

COUNTRY LIFE

An aerial photograph of a crowded beach. The top of the image shows the sandy shore with several people standing. Below the shore, the ocean is filled with numerous surfers, each with a brightly colored surfboard (red, blue, yellow, green). They are positioned in the surf, waiting for waves. The waves are breaking in a series of white, frothy lines across the frame. The water is a deep turquoise color. The overall scene is one of a busy, popular surfing spot.

EVERY WEEK

JUNE 14, 2023

SOS: Save our Surf

The battleground beneath the waves

NEW: Country Life's Little Green Book
Great ways to live well and sustainably
PLUS Wind-turbine architecture and no-spray gardening

Heart and soul

This year's WOW!house brings interior design to life, finds Giles Kime



The de Le Cuona twin bedroom by Christian Bense combines the simplicity of a safari tent with carefully curated eclecticism

WHAT brings inspiring interior design to life like nothing else? Well, actual interior design, of course, in all its three-dimensional, tactile, multicolour glory. The fact that opportunities for ordinary mortals to see the latter are rare was identified half a century ago with the launch of Kips Bay, the most successful and long-lived show-house in the US. Although there was an attempt to establish something similar in London, it never caught on, which makes last week's unveiling of the second WOW!house equally as exciting as the first.

With 18 rooms occupying more than 5,000sq ft, it's a challenge to make generalisations about a project of such depth and breadth, from the panoramic vistas of the entrance foyer that was dreamt up by Mark D. Sikes (whose client list included the Bidens, no less) to a kitchen that has been elevated

‘Interior design has the capacity to transform our lives’

beyond the merely functional thanks to a collaboration between luxury kitchen specialist Martin Moore and Henry Prideaux. And in between? There's Nicky Haslam's appositely named Legend Room, Vanessa Macdonald's happy marriage of classic and contemporary and the gem that is the bathroom designed by Barlow & Barlow for Drummonds.

As well as the breadth, there is also the fathomless depth to consider; the almost imperceptible details that combine to create a whole that is infinitely greater than a sum of the parts. There are lots of them here; the sinuous curves of the shower surround in the

Drummonds bathroom, the braid-edged linen that forms canopies that hang above the pair of single beds in the de Le Cuona bedroom by Christian Bense, the flatweave Christopher Farr rug that mimics wood grain in De Gournay's Morning Room by Waldo Works and Simon Orrell's relief panels in the Martin Moore kitchen designs by Henry Prideaux.

The WOW!house is more than a source of inspiration. It's a demonstration of how and why interior design, of all creative endeavours, is not only one of the most multifaceted, it is also the one that has the capacity to transform our experience of our daily lives. Recognition of this fact is this year's charity partner, TP Caring Spaces, which was launched by the interior designers Bunny Turner and Emma Pocock, who are using their design expertise to transform utilitarian therapy and respite-care spaces into havens for carers and patients. ➔