



# The COUNTRY LIFE Top 100

Restoring or building a house in the country offers the opportunity to create the rural retreat of your dreams. For the second year, Country Life presents its definitive list of architects, interior designers, builders and garden designers with the skills and experience required to turn those dreams into reality.

Compiled by Arabella Youens

**T**HE internet is awash with the websites of architects, interior designers, builders and garden designers, but which have a track record and the sensitivity required to work on a country property, whether it's in the UK or abroad? There are obviously many more than those listed on these pages, but these are the practitioners whose reputation and recent work demonstrates that they have an understanding of both classic and contemporary houses fit for the challenges and demands of modern life, from Georgian country houses and Modernist villas to French châteaux and Alpine chalets.

## Architects

**The appetite for constructing a country house from scratch has never been greater. As family life in the 21st century revolves ever more around large, open-plan spaces and there is a greater demand for privacy and seclusion, the solution is often to buy a plot and build the dream.**

**It's a process that demands careful thought. What makes the perfect English country house is the marriage between the building and the landscape. It's this element, as well as a good, working relationship between the architect and the local planning officer, that can be the making or breaking of a new-build scheme.**

**Fortunately for anyone embarking on such a project—be it large-scale or modest in size—the pool of architectural talent in Britain continues to grow. The output of our top-rated country-house architects varies in scale and style from classically inspired country mansions to distinctive new houses in a modern idiom, as well as traditional and contemporary barn conversions, family houses and domestic extensions to listed or sensitive buildings.**

### ADAM Architecture

The Winchester- and London-based team of multi-award-winning architects and urban designers is one of the largest practices to specialise in new-build country houses. The company's directors include leading lights in Classical architecture such as co-founder Robert Adam, George Saumarez Smith (who designed the Palladian villa shown left) and Hugh Pether. Each stamps his own architectural personality on projects that range from Regency houses in Berkshire to a cottage orné extension in Yorkshire via a new Queen Anne country house in the Chilterns and a sustainable Cornish manor.

Paul Banker

01962 843843; [www.adamarchitecture.com](http://www.adamarchitecture.com)

[www.countrylife.co.uk](http://www.countrylife.co.uk)



The dining room of a house designed by George Saumarez Smith of ADAM Architecture

### ANTA

Founded in the 1980s by (architect) Lachlan and (textile designer) Annie Stewart, ANTA's architecture is strongly informed by the Scottish vernacular. The practice embraces colours inspired by the Scottish landscape and is known for employing local materials and craftsmen. A favourite of The Prince of Wales, the practice has worked at Eilean Donan Castle and the Queen Mother's memorial garden at Castle of Mey.

01862 832477; [www.anta.co.uk](http://www.anta.co.uk)

### Ben Pentreath (see also Interior Designers)

From striking houses to master-planning, Ben Pentreath and his team create thoughtful, distinctive designs that fly a flag for the possibilities of classically inspired architecture. Recent projects include designs for Tornagrain, a proposed new town near Inverness, and Sulis Down, 200 homes near Bath that draw on the Arts-and-Crafts vernacular.

020-7430 2424; [www.benpentreath.com](http://www.benpentreath.com)

### Craig Hamilton

Having studied architecture at the University of Natal, Craig moved to the UK in 1986 and established this practice in 1991. Based in Radnorshire, he undertakes projects throughout the UK and abroad and has a reputation for progressive Classical and traditional architecture. He also specialises in chapels, for which he has won Georgian Group awards two years running.

01982 553312; [www.craighamiltonarchitects.com](http://www.craighamiltonarchitects.com)

### Donald Insall Associates

Established in 1958, the firm's focus is on the care, repair and adaption of historic buildings, as well as designing new buildings for sen-

sitive sites. It takes particular pride in using locally sourced materials and incorporating energy-efficient technologies into new and old houses. The company is working alongside BDP on the restoration of the Palace of Westminster and, in October 2017, it was announced that the firm will handle the major overhaul of Grade I-listed Wentworth Woodhouse, Rotherham, South Yorkshire.

[www.donaldinsallassociates.co.uk](http://www.donaldinsallassociates.co.uk); 020-7245 9888

### Francis Johnson & Partners

This East Yorkshire-based practice is best known for designing new-build country houses—indeed, it was the first to complete a house under the requirements of PPG7 (known as 'Gummer's Law'). It also designs village houses, cottages and interiors; in 2017, the firm received a commendation by the Georgian Group for the restoration of the interiors of Euston Hall in Suffolk.

[www.francisjohnson-architects.co.uk](http://www.francisjohnson-architects.co.uk); 01262 674043

### Francis Terry & Associates

Having moved on from his father's practice (see *Quinlan & Francis Terry LLP Architects*) in 2016, Francis Terry and his team continue to create classically designed country houses. In June 2017, he was elected to lead RIBA's traditionalist wing and the company is currently working on a new-build Palladian-style house in Norfolk.

