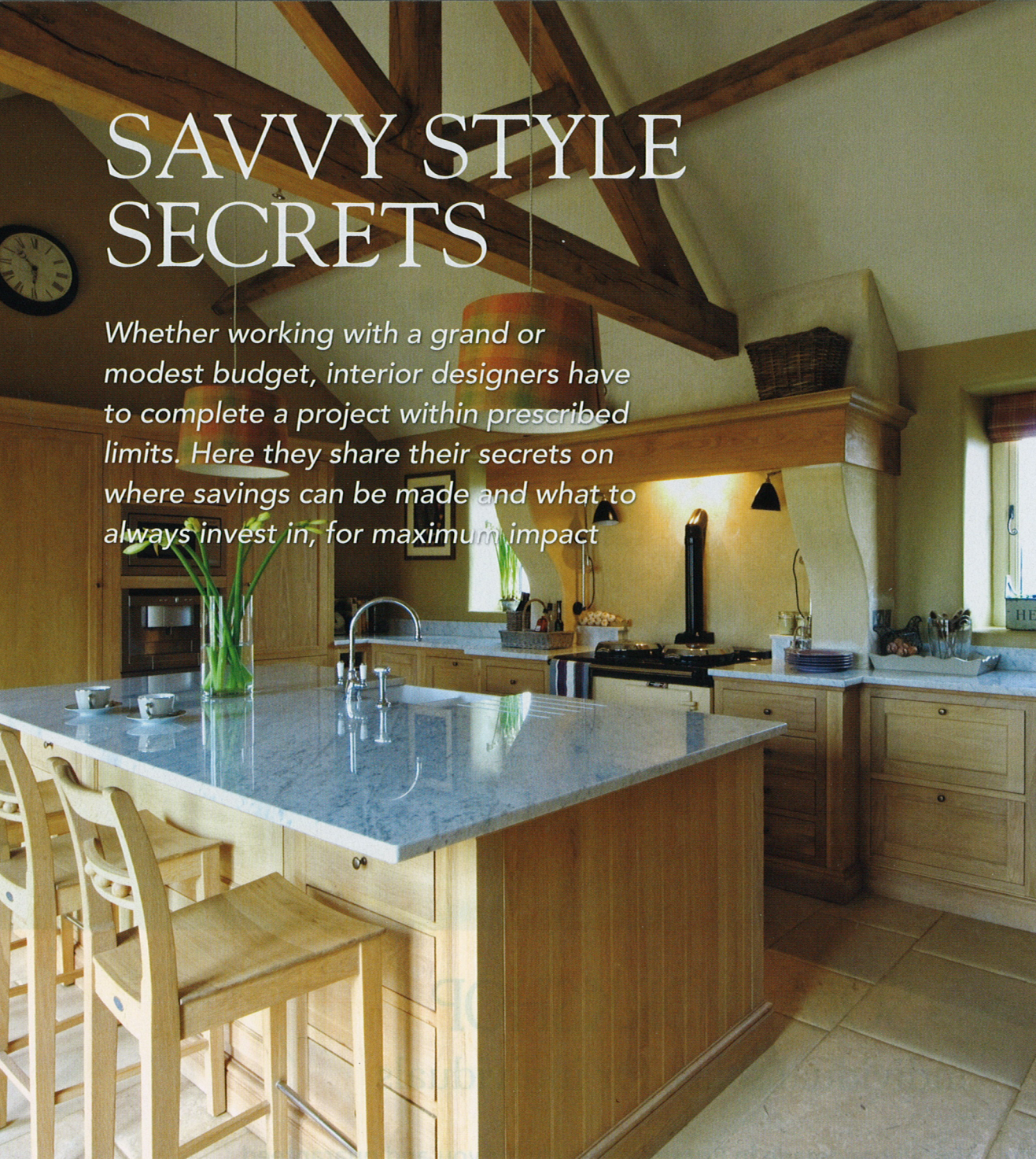


SAVVY STYLE SECRETS

Whether working with a grand or modest budget, interior designers have to complete a project within prescribed limits. Here they share their secrets on where savings can be made and what to always invest in, for maximum impact



LEFT The Henley kitchen collection from Neptune is an affordable way to create a 'bespoke' kitchen from the individually sized cabinets in natural oak. Average price for complete kitchen (units only) £12,000.

RIGHT Cate Burren sought out quality, yet affordable, antique furniture that only needed a little work to restore to its former splendour. She also used a small amount of luxury wallpaper in the alcoves to add glamour without much expense.

FAR RIGHT Invest in a sumptuous carpet to give a room an immediate sense of opulence. Wool Chicago in Taupe, £89 a square metre; Wool Romeo in Ivory, £76 a square metre, both Crucial Trading.



ANTONIA STEWART

"You should always spend on the actual building itself, trying to create as near perfect a canvas as possible. If you are happy with the actual space of the building then the decorating can come over time. A home will naturally evolve and will reflect current trends and the changing tastes of the owners, undoubtedly [containing] items from their travels, even new books, artwork or photographs.

Use lots of less expensive fabric and then accessorise with more expensive items. For example, a feature wall could be done in an expensive wall covering, with the rest of the walls being done in a paint. Or cushions covered in expensive fabrics could be put on sofas covered in cottons or linens.

Fabrics with embellishments, such as beads, hand embroidery or metal threads, can often look more

expensive than a plain version. To update a bedroom you could buy new bedlinen. You could paint the back of a bookcase a different colour to the shelves: dark colours for a study; fun colours for children's bedrooms.

Lighting is very important for me and can make or break the atmosphere of a room. For the evening I would always have lighting only from table lamps, standard lamps or picture lights, preferably on a dimmer so that the light can be controlled. Downlights and pendant lights are fine for general lighting but too bright for an evening setting.

For a country-kitchen look, Neptune is a rapidly growing company that has some fabulous products at competitive prices. By purchasing their standard unit modules you can create your own bespoke kitchen at a fraction of the price of other kitchen companies. It really is a great idea. They also do lots of other painted furniture which is also very smart and not too expensive."