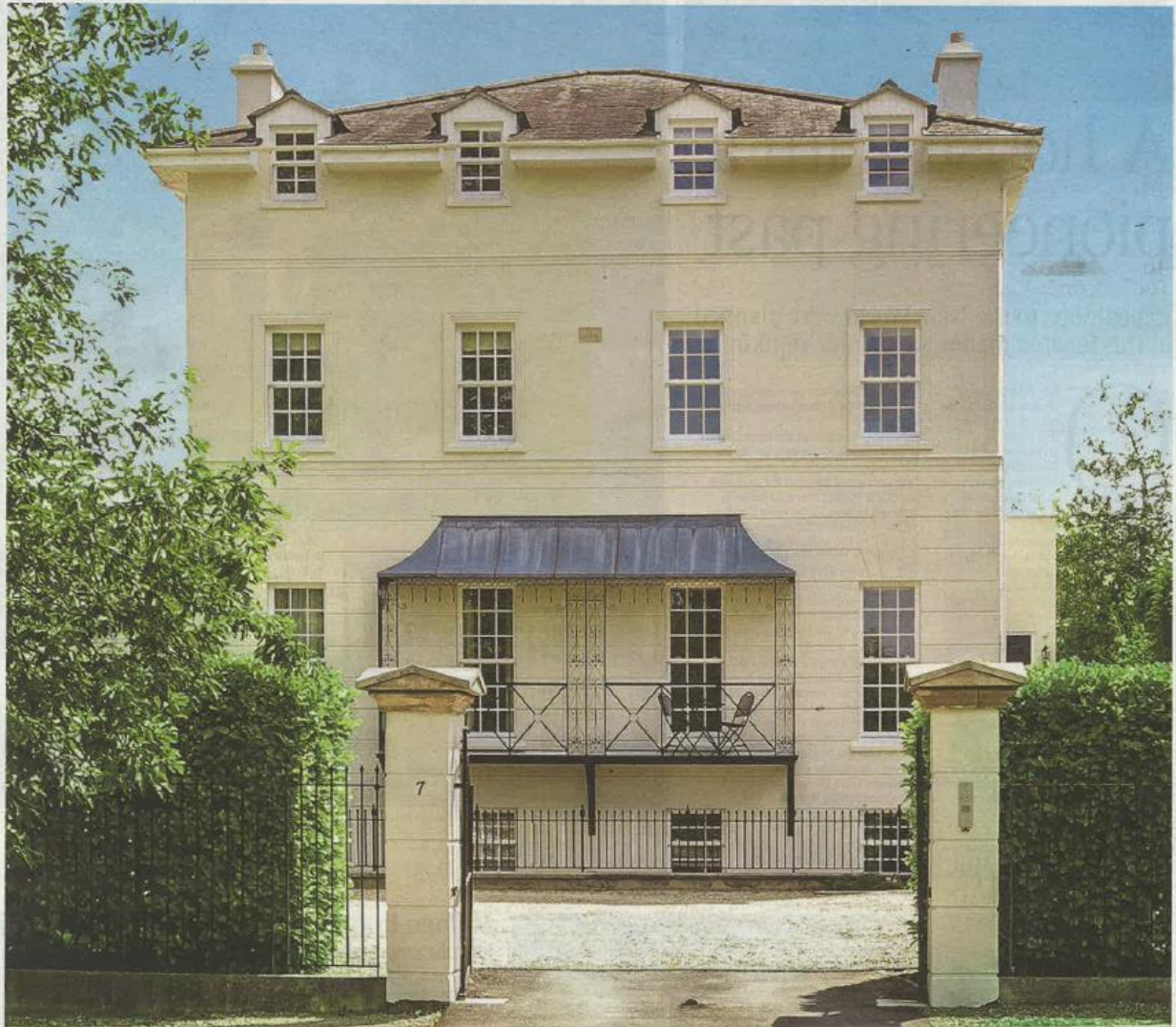


Bricks & Mortar



Culture and fine architecture

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LUXE

The interiors of the seven apartments at Beau House, a new luxury development on Jermyn Street in St James's, central London, are 99 per cent British — from the custom-made wallpaper hand-printed in the Black Mountains of Wales, to the herringbone oak flooring hand-finished in the north of England.

At One Tower Bridge in east London, where one-bedroom apartments start at £1.475 million, every piece in the show flat has been created in the UK. Upholstery, headboards and banquette seating are made by the young English company Source Furniture, based in southeast London; the mirrors and picture frames are manufactured near Liverpool, and the curtains and cushions are from the outskirts of the capital. The lights are by the British designers Tom Dixon, Jasper Conran, Louise Bradley, Pinch Design and CTO Lighting.