01206 580528; <http://ftanda.co.uk>

### Giles Quarme & Associates

Historic buildings are a practice speciality. The restoration work by the London-based team on Grade I-listed Glynde Place in the South

Downs National Park was recognised with no fewer than five awards in 2017. Work on the Elizabethan mansion preserved its historic features while allowing it to become a comfortable, 21st-century family home. 020-7582 0748; [www.quarme.com](http://www.quarme.com)

#### **Gluckman Smith**

Specialising in projects that require a contemporary response to sensitive settings—both in west London and the Cotswolds—Tom Smith and Robert Gluckman work on extensions to Victorian houses, barn conversions and new-build houses within historic landscapes. One recent example is Font House, in the grounds of Nevill Holt, Leicestershire, where the practice replaced a tired, 1960s bungalow set in a walled garden with a one-storey, two-bedroom house with façades constructed from local ironstone. 020-7998 1525; [www.gluckmansmith.com](http://www.gluckmansmith.com)

#### **Groves-Raines Architects**

This Edinburgh-based, award-winning practice specialises in the conservation, restoration and reuse of existing historic buildings. Established in 1972, it has been involved in saving a number of A-Listed castles, churches and fortified houses from dereliction across Scotland and in

Ireland. In 2017, founder Nicholas Groves-Raines was presented with a lifetime achievement award from the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. 0131-467 7777; <http://grovesraines.com>

#### **Hoare, Ridge & Morris**

A relatively new practice, founded in 2012 by Mark Hoare (previously of ADAM Architecture), Ted Ridge and Charles Morris, it covers considerable ground, from master-planning village extensions to interior design, based from its office in Snape Maltings, Suffolk. Recent projects have included alterations and repairs to important listed buildings as well as the design of new houses and landscaping. 01728 688747; [www.hрма.co.uk](http://www.hрма.co.uk)

#### **Hudson Architects NEW FOR 2018**

Founded by Anthony Hudson in 1992, its projects range from a modern family house in Jersey to the transformation of a Tudor barn in Essex into a stylish modern home. The practice has two offices: one in Norwich and the other in Clerkenwell, London. 01603 766220; <http://hudsonarchitects.co.uk>

#### **Ian Adam-Smith NEW FOR 2018**

Housed in a group of barns on the Surrey/West Sussex border, this practice takes on

major projects primarily in the surrounding counties, as well as London. Completed projects include the reconfiguration and extension of Pickhurst, near Chiddingfold, Surrey, which featured in *COUNTRY LIFE* last year (*Property market, May 10 and June 21, 2017*). 01428 644644; [www.ianadam-smith.co.uk](http://www.ianadam-smith.co.uk)

#### **James Gorst Architects**

James Gorst says his practice, which has won several awards for its Modernist homes, is focused on creating domestic architecture that explores abstract form that 'doesn't hark back to traditional porches or pitched roofs'. Recent projects include Hannington Farm in Northamptonshire—an assembly of buildings with asymmetrical roofs—and a two-storey extension to a Georgian house in London. [www.jamesgorstararchitects.com](http://www.jamesgorstararchitects.com); 020-7336 7140

#### **John Simpson Architects**

Has extensive experience of working on public and educational buildings—ongoing projects include a new building at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, USA, and the £25 million redevelopment of the Royal College of Music in Kensington. Based in Bloomsbury, residential projects ➤



**James Gorst converted this stone barn into an artist's studio and extended it to create garaging and staff accommodation**



**This house, designed by Smallwood Architects, was built on the remains of a Victorian house, the cellars of which were retained**

range from mansions in New York and Paris to country houses across the UK. [www.johnsimpsonarchitects.com](http://www.johnsimpsonarchitects.com); 020-7405 1285

**John Stark & Crickmay Partnership**

Founded in 1999, following an amalgamation of two of the longest-practising firms in the South-West. Work ranges from larger country houses to conservation projects and domestic extensions. 01305 262636; [www.jscp.co.uk](http://www.jscp.co.uk)

**Julian Bicknell & Associates**

Julian Bicknell leads a large team of traditional architects who design buildings, landscapes and interiors across the UK and worldwide. One of his most celebrated houses, the neo-Classical Henbury Hall near Macclesfield, Cheshire, is widely recognised as one of the most important country houses built in England during the late 20th century. 020-8891 1001; [www.julianbicknell.co.uk](http://www.julianbicknell.co.uk)

**Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects**

Specialists in old and listed buildings, as well as new buildings in sensitive areas, this practice is family-run from offices in Saffron Walden, Essex. It has a strong focus on East Anglia and the Home Counties; work includes the remodelling of listed houses, basement extensions and pool houses as well as more esoteric projects, such as garages with bat lofts. 01799 599208; [www.kpt.co.uk](http://www.kpt.co.uk)

**Kit Rae-Scott**

Although Kit Rae-Scott is not a qualified archi-

tect, his passion for historic buildings—one fan believes he can describe and draw the floor plans of every great house in England—is well known throughout the West Country. Work includes Whithurst Park, a new Jacobean-style manor house in Sussex. 01297 22172; [kit.rae-scott@hotmail.com](mailto:kit.rae-scott@hotmail.com)

**Lindsay Buchan Architects**

After starting out in retail and hotel design, Edinburgh-based Lindsay Buchan established his own practice in 1993. Working on the refurbishment, extension and design of town houses and country villas throughout the UK, there is a particular focus on Edinburgh and East Lothian, where he's known to have good relationship with both local planners and Historic Scotland. 0131-554 9008; [www.lindsaybuchan.com](http://www.lindsaybuchan.com)

**Marc Deaves**

Having started his career working on historic buildings for large London estates, this publicity-shy architect (he has no website) has worked on many important houses. One of his largest projects has been the comprehensive overhaul of Encombe House, near Corfe Castle in Dorset. 020-7498 9361; [marc@marcdeaves.com](mailto:marc@marcdeaves.com)

