

Alidad

Formerly a director of the Islamic Art department at Sotheby's, he's lived in London for more than 40 years and works mainly in Britain, Europe and the Middle East.

They say 'His unique aesthetic blends a wide spectrum of luxurious materials and a deep art historical knowledge with timeless restraint'

We say 'A designer who's not afraid of using pattern and fabric with grand effect'
020-7384 0121; <http://alidad.com>

Ben Pentreath (see also Architects)

A London and Dorset-based polymath (interior design is one arm of his busy architectural-design practice), who's known for creating rooms that are timeless, but not locked into any historical period.

They say 'We draw inspiration in equal measure from the great English practitioners of the 1960s and 1970s and from historical interiors of every period, but all infused with a fresh, modern sensibility'

We say 'A master at re-creating the many layers of the country-house look updated with flashes of colour'
020-7430 2424; www.benpentreath.com

Chester Jones

A designer who trained as an architect and works in a modern idiom, using antiques and artefacts from a range of cultures and periods.

They say 'Living contentedly is, to a great extent, feeling comfortable in one's own surroundings. Facilitating this is our principal objective'

We say 'A serious designer with a pared-back style and overtly artistic eye'
020-7498 2717; <http://chesterjones.com>

Colin Orchard

Based in Chelsea and the Cotswolds, Colin worked at Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler before setting up on his own in 1989. He's responsible for the exquisite revival of the interiors at Ballyfin.

He says 'I want my clients to be totally happy, but excited, too'

We say 'The ultimate in the English country-house style'
020-7351 5501; info@colinorchard.com

Douglas Mackie Design

The architect is renowned for his integration of serious art collections with beautifully conceived backgrounds.

They say 'My philosophy is to create a perfect balance between furniture, art and sculpture'

We say 'A sophisticated decorator who uses modern British art and contemporary furniture with striking effects'
020-7487 3295; www.douglasmackie.com

Edward Bulmer

A specialist in the reorganisation and redecoration of historic buildings and houses, Edward



Simon Upton/Sibyl Colefax and John Fowler

Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler is Britain's longest-established interior-decorating firm

has worked on a wide range of historic houses, including Althorp and Goodwood. He's also a paint specialist, with his own range.

They say 'Almost always, these houses are used to display collections of art and I approach this as half-curator and half-designer. If the result isn't convenient or comfortable, it has failed'

We say 'A undisputed specialist for Grade I-listed interiors'
01544 388535; www.edwardbulmerpaint.co.uk

Emma Sims-Hilditch

A Wiltshire-based designer who champions a contemporary country look that sits happily in everything from manor houses and cottages to apartments and town houses.

They say 'We believe true luxury is about quality of life, embracing the beauty of everyday living to create a look that is truly inspiring'

We say 'Emma creates elegant and cheerful rooms that are firmly rooted in modern country living'
01249 783087; www.simshilditch.com

Guy Goodfellow

The London-based, full-service team, which includes architects and draughtsmen, was responsible for the restoration of Garsington Manor as well as London town houses.

They say 'His natural flair, combined with his classical background, guides the design process of projects towards their appropriate and suitable decoration with unmistakable originality'

We say 'Not locked into one particular look — refreshingly unpredictable'
020-7349 0728; www.guygoodfellow.com

Henrietta Spencer-Churchill

Having studied at the Inchbald School of Design, Lady Henrietta set up Woodstock Designs in 1981. It specialises in the renovation and restoration of Classical and listed buildings.

They say 'We incorporate current trends and technology while respecting historic character and architecture'

We say 'For classic country-house decorating, look no further'
www.spencerchurchilldesigns.com; 01993 811887

Henriette von Stockhausen

Having co-founded VSP Interiors with Jane Petti in 2000, Dorset-based Henriette has built up a reputation for skilfully blending colour with beautiful antiques that is inspired by her European childhood.

They say 'With a spell in stage and theatre design, Henriette brings a sense of drama to any space'

We say 'A perfect choice for young families moving into a big country home'
07787 574192; www.vspinteriors.com

Hugh Leslie

Strong form and colour are a big player in his designs, which often incorporate different styles and periods.

They say 'Hugh's flexible approach and wide-ranging expertise make for a working relationship that's second to none'

We say 'Predominantly London-focused with a heavy bent towards a clean mid-20th-century look'
020-7584 7185; <http://hughleslie.com>