

Summer 2011

We have all enjoyed an early taste of summer this year so composing my latest newsletter is done with the help of sunlight to inspire me. I hope that the following will inspire you too.....?



Mentioning sunlight links to my first topic – and a wee word of caution. Mediterranean, Exotic or Caribbean colours will not look as they did on your holiday when transported home into our cooler Northern light.

That is not to say we can't give our homes a holiday-inspired décor scheme – it just requires a bit of know-how and restraint. Terracotta hues from Italy or Spain work really well in living and dining rooms. That fabulous bright blue of the Mediterranean sky and sea can be great with a wood kitchen, but beware of using it too liberally in a bathroom for fear of creating something more akin to Iceland than Greece!

Instead for bathrooms rely on nautical/beach themes to remind you of your summer holiday. Shells, sponges on ropes, carved fish and yachts are motifs and accessories available to get the look. Together with bright blue towels you will transported back to that Greek Island!



Be very careful too when using yellows. While we all associate this colour with sunshine, it is best used in soft rather than bright tones – yellow can be very tiring to live with if strong or bright. Similarly gold too often in paint can turn out a dowdy mustard when put on the wall. Use sand colours to achieve a pleasing gold shade and remind you of sandy beaches.

One easy way to inject bright colours and summery themes is to introduce some of this seasons "big" floral designs. Less is more on this for most people so stick to cushions, table cloths, feature walls etc so as not to overwhelm your interior spaces.

For further afield, more exotic inspiration look to embroidered silks and linens reminiscent of Asia and the Far East. These fabrics and motifs (Paisley patterns for instance) do have a lasting appeal as well as a seasonal one. Check out Kobe, Villa Nova, G P & J Baker for ideas as well as my website Soft Furnishings section at [www.sandralawsoninteriors.co.uk](http://www.sandralawsoninteriors.co.uk).

Designs inspired by nature are also to the fore just now and using these will give your home the "outside in" look but for all seasons. Designs with stylised leaf motifs and silhouetted trees or branches look truly serene. One feature wall in your kitchen/dining room of trees will capture that al fresco eating experience twelve months of the year.

Mentioning the outdoors brings me to my next summer subject- the exterior appearance of your home.

Summer is the best time of the year to paint front doors, window frames, exterior walls, fences and gates. To give your property kerb appeal look to ranges such as Dulux Weathershield so that you can co-ordinate your walls and woodwork. Remember to consider the neighbouring vernacular architecture and palette before choosing colours. I doubt your neighbours will appreciate Ice Cream Mediterranean or hot Caribbean colours applied to your property, not to mention the planning/heritage authorities!! Stick with native UK/Scottish tones for finishes.

Once you have the outside decided, take the opportunity to cast a critical eye over your hall (and stairs and landing). These are the places that take a bashing from family life but are the First Impression areas for visitors. Is your hall in a fit state to receive those visitors?

If not, while you are away for your two week holiday in the sun, get a decorator in to freshen up the hall, stairs and landing areas. These are very difficult areas for the DIY decorator to tackle as often scaffolding is required to reach the stairwell. In addition, as the hall leads to everywhere else in the home, it is very disruptive to normal family life. Having it all done while you are away is a really good plan for all concerned!



As this area is also the hardest one to get right décor wise calling in another expert is also a good idea. An Interior Designer will produce a décor scheme, organise and supervise the decorating while you are relaxing on the beach. Well worth considering – check out my website for details on how to book a Design Consultation via the Contact page. [www.sandralawsoninteriors.co.uk](http://www.sandralawsoninteriors.co.uk)

For a £90 fee I can produce a design scheme, book the decorator and order all required. Key holder and project over-see is also available at an hourly rate to give you peace of mind while on holiday.

If you are planning to stay at home with the kids this summer, then consider a clear-up day for the inevitable rainy day. Encourage all to de-clutter their rooms. Re-cycling and donating could be rewarded by the promise of a new (preferably outdoor) toy when no-longer wanted stuff is given to charity. Try rewarding yourself too with a new summer dress for unloved clothes donated to charity! The “man of the house” may be persuaded to clear out the garage/hut but I will leave you to the method of persuasion/bribery!

When all that is done head out into the garden as soon as the sun shows its happy face and light the barbeque. While the charcoal is heating up set the scene with bright coloured cushions and table/picnic ware and enjoy. Here in the garden most definitely the louder the better on colours, designs and fabrics to compliment the mid-summer blooms of nature.

Pour that cold drink and dream of hotter climes – enjoy!



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