

When it comes to giving your home an interiors makeover, it can be tricky to know where to start. To help guide us, the team behind this year's House & Garden Festival asked designers from the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID) to share the one redecorating tip they swear by.

Don't forget to plan

"Think about how the room is going to be used and what 'flow' would work best, then plan the furniture accordingly," says Anna Bilton of Anna Bilton Ltd. "Get a thorough understanding of the scale of the room to ensure that anything you propose is in keeping with the proportions of the space."

BIID president elect Gilly Craft, of Koubou Interiors, agrees. "Plan effectively and measure before you buy. You want to be sure the beautiful sofa you have chosen will get through the doorway."

Look for inspiration everywhere

Don't just look at magazines, Pinterest, Instagram feeds and interior boutiques for design ideas, says Natalie Cencelli of Mood London. "Be inspired by the different colours, textures and shapes found in nature, in cities and spaces and places that you come across. Inspiration is all around you - don't be afraid to look and implement what you see."

Bess Sturman of Sturman & Co asks clients to show her an item of personal significance, which she then uses as a starting point for her designs. "Find just one thing you love and build your home around it with care and discipline."

If you're at a loss over where to start, try putting together a scrapbook or photographic wish list of ideas and items for your project, suggests Angela Aston of Trinéire.

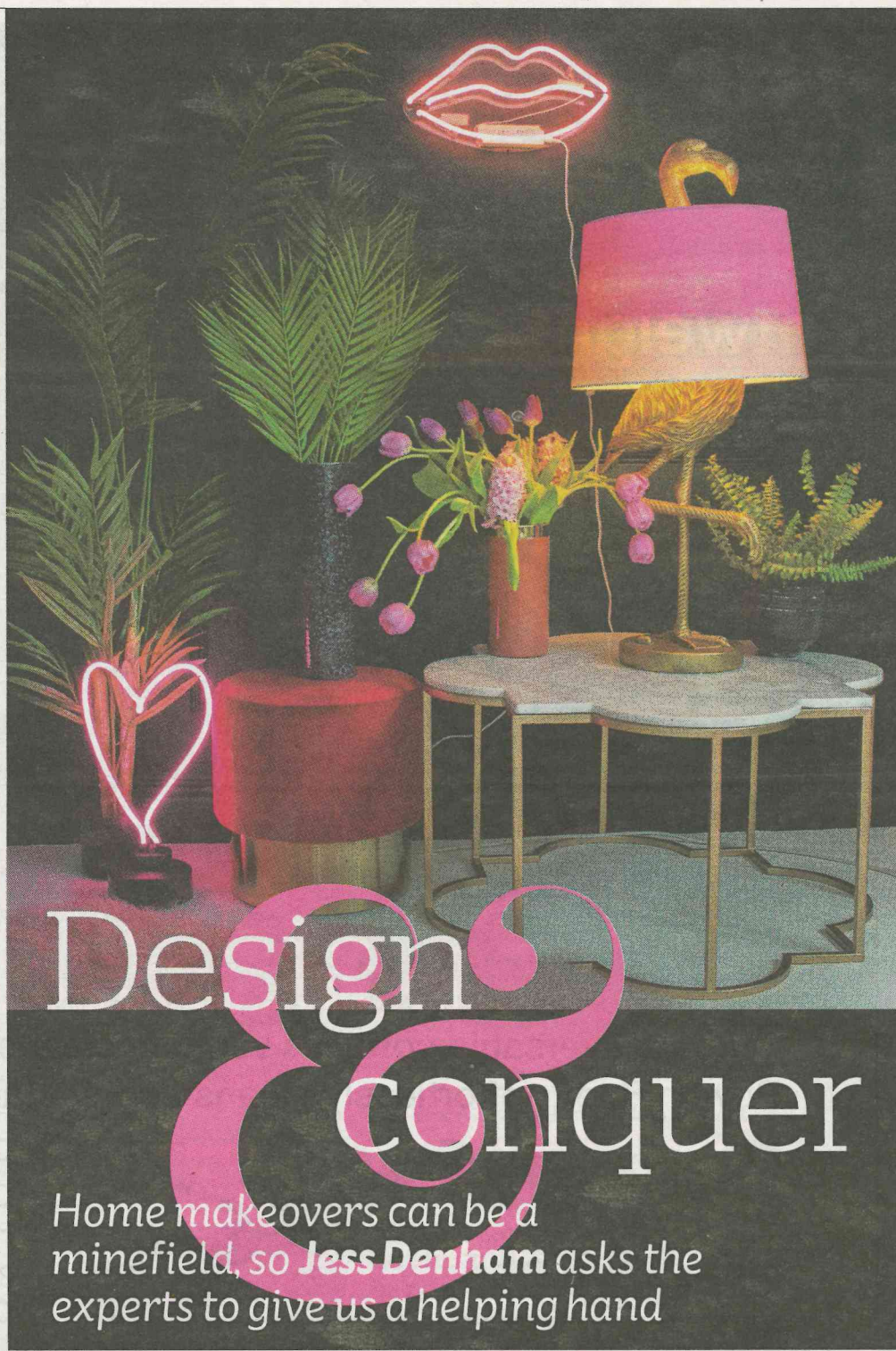
"It is also good to remember that both positive and negative feedback, what you like and what you don't like, play equal parts in achieving the perfect interior," she says.