**Peregrine Bryant NEW FOR 2018**

This practice was recently appointed by the new American owners of Crichel House in Dorset to reinstate missing elements to the house. Other projects include restoration and conservation of listed buildings all over the country. Last year, tragedy struck the firm when it lost newly appointed team member Gloria Trevisan in the

Grenfell Tower fire. In memory of Gloria and her boyfriend, Marco, the company has established an annual award to help talented young Italian graduates interested in conservation architecture. 020-7384 2111; [www.peregrine-bryant.co.uk](http://www.peregrine-bryant.co.uk)

**Ptolemy Dean Architects**

Architect, television presenter, the 19th Surveyor of the Fabric of Westminster Abbey and COUNTRY LIFE contributor, Ptolemy Dean leads the field in historic preservation of buildings and designing new buildings in keeping with their surroundings. Projects include his own new-build farmhouse overlooking the Sussex Weald. 020-7378 7714; [www.ptolemydean.co.uk](http://www.ptolemydean.co.uk)

**Purcell**

This award-winning practice has studios throughout the UK and is often involved with major projects on large country houses and historic buildings. In December 2017, it was appointed (jointly with Allies and Morrison) by the National Trust to 'reimagine' Clendon Park after it was damaged by fire in 2015. 020-7397 7171; [www.purcelluk.com](http://www.purcelluk.com)

**Quinlan & Francis Terry Architects**

Continuing the tradition of Classical architecture established by Raymond Erith in 1928, Quinlan Terry has designed many of the finest country houses built in the past three decades, including Ferne Park, Viscount Rothenmere's house on the Dorset/Wiltshire border. 01206 323186; [www.qftarchitects.com](http://www.qftarchitects.com)

**Russell Taylor Architects NEW FOR 2018**

With a reputation for obtaining planning and listed-building consent in difficult and chal- ➤

lenging areas, the practice specialises in Classical architecture, period designs and details. The main studio is in London, where a lot of work extending and remodelling houses takes place and the firm has a second office in Polperro, Cornwall.

020-7261 1984; <http://rtarchitects.co.uk>

#### **Simpson & Brown Architects**

An Edinburgh-based conservation firm that works on a range of projects, including an ogee-roofed pavilion at Wormiston House, Fife (*COUNTRY LIFE*, May 17, 2017) as well as the full restoration of the Landmark Trust's Auchinleck House and the ongoing care of Lindisfarne castle.

0131-555 4678; [www.simpsonandbrown.co.uk](http://www.simpsonandbrown.co.uk)

#### **Smallwood NEW FOR 2018**

This London-based firm (with a second office in Stamford, Lincolnshire) was founded by Christopher Smallwood in 1976. Its portfolio includes the refurbishment of a castle in Ireland, a new house in Connecticut, USA, a Palladian house in Hampshire and the conversion of a listed 18th-century stable block into an indoor pool and party barn.

020-7376 5744; [www.smallwoodarchitects.co.uk](http://www.smallwoodarchitects.co.uk)

#### **Stuart Martin Architects**

*Andy Marshall* This Dorset-based practice designed the award-winning Chitcombe House in Wooland. Although initially focused on conservation work, the team is increasingly involved in new-build projects within the

Classical and vernacular traditions, working all over the UK.

01935 83543; [www.stuartmartinarchitects.com](http://www.stuartmartinarchitects.com)

#### **Thomas Croft Architects**

This practice specialises in contemporary interventions in historic buildings as well as new buildings that relate strongly to historic settings. Many projects are in London, but the team has converted a Grade II-listed barn in Kent and a new house on the north Norfolk coast.

020-8962 0066; <http://thomascroft.com>

#### **Watson, Bertram & Fell**

A firm of architects and surveyors based in Bath with a broad spectrum of experience of working on listed buildings and innovative new projects in sensitive conservation areas. Led by principal architect Mark Watson, it works on country and town houses of all sizes as well as estates, including Ilchester and Ozleworth.

01225 337273; [www.wbf-bath.co.uk](http://www.wbf-bath.co.uk)

#### **Yiangou**

With handsome offices in central Cirencester, this architectural practice has been responsible for the design of a number of classically inspired new-build country houses, including Rectory Farm at Church Enstone, Oxfordshire. It also specialises in highly contemporary pool houses and leisure complexes.

01285 888150; <http://yiangou.com>

## Garden designers

**There are few more beautiful words in English than 'summer afternoon' and, to many, the scene that is conjured is one set on a lush, green lawn surrounded by borders filled with highly-scented roses, lying in the dappled shade of a mature cedar tree.**

**None of this happens by accident. A beautiful country house is as much about its surroundings as it is about its architecture and it takes the skill of the very best garden designer to create or develop a setting which achieves that perfect harmony between house and garden.**

**Previously unremarkable spaces can be transformed, hitherto unexposed views can be opened up, outdoor dining spaces under wisteria-covered pergolas established, romantic corners created with an arbour swathed in roses or vines and unsightly walls softened by a tangle of climbers.**

**We are blessed with a vast pool of home-grown creative talent. From master-minding parkland for new country houses to designing classic English walled and cottage gardens, via more minimalist and elegant approaches and not forgetting compact urban terraces and roof gardens, these are the professionals at the top of their game**

#### **Acres Wild**

This revered practice was established by Debbie Roberts and Ian Smith in 1988 and has a reputation for creating stylish contemporary country gardens. Last year, its work was recognised by an award from the British Association of Landscape Industries—judges praised the exceptional planting and detailing. Although the firm predominantly works across the Home Counties, team members will travel further and have completed projects in London, throughout the rest of the UK, France, Spain and California.

