

COUNTRY LIFE®

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EVERY WEEK

Puss in books: the nine lives of literary cats



What your socks say about you
How St James's pelicans caused a Cold War crisis



Fun on the floor

The interiors visionary Kit Kemp has launched a collection of carpets

NEWs that the carpet on the saloon staircase at Althorp in Northamptonshire has been replaced after 170 years of sterling service to the Spencer family should have a sobering effect on anyone who regards interior design as a transitory, fashion-driven business. The creeping, media-driven ‘black is the new white’ approach to interior design isn’t just responsible for a gradual erosion of quality, it’s also behind a growing proportion of perfectly serviceable furniture, flooring and accessories ending in up landfill.

Describing new ranges in the breathless language of fashion magazines sows the seeds of discontent among those who are easily swayed. The environmental impact is grim; a stair carpet, sofa or kitchen has a far greater carbon footprint than a sparkly dress from Zara.

Choosing a look that you like and sticking with it is the hallmark of aesthetic confidence. Examine the work of the world’s greatest interior

designers and you’ll find that it rarely evolves dramatically. Boring? Intractable? A symptom of creative block? None of these—they simply have an aesthetic language that’s highly personal, can’t be improved upon and is utterly immune to the whim of fad and fashion.

‘Kit Kemp’s instincts are her greatest resource’

One of these is Kit Kemp, the creative force behind some of London’s (and two of New York’s) most inspiring hotels, whose instincts are her greatest resource. Her recent decision to join forces with Wilton Carpets to create a patterned collection wasn’t precipitated by the recommendations of a trend forecaster. Instead, it was an opportunity to do for carpets what she’s

done for travellers: offer a more thrilling alternative.

The nine designs address one of the interior designer’s biggest problems—there’s a danger that a floor can be one of the duller parts of a scheme. Patterns range from discreet herringbones to more graphic architectural designs that make a bolder statement, yet her experience as a designer means that, however distinctive, they all have the capacity to blend effortlessly into a room. Predictably, her influences are wide-ranging—ethnic textiles, traditional weaves and the natural world.

Although the Wilton Carpet factory is knee deep in history (it’s been making carpets for 400 years and still operates several 100-year-old looms), the technology behind this range is cutting edge, enabling the designer to create subtle effects and gradations of colour. The results, needless to say, are impressive—as is the fact that the launch isn’t being trumpeted as the beginning of a trend. 



Kit Kemp’s new range for Wilton Carpets (01722 746000, <https://wiltoncarpets.com>)