

From decorating the Clooneys' Berkshire home to providing the final flourishes to photo shoots, interior stylist Hannah Cork knows exactly how to give a room the wow factor

WORDS **JESSICA JONZEN**

# The finishing touches



IMAGE: JOHN ORGAN



If you've ever looked at an interiors feature and wondered how they make it look 'just so', the answer is simple: with an interior stylist. From shoots for glossy magazines to advertising campaigns for brands, interior stylists piece the puzzle together, creating a space which looks perfectly put together, but also warm and inviting.

When George and Amal Clooney were looking for a quick décor fix for their Georgian home in Sonning, whilst they honeymooned back in 2014, they looked no further than Hannah Cork. The interior stylist, who has transformed properties for television programmes including *George Clarke's Old House New Home* and *Kirstie's Homemade Home*, as well as advertising campaigns and private clients, was recommended to the couple. 'They looked at my portfolio and we exchanged emails before we had a conference call on Skype. I was sitting in my flat in Hammersmith while they were by the pool in Lake Como!'

Cork had just two weeks to completely redecorate and style two living rooms, the kitchen, master bedroom and a guest bedroom. 'They wanted to make it comfortable so they could spend time there before the big renovation. I visited the property, put together some Pinterest boards for them with ideas and they said I'd hit the nail on the head,' she says. 'One living room was to be for guests and was very bold and rich with strong jewel colours, tropical fabrics and gold metallic accents. For the second living room, located upstairs, where the couple wanted to relax cosily in private, I combined a faded country house feel with historical Highland accents. Andrew Martin panelled wallpaper, a large and

beautifully faded red rug by Oka, historical maps on the walls, a wood-stacked fireplace, deep muted Graham & Green and Loaf sofas smothered in faux fur, velvet cushions and woven check throws all created the look.'

An interior stylist for eight years, Cork studied fine art at Nottingham Trent University before embarking on a career in event management. 'I was organising events all over the world, which was great, but not creative enough for me,' she says. It was when she bought and redecorated her own flat in Hammersmith that she fell into a new career. 'The recession hit and there was an opportunity to take voluntary redundancy, so I saw it as a perfect chance to work my way into styling.'

What's the difference between interior stylists and designers? 'There's quite a lot of crossover – stylist is more of an industry term. An interior designer comes in earlier in the project and will be able to advise on using the space, moving walls and so on. A stylist comes in a bit later to advise on paint colours, fabrics, furniture and the finishing touches; lighting that candle, as it were.'

Cork is constantly inspired by the work she does with her clients and plans to renovate her home this year. 'I'm looking to get some more rich, dark colour on the



IMAGES: JO HENDERSON FEATURING TAMASYN GAMBELL

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## INTERIORS



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walls. I've been using a lot of dark blue on walls for clients and it's a very contemporary look,' she says. Cork finds inspiration from a vast array of sources; from cinema carpet and London Underground tiles to far-flung travel. 'Travel, for me, is key to refuelling creativity,' she says. Thankfully, her work takes her across the globe so she is never short of inspiration.

It is Cork's job to respond to her client's brief and disparate tastes, but her aesthetic remains consistent. 'Colour, pattern and composition are really important to me. I'll take objects

from different periods and pair them with paint and fabrics in a very considered yet unexpected way, to successfully draw them together.'

Which three things can instantly transform a room? 'A rug layers up a room, gives it depth and can really anchor the space. Paint transforms a space – I'd always advise painting swatches as big as you can so you get a realistic idea of how the colour will work. The third item would be cushions; you can be quite bold with colour and pattern, but they won't dominate or be a permanent or vastly expensive fixture,' she advises.

And her interiors trend prediction for 2017? 'Dark olive green. I'm starting to use it quite a bit with private clients. It works beautifully with powder pink and

### Hannah Cork's Little Black Book

#### For interesting textiles

##### Cockpit Art Studio

This studio near Russell Square in London is a great incubator for designer-makers. Fanny Shorter and Tamasym Gambell are both textile designers based there whose work I really love.

[cockpitarts.com](http://cockpitarts.com)

#### For eclectic furniture and accessories

##### Graham & Green

They have a beautiful, eclectic mix of pieces.

[grahamandgreen.co.uk](http://grahamandgreen.co.uk)

#### Loaf

Their sofa styles are comfortable and relaxed and they have a huge range of fabrics. I selected the Bagsie sofa for the Clooneys upholstered in woven check wool by Johnston's of Elgin.

[loaf.com](http://loaf.com)

#### For rugs

##### The Rug Company

Their rugs are fantastic and they have all the designer names there, too. I selected a rug by Jonathan Saunders for the Clooneys.

[therugcompany.com](http://therugcompany.com)

#### For vintage furniture

##### The Old Cinema

This emporium on London's Chiswick High Road has fantastic pieces in great condition from all periods.

[theoldcinema.co.uk](http://theoldcinema.co.uk)

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## INTERIORS



### Sunbury Antiques Market at Kempton Racecourse

It's on every other Tuesday morning from 6.30am – go at the crack of dawn for the best finds!

[sunburyantiques.com](http://sunburyantiques.com)

### For lighting

#### Tom Raffield

He makes beautiful, handcrafted wooden furniture and lighting in Cornwall.

[tomraffield.com](http://tomraffield.com)

#### Naomi Paul

She makes stunning crocheted lighting, which is very sculptural, in bold shades.

[naomipaul.co.uk](http://naomipaul.co.uk)

#### Beth Lewis-Williams

She makes beautiful ceramic pendant lights which feature a relief of a landscape or architecture.

[bethlewiswilliams.com](http://bethlewiswilliams.com)

### For wallpaper

#### House of Hackney

Great for really edgy designs.

[houseofhackney.com](http://houseofhackney.com)

#### Timorous Beasties

Gorgeous unexpected prints.

[timorousbeasties.com](http://timorousbeasties.com)

#### Andrew Martin

I used his panelled wallpaper in the Clooneys' sitting room.

[andrewmartin.co.uk](http://andrewmartin.co.uk)

### For paint

#### Little Greene

They have a great range of colours.

[littlegreene.com](http://littlegreene.com)

#### Fired Earth

I love deep rich blues and their Carbon Blue is a great shade. They're not just for tiles!

[fireearth.com](http://fireearth.com)



IMAGE: (TOP) JOHN ORGAN FEATURING MATALAN (BOTTOM) JON AARON GREEN

dark blue - so two strong colours and a lighter one - to create a nice balance.'

Working with private clients offers Cork a different pace from styling for photography shoots. 'I get real satisfaction from knowing that someone is going to enjoy the space,' she says. 'Your surroundings are so important for your own wellbeing; they help you to feel comfortable and confident. That's a wonderful thing to be able to give to someone.'

[hannahcorkinteriordesign.co.uk](http://hannahcorkinteriordesign.co.uk)

'Dark olive green will be a big interiors trend for 2017. It works beautifully with powder pink and dark blue'