01403 891084; [www.acreswild.co.uk](http://www.acreswild.co.uk)

#### **Angela Collins Garden Design**

With gardens characterised by billowing and romantic borders that are punctuated by strong, architectural planting, Warwickshire-based Angela Collins has built up a reputation over the past 25 years for creating individual gardens that marry the house to the countryside.

07876 592440; [www.angelacollins.co.uk](http://www.angelacollins.co.uk)

#### **Arabella Lennox-Boyd**

A landscape designer since 1971 and the winner of numerous gold medals from Chelsea, Arabella Lennox-Boyd stands at the peak of British garden design. Not averse to intrepid ➤



**This country house designed by Yiangou was constructed from Cotswold ashlar stone**



undaunted by unpromising sites and transforming spaces into romantic and theatrical gardens. [www.bannermandesign.com](http://www.bannermandesign.com)

**Jinny Blom**

A psychologist until her mid thirties, Jinny Blom now stands at the forefront of English garden design, taking on projects that range from a lodge in Kenya to the Buckinghamshire home of Lady Getty via urban London gardens. Green structures and water (where possible) are key elements to her designs. Last year, she published *The Thoughtful Gardener*. 020-7253 2100; [www.jinnyblom.com](http://www.jinnyblom.com)

**Julie Toll Landscape & Garden Design**

Widely regarded as one of the first garden designers to pioneer meadow planting in private gardens, Julie Toll's designs often involve collaborating with artists and craftsmen such as dry-stone wallers, sculptors and blacksmiths. Based in Hertfordshire, she works extensively overseas, particularly on the Caribbean island of Nevis. 01438 310095; [www.julietoll.co.uk](http://www.julietoll.co.uk)

**Kim Wilkie**

With a considerable international following, the Hampshire-based landscape architect is known for originality and verve when it comes to garden designs. His work includes the transformation of the V&A's courtyard and the restoration of parkland at The Grange in Hampshire, as well as many high-profile country estates. 01489 891691; [www.kimwilkie.com](http://www.kimwilkie.com)

**Luciano Giubbilei**

Multi-medal-winning designer, who designs Classical and elegant gardens for London town houses and rural landscapes. He's donating the profits of his recent book, *The Art of Making Gardens*, to support trainee gardeners at Great Dixter, East Sussex, where he works with head gardener Fergus Garrett. 020-7622 2616; [www.lucianogiubbilei.com](http://www.lucianogiubbilei.com)

**Marcus Barnett**

It was a commission in the Scots Guards that taught Marcus Barnett the art of understanding landscape and topography—a useful skill when it comes to redesigning country-house gardens and parkland for clients. Trees and architectural forms as well as hard landscaping form the foundation of many designs, which appear restrained and uncluttered before, on closer inspection, revealing layers of complexity. 020-7736 9761; [www.marcusbarnett.com](http://www.marcusbarnett.com)

**Marie-Louise Agius of Balston Agius**

Based near Devizes, in Wiltshire, and trained at the KLC School of Design in London, Marie-Louise Agius works on projects that range from roof gardens to large private estates. She won ➤

**Starting geometrically, this design by Harris Bugg gives way to something more curvaceous**

plant-hunting trips (she has a passion for rare trees and shrubs), she's known for her beautiful herbaceous borders. 020-7931 9995; [www.arabellalennoxboyd.com](http://www.arabellalennoxboyd.com)

**Arne Maynard Garden Design**

A London- and Monmouthshire-based designer with an architect's training who has a reputation for creating gardens that balance a sense of wildness and order and the formal with the informal. His interest in gardens began during a holiday job working on the gardens of Cranborne Manor, Dorset; today, his projects take him all over the world. 020-7689 8100; <http://arnemaynard.com>

**Colson Stone Practice NEW FOR 2018**

Winner of the SGD Historic Garden Restoration Award for his work at Villa Balbiano on Lake Como in Italy, Christian Sweet and his team work on a wide range of projects throughout the UK and Europe. The full-service practice covers every aspect of working with new and historically sensitive houses. 01823 332883; [www.colsonstone.co.uk](http://www.colsonstone.co.uk)

**Bradley-Hole Schoenaich Landscaping**

Recently appointed by the RHS to develop the masterplan for the Society's flagship gardens at Wisley, Surrey, the influential Modernist and winner of six gold medals and two Best Show Garden awards at Chelsea Flower Show is currently working on a 500-acre landscape near Henley. Recent projects include a new public landscape for the BBC at White City, a garden for the former Arsenal Football ground and gardens around the Stirling Prize-winning Sainsbury Laboratory, University of Cambridge 020-8939 1749; <http://bhsla.co.uk>

**del Buono Gazerwitz Landscape Architecture**

Florentine Tommaso del Buono established

the practice with American Paul Gazerwitz in 2000. Home is in Suffolk, but the team is based in London, from where it designs gardens that favour clean lines and play with scale and proportions. 020-7613 1122; <http://delbuono-gazerwitz.co.uk>

**George Carter Garden Design**

A sculptor-turned-gardener, George Carter is known for creating formal gardens often inspired by the simple geometry of 17th-century gardens. Although he's based in Norfolk, he's worked on the Garden of Gethsemane as well as Chevening House, Burghley and Holkham Hall. 01362 668130; <http://georgecartergardens.co.uk>

