

A warm, rustic living room with a red armchair, a window with a plant, a lamp, and a framed botanical print.

Cosy up *your home*

Creating comfy rooms and snug spaces is sure to see you through the dark days of winter. Angelina Villa-Clarke talks to the experts to find out how to make your home into the ultimate 'winter-proof' sanctuary

W

ith long nights upon us, nothing appeals more than getting comfortable at home with a warm drink and a good book. In Denmark, this feeling is truly embedded in the country's culture through the notion of hygge, which encompasses the wellbeing that comes from simple pleasures in life. Lighting a room with candles, curling up by a flickering fire or snuggling under a warm blanket are all elements of a hygge lifestyle.

Bad weather often means more hours spent indoors, so winter can be a dismal time for many. By making a few simple tweaks to our homes, we can create our own hygge: relaxing spaces that offer rest and respite, making this season a time to look forward to. In short, cosy homes can help us perfect the art of 'wintering'.

Colour is a great place to start. Fred Horlock, design director at Neptune, which has a store in Harston, says: "Embrace earthy tones such as deep rusts and browns, which can be introduced through textured throws and rugs."

Dominic Myland, CEO of paint brand Mylands, suggests: "Enveloping a room in a single colour, particularly deep neutrals like our Egerton Place or darker shades like Burlington Arcade, creates an intimate feel that's also luxurious and dramatic."

Creative director and co-founder of Yes Colours Emma Bestley says: "For a cocooning atmosphere, drench the entire room in deep, jewel-like tones such as rich plums, warm oranges and forest greens."

You can also introduce colour by choosing statement furniture. "Opt for pieces that will enhance the room's overall cosiness, such as soft green and mushroom," advises Kate Palmer, creative director at The Painted Furniture Company.

Berry and burgundy are on trend too, and will bring a feeling of quiet luxury when paired with shades from nature, such as forest green, says Georgia Metcalfe, founder of the French Bedroom Company. Meanwhile, Shelley Cochrane, accessories buyer at Furniture Village, picks teal as her colour of the season. "Colour-drench the space in this opulent shade, from



CHOOSE COLOURS WISELY Specialists from Neptune (left) and Mylands (above) recommend darker, visually striking tones for keeping the winter months vivid

walls and floor coverings to furniture and accessories,” she says. “This will deliver a captivating effect in dining rooms, creating an intimate backdrop for candlelit dinners.”

Ultimate cosiness, however, is all about making sure you have the right furniture to sink into. “Choosing the perfect sofa is key,” states Caron Grant, brand manager at homeware company Bridgman. “It’s the centrepiece of any living space and vital for relaxing and unwinding. Don’t forget about comfortable armchairs as well – another essential. Create cohesion with an armchair in the same style and colour as your sofa or opt for an accent piece that enhances the space with a striking silhouette. Pairing it with a complementary footstool allows you to unwind in absolute comfort.”

Natural accessories

For those on a budget, it isn’t necessary to redecorate or invest in new furniture to create a welcoming space. This is easily achieved with just a few artful, thoughtfully placed accessories.

Interior designer Claire Garner says she always turns to natural materials. These include wood, rattan and linen, among others, which help create authenticity and rustic charm. “You can enhance a room’s atmosphere with soft, textured throws and cushions, as well as accessorising with vintage finds such as antique lamps and woven baskets.”

MAKING STATEMENTS Bold furniture is essential for brightening up spaces at Claire Garner Interiors (below) and Furniture Village (right)



How to add layers

Debbie Leigh, design manager at Iliv and SMD Textiles Ltd, offers tips on accessorising rooms

- Layer soft furnishings in tonal colours and textures.
- Blend plains and patterns carefully – when using bold-patterned upholstery it’s best to keep cushions plain and vice versa.
- Pair warm tones such as soft greys and browns with natural materials like wood and stone.





STOCKISTS

Abbeygate Lighting

01394 288240
abbeygatelighting.co.uk

Alternative Flooring

01264 335111
alternativeflooring.com

Bridgman

020 8804 7474 | bridgman.co.uk

Claire Garner Interiors

01442 801220
clairegarnerinteriors.com

Direct Stoves

0161 516 8860 | directstoves.com

French Bedroom

01444 415430 | frenchbedroom.co.uk

Furniture Village

0345 646 1701 | furniturevillage.co.uk

Glasswells

01284 752804 | glasswells.co.uk

Iliv

01772 651 199 | iliv.co.uk

Morso UK

01788 554410 | morsoe.com

Mylands

020 8670 9161 | mylands.com

Neptune

01223 643535 | neptune.com

The Painted Furniture Company

01285 656041
paintedfurnitureco.co.uk

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MOOD LIGHTING

Soft, warm, atmospheric lighting and flickering candles can also boost a room's cosiness. To create an enticing setting and the perfect ambience, think about using a variety of lighting sources, from overhead lamps to reading lights. Abbeygate Lighting, based in Bury St Edmunds, advises moving away from harsh white bulbs, instead opting for warmer ones with softer hues. Dimmable bulbs allow you to adjust brightness according to the occasion.

Glasswells, Suffolk's largest independent furniture store, also offers a wide range of on-trend lighting from elegant chandeliers to statement table lamps. They can also advise on what works best for your room.

Chic white church candles, or stylish ceramic ones, also add a sense of charm to rooms, offering a timeless look that roots us back to bygone days. This winter, Woodwick has launched four new scents designed to transport you to faraway lands. Phantom Cherry, Hypnoflora, Antiquarium and Gilded Sands each take inspiration from mystical destinations.

