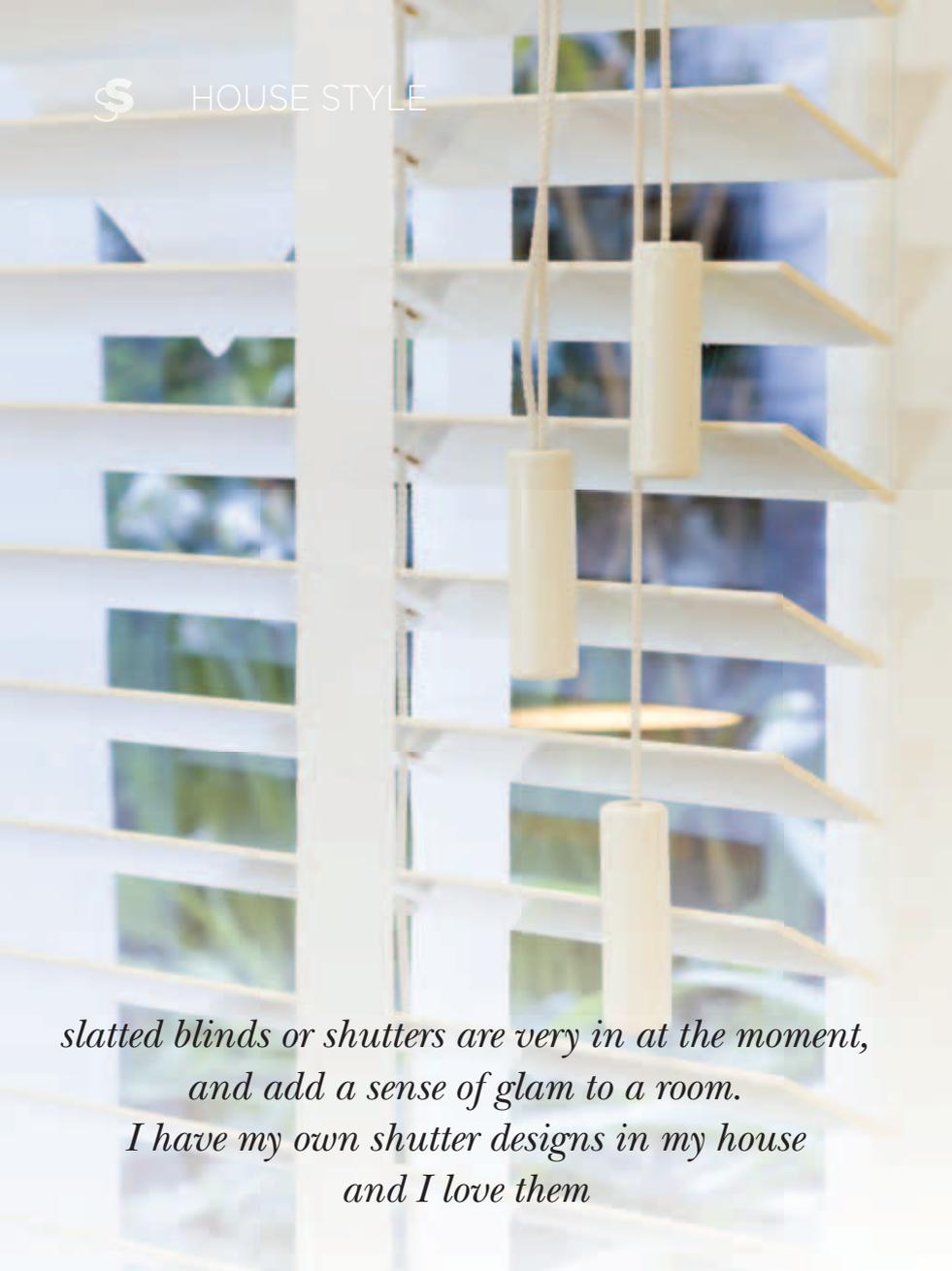
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slatted blinds or shutters are very in at the moment, and add a sense of glam to a room. I have my own shutter designs in my house and I love them



4 Add texture and colour

Once the spacing and the lighting are sorted, you are free to play around with different textures and colours. I am known for my love of neutrals – black, white, cream, grey and taupe. These make the perfect backdrop for any scheme in a room. However, I do use more colourful tones; I just use them in subtle ways.