**Graham Lloyd Brunt NEW FOR 2018**

Timeless gardens for modern living is Graham's specialty. Based in Westminster, the practice tends to work on larger gardens for houses and hotels in London, as well as country-house gardens in southern England and, occasionally, further afield. 020-7222 2777; [www.lloydbrunt.com](http://www.lloydbrunt.com)

**Harris Bugg Studio NEW FOR 2018**

This new partnership only was established in 2017 when Hugo Bugg and Charlotte Harris merged their existing practices. Dividing their time between studios in Exeter and London, they've built up a reputation for delivering creative and eye-catching gardens, from contemporary London roof terraces to large country estates. 020-8191 7131; [www.harrisbugg.com](http://www.harrisbugg.com)

**I. & J. Bannerman**

Husband-and-wife garden designers 'and builders', who have worked on a number of gardens, including Asthall Manor, Houghton Hall, Arundel Castle and the stumpery at Highgrove. They have a reputation for being

a Chelsea Gold Medal in 2013 and also looks after the gardens at Exbury, Hampshire, created by her great-grandfather, the celebrated plantsman Lionel de Rothschild.

01380 848181; [www.balstonagius.co.uk](http://www.balstonagius.co.uk)

#### **Pip Morrison**

Until recently, Pip worked alongside fellow garden designer and author Mary Keen. Today, the accomplished landscape architect, who trained in Edinburgh, maintains a famously low profile. 07817 736360

#### **Robert Myers Associates**

A large, Cambridge- and Herefordshire-based practice that's designed many private country gardens and public spaces, including the Magic Garden at Hampton Court Palace and the Bowes Lyon Rose Garden at RHS Wisley. It's currently working on designs for the proposed redevelopment of the In and Out Club on Piccadilly, W1. 01544 232035; [www.robertmyers-associates.co.uk](http://www.robertmyers-associates.co.uk)

#### **Rupert Golby**

This Kew-trained garden designer keeps a low profile, but has nevertheless built up a word-of-mouth following in the Cotswolds and beyond for his Classical planting. His project portfolio includes Daylesford House in Gloucestershire and Kingham Hill House in Oxfordshire. 07785 228384

Alex Ramsay

#### **Simon Johnson**

As an experienced country-house landscape

designer, Simon Johnson's expertise takes him to projects all over the world, from the Mediterranean to New England in the USA. Based near Bath, he worked with acclaimed designer Penelope Hobhouse for many years. [www.simonjohnson.co.uk](http://www.simonjohnson.co.uk)

#### **Todd Longstaffe-Gowan**

As gardens adviser to Historic Royal Palaces, Todd Longstaffe-Gowan was responsible for the redesign of Kensington Palace's commemorative White Garden, which opened last summer. 020-7253 2100; [www.tlg-landscape.co.uk](http://www.tlg-landscape.co.uk)

#### **Tom Stuart-Smith**

Widely regarded as one of the country's most influential garden designers, Tom Stuart-Smith has won eight gold medals and three best-in-show awards at Chelsea. Country-house gardens are a staple, but work takes him around the world. He's currently designing the new RHS garden near Salford, the first stage of which is anticipated to open in 2019. 020-7253 2100; [www.tomstuartsmith.co.uk](http://www.tomstuartsmith.co.uk)

#### **Xa Tollemache**

Xa Tollemache's garden at Helmingham Hall, near Ipswich in Suffolk, was named the Historic Houses Association's garden of the year in 2017. Her practice, which was established in 1996, favours a classic contemporary style. Her Global Growth garden, for RHS Hyde Hall in Essex, is due to open this summer. 01473 890799; [www.xa-tollemache.co.uk](http://www.xa-tollemache.co.uk)

## Interior decorators

**Of all the decorative trends that have been in vogue during the past 50 years—be it Scandi, mid-century, Minimalism or industrial—none has been as powerful or as enduring as that of the English country house. Exported all over the world, it's a near indeterminable alchemy that informally blends elements such as mixing brown furniture with contemporary objects, layers of pattern and textiles, kilims, ikat lampshades and comfortable sofas.**

**There are, thankfully, few rules to country-house interior design. It's a broad church of tastes that, with every new generation of decorators, is being reinterpreted and producing some surprising and delightful results.**

#### **Alidad**

Brought up in Iran and Switzerland before moving to the UK and then working at Sotheby's, Alidad has a deep appreciation for history and can talk eloquently of aesthetics from Baroque to neo-Classicism, Chinoiserie to Art Deco. Although Alidad eschews fashion, he believes in 'timeless elegance and matured nonchalance'. Studio Alidad is his 'ready-to-wear' arm, which is aimed at a younger audience or those on a tighter budget. 020-7384 0121; [www.alidad.com](http://www.alidad.com)

#### **Ben Pentreath**

The highly regarded interior-design arm of Mr Pentreath's architecture practice (see page 99) typically combines a strong use of colour and Classical details with simple patterns and an eclectic mix of furniture and lighting from different periods. 020-7430 2424; [www.benpentreath.com](http://www.benpentreath.com)

#### **Colin Orchard**

Like many of the most accomplished decorators, Colin Orchard cut his teeth at Sybil Colefax & John Fowler, where he led a design team. Since 1989, he's run his own business, where he works on projects that criss-cross the Atlantic. He's spent much of the past decade working on the exquisite Ballyfin in Ireland. 020-7351 5501; [info@colinorchard.com](mailto:info@colinorchard.com)

