

Decorating RESOLUTIONS

Start the New Year as you mean to go on, with a new ethos when styling the home – from being braver with colour to considering provenance



Be more decisive

Staffan Tollgard,
director, Staffan
Tollgard Design Group

Struggling to make decorating decisions can delay a project for weeks, sometimes months. Staffan Tollgard offers advice for narrowing selections to enable a clear vision to come to fruition.

“Design today offers too many choices – as much for the designer as for the client. There is a world, both physical and virtual, of directions to go down and it takes a clear eye and a strong will to go down one path and stick to your guns when an equally attractive alternative presents itself. Finding the path is key, and we have a name for it at our Design Group: ‘the red thread’. It’s a Scandinavian way of describing the DNA of a piece of creative work: the key ingredients that give it its unique flavour and relate it to the client’s story.

I follow the breadcrumbs dropped by the client: who they are; what they want the house to say about them; what they have collected and cherished along their journey. I read the clues in the architecture and the environment and I distil this information into a clear direction: the red thread. It might be a piece of art, or a period of architecture. It might be, as in the interior pictured [left], the eclectic mix of old and new together with the client’s favourite colour – a rich and dramatic aubergine that is subtly repeated so as to weave a literal red thread across the house. Once I have found the red thread, I practice the art of sacrifice: even if something wonderful presents itself, if it doesn’t follow or add to the red thread or the design story we’re telling, I say no.”



Declutter & refresh

Mark Gillette, director, Mark Gillette
Interior Design

Be a little ruthless and make a clean break with pieces that do not fit a new scheme.

“I love mixing antique and contemporary, and this can work beautifully. However, I am not averse to being quite honest when much-loved antiques or old family favourites simply will not work with a new scheme, no matter how hard you try to accommodate them. Whatever passes the ‘will it work?’ test must be in keeping with the new vision. It is often quite cathartic to declutter when deciding what to keep, but it is also vital to look at up-dating objects and how they are displayed. I like creating new ways to display traditional objects; for example, putting a mixture of decorative silver, with other objects, old and new, into a vitrine to create an old-fashioned cabinet of curiosities. Don’t be scared to reframe those old family photographs; get rid of silver and use leather or shagreen frames instead. It’s all about experimenting.”



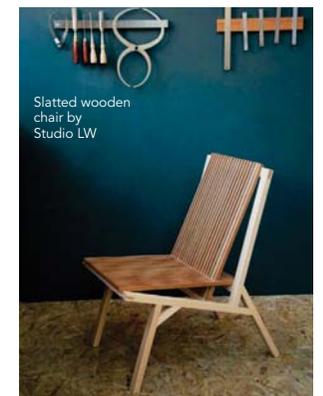
Invest in Craftsmanship

Rosy Greenless, executive director, Crafts Council

In a world of mass-production, owning unique or handcrafted items is both a luxury and a wonderful way to support local makers, who use heritage skills and develop modern techniques to create beautiful pieces.

“Making with our hands is a deep-seated human instinct and, faced in the 21st century with an increasingly digital world, it has become more popular than ever. People are looking for an alternative to mass consumption, so we’ve witnessed a renewed interest in authentic products with known provenance over the last few years. Britain has a long heritage of makers producing high-quality, beautiful products, more often than not using locally sourced materials where possible.”

Visit the Crafts Council website for more inspiration and a useful directory of craftspeople: craftscouncil.org.uk ▶



Slatted wooden
chair by
Studio LW