By adding colourful accessories, such as cushions or vases, you can

bring in colour but you also have the chance to change the theme of a room along with the seasons or your mood.

In autumn and winter, throws are a really great way to change the feel of a room quickly. In the summer, using orange cushions or adding fresh flowers or even something as simple as putting a few lemons and limes in a bowl will give the room a brighter feel.

5 Move the furniture

Considering furniture carefully is so important as it brings together the key ingredients of colour, texture and form. I like to mix bold shapes and textures as it makes everything look a little more interesting, so you could use an extravagant chair with a fun pattern as a centrepiece for a room or use an original dinner table as a focal point.

I'm launching a new furniture collection I am really excited about, as I have designed some beautiful leather pieces that bring

together my love of texture and scale.

6 Take note of trends

I always say that it's never ideal to overdo trends but it is good to have an idea of what is hot. So I have taken note of some of this year's trends.

Old reclaimed wood is coming back, finished with lacquer, shiny metals or glass.

Also slatted blinds or shutters are very in at the moment, and add a sense of glam to a room. I have my own shutter designs in my house and I love them. They are black and make each room look complete – and they're very easy to clean, which is always a bonus!

Texture will be a big focus this year as the importance of being comfortable is becoming an increasingly big factor in a room; it's not all just about how it looks nowadays. Silks and velvets will be a big theme in homes, with these fabrics used



to cover cushions as well as being used for bed linen. Waxed fabrics, such as Swedish linen, will be used in order to create a modern feel with a hint of that rustic feel.

7 Make it personal

In my own home, I tend to use photographs of my family and friends to personalise my rooms, and I like to collect pictures of Marilyn Monroe. It just gives the home a sense of warmth and spirit.

All in all, designing a room is a wonderful experience. You have the freedom to use different colours and textures to design something original for yourself. Every person's creation is different and it should reflect how you live and what you like.



Bigger HOUSE Same property

Photos: SpacialImages.com

Property expert **Sarah Beeny** says you don't have to switch postcodes to find more living room.

Add more space and value to your home with an extension. Here's how...



Moving house is not cheap. People always underestimate costs because they pay them a bit at a time and don't necessarily add them up.

A reasonable estimate of the cost is about 10% of the price of the property you're selling. That means if you live in a three-bedroom house worth £300,000 and decide to move into the identical three-bedroom house next door, you'll pay around £30,000 on estate agent's fees, stamp duty, legal costs, removers and the rest.

Trading up to a four-bedroom house, when you include the invisible cost of moving as well as the property price hike, can add a huge whack to your mortgage. How much more sensible to hang on to that £30,000 and build an extra room in your current property instead, especially if you like where you are living.

Adding square footage will always add value. The only question is whether it adds more value than it costs.

Three ways to extend: up, out or down

Going up and out, with a loft or kitchen/conservatory extension, is less expensive than going down, into the basement. But whichever way you extend, keep the balance of the house. You don't want it to become top- or bottom-heavy, have too many bedrooms for your living space, or wake up and find all your garden inside the conservatory.

When adding space, the finish is everything, so make it the best quality you can afford. You don't always need an architect, but it's a false economy not to on a big project where structure and details count. I'd use a local building company with experience of similar extensions to your style and period of house. You're going to spend serious money on this, so visit previous clients to see how the builders' work stands the test of time.

Before you undergo any building work, check if you need planning permission. →

You don't want it to become top or bottom heavy, have too many bedrooms for your living space, or wake up and find all your garden inside the conservatory

games room, utility room or guest room, and also liberates space upstairs.

But be careful and do your homework. Foundations may be unsound, and your neighbour's services may be running under your house. Drainage can cause problems, as ground water and waste have to be pumped out upwards from a basement. A lot of properties are built under the water table, so with heavy rain and a breach in your tanking – the vital waterproof lining around floor and walls – you could end up with a surprise swimming pool down there.