#### **Linley**

Exquisitely made joinery features strongly in interior projects by Linley, the decorating arm of Lord Snowdon's furniture business. The in-house team of interior architects, designers and consultants works on residential and commercial projects all over the world. 020-7730 7300; [www.davidlinley.com](http://www.davidlinley.com)



**A paved terrace offers views across this garden designed by Robert Myers Associates**

**Douglas Mackie Design**

With an eye for integrating serious art collections into private homes—a recent project placed 20th-century art in a Tudor-era mansion—Douglas Mackie is skilled at creating stately yet cosy spaces. After studying architecture at Cambridge, he trained with legendary decorator Tessa Kennedy. 020–7487 3295; [www.douglasmackie.com](http://www.douglasmackie.com)

**Edward Bulmer**

The interior decorator and natural paint pioneer studied fine art at the University of East Anglia before joining David Mlinaric's practice. Later, he worked with artist and picture restorer Alec Cobbe before setting up his business in Herefordshire, where he specialises in listed houses. 01544 388535; [www.edwardbulmerpaint.co.uk](http://www.edwardbulmerpaint.co.uk)

**Emma Sims Hilditch**

Emma and her team specialise in executing a relaxed and modern country style, which is achieved through a singular approach to lighting, texture, colours and the flow of rooms that becomes the main focus of each project. Work varies from large family houses to new-build town houses in Bath, London apartments and coastal homes in the Channel Islands. 01249 783087; [www.simshilditch.com](http://www.simshilditch.com)

**Guy Goodfellow**

The fact that Guy Goodfellow and his team refused to be pigeonholed into a specific style explains why clients with multiple homes repeatedly ask him to decorate them all. There's an underlying current of Englishness to each design, but, from there, it can go in any direction. He also sells his own collection of fabrics and wallpapers. 020–7349 0728; [www.guygoodfellow.com](http://www.guygoodfellow.com)

**Henrietta Spencer-Churchill**

With a Classical aesthetic and a fleet of clients in both the UK and America, Henrietta is known for her deep knowledge and passion for country-house interiors and architecture (she studied history of art in Florence and Paris). Based in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, she's also a director of HRW Antiques. [www.spencerchurchilldesigns.com](http://www.spencerchurchilldesigns.com); 01993 811887

**Henriette von Stockhausen**

Co-founder of VSP Interiors, Henriette von Stockhausen uses her background in antiques to create rooms that are classically inspired yet colourful and eclectic, blending a mix of old and new furniture and decorative pieces. Based in Dorset, and with a passion for the countryside, she's popular with families moving out of London and establishing a country house. 07787 574192; [www.vspinteriors.com](http://www.vspinteriors.com)



Alexander James

**Henriette Von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors designed this country-house bedroom****Hugh Leslie**

Although he professes to have no house style, this is a designer who certainly isn't afraid to make a statement. Colour features strongly in his schemes—perhaps something to do with the fact that he hails from New Zealand. Abstract art is a major feature. 020–7584 7185; [www.hughleslie.com](http://www.hughleslie.com)

**Jane Churchill Interiors**

A name synonymous with classic English interior design, Jane Churchill has been known for her deft ability to combine traditional and contemporary elements since she established the business in 1975. 020–7730 8564; [www.janechurchillinteriors.co.uk](http://www.janechurchillinteriors.co.uk)

**Janine Stone & Co**

The go-to practice for clients looking for luxurious, elegant design. The multi-disciplinary team covers architecture, interior design, building and project management and is based in London and Cheshire. This highly creative design practice led by Janine Stone and her team of 50 professionals predominantly focuses on private clients and their town houses and apartments in central London and country houses in the Home Counties and further afield, including international projects. 020–3797 7256; [www.janinestone.com](http://www.janinestone.com)

**Joanna Wood**

With an interior-design practice and eponymous shop on Belgravia's Elizabeth Street,

Joanna Wood brings Classical style, a well-honed eye for practical details and enormous energy to her projects. Currently tasked with decorating the American ambassador's residence in London, she can turn her hand to anything from Soho penthouses to classic country houses. 020–7730 0693; [www.joannawood.com](http://www.joannawood.com)

**John Evans**

An interior architect and designer, John Evans's expertise lies in spatial planning and improving the flow of interior space in his projects. Birmingham-based (and with an office in London), his projects have a contemporary bent and range from new-build country houses to luxury ski chalets. 020–7252 2392; [www.johnevansdesign.com](http://www.johnevansdesign.com)

**Katharine Pooley**

With showrooms in Walton Street and Qatar (she grew up in the Middle East and has lived in the Far East), Katharine Pooley's projects include barn conversions, country houses and castles in Scotland, in which she creates fresh, contemporary country spaces. Last year, she published *Journey By Design*. 020–7584 3223; [www.katharinepooley.com](http://www.katharinepooley.com)

**Keech Green**

Established by Michael Keech and Graham Green in 2002, the practice specialises in bespoke furniture, unusual finishes and what they describe as a signature 'Modern Deco' approach to interior design. A good choice for someone looking for a finish ➤



**Joanna Wood designed this bathroom for her own house in the country**

that's both elegant and masculine.  
020-7351 5701; [www.keechgreen.com](http://www.keechgreen.com)

**Lucy Elworthy**

A Wiltshire-based interior designer (who's handily married to Canadian-born architect John Comparelli), Lucy Elworthy has a reputation for blending period and contemporary pieces to create stylish, comfortable country houses. Formerly Decoration Editor of *House & Garden*, she creates schemes that are characterised by a discreet use of colour and pattern.  
07957 693246; [www.lucyelworthy.co.uk](http://www.lucyelworthy.co.uk)

