



## THE SPECIALIST

If you're looking for that perfect family home but can't face the wrangle with planners and builders, then interior architect Nicky Dobree is the answer to your prayers.

Based in Battersea, she is considered a rising star in the decorating world: her work is highly rated not only by her clients but by her fellow professionals too.

'I'm not just a decorator,' she says firmly. 'I begin by looking at the building. You need to preserve the soul of the building. I do a lot of work with listed buildings and this approach is critical.'

Having studied languages at Bristol University, Nicky worked in publishing and travelled the world before – determined to set up home in London – she retrained in Interior Architecture and Design. For seven years she worked for Taylor Howes Designs then seven years ago, she set up on her own. She has never regretted it. She creates sleek modern homes and, unusually, modern ski chalets.

'I have two children, so I know what a family home needs to contain,' she explains. 'I hate to use clichés, but I suppose my style is best described as classic contemporary.'

Clients adore Nicky's ability to transform a house into a practical, modern home and also her extraordinary attention to detail. Several clients are based abroad: they appreciate her ability to project-manage building work (carried out by her own team) then to decorate once the architectural shell is in place. By the time the client moves in, even the teaspoons are in place.

Nicky Dobree Interior Design, 25 Landsowne Gardens, SW8; 020 7627 0469

# INTERIORS

Gráinne Dennison wraps it up southside for the perfect Christmas



## FAIRY TALE ENDING

If you're looking for exquisite Christmas decorations, now is the time to pop across to Barnes to visit the wonderfully named Tobias and the Angel. Self-confessed Christmas obsessive, owner Angel Hughes spends 12 months sourcing vintage fabrics and making and designing the festive baubles.

This year you can choose from Angel's usual gorgeous array, including Turkish slippers fashioned from pieces of 18th and 19th century material (priced from £12.50). For the ultimate tree topper, try a 'Glamorous Angel'. No ordinary tree fairy, she has linen hair and gilded metal wings. 'Glamorous Angels' cost from £185 to £285.

You can find Tobias and the Angel at 68 White Hart Lane, Barnes, SW13; 020 8878 8902. It is open 10am-6pm, Monday to Saturday.



## HANG IT

Rugs can make the most exotic wall hangings. This camel-patterned wool rug from Baluchistan is a perfect example for the job. Made using natural dyes, it measures 3ft8 by 4ft10, is 100 per cent wool and costs £670. You can buy it, and many others, at Charlotte Gaskell Oriental Carpets, 183 Trinity Road, Wandsworth Common, SW17; 020 8672 3224

## IT'S A DOGS LIFE

Everyone should have Welsh woollen blankets in their home, but now you have the perfect excuse to buy new ones. Battersea Dogs Home uses up 1,000 old blankets a day. With the advent of the cold weather, it is even more desperate for donations. Ideally blankets should be medium to large, but not sheets, towels or duvets as the dogs rip them! 4 Battersea Park Road, SW8

## TROUBLE-FREE TREES

If you're wondering where to buy your Christmas Tree this year, don't forget Thurgood's. This traditional independent greengrocers sells old-fashioned spruces with a solid wooden base, and the whole experience will remind you of childhood Christmases. Trees will be in stock from 1 December and cost approximately £22 for a six or seven foot tree. 75 Broughton Street, SW8