If you go ahead, keep the ceiling height high – don't settle for less than eight feet – and put in as many sources of natural light as you can via windows, grilles, light wells, sun tunnels, stairwells and skylights. If you have any extra money, spend it on making

a beautiful, open staircase down to the basement, as it will transform the space.

Finally, expect a long and dirty job, although many basement conversions are carried out through the front garden.

Going up - loft conversions

Adding square footage is the surest way to add value to a house; just check that you're adding more value than it's going to cost.

A loft conversion is a very popular way of creating extra space. It is generally cheaper per square foot to convert a loft than a kitchen or cellar, as most of the structure is already in place.

However, think twice before you indulge your instinct to enlarge it to the max. Changing the profile of the roof by installing dormer windows or a mini-mansard will almost certainly make planning permission less likely. Furthermore, if the installation is badly designed, it can be an eyesore.

Alternatively, why not incorporate as much natural light as you can with roof lights. If you do build a





Basement extensions are becoming increasingly popular because they can double a house's living space

Building regulations have recently changed and properties undergoing work are now assessed on their total energy-efficiency. An architect can help you with this.

Going down - basements

It's a huge risk putting a basement in a property, and it comes at a high price. Going down is the most expensive and complicated way to extend a home, costing about three times as much per square foot as a loft extension. Whether you make your money back depends on the type of house, the quality of work, the layout, interior design and natural light within the underground space.

In pricey areas, where family houses sell for £750,000 or more, a basement is probably a better investment than elsewhere. If your street is full of starter houses or two-up-two-downs, you are unlikely to get your money back on a basement conversion.

So why bother? Because basements can double a house's living space. Many family houses have adequate bedrooms – all those loft conversions – but the ground floor living area may be cramped. Building downwards creates a whole extra floor for kitchen or playroom,



mansard, fitting a pair of glazed doors with railings outside with views over the back garden gives another level of luxury.

One of the most important things to remember for any loft conversion is that it must have sufficient headroom – anything below 7ft at the highest point will feel cramped. Bear in mind, too, that you will lose some of the head height in an attic when converting it to a habitable room, as you will need to strengthen the floor.

Going out – kitchen extensions

A roomy kitchen extension is a huge selling point, but what matters is how well it's been done. Don't tack a box on the back of your house. The kitchen needs to be bold and imaginatively designed so that it creates extra space and uses it to the best effect. You want a chic, light-filled space with subtle but well-defined areas for eating and cooking, not a kitchen that's a corridor to the back garden. It can be traditional or modern, but I'd always put in as much glass as is permitted within building regulations. One spectacular room can sell a house, and for my money, a big kitchen full of glazing or, even better, a retractable roof you can open on balmy evenings, is a real winner.

Going out – to the side

Don't just extend backwards but sideways, too. Those dank, dark passages beside terraced houses – the side return – were probably used by the Victorians on their journey to the outside loo, but today they are wasted space.

Extending the kitchen into them makes the layout of a period terrace much more relevant to today's lifestyles. Often the gain in square footage is modest but it makes a huge difference to the room, bringing light through glazing on the roof.

You will certainly need to comply with building regulations, which will require you to check weight loads with a structural engineer. The outside wall is generally supporting several floors above and, without the correct support, your house could collapse. Nowadays the technology is there to create incredible open ground-floor spaces using portal frames, concealed structural beams and pillars, but it will be costly. If it matters whether you make your money back, check that your postcode can stand it.



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PICK OF THE PROPERTIES

A range of houses which have caught the eye of Sussex Style - they will suit different tastes and budgets



Elegance amid the orchards

This light and spacious house is very attractive, easy to maintain, and comfortable too. In Georgian style, it is walking distance from the centre of Ticehurst village, and has lovely views over orchards and fields. It has a master bedroom suite and three further bedrooms, and also a useful one-bedroom annexe with its own entrance. The kitchen has an Aga, plenty of workspace and storage; the main receptions rooms are well-proportioned, the drawing room with an open fire. Detached double garage, parking, mature gardens and grounds with fruit trees. 0.86 acres. **Vine Court House, Ticehurst, East Sussex**
Guide price £1,100,000 with Knight Frank, Tunbridge Wells, 01892 515035

Victorian country style

A substantial wing of an elegant Victorian mansion set in about three acres of gardens and grounds. There is a double garage with a storeroom above, and a useful workshop.

