

# HOME



## GARDEN PATHS

Monty Don on the surprising history of the British obsession with gardening p40

### TALKING HEADS

Alan Bennett's London neighbours reveal what it was really like to live with the Lady in the Van | p8

### GREAT WESTERN

Why southwest England is the housing market to watch | p22  
PLUS Should you go DIY with online agents?

### THROW OUT THE TARTAN

The new rules for cosy interiors this winter: think smart as well as snug | p34

Staying snug inside has never been so stylish. Opt for opulent velvets, soft lighting and natural materials – and chuck out the twee tartan, says **Katrina Burroughs**

**S**omething's up with the concept of cosiness this year – the goalposts have relocated from a place of tartan blankets and cable-knit cushions to more contemporary, aspirational territory. Used to be, as long as a room was snug and comfy, it was officially cosy. In the winter months, we would traditionally ease off on the styling; layering covered a multitude of sins. Now the season has arrived for cocooning again, and it turns out there's a little more effort involved than digging out the Slanket and buying in the firefighters.

I blame Monocle, the global lifestyle magazine that recently published a spectacular Guide to Cosy Homes. In its foreword, cosy is redefined as "the elegantly warm, the untouched and original; the perfectly lit". There's not a single mention of reindeer-print brushed cotton duvet covers – it's a catalogue of tranquil, architecturally interesting spaces from Rio de Janeiro to Tochi and Toronto, featuring flawless design in warm, natural materials.

What, though, if your home, like mine, is of minimal architectural merit and you do not have regular access to a private jet? The same philosophy applies. The non-Monocle classes, too, are steering away from twee takes on Scottish shooting lodges and Swiss chalets to find a cooler kind of cosy this winter. There are three golden rules

for all: no plaid, no ski chic and definitely no antlers.

According to Anne Line Hansen, the Danish founder of a new e-boutique, Esensual Living, the key to getting the look right is that it soothes all the senses. "In Denmark, we have a word for having a cosy time, *hygge*, which involves relaxing, often eating and drinking, all within a comfortable environment. Defining cosy, for me, is all about laid-back comfort and natural beauty in the form of seasonal flowers and soft lighting – lots of large tea candles that I bring back from my travels and place all over my flat. Radianee, from Woo, is my favourite."

Designers agree that getting your lighting right is crucial. "I love low lighting," says Sophie Amini, product designer at the decorative lamps label Pooky. "We moved house quite recently and there are spotlights everywhere – we just don't turn them on. It's not a pleasant light, it's not flattering. It's harsh."

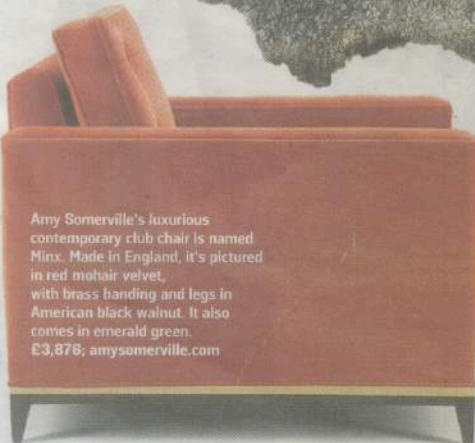
Amini, whose lamps have been bought in quantity by the Soho House chain, describes her aim when setting up the brand two years ago: "I wanted to create lamps that bring life and warmth to a room, making it homely and cosy. We spent hours and days and months torturing ourselves about the luminosity coming through the shades to make it warm and orangey, instead of cold and white."

The resulting shades, each with the perfect level of translucence, come in cotton, linen, parchment and silk, in plain or ikat pattern. No tartan.

The Fabulous Fleece Company has just added this silky-soft sheepskin to its range. It comes from a Gotland sheep; the shades of grey are natural markings. £120; [thefabulousfleececompany.co.uk](http://thefabulousfleececompany.co.uk)



Amy Somerville's luxurious contemporary club chair is named Minx. Made in England, it's pictured in red mohair velvet, with brass banding and legs in American black walnut. It also comes in emerald green. £3,876; [amysomerville.com](http://amysomerville.com)



# Bold comfort



Dressed up in veneer and velvet, John Lewis's cosy winter launches have an opulent edge. Pictured are the Puccini walnut-veneered cocktail cabinet (£1,999), Wendy Morrison's Jewels rug (£595) and the Furia Odyssey large sofa, in Marco Sapphire Blue velvet (£2,000). [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)

Handmade using natural ingredients, these beeswax candles from Woo (Worlds of Opportunities) come in salvaged vodka and wine bottles. From £12; [esensualiving.com](http://esensualiving.com)



It's the wool shade that makes the Lana table lamp so cosy. New from Pablo Designs, it comes in Stone Grey, Charcoal, Arctic Blue, Moss and Plum, and the height is adjustable. A small lamp (shade 28cm diameter) costs £243 on a white base or £251 in chrome, as shown; a large one (33cm diameter) costs £281 or £292. [pablodesigns.com](http://pablodesigns.com)





**TIMES+**

Three members will each win their own smoke house, perfect for creating delicious smoked food and drink at home. For your chance to win, visit [mytimesplus.co.uk](http://mytimesplus.co.uk)



Stockholm Horizon, a collection of enamelled aluminium bowls and vases inspired by the Swedish sky, is the latest launch from Stelton. Designed by Bernadotte & Kjellberg, the bowls range from 10cm diameter (£30) to 40cm (£200), and the vases from 118cm (£60) to 123cm (£180). [steltonshop.dk](http://steltonshop.dk)

Iran Dachtari, Simon Whitmore, Frédéric Ducast, John Bennett



What could be cosier than a woven willow basket? Cox & Cox has launched this log carrier in a grey wash, open at both ends to accommodate any length of firewood. £60; [coxandcox.co.uk](http://coxandcox.co.uk)

Full of surprises, Sofa.com (can you guess what it does?) has an unusual range of cushions, including the 50cm square Kashmir Embroidered Arrow. The cover is 100% wool and the decoration is chain stitch, embroidered by hand in India. £45; [sofa.com](http://sofa.com)



Plato is a classic copper and chrome light from Pooky. The warm metal finish means it's at home on a desk or on a bedside table. £165; [pooky.com](http://pooky.com)

Murmur is a new line from the Northern Irish firm Bedeck. Launched this year, it features calming monochromes, and the bed linen is the highlight. Dash linen, from £17 for a pillowcase; navy Sail throw, £120; Bud grey cushion, £55. [murmur.co.uk](http://murmur.co.uk)



The Hambledon butler's tray, in raw oak, has a removable top; the stand folds flat for storage. £125; [gardentrading.co.uk](http://gardentrading.co.uk)



**As individual as you are, we design for how you live**  
 GARDEN ROOMS | ORANGERIES | CONSERVATORIES | EXTENSIONS

For a brochure or to request a complimentary design consultation  
 CALL FREEPHONE 0800 288 8333  
 OR VISIT [www.arboreta-oak.com](http://www.arboreta-oak.com)

connect with us