**Max Rollitt**

Antique dealer, furniture designer and decorator, Max's skill is for creating graphic, elegant and distinctive spaces that look as if they've evolved over the years—it's a style that follows very much in the vein of the greats, including Christopher Gibbs and Robert Kime.  
01962 791124; [www.maxrollitt.com](http://www.maxrollitt.com)

**McWhirter Morris**

Former director of Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler Sarah Morris joined forces with established antique dealer James McWhirter in 2005. The result is a practice that marries the traditional English country-house style with carefully chosen antiques. The pair worked on the refurbishment of Dumfries House for The Prince of Wales and projects range

from town houses to country houses and villas abroad.  
020-7349 2575; [www.mcwhirtermorris.com](http://www.mcwhirtermorris.com)

**Mlinaric, Henry and Zervudachi**

A blue-chip firm of decorators, founded in the 1960s by David Mlinaric. The partners work on an extensive range of projects for private clients, often with extensive art collections. The firm has offices in Paris and New York and projects take members to all the (most glamorous) corners of the globe.  
020-7730 9072; <http://mhzlondon.com>

**Nina Campbell**

The decorating legend, who started her career shadowing the legendary John Fowler and collaborating on the interiors of Annabel's in their first incarnation. She also has hugely successful collections of fabric and wallpaper and owns an eponymous boutique in Walton Street, SW3, and a showroom at the Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour, SW10.  
020-7225 1011; <http://ninacampbellinteriors.com>

**Paolo Moschino for Nicholas Haslam**

Clients appointing Paolo Moschino will most likely be looking to introduce the company's signature luxurious finishes and good art to their London, Paris or New York homes, but the contemporary designer can equally bring its distinctive, Continental flair to country

houses. The Belgravia-based shop makes and sells furniture, fabrics, lighting and antiques.  
020-7730 8623; [www.nicholashaslam.com](http://www.nicholashaslam.com)

**Penny Morrison**

A South African-born interior designer who champions the 'undecorated' look and whose guiding motto is 'who cares if the colours don't match?'. Rooms are full of colour, pattern and interesting pieces of furniture. She also designs her own range of fabrics that, together with a collection of decorative accessories, are available to view at Lorfor's Antiques, Langton Street, SW10.  
01547 560460; [www.pennymorrison.com](http://www.pennymorrison.com)

**Pippa Paton**

Working from her full-service interior design, architecture and project-management studio in Kingston Bagpuize, Oxfordshire, Pippa creates fresh and contemporary rooms that sit happily alongside exposed historical features—as demonstrated in her book published last year: *Twenty First Century Cotswolds*.  
01865 595470; [www.pippapatondesign.co.uk](http://www.pippapatondesign.co.uk)

**Rita Konig**

Multi-tasking interior designer and journalist Rita Konig specialises in timeless and elegant designs that mix and deliberately don't match, with charming and always distinctive results. Although she's based in London, a lot of projects take her to the USA, where she used to live and work.  
020-3735 7280; <http://ritakonig.com>

**Robert Kime**

A quiet and unassuming man with impeccable credentials and unimpeachable taste, Robert Kime is, unquestionably, one of the great English decorators of today. With a passion for antiques (visit his showroom in Pimlico Road for evidence), he has an extensive collection of fabrics to draw upon and his interiors encapsulate all that's individual, off-beat, informal and interesting about country-house design.  
020-7831 6066; [www.robertkime.com](http://www.robertkime.com)

**Rose Uniacke**

An absolute master of the restrained and more disciplined approach that is, nevertheless, a long way from Minimalism, Rose Uniacke brings her deep knowledge of antiques and razor-sharp aesthetic eye to her projects. She's a favourite with A-list clients who want rooms that are comfortable as well as stylishly curated.  
020-7730 7050; <http://roseuniacke.com>

**Salvesen Graham NEW FOR 2018**

Founded in 2013 by Nicole Salvesen and ➤

Nick Smith

Mary Graham, this thriving practice quickly gained a reputation for a style that is achieved by layering textures, pattern and colours and juxtaposing antiques with contemporary pieces. Both have young families and young clients to boot.

020-7967 7777; [www.salvesengraham.com](http://www.salvesengraham.com)

### Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler

After moving to its new premises on Pimlico Road, this long-established English firm continues to go from strength to strength. Run by eight directors, who all have their different style and expertise, but channel Fowler's belief—chiefly, that a room should be 'well behaved but free from any rules'.

020-7493 2231; [www.sibylcofax.com](http://www.sibylcofax.com)

### Studio Atkinson

With various projects for the Soho House group and, more recently, Beaverbrook, Surrey's latest country-house hotel, under her belt, Susie Atkinson knows how to decorate chic, comfortable spaces. She has a particular passion for craftsmanship.

020-7384 0700; <http://susieatkinson.com>

### Thorp

Based in smart, Belgravia offices—a conveniently short taxi ride for her many Mayfair-based clients—Philippa Thorp's

Dylan Thomas

practice covers all bases and will take projects from the ground up, including not just the interiors, but also the design of furniture and fittings to suit each room.

020-7235 7808; [www.thorp.co.uk](http://www.thorp.co.uk)

### Todhunter Earle

Emily Todhunter and Kate Earle work on projects that range from country houses to hotels (Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons), yachts, nightclubs and ski chalets. Designs are grown-up, but with quirks—a glitter ball here, a splash of colour there. They also have a collection of lighting, wallpaper and rugs.