Yankee Candle's new collection – Passport to the Holidays – is influenced by classic Christmas aromas from around the world.

"Layer textiles such as velvets and linen-satin blends using tone-on-tone colours to create a cosy and expressive interior," says James Gomez, co-founder of Yarn Collective. "Warm, earthy swatches such as terracotta, sienna or copper are great options for curtains and bring warmth and comfort. Shades of green with olive undertones add a luxurious feel to a space."

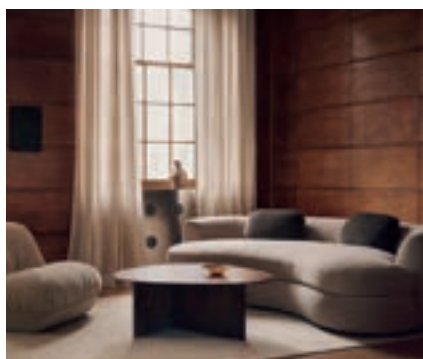
Rugs are another effective way to add softness and interest to a scheme. Kirsty Barton, marketing manager at Alternative Flooring, says: "As the temperature drops, rugs become more than just a design element, also serving as essential insulators that add beauty and warmth to any interior. Placing a large wool rug on cold, hard

floors creates a homeliness and softens your space."

Cushions can introduce visual appeal and, when chosen in luxury fabrics and displayed symmetrically, they can add a sense of drama to a room. In fact, by restyling a room with new accessories every season, you can keep the scheme looking fresh. "A simple revamp is the easiest way to elevate a space without having to redecorate or introduce new furniture," agrees French Bedroom's Georgia Metcalfe. "Soft furnishings are the perfect starting point for this. In bedrooms it can be as easy as switching out your bed linens and cushions, while in the living room we love swapping out curtains and rugs – often seasonally – to introduce new colours and textures and let summer sunlight in or keep the winter freeze out."

Finally, it is surely the allure of a roaring fire that produces the ultimate hygge effect. Morso's contemporary stoves burn wood efficiently, so they not only look sleek but also offer an environmentally friendly method of warming up your home. Direct Stoves also has a large range of traditional and modern wood-burning stoves. Joanna Humphreys, the company's fire and stove specialist, says: "A wood-burning fire adds character to a home like nothing else. Not only does it create an enticing atmosphere, but it introduces a timeless centrepiece for the room." ●

BRING THE HEAT Morso (top) and Yarn Collective (below) highlight the importance of generating warmth in different ways



Pastures new

If you're moving house to take advantage of Cambridge's excellent schools or catchment areas, choosing the right estate agent can smooth the process

Cambridge is a wonderful city to call home with its famous university, historic city centre and charming villages surrounded by green spaces. Moving to the city to take advantage of its excellent schools is a sensible step for any young family, but the local property market can be a bit daunting if you don't know the area well.

That's where Bush & Co comes in. A leading independent estate agency working in Cambridge and its surrounding areas, this dedicated team of property experts is filled with energy and enthusiasm. Its goal is to support customers fully through their property journeys.

Founded by Andrew Bush in 1996, the company stands out for its personal

touches and prides itself on high levels of customer satisfaction. It's not simply about transactions, it's a caring service that supports you throughout the buying or selling process, keeping you updated and demonstrating honesty and integrity.

If you're selling in the area, Bush & Co's team of sales experts is with you from market appraisal to completion, ensuring your sale stays on track. It offers premium property marketing, including stunning HD photography and industry-leading brand-awareness campaigns. The company is committed to elevating your property to its highest potential. It has an extensive, well-managed database of buyers ready and eager to be introduced to their dream home, which allows Bush & Co to swiftly match your property with a buyer.

The agency also has a team of lettings experts with decades of experience to help

let and manage your properties, giving you peace of mind that your investment is in safe hands.

It offers two services: the first is fully managed lettings, which make Bush & Co responsible for all aspects of renting out a property, including advertising, finding and referencing tenants, preparing tenancy agreements, collecting rent and organising maintenance. It will also collect, hold and register the five-week security deposit in a government-approved scheme.

For a more hands-on approach, the let-only service allows you to collect your own rent and be in direct contact with tenants once a tenancy begins.

Bush & Co has won many awards, including the independently verified, performance-based Best Estate Agent Guide 2024, where it won exceptional accolades in both sales and lettings and was listed among the top 500 agents. It is regularly named a top performer by Get Agent and was awarded the UK Enterprise customer care excellence award and best independent estate agent (Cambridgeshire) by *SME News* for 2024.

Whether you require sales or lettings, the Bush & Co team is on hand to help, with extensive local knowledge that sets it apart as your trusted estate agent. ●

Bush & Co.

Get in touch with the team today by visiting bushandco.co.uk or call 01223 246262 to speak with one of the team



Cuddle corners

Cosy, warming wintertime accessories



Chunky knit throw, £175
coxandcox.co.uk



Eskimo footstool in faux yak sheepskin fur, £199
wheresaintsgo.co.uk



Rodin rattan lantern, £90
oka.com



Circus ceramic table lamp, £199
darlighting.co.uk



Cashmere touch fleece cushion, from £15
waltonshop.co.uk



Velvet quilted throw in mustard, £29.99
homescapesonline.com



Ned standing lamp in bronze with black marble base and 30cm empire shade in rattan, £356
pooky.com



Longwool sheepskin rug, £59
limelace.co.uk



Berber storage log basket, £34
basketbasket.co.uk



Large Cormack candle holder, £25
oka.com