

LIFE

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A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

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LIFE PROPERTY

Enjoy the holidays all year round

We've all been tempted by markets full of exotic treasures; here **Maria Fitzpatrick** shows how to incorporate them with class

With August comes the chance to travel and feast our senses on other lifestyles and cultures. Then we return home and try to prevent the memories from fading as fast as our tan lines – those exotic markets piled high with textiles and treasures, rustic villas with terracotta tiles and cool stone walls, and wispy summer-white curtains twisting in the breeze bring summer to life.

It's no wonder that so many of us come back determined to inject a sense of adventure into our homes, and interior designers and retailers in the UK are increasingly helping us to extend the holiday feeling, using their own overseas expeditions to snap up the "finds" we had to leave out of our luggage.

"We have spent over a decade travelling the globe looking for inspirational colours, textures and patterns," says Lucinda Waterhouse, the founding director of Oka (okadirect.com). "It's clear that people are much more experimental with style than in previous years, due to new and exciting ideas from overseas being mixed with traditional concepts."

If anyone knows how to capture a sense of place, it's photographer David Magee, who has travelled all over the world, exploring beauty and drama on different continents.

Over the years he has taken many business trips to southern India and Sri Lanka, and developed an affinity with that part of the world.

As a result, his London home, between Streatham and Tulse Hill, is "reminiscent of overseas living", with a distinctive flavour of India.

London brick is gently warmed with intricately woven wall-hangings, and he has even hand-carved his own version of a traditional wooden bed from Kerala, which inspired his passion for "places that are very coastal and full of palm trees".

The balanced design of his home is a masterclass in using a light touch with travel-inspired decoration. This is crucial as, if you mimic one particular overseas style in forensic detail in a British home, you can easily end up with a souvenir "stage set" that is memorable for the wrong reasons.

"It's important not to try to 100 per cent replicate China or India or New England in a home, using every

reference you can lay your hands on," says Maurizio Pellizzoni, chief designer for interior and architecture firm MPD London (mpdlondon.co.uk), who has recently created a Hamptons-inspired interior in a Surrey mansion.

"Your home is not a showcase or a museum, and we also have a very particular light, weather and environment.

"I always think carefully about what can be communicated with the base materials and colour palette, and how that can be adapted in winter by adding an extra accent colour – and I add a surprise reference or two that's not 'on theme', to keep the space authentically homey."

Antoinette McWilliams-Gray and her husband David took an organic approach by building Ossicles, an "internationally inspired" five-bedroom home in Oxfordshire.

"We're quite nomadic, really," David explains. "We've always immersed ourselves and tried to fully absorb the design in the places we've visited; it's often the factor that creates the most personality and atmosphere, and we've brought lots of those influences home with us."

The couple worked with the architect Stephen Tait at Spratley Studios (spratley.co.uk) to create a double-height living area with a mezzanine floor overlooking the forest around their home, inspired by structures and views in Connecticut and Florida.

They chose natural materials for the flooring, walnut and mahogany inspired by the luxury materials in prestigious developments in Asia; marble for "its calming, soothing texture associated with wellbeing in Thailand"; slate from Ireland; and large areas of glass reminiscent of contemporary coastal homes they admired in Phuket.

Dotted around are beautiful objets d'art and pieces of furniture, proving that foreign curiosities can work with a minimalist English canvas. "Every element has a memory associated with it," David says. "They're great conversation pieces as well as decoration, and together they tell the story of our life."

For others, the highlights of that story happen closer to home. The recent refurbishment of Sara Dyer's three-bedroom house on King's Avenue, in Clapham, south London,



Home and away: the Hamptons-style interior created by Maurizio Pellizzoni speaks of understated elegance, top; the internationally inspired Ossicles in Oxfordshire, right; picture-perfect Hillside Road, left; and King's Avenue, inset

has managed to create the "wind in your hair" feeling of a seaside retreat in Norfolk, where she spent her childhood holidays.

Using a light, bright palette, clean lines and a hint of seaside texture, it was designed with "a calming energy" in mind. The coastal hints are kept to white shutters, hints of blue upholstery and accessories, subtly striped Osborne & Little fabrics, and an authentic sleepy

seaside town mood in the bedrooms – all brown antique furniture against airy whitewashed walls.

But the real highlight is the effect from the extended kitchen and dining room, where you can look out the open French windows on to a 31ft landscaped pebble "beach" with a decorative Norfolk-made beach hut at the end, a reminder on grey London days that summer is never too far away.

FOR SALE

- 11 Hillside Road, London SW2, at £1.25m with Hamptons International (020 7738 7622, hamptons.co.uk).
- Ossicles is for sale at £2.95m through Hamptons (01491 572 215).
- Sara Dyer's house on King's Avenue, London SW4, is for sale through Douglas & Gordon at £995,000 (020 8675 4400, douglasandgordon.com).

THE WANDERLUST LIST

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Habitat has a range of wonderfully earthy stoneware and ceramics in evocative hues, such as the Almada mug, £7.50, all made by artisans in Spain and Portugal (habitat.co.uk).

TROPICS

Clarissa Hulse has created a new collection of seven fabrics inspired by the tropical plants on the Caribbean island of Grenada; cushions £35 each, above (clarissahulse.com). Those with a serious sense of adventure could opt for Parker & Farr's Storyteller

sofa, £3,245, upholstered to convey a "tranquil tropical paradise", or re-create the vivid flora and fauna of the Amazon with new wallpaper from themintlist.com.



FRANCE

For old-fashioned chateau charm, look to the French Bedroom Company's Bonaparte furniture, including an ornately carved China-blue mahogany bed, £2,570 (frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk).

SOUK CHIC

Go for the vibrant Turkish

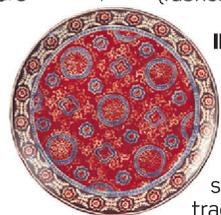
rugs in a range of weaves and colours, at themintlist.com, or a Marrakech decorative serving plate, below, for the table or wall, £16 at Oka (okadirect.com).

BRAZIL

New Brazilian furniture brand TOG, which is exclusive to Heal's, will be available on its new Designer Furniture floor at Tottenham Court Road as part of the London Design Festival 2014 (September 13-21). We particularly love the stackable Joa Sekoya chair, £140 (heals.co.uk).

GREECE

Fabrics & Papers has produced a beautiful bespoke range of cushions suitable for indoors and outdoors using Osborne & Little's contemporary Ionia fabric collection, £150 each (fabricsandpapers.com).



INDIA

Mahout Lifestyle's fair-trade dhurries (rugs), which showcase the skilled weaving traditions of Indian craftsmen and their clever use of colour, are woven in Rajasthan, from £55 (mahoutlifestyle.com).