Lots of flexible accommodation inside: entrance lobby, dining hall, drawing room with half paneling and an open fire, study, kitchen/family room, utility room, cloakroom, larder. Master bedroom with en-suite shower/dressing room, guest bedroom with en-suite shower room, three further bedrooms, family bathroom, games room/bedroom 6 with en-suite cloakroom, attic store room.

The Porch House, Colemans Hatch, East Sussex
Guide price £1,500,000 with Knight Frank, Tunbridge Wells



The heart of ancient Rye

This is a unique, Victorian, detached property, a short walk from the heart of ancient Rye. Four bedrooms, one ensuite, gated off street parking for four cars, and more still to the front. A rear garden and a 500 sq ft cellar with good ceiling height may offer all sorts of possibilities.

The guide price is £425,000 with Standen Hodgson, Rye, 01797 229922





In the footsteps of Elizabeth I

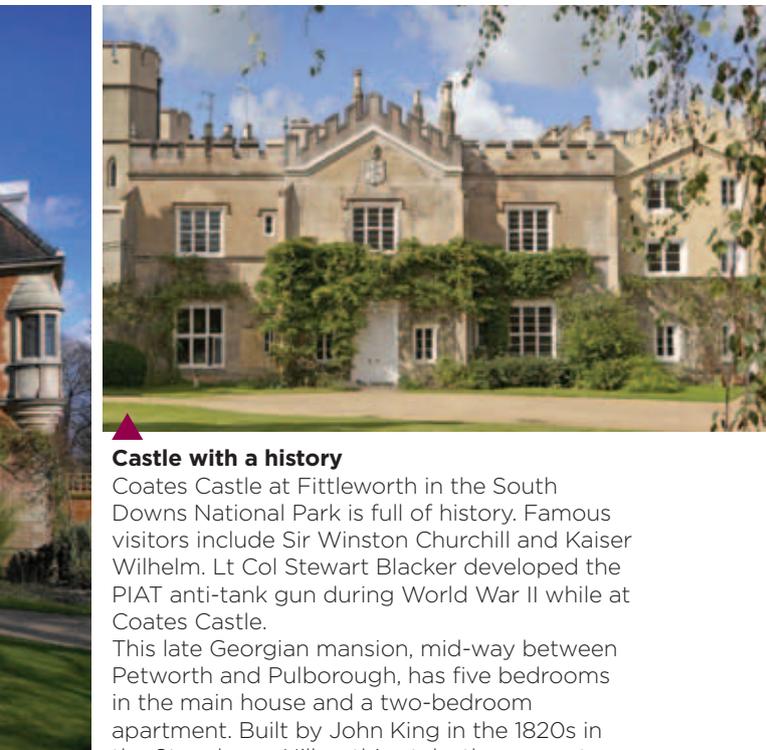
Fryers, West Chiltington, dates back to the 13th century and is said to have hosted Elizabeth I, who lunched there while travelling from Brighton to Petworth late in her life. The same family has owned the house for some 40 years. It has many interesting period features, including a bi-furcating staircase and an unusual and attractive vaulted master bedroom. In the 7.6 acre grounds are two cottages, a vineyard, a swimming pool, and a tennis court.

The guide price is £1,950,000 with Batcheller Monkhouse, 01798 872081, and Knight Frank, 0140 333 9180

Poet's corner

The Old Farm at East Harting, near Petersfield, was once owned by Gerald Bullett, the poet and novelist. This beautiful 16th-century farmhouse is listed Grade II, and comes on to the open market for the first time in 55 years. Five bedrooms and a neat, secluded garden, close to the South Downs.

The guide price is £1.55 million with Jackson Stops & Staff, Midhurst, 01730 812357



Castle with a history

Coates Castle at Fittleworth in the South Downs National Park is full of history. Famous visitors include Sir Winston Churchill and Kaiser Wilhelm. Lt Col Stewart Blacker developed the PIAT anti-tank gun during World War II while at Coates Castle.

