

ESSEX LIFE

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ASK ANTONIA

Essex Life interiors expert Antonia Edwards answers your questions

■ You can visit Antonia's brand new blog at www.upcyclist.blogspot.com



Q1 We've moved into a large period property and are looking for a stunning floor for a grand dining room. What would you recommend?



WITH kitchen, dining and living rooms all merging into one, for many homeowners, a separate formal dining room is a rare luxury. As a room that gets used for special occasions to entertain guests, the interior should certainly be dressed to impress. For something that will guarantee the wow factor, I would recommend White & White London (01277 353499) which makes bespoke wood floors, floor coverings and joinery. The firm has worked on prestigious residential and commercial projects with a

clientele that includes the British Museum, the Gherkin and the Houses of Parliament. Antique wood has a depth and tone that cannot be replicated, so for authentic period character, you may be interested in White & White's antique flooring range. The company has libraries of historic flooring designs, including everything from classic boards to parquet panels that have been reclaimed from palaces, stately homes and hotels around the world.

Q3 I like the idea of black or dark furniture and furnishings, but how do I prevent it looking too masculine?

WHEN opting for a dark colour scheme, you need to bring it to life with light reflecting materials. Think about ways you can break up the dark with different textures and patterns such as sequin-embroidered cushions, silver



accessories, floral metallic wallpaper or mohair throws. Mix up the dark with neutral shades such as cream or taupe for a simple, modern feel. Also, seek out furniture that has curvaceous forms, slender legs and embellishments for a more feminine look. Glossy lacquered finishes will also give you added sparkle and you might be interested in some of the ranges from Kelly Hoppen. Pictured is a square dining table which has a weathered taupe wood top and black lacquer feet (£1,895). The soft wood in contrast with the black lacquer creates a modern, sophisticated look. The Kelly Hoppen range is available at Brightwell Interiors in Ipswich, Suffolk (01473 611130).

Q2 Where can I find a laundry basket that isn't an eyesore?

WHETHER it's sitting in the wash bin, the ironing basket or hanging out to dry, laundry and stylish interiors rarely go together. This can be even more challenging if you don't have a utility room. With this in mind, it's worth checking out the new range of Tallow laundry baskets by Jim Lawrence. Hand-forged in the firm's Suffolk workshops, the design stands apart from most of the wicker, wood or plastic versions on the market and the range is available in polished (shown below), plain ivory and matt black finishes. The liners have drawstring tops which can be removed for easy cleaning and carrying washing to the washing machine. These come in any of the firm's Longford Gingham fabrics (Azure Blue, Zesty Green, Candy Pink, Postbox Red, Stone Grey and Natural) and cost £149. Also check out the drawstring cotton laundry bags that come in a huge range of fabrics and start at £18. Visit Jim Lawrence, Hadleigh, Suffolk or call 01473 826685.



NEED INTERIORS ADVICE?

Do you have a question that needs Antonia's advice? Please email julian.read@archant.co.uk