020-7349 9999; <http://todhunterearle.com>

### Veere Grenney

Another New Zealand-born designer, Veere Grenney creates projects dotted around the world. His designs are immaculately tailored and respond carefully to the architecture, climate and culture of the buildings.

020-7351 7170; [www.veeregrenney.com](http://www.veeregrenney.com)

### Wilkinson Beven NEW FOR 2018

A Birmingham-based studio that has lots of experience working on country houses in the Cotswolds and Warwickshire as well as ski chalets in the Alps and holiday homes in the Caribbean. With a resolutely contemporary bent, it has a meticulous attention to detail.

0121-622 7366; [www.wilkinsonbeven.com](http://www.wilkinsonbeven.com)

## Builders

**New-build country houses and extensions to listed or historically sensitive buildings require professional attention and specialist knowledge. It's worth spending just as much time choosing your builder as you do your architect.**

**Our recommendations for firms specialising in country houses are based on their craftsmanship and expertise in the fields of conservation, restoration and time-honoured building skills.**

**Collectively, the companies boast several hundred years of experience and many of them count skilled artisans within their teams. Testament to the strength of their reputation is that many of them are commissioned to work not only in the British Isles, but also by clients based overseas, who require the assurance of excellence.**

### Artichoke Ltd NEW FOR 2018

A specialist joinery designer for country houses (and traditional town houses) established by managing director Bruce Hodgson in 1990. The firm bridges the gap between architecture and interior design and makes all its fitted furniture, kitchens and interior joinery in its Somerset workshop.

01934 745 270; [www.artichoke-ltd.com](http://www.artichoke-ltd.com)

### Carpenter Oak

Award-winning builder of handcrafted oak-framed buildings, houses and extensions, examples of which have been shown on Channel 4's *Grand Designs*. Based in South Hams, Devon, the firm has a reputation for marrying modern technology and expertise with age-old skills and the team has completed a number of international projects, including a new-build house in the Dordogne and a swimming pool in St Petersburg, Russia.

01803 732900; [www.carpenteroak.com](http://www.carpenteroak.com)

### Oakwrights

This large company is based on the outskirts of Hereford and operates both nationwide and abroad. It's won multiple awards for the design and construction of all styles of oak-framed houses and buildings, in both traditional and contemporary styles.

01432 353353; [www.oakwrights.co.uk](http://www.oakwrights.co.uk)

### Prime Oak

This Staffordshire-based firm was founded in 1998 and, since then, it has won many awards and established a reputation for delivering innovative new products to the market, such as bi-folding doors and windows. Sister companies include oak-framer ➤



**The Tea Room at The Temple of Diana in the grounds of Weston Park, designed by Janie Money, associate director of Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler**



Emma Harris

**This Edwardian house was transformed by Ian Adam Smith architects (see page 100) and the building firm R. W. Armstrong**

Julius Bahn and the garden room and window supplier Montpellier.  
*Prime Oak: 01384 296611; www.primeoak.co.uk*  
*Julius Bahn: www.juliusbahn.co.uk; 03444 171400*  
*Montpelier: www.montpelierjoinery.com; 01384 279933*

**R. Durtnell & Sons**

This family-owned, family-run firm was founded in 1591, making it the oldest building group in the country. Last year, it won the contract to restore the Brighton Royal Pavilion. Based in Kent, the company undertakes every type of project from new-builds to alteration and renovation work, much of which is carried out by its in-house tradesmen.  
 01959 564105; <http://durtnell.co.uk>

**R. J. Smith & Co NEW FOR 2018**

Known for its work on high-end new-build projects as well as the repair, conversion and alteration of historic buildings, this Hampshire-based firm has worked with top architects including George Saumarez Smith of ADAM Architecture (see page 99).  
 01256 892276; [www.rjsmith.co.uk](http://www.rjsmith.co.uk)

**R. Moulding & Co**

A long-established Wiltshire-based residential building firm, its work is often featured on the cover of COUNTRY LIFE. Recently completed projects include a Grade II\*-listed house near Winchester, and the extensive restoration of an Elizabethan house in Wiltshire.  
 01722 742228; [www.moulding.co.uk](http://www.moulding.co.uk)

**R. W. Armstrong**

Family-run residential building firm with five offices across London and the South, specialising in new build and the refurbishment of period and country homes. Recent projects include the refurbishment of a Grade I\* listed Baroque manor house. Its conservation arm, Daedalus, has received RICS awards for four years running.  
 01256 850177; [www.rwarmstrong.co.uk](http://www.rwarmstrong.co.uk)

**Stevensons of Norwich**

This is the go-to firm for architectural mouldings for all periods of traditional buildings as well as the restoration of traditional plasterwork, cornices and ceiling roses, which are

all hand-cast. It's the only manufacturer licensed by the National Trust to produce decorative plasterwork.  
[www.stevensons-of-norwich.co.uk](http://www.stevensons-of-norwich.co.uk);  
 01603 400824

**Symm**

Based in Oxford, this family-owned firm carries out much of the highly specialist work itself, thanks to an in-house team. Residential projects include everything from alterations and full refurbishments on listed country houses to dramatic glass extensions for Victorian town houses in London.  
 01865 254900; [www.symm.co.uk](http://www.symm.co.uk)



**Stockton in Wiltshire has been carefully renovated with the help of R Moulding & Co**