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Sometimes.

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HOME

INTERIORS

The Clooneys hired a stylist for a quick honeymoon decor fix, but they're not just for A-listers, says **Katrina Burroughs**

What do cash-strapped homeowners have in common with design-loving A-listers? Two words: interior stylists. Celebs have long engaged expert help to zhuzh up their des res, alongside fashion stylists to create their personal look. Now, we civilians are discovering that there's an option for an inexpensive refresh of our homes, rather than a total revamp, and stylists are set to take over from traditional interior designers as our favourite fixers.

The difference between styling and interior design is time and money: styling takes less of both. It can be swift and seasonal or fun and temporary. Rooms can be styled for summer, for a party – or for a honeymoon. When George and Amal Clooney returned from their

Hannah Cork has given this room a lift with bright colour and contemporary accessories. Picture shows Alhambra pendant (£99; atkinandthyme.co.uk), Aubusson Blue paint, by Annie Sloan (£19 a litre; chalkinteriors.com), Sunshine coffee table (£495; loaf.com) and Orson sofa (£499; made.com). hannahcorkinteriordesign.co.uk



John Dwyer, Ray Riley, Austin Dwyer, Getty Images



wedding to their new house in Berkshire, the interior stylist Hannah Cork had transformed a suite of rooms into a cosy, characterful nest where the couple could begin married life.

"I was working on their place while they were in Italy, getting it ready for them to come home," says Cork, who styled the rooms in the current Channel 4 series George Clarke's Old House, New Home. "They had bought their beautiful Georgian house in Sonning, and it was empty. They wanted to spend some time there, and for it to be comfortable, then to make plans for the big renovation.

My brief was to furnish two living rooms, the kitchen, the master bedroom and the guest bedroom. In two weeks."

An interior stylist for eight years, Cork has worked with TV's biggest design names, including Kirstie Allsopp and Mary Portas. Over the past two years, she has been asked to do an increasing number of "refreshes" for private clients: "People are realising that you can change your home without scrapping it all."

She says that if homeowners need a quick fix or temporary makeover – or both, as in the Clooneys' case – a stylist, rather than an interior designer, is suited to the job

because they routinely work to hair-raising deadlines. "The pace of TV is really fast. You need to do a site visit, assess and think. 'What do I need to make this look really fantastic, quickly?'"

The starting point for a project is often the homeowner's prized possessions, which the stylist will work into the scheme, but the Clooneys brought nothing to the house bar a few framed photos. In the kitchen, Cork spotted a bright yellow Aga, left by the last owner. "That became my anchor," she says. "The Clooneys loved it, so I styled the kitchen around it.

"I asked them to send me inspirational images of interiors. It turned out they liked a good mix of old and new pieces, and a style that looked as if it had developed over time, and you'd collected on your travels. Beautiful, but not shiny. So they sent me the inspirational images, and 24 hours later, I sent moodboards and we Skyped. Them in Com, me in my flat in Hammersmith."

The power couple loved Cork's ideas and gave her scheme the greenlight. So she began repainting the lofty Georgian rooms and sourcing candles to fill them. "They had a huge wedding to focus on, so I had to move forward on my own with what I thought would work."

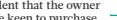
"I called on all my contacts and said, 'If you are able to loan me these pieces, I'm going to style them into a beautiful house. I'm confident that the owner will be keen to purchase



Hannah Cork created a honeymoon suite for George and Amal Clooney



▲ This interior by Cork has walls painted in Farrow & Ball Calamine and a Butterfly pendant (£365; tomraffield.com)



The look of love

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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► Velvet Inferno cushion from House of Hackney, in teal (60cm square). £148; houseofhackney.com

→ them, and you'd be thrilled to have them on your client list. "Without any idea of whose house they were supplying, retailers said: "Fine." Such is the pull of the power stylist.

Because of the extreme time pressure of the project, most pieces were ready-made and available in the shops. Pleasingly, if readers so desire, they can buy the Clooneys' honeymoon look from Timorous Beasties, Little Greene, House of Hackney and Oka.

Cork remembers one item was exclusive at the time, though it's now available to all. "I showed them Jonathan Saunders's Nouveau rug, which he designed for the Rug Company, and they loved it. It had only just been released, and that was the first property it went into."

Sera Hershman-Loftus, an interior designer and stylist who has her own range of boadilo-style cushions, furniture, wallpapers and lampshades, specialises in sexing up the homes of stylish celebs, including Sadie Frost, Frances Ruffelle, Eliza Doolittle and Pearl Lowe. She says: "I do a lot of styling for my clients, as well as the full-on interior-decor service. For example, when I worked for Patsy Kensit, after I finished her house, she would ask me to come over just to style her perfume bottles on her dressing table."

Hershman-Loftus lifts tired interiors with plants and scents, and switches textiles and lighting according to the season. "My clients like to have a summer home and a winter home, without the expense of redecorating. I change the furnishings by

making summer loose covers such as white linens or white denims."

Soon to begin filming the fourth series of The Great Interior Design Challenge, the stylist Sophie Robinson says: "I'd hate to feel, after I'd decorated, that a room was 'done' and you wouldn't think to change anything. My interior spaces are like a playground for me to be creative — I'm forever changing the way I style them."

She encourages constant reinvention. "My favourite trick is to create a gallery wall by collecting all your pictures together and displaying them in one place. They have so much more impact this way."

Now a quick remix can be ordered as easily as an Uber, with the launch of an entirely online interiors service, Decology. Its founder and chief executive, Sharon Costi, ex-Apple and John Lewis, has created a platform that offers e-design and styling, starting at £250. "For a few hundred pounds, a stylist will take your existing pieces and weave a new story with them, filling in the blanks with expertly selected items that complement what you already have," she says.

"They know where to find that one piece that will bring it all together, just like a personal shopper." Great idea. Worth rolling out the red carpet for.



▲ Napoleon Bee velvet cushion by Timorous Beasties (65cm square). £108; timorousbeasties.com

GET THE CLOONEY STYLE

▲ Nouveau, by Jonathan Saunders for The Rug Company, is made from hand-knotted Tibetan wool. £985 a sq metre; therugcompany.com

Citrine is a bold paint colour from Little Greene. £38 for 2.5 litres of Absolute Matt emulsion; littlegreene.com

◀ Here's a glam combination of distressed metal and antiqued mirror glass in a compact tripod table from Oka, called Triomphe. £295; oka.com



◀ The Deep Dream sofa, designed by Jamie Graham, of Graham & Green, is upholstered in Vintage Green velvet, with beech legs. From £1,795; grahamandgreen.co.uk

► A simple rehanging of favourite photos and artworks can bring freshness to a hallway and create an impact. Here is Sadie Frost's staircase, featured in Sera Hershman-Loftus's book, *Seductive Interiors* (DICO £30). To find out more about Hershman-Loftus's design service, visit seraoflondon.com



Boho Loft



Ros Calver

► Based in Glasgow, Louise Bramhill does 'restyles', where people want to refresh a room or add pops of colour. Picture shows bespoke cushions in Kansai velvet, in Zinnia colourway (£130 a metre; blackeddition.com); and in Nina Campbell Cantabria moiré velvet, in Eucalyptus colourway (£89 a metre; osborneandlittle.com). The table, from Novamobili, Italy, is available for £300 at louisebramhillinteriors.com



Nade Smith Photography

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Natasha Price

► Costi's bedroom features bed linen from West Elm, and cushions and throws from Anthropologie and Caravane. The Game wall lights are by House Doctor (£125 each; trouva.com) and the walls are painted in Farrow & Ball All White Estate Emulsion (£39.50 for 2.5 litres; farrow-ball.com)