This late Georgian mansion, mid-way between Petworth and Pulborough, has five bedrooms in the main house and a two-bedroom apartment. Built by John King in the 1820s in the Strawberry Hill gothic style, the property was sold to George Wyndham whose coat of arms appears above the main entrance.

The guide price is £1.92 million for the whole; or in two lots with the main castle at £1.395 million and the adjoining apartment at £525,000, with Jackson Stops & Staff, Midhurst, 01730 812357



Pet's property

Ancton Manor, the former home of Sixties pop star Petula Clark, is on the market for just over £1 million. The much-loved Pet Clark celebrated her 80th birthday on 15 November 2012: with more than 68 million records sold, she is one of the most successful female British singers in chart history. The owners bought this six-bedroom house at Middleton on Sea from her some 30 years ago. The house dates back to 1677 (with later additions) and was originally two cottages which were combined in the 1950s to create a family home of more than 3,000 sq ft.

Guide price is £1.05 million with Henry Adams, 01243 587687

NOTHING sentimental *about rental*

Shortage of supply in residential sales and the difficulty of getting a mortgage are pushing more and more people into the private rented sector.

At the same time, rental costs are rising.

Nick Keith reports

The rising competition for rental properties is pushing up rents, according to *The Times*. In five years the number of people renting privately has risen by 48% and 5.4 million people could be renting by 2015, the newspaper has reported.

Meanwhile, rents are going up. Savills have forecast that rents will increase by 2.5% in the UK in 2013, with the biggest rises in Greater London, and by 26.4% in the next five years.

So it is no surprise that £11.8 billion worth of buy-to-let mortgages were agreed in the first nine months of 2012, a 19% rise on the same period of 2011, according to the Council of Mortgage Lenders. With landlords focusing on rental income rather than capital growth, tenants are bound to face forking out even more rent in future.

Sussex looks to have a good range of rental property in stock with the agents. 'The lettings market has grown in recent years,' says Jane Poile, senior lettings negotiator at Batcheller

Monkhouse, Haywards Heath, 'and there continues to be strong demand for high quality properties within the area.'

'The supply of rental properties has grown by 1.5 million households in the last decade. At the same time average rentals have increased by 66%, suggesting that demand is outstripping this impressive increase in supply. 2012 has again been a strong year for the lettings market and we expect this trend to continue in the future.'

Her colleague Alexander Wilks adds that here is 'a huge amount of interest' in the less usual properties with strong green credentials – renewable forms of heating such as air and ground source heating systems.

'With the cost of central heating and utility bills generally reaching an all-time high, tenants are much more focused on the running costs,' Alexander Wilks says. 'Properties that are well-insulated with double-glazing and modern central heating systems continue to attract tenants.'

However, Paul Dryden, Lettings Manager, at Hamptons International in Haywards Heath, has struck a more cautious note:

'The current letting market is very up and down. Surprisingly, activity levels are lower than expected compared to previous years, particularly for larger

With the cost of central heating and utility bills generally reaching an all-time high, tenants are much more focused on the running costs

properties. This has put some downward pressure on achievable rents for houses, although demand for smaller properties and apartments remains strong and continues to underpin rents in the area.

'In recent weeks we have seen a number of tenants registering with us, who are moving from overseas and are looking for larger properties to rent and move in to a new property within a couple of weeks turnaround. Although this has provided a slight uplift in demand, we strongly encourage landlords to price for the market in order to secure tenants. There are plenty of tenants in strong positions, but are increasingly price-conscious, and so we encourage all landlords to react to the current market.'

At the top end of the market, Hamptons offer Lock House in Partridge Green. This huge house has 10 bedrooms, five living rooms, a swimming pool, gym and guest and staff cottages – all for £12,000 pcm (per calendar month). In Brighton one of a dozen houses to rent is a three-bedroom house with a swimming pool and off-street parking for four cars.

In late November, Batcheller Monkhouse had disposed of nearly half the rental properties on its website. Interesting rentals remaining included a five-bedroom, three-reception room

Lingworth in Haywards Heath



Renting

- 1.2 million people rent, and this will rise to 5.4 million within three years (*The Times*).
- £741 is the average cost of a private sector rent in England and Wales (LSL Property Services, owners of lettings and estate agency chains such as Reeds Rains and Your Move).

