

PERIOD LIVING

CELEBRATING CLASSIC HOMES AND TIMELESS STYLE

MARCH 2024

Colour confidence

BE INSPIRED BY BEAUTIFUL HOMES FULL OF UPLIFTING
PALETTE AND PATTERN COMBINATIONS

**HAPPILY
ORGANISED**

FIND A PLACE
FOR EVERYTHING
WITH CLEVER
STORAGE

DELICIOUS HUES
GO BOLD WITH
PAINTED KITCHEN
CUPBOARDS

**SMALL
WONDERS**

BRING YOUR
GARDEN TO
LIFE WITH
DWARF BULBS

Plus

- EASTER CRAFTS & TABLE STYLING
- FLOORING IDEAS FOR EVERY SPACE
- WET ROOM DESIGN TIPS

SPRING GREENS

HOW TO DECORATE WITH VERSATILE AND CALM SHADES OF SAGE

FUTURE

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TEXTILE TALES

Ancient & modern

The oldest and arguably most sustainable fabric, linen is beloved by many for its incredible versatility, and its potential in regenerative agriculture sees a new dawn of reverence

Linen is our longest-serving woven textile. Created from the fibres of flax plants – grown from seed and harvested around 100 days later when their blue flowers are in bloom – it has been used for every purpose, modest to majestic; from grain sacks to monogrammed trousseau.

The oldest known flax fibres were excavated from a cave in the Caucasus region in 2009 and date back to 34,000 years ago. Today, linen continues to be prized for its drape, handle and robust yet relaxed use in interiors, in the form of curtains, upholstery, bedlinen, kitchen linens and bathroom towels.

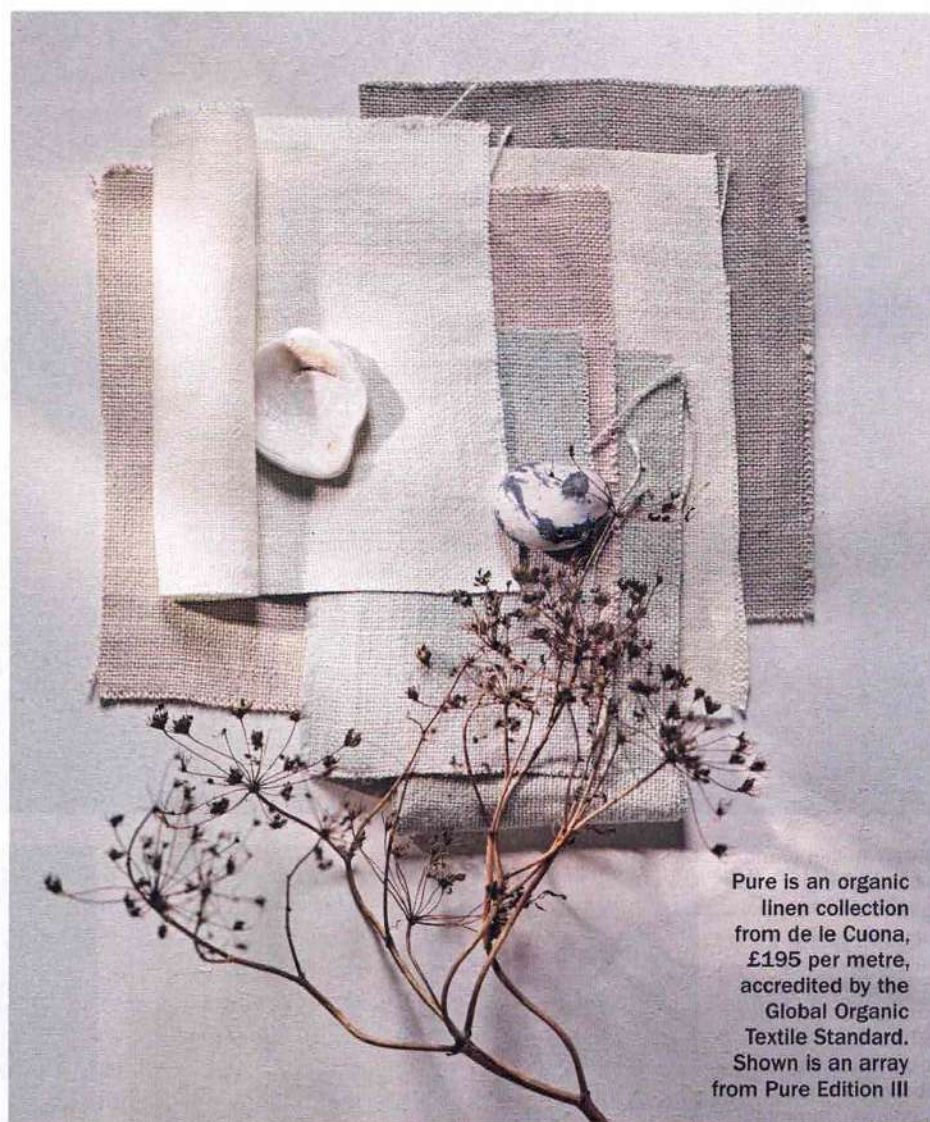
For the love of linen

Less water-hungry as a crop than cotton, almost bobble and lint-free, and suitable for a vegan lifestyle – unlike wool and silk – linen is a natural textile that quietly fulfils a host of modern requirements. Moisture absorbent yet quick to dry, it has anti-bacterial qualities and is thermo-regulating. It has low elasticity – hence its reputation for wrinkling in clothing – but this is not problematic for either upholstery weaves or lighter cloth for curtaining.

Those who understand and champion linen do so with fervour and respect. Gigliola Castellini Curiel, head of marketing and development at C&C Milano reveals: 'Linen is our company's ambassador: the fabric that most represents our aesthetics and values. It is venerable but modern; elegant and anti-allergenic; absorbent and thermal; strong and longstanding; natural and ecologically friendly; exclusive yet with a very "relaxed" look. It also becomes even more beautiful wash after wash.'

Soil to soil

Like good wine, fine linen improves with age. Although we tend to think of *terroir* about vineyards, *terroir* and textiles can also go hand in hand: the most desirable linen is similarly dependent on topography. Sun, soil,



Pure is an organic linen collection from de le Cuona, £195 per metre, accredited by the Global Organic Textile Standard. Shown is an array from Pure Edition III

minerality, weather conditions and water all help or hinder the strength, length, colour, character and yield.

Textile archivists at the V&A advise that 'the rich soil and frequent rain of northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands uniquely suit the flax plant – *Linum usitatissimum* – resulting in the highest quality flax and linen.

'While other countries, including China and Canada, do grow flax, the need for irrigation, fertilisers, and pesticides negates many of the plant's considerable environmental benefits. Today, the European Union grows 70 per cent of all flax produced.'

For Bernie de Le Cuona, one of the industry's most respected and knowledgeable linen experts and founder of de Le Cuona, only flax from Flanders will do. 'Flanders is flax country. It is where the best flax comes from due to the special soft climate, which allows the plant to grow tall. Some fibres are farmed specifically for de Le Cuona, and working with select farmers means we keep track of the entire process of production from the moment the seeds are planted to the finished linen fabric,' she explains.

Cultivating such close, long-term working relationships was pivotal in ►