Get the lighting right

Lighting is "absolutely key" to all design schemes, says Emma Green of Emma Green Design, who recommends mixing up wall lights, table lamps and candlelight.

"The worst thing you can do is have overly bright spotlights and place these in a row. Nobody wants to live on an airport runway. Instead, position downlights according to what you are actually lighting and remember to instal dimmers for creating different moods."

Emile Azan of Chameleon Designs recommends starting with a "daylight first" approach, using floor to ceiling glazing where possible and using glass-panelled doors and windows



Design & conquer

Home makeovers can be a minefield, so **Jess Denham** asks the experts to give us a helping hand

to borrow natural light from brighter rooms.

Invest in mirrors

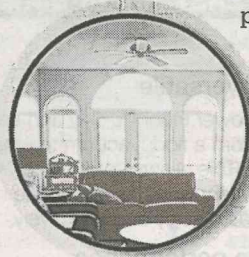
Mirrors are invaluable for creating the illusion of more space and reflecting light into darker corners. Nicola Burt of Nicola Burt Interior Design recommends hanging one above a console table in the hallway, both for checking your reflection and to visually widen the space (like the Umbra Hub, *inset*, available from hurnandhurn.com). "Your eye is pulled towards

the reflection, tricking you into thinking there is space beyond." She also suggests placing a mirror opposite a window with a pretty view to create another "window", while circular mirrors help soften a space with square or heavy furniture.

Be bold - even in small spaces

Emma Green feels strongly about colour, which can "lift a room to another level". She encourages DIY designers on a time and money budget to paint their walls in dark tones. "It adds instant warmth, depth and glamour and you will find that anything put against it will instantly ping. Even if you just

interior expertise: (main) bold accessories work well when set against a backdrop of dark tones. All available from audenza.com; (below) be sure to make sure there's space for your dream sofa. Available from darlingsofchelsea.co.uk

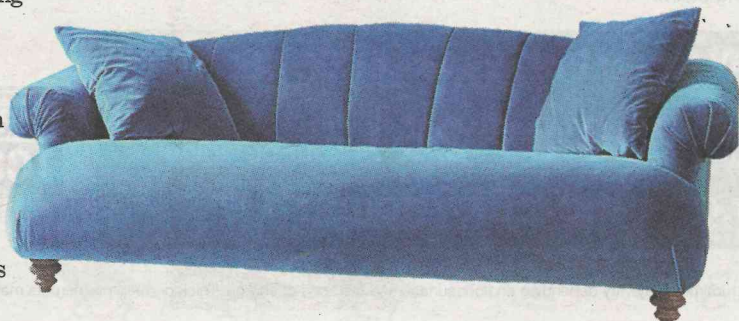


paint your woodwork darker than your wall (instead of the ubiquitous white gloss), you have an instant contemporary update."

Play around with heights, layers and textures, she adds. "Mix and match textures such as wool, velvet, linen and leather for depth and cosiness and retain any original period features such as cornicing, stained glass or tiles for curiosity and contrast." And it's a common misconception that small rooms need small furniture. "Don't be afraid of using large-scale pieces such as big sofas or artworks. Large furniture can make a room look much grander."

EVENING STANDARD

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The House & Garden Festival runs from 20-24 June at Olympia London

Five to view

Loughborough



BROWNING ROAD, LE11

Price: £145,000 **What they say:** This charming property has two reception rooms, both with windows to the rear elevation. There are three bedrooms and a family bathroom. Gated side access leads to an enclosed garden.



TIVERTON ROAD, LE11

Price: £230,000 **What they say:** This spacious three bedroom, link-detached home has a large reception room and modern fitted kitchen. There is an enclosed garden, off-road parking and access into the garage.



HILLCREST DRIVE, LE11

Price: £479,950 **What they say:** This extended home has four bedrooms, two en suite, and four reception rooms. The kitchen/diner has plenty of storage units, with integrated appliances and a substantial separate utility room.



DARWIN CRESCENT, LE11

Price: £125,000 **What they say:** This spacious two-bedroom flat is perfect for a first-time buyer or a buy-to-let. The main double bedroom has double fitted wardrobes. There is an allocated parking space.



ASHBY ROAD, LE11

Price: £400,000 **What they say:** This five-bedroom home has period features and a range cooker which also provides the central heating. There are two large reception rooms, two bathrooms, a garden and garage.