

AN EYE FOR DETAIL

Tor Saer, founder of Westcot House, chats to **Hester Grainger** about why upholstery is becoming so popular and talks about one of her stunning projects in Oxfordshire



Tell us about Westcot House

Westcot House has developed through word of mouth and commissions. As well as handmade curtains and blinds, I offer a full range of upholstery services including padded headboards that can be made to order in any shape, size and fabric. Bed valances and cushions of various styles add the finishing touch. We also have a growing library of fabric and trimming books by a wide range of designers.

Tell us about your upholstery

Chairs can be given a new lease of life. Sofas can either be reupholstered or we can make them from scratch. You get to choose your own size, design and fabric. Customers have chosen sofa shapes, adapting them to suit their lifestyle. An additional footstool, for example, can act as a "chaise" end.

Padded headboards are also a wonderful way to finish off a bedroom scheme. Using fabulous fabrics, headboards are also made from scratch and special commissions are increasingly popular. An unusual shape, covered buttons or simple piping, give an elegant look to plain fabrics.

Talk us through cushion and curtain trends

The "Oxford" style cushions with a flat border on each side are becoming increasingly popular. We make cushions of all shapes and sizes. Whether you want to

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match existing covers on a sofa, add colour to a children's bedroom or create a special gift, there is something in our range for everyone. They can even be piped or finished with beads or bobbles.

All curtains and blinds are bespoke and made to measure by hand, in gorgeous fabrics chosen with care. Curtains are made using traditional methods with handmade headings giving an elegant finish. Fully interlined with buckram heading, we use traditional interlocking methods so that they hang beautifully. Many headings are available, from traditional triple or double pleat to the more informal "cottage top" heading.

Tell us about The Grange

The Grange was rebuilt from the old rectory on 1842. You can find it in the pretty village of Upper Tadmarton, near Bloxham, about 25 miles north of Oxford. It's steeped in history, and Grade II listed. The house has now undergone a complete transformation

making it a unique home for a young family and bringing it right into the 21st century. The owners were keen to retain as many original features as possible, including elegant tall sash windows and flagstone floors. But they were also keen to transform it into a practical but comfortable home for their family which includes three young boys and a yellow labrador.

The interiors were designed by Fiona Crole and the soft furnishings were made and supplied by myself. Many of the furnishings have been collected by the owners through their years of living and working in the Far East. This resulted in an eclectic and unique mix of old, new, east and west.

How did you choose the furnishings for each room?

In the kitchen (originally the dining room) the tall windows leading on to the garden are a focal point. I used full length curtains in Titley & Marr's Paisley fabric in french grey →



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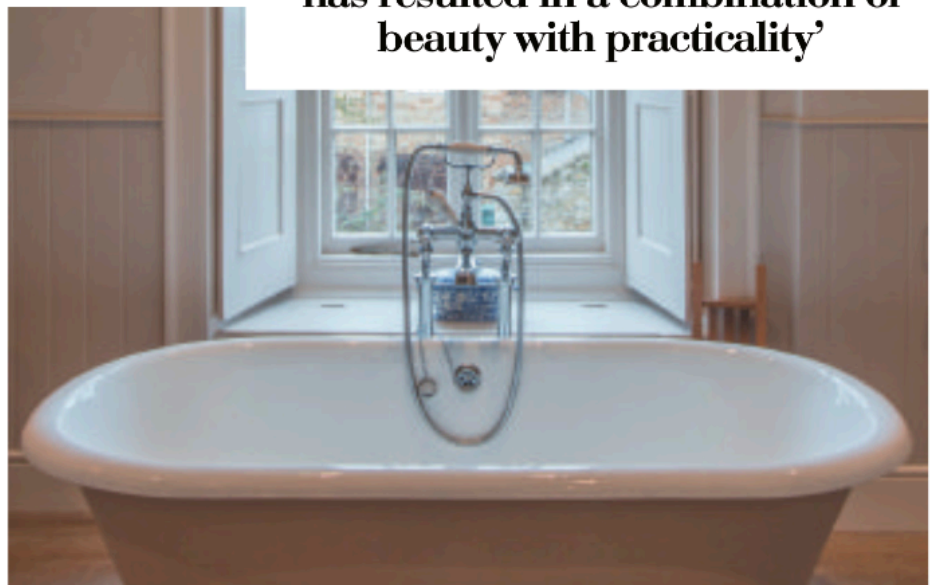
to give a calm restful feel, while pops of colour were provided by the chair cushions in Romo’s Linara. I wanted to choose shades of orange and yellow, to match the owner’s paintings. Mixing fabrics from the owner’s existing cushions, created a completely unique look.

The snug leads directly from the kitchen and in contrast to the pale whites and greys, a warm orange theme permeates there. The curtains in Tissus d’Helene basketweave fabric with a deep warm orange border, and cushions in fabrics by Rapture & Wright helped to break up the solid blocks of colour.

Jane Churchill’s “Nuri” fabric in blues and greens brought a contemporary feel to the drawing room and the poles by Walcot House with their glass finials, drew attention to the height of the windows. The owner decided to replace the original carpet with a wooden floor and so a bespoke rug tied the colour scheme together and added softness. The blue theme was picked up in the sofa fabric and a gentle yellow introduced with sofa cushions in a geometric design by Veere Grenney.

When it came to the bedrooms, having three boys in the family means that the master bedroom is a haven of restful pinks. I added relaxed linen curtains in the bedroom and dressing room in a soft pink linen by Tissus d’Helene. In the family bathroom an elegant freestanding bath in front of a window featuring Rapture & Wright’s Guadeloupe fabric, means that calm pervades.

The boys opted for shades of blue, red



and beige, with a favourite reading spot being the window seat in red and beige check. They all have bespoke headboards in striped fabrics by Ian Mankin and piles of cushions to complete the look.

We thought through the smallest detail – the blinds in the utility room, in Christopher Farr’s “Carnac Lemon” bring a slice of sunshine to life in the laundry. Throughout this house the clever use of colour and fabrics has resulted in a combination of beauty with practicality. ①

Tor Saer
westcothouse.co.uk
 I: @westcthouse