Buy to let

- The best yielding houses are HMOs, those in multiple occupation (Mortgages for Business).
- 80% of investors see their property income as their pension; and 61 per cent plan to live off their rental income when they retire (National Landlords Association Survey)

house in Bob Lane, Twineham, near Burgess Hill for £3,500; Lingworth in Haywards Heath has 8 Bedrooms, and is an easy walk to town centre and railway station for £4,500pcm; and a classic six-bedroom farmhouse only three miles from Horsham, at £2,500pcm.

Stuart & Partners are offering another farmhouse, which, they say, is 'stunning' in Bineham, near Haywards Heath for £4, 500pcm. It has five bedrooms, a courtyard and a modern finish in a rural setting.

Another country house, this time with six bedrooms and at Cross in Hand, near Heathfield, is in the hands of Jackson Stops & Staff. Set in 16 acres, the house is laid out on three floors with a gym and a cinema room. The rental price is for £5,500pcm.

In Eastbourne, Dukes Lettings have a six-bedroom house in a tree-lined road at the foot of the South Downs for £3,500psm; and a five-bedroom house in a secluded setting for £2,500 pcm.



Warnham Court Farmhouse



The Coach House

*Sussex looks to have
a good range
of rental property
in stock with the agents*



Lingworth in Haywards Heath

Contacts

Batcheller Monkhouse, 01444 415151
Dukes Lettings, 0843 313 1579
Hamptons, Horsham, 0843 313 4208
Jackson Stops & Staff, 01892 521700
Stuart & Partners, 0843 315 2198



SARAH BIRD

LEAN on me...

Sometimes we don't realise we've just eaten a whole packet of biscuits, smoked those 20 cigarettes or have got to the bottom of that bottle of wine. Our minds are preoccupied with the unconscious distractions we give ourselves - and then when we realise it, we beat ourselves up about what we have done. That old chestnut - guilt!

In a survey of 3000 people, 54% said they have food cravings when in these situations and the other 46% said they craved chocolate in particular. It made them feel less anxious and irritated, they said, but they added that this only worked for a short time.

When we are depressed our bodies do not release mood-lifting chemicals such as dopamine, noepinephrine and serotonin into our brain as it normally would and so we rely on external sources.

Our personalities can sometimes dictate these cravings in times of dysregulation - whether we are irritable or anxious. Comfort eating works for a while, but it sets up



Cigarettes, sex, chocolate, shopping, food, alcohol, relationships, helping others... Nearly all of us have been guilty of indulging in one, maybe more, maybe all of these emotional crutches! Whenever there is a problem or crisis in our own life this is where we fix our attention

a vicious circle, until we learn, often the hard way, that there is another option.

These are emotional crutches. Most of us lean on one at some time, but often without knowing or understanding why we do this.

They are automatic behaviours. When there has been an emotional problem in my life, I have spent an hour on the phone telling a friend all about it. I put the phone down and look aghast at the empty packet of biscuits in my hand. It wasn't empty when I started.

Indulging is a control issue. I know this sounds unlikely, but in indulging we control something. Whether it be sex, food, alcohol or relationships, - you are controlling, and yet out of control of your emotions.

This often makes for a nagging sense of hopelessness, a feeling that you can do nothing to make yourself feel better.

There have been times when I have been in so much pain caused by situations with people that I love that I have interfered when things are none of my business.

But you can learn a new way to cope with your emotions. Not easy, not always successful, but this is what I have managed to do, after many years of leaning on a collection of crutches.

Learning to let go takes time and is excruciating but when you can do so it gives you an unfamiliar and heady freedom from guilt - possibly for the first time ever.

My relationship with my daughter has been very difficult due to her alcohol and drug abuse, triggered by ADHD and bi-polar disorder. I tried everything, I used every emotional crutch I could lay my hands on and eventually came to the conclusion that I had to find a different solution that lasted.

When it was suggested to me that I needed to find a way of letting go of things,





mostly my desire to people-fix, I resisted hard: 'oh here we go, why do I need to do this?'

I quite enjoyed trying to fix people. I thought I was helping them, and frankly, thought I was quite good at it.