Is Made in Britain the new status symbol? Just as we prefer to know that our food is from sustainable local producers, designers say that buyers are increasingly prepared, and proud, to pay more for furnishings designed, manufactured and finished by British artisans.

Huw Hughes of Edward Philips, the studio that designed the interiors of the Beau House flats, has seen a growth of interest in British craftsmanship in his work on high-end residential projects.

"In this world of technology where we buy everything off the internet, it is really nice to go and see a piece of furniture you have bought being made. There's a changing market in property and interiors. I think people want things individual and unique, and I think people are becoming more patriotic."

Natalie Melton, a co-founder of The New Craftsmen, which curates, commissions and sells unique contemporary objects, agrees.

"People are, without doubt, more interested in British craftsmanship. They are seeking pieces that have a narrative, and provenance is becoming more important, also from a sustainability point of view. They want to understand where a product has come from and how it was made. "We have moved away from Ikea. People are more interested in saving and making a considered purchase that they feel is going to stand the test of time and be something they could hand on to a future generation."

Melton set up The New Craftsmen in 2012 with Catherine Lock, a product developer for brands such as Habitat and John Lewis, and Mark Henderson,



The interiors of Beau House, a luxury development on Jermyn Street in central London, feature furnishings predominantly made by British designers

Made in Britain is the new status symbol

Let's celebrate craftsmanship. High-end developments are using artisan pieces as their selling point, says Laura Whateley



Award-winning kitchens designed by Sebastian Cox for deVOL, from £15,000

the chairman of Gieves & Hawkes, the tailor. They shared an appreciation and interest in craftsmanship and wanted to support and champion British makers who have limited outlets to sell and promote their work.

"The crafts market is quite fragmented and disorganised," Melton says. "Craftspeople only really had fairs or galleries to sell their work. There are nowhere near the number of outlets that there are for contemporary art, but this is a valuable market sector; estimates suggest that craftsmanship is worth more than £1 billion to the economy."

The New Craftsmen has a shop in Mayfair, central London, and sells the work of 150 makers online, shipping items around the world. Makers include Rachel Scott, a septuagenarian weaver who creates geometric rugs on a loom that was made for her by her brother. She collects fleeces from sheep



throughout the UK, making the rugs from the natural yarn; she can tell which breed went into each rug by the colour. The New Craftsmen also holds samples and swatches, so if you want a bespoke table made you can talk through ideas and materials in the studio.

Another up-and-coming craftsman is Sebastian Cox, who in 2010 founded his workshop in southeast London on the principle that the past can be used to design the future.

Cox says that he is motivated by the way generations of craftsmen have used a limited palette of biodegradable and renewable materials in a creative way, turning them into objects that are functional, simple, understandable and beautiful.

Much of his furniture is made from wood he coppices himself. His debut collection, Products of Silviculture, is

Sebastian Cox, who makes timber furniture: "People have come to appreciate the time and skill required to make something beautiful." Inset left: the Wallis sofa by Russell Pinch of Pinch Design for Heal's, £1,709

made from coppiced hazel, putting a traditional material to contemporary use. His work includes a hat stand made of a single lightweight coppiced hazel rod, with adjustable hooks, and a stool with strong but light legs hand-hewn to a taper to reveal bright white hazel beneath.

Cox is surprised that people are prepared to pay extra for work that has sustainable roots. "At university the main topic of conversation was how to explain to people that the time it takes to make something properly is worth the cost. Fortunately, by the time I came to be in business, people had come to appreciate the time and skill required to make something beautiful," he says.

Cox sells some work at Heal's, which has a long tradition of working with British designers and furniture companies. It notes buyers' growing interest not only in the production process, but also the nationality of the designer and brands; it's "part of a wider desire to invest wisely and support home-grown talent, that is showing no signs of subsiding," says Sivan Metzger, a product developer at Heal's.

"A love for mid-century inspired designs has ensured that brands such as Ercol remain incredibly popular with customers." Ercol, which was founded in 1920 in Buckinghamshire, remains a family-owned, private company manufacturing much of its furniture at its Buckinghamshire factory, which employs 100 craftspeople. Its recent Studio Couch is a collaboration with the Scottish textile designer Bluebellgray, designed in Treslaig fabric.

"In lighting, leading designers include Lee Broom, Tom Dixon, Anglepoise designs by Sir Kenneth Grange and Charles Lethaby," Metzger says.

The British Designers at Heal's campaign starts on July 24 and will feature work from four new designers.



The show flat at One Tower Bridge, east London; all the furniture is made in the UK