

WELCOME

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As I'm writing this it's pouring with rain but optimistic souls that we are here at Midlands Homes & Interiors, we've decided it's going to be a long late summer. Yup, August is gonna be a scorcher through sheer will power alone.

That sorted, we've rounded up some gorgeous fresh summery recipes on page 56, (and they're not barbecue-based so you can have them indoors if the heavens open!)

You'll notice a strong food theme – we've got an interview with champion chef Raymond Blanc as well as a whole clutch of restaurant reviews (so many dishes, so many delights, how do we do it?!).

The word on the street being that more of us are investing in our homes in favour of moving, we've done some research on how to update bathrooms. You'll drool for our selection of freestanding baths on page 49 and we've got the lowdown on the hottest trends too on page 50.

We've also gone crazy for kitchens and kitchenalia – check out the goodies on pages 23 and 25 to suit different décor styles, and don't blame us if you hanker after the cosy glow of a coal or wood-burning stove after reading our Ode to Agas on page 27.

And with the vague notion that somehow a beautiful boudoir will endow us with the French chic that so often eludes Ros Bifs, we've decided to crack the Belle Chambre secret, hoping that the rest will follow...

We steal some more inspiration from our continental cousins in our French Chic feature on page 37, adding a contemporary twist that brings it bang up to date.

Come to think of it, our frisky floral feature (page 53) is also a bit 'risqué' with its saucy bouquets– who would have thought flower arranging could be such fun?!

In today's world, many of us are opting to ditch the daily commute and work from home. With this in mind, our feature on home offices (page 45) will no doubt go down a treat.

We've plenty more packed into this issue with all the old favourites making an appearance – gallery wall, events, gorgeous home accessories and our fab A-Z design spotlight from our columnist, BBC Road Show presenter and Fieldings auctioneer Will Farmer.

Fingers crossed for an Indian summer but whatever the weather, enjoy your new issue of Midlands Homes & Interiors!

Naomi



Oriental Garden from a collection at
Designers Guild, www.designersguild.com