I quite simply wasn't. I was avoiding facing up to things about myself and I was enabling others to carry on on what was often a very destructive path of their own.

So I listened and I tried and I succeed, most of the time.

Indulging is a control issue. I know this sounds unlikely, but in indulging we control something. It can be sex, food, alcohol or relationships



What worked for me

You must identify the real problem in yourself. You can't change if you're not honest about what it is. You may not be able to change the situation but you can change the way you react to it.

Some difficult questions to ask yourself

Can I let go of this? Is it really that important? Does it matter? Do I have any control over it? Why am I drawn to trying to help others? Does it make me feel better about myself? Do I want or need to be liked?

Remember

Other people's business is not your business. Ouch! (I hated this one).

Say no to people if you want to. It is allowed.

Turn people away - with love. When people try to involve you in their problems say, 'I love you, but actually this is not my problem, it's yours. I can't fix it for you.'

Write things down. This can be a way of seeing things for what they are.

Prayer can help. Even the atheists amongst us! Everyone has prayed to something in times of need. This may be one of those times, so pray for the strength to do the above!



Rogate West Sussex

Geraldine Onslow
takes a look askance

On Friday night, had you been passing the Rogate village hall at about 8pm - lights on, car park full - you would have heard the wondrous whistling of a Maasai warrior, calling in his cattle.

Inside (it was a sell-out, but you might have got standing room at the back) we ticket-holders were being entertained by a troupe of seven Maasai men and two women dancing, singing, whistling and jumping in their red checked shukas, car tyre sandals and vibrant beaded jewellery.

A retired theatre impresario, John, has been bringing the troupe to England for the past 10 years and they were visiting 100 venues in six weeks, educating us about the life of the Maasai and selling their wares. My Christmas shopping began – jewellery and beautiful beaded bowls.

That same evening my sister, bound for Heathrow from Dorset in a minicab: “That’s a funny thing,” she told the driver, “I am going to Kenya and my sister is in Sussex watching dancing Maasai warriors!”

“Really?” he said, “I saw them in Charlton Hawthorne last night.” (That’s Dorset.)

Rogate is, by most people’s standards, an active village, but Maasai warriors – that was a first. There’s the church, a busy shop, and the pub at the centre of things. (Not so long ago there were three pubs, but times change, and the



White Horse is excellent.) You can do any amount of research before you move to a new place: go to the pub and the local shop, park behind a hedge and listen to the traffic noise, but still it is a gamble.

Rogate was the bulls-eye of our home search: it is close to Petersfield where we both worked, and near - but not too near - where my mother lived. And it has wonderful view of the South Downs. We knew no one who lived here, but knew someone who once had...

Estate agents brochures will give you geographical context, journey times to local historic attractions and highlights from the primary school’s Ofsted report, but they won’t tell you if a village has got heart. You only find that out when you move in.

A few days after we arrived, struggling through a sea of cardboard boxes, we were invited to a Welcome to the village party on the following Sunday afternoon in the village hall. What? For us? How kind! Well, not exactly. These parties happen every

two or three years to introduce newcomers to the village - like Freshers Week at university without the Dangerous Sports Club and drinking games (not yet anyway) – and we were just some of the newest. There was quite a turnout: old hands bought plates of sandwiches and cakes, and the vicar made a speech.

We were approached by members of the tennis club, the bridge club and the bowls club. My husband was asked if he wished to join the choral society (“I really can’t sing,” he said. “Never mind, you’ll bring the average age down.”) The Ramblers? The British Legion?

Those planning to move from a cooler, more urban way of living may recoil at the thought of such bonhomie and clubbiness. Don’t be like that. You may titter - but the point is you don’t have to sing, or become a rambler, or join a quiz team. Heart means something more than just that. We certainly haven’t been great joiners and we haven’t seen most of the other newcomers since the day of the welcome party. But we frequent the pub, and we walk (rather than ramble), and have made friends here.

You make of a village what you will. But it is activity and a bit of bonhomie that make a village more than a gathering of dwellings, a collection of individuals and families. But still, you don’t often hear Maasai cattle-whistlers – even in Rogate.

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