

Spring interiors: what's new this season?



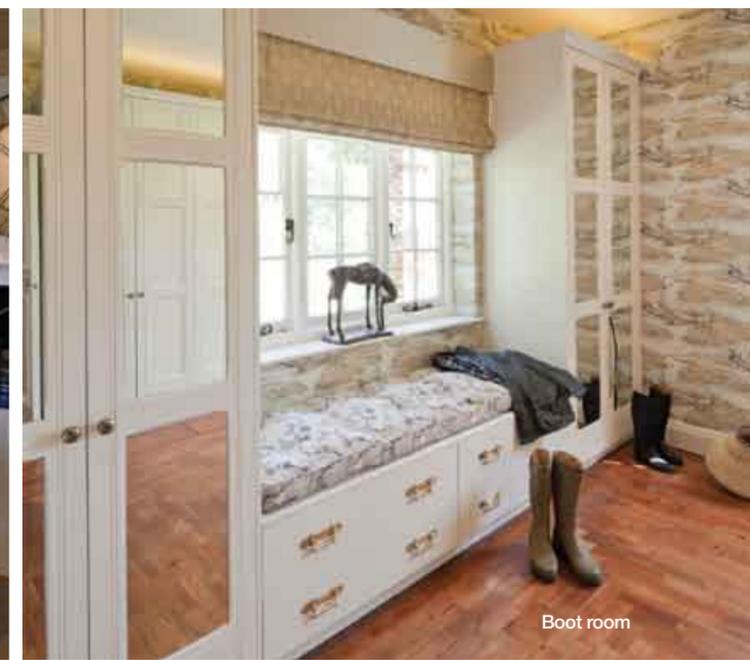
Kitchen



Bathroom



Dressing room



Boot room

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Concrete ideas

Grey and concrete may not sound like an ideal combination. But don't worry: these two current trends in interior design are actually far more tempting than they sound.

Let's start with greys: the in-colour for all kinds of homes. Crucially, it's the backdrop and complement to a whole range of brights, pastels and retro patterns that is the look to go for.

Concrete, meanwhile, is very much the material of the moment for the kitchen. From polished floors to worktops, concrete is practical – it withstands heat, resists scratching and is easy to clean, so is perfect for preparing food, and is surprisingly tactile.

It is typically full of uneven edges and naturally occurring imperfections that make it all the more appealing. Although it is often a feature of highly contemporary kitchens, it can also work well as part of a more traditional look, just as granite can.

Designers love it because it's so flexible: you can produce unique shapes to fit your space and there are a wealth of colour possibilities too, with the basic grey flecked or patterned with brighter hues. I recently used it in a family home in Hertfordshire, where the kitchen adjoins a conservatory, getting maximum light falling on to a gorgeous polished concrete work surface.

Sumptuous bathrooms

But rest assured that there are plenty of softer trends too – particularly when it comes to bathrooms. There's no clinical edge here: today's bathrooms are all about personality, with frieze tiles and distinctive wallpapers helping to create a room that's easy to relax in.

Don't shy away from unusual features either: I was delighted to have a fireplace in a bathroom I worked on recently, not only as a feature but because you knew it would be a lovely warm room. That bathroom also incorporated stunning tiling by James Galloway inside the shower cubicle.

Bespoke storage

Of course, if you're anything like me, the ability to relax relies on having a carefully planned storage space so that the bathroom doesn't get cluttered – you get to enjoy the clean lines and features, not a selection of shampoos and shower gels.

We're seeing more and more innovative storage solutions, not only for bathrooms but also throughout the home. Bespoke pieces that fit perfectly along the walls or into alcoves are well worth the investment: I've worked a lot with John Cook and Sons, who are wonderful joiners and really create something that is beautiful and distinctive, as well as functional.

Embrace your personality

Naturally, once you move into a world of bespoke furnishings, you expect them to stand the test of time rather than needing to ditch them as new trends emerge – which leads to my most fundamental piece of advice for interior trend-watchers. Yes, embracing the latest ideas can give your home a fresh look, but don't become a slave to it: the homes that people fall in love with are the ones that truly reflect the personality of their owners.

That normally means a blend of old and new, intriguing objects, stunning artwork and luxurious textures rather than a single design style. That, to me, is the



Hallway

essence of good design: creating a home that captures a personality and suits the people that live there.

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