



THE EVOLUTION OF *the Loft Ladder*

“It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change.”

Charles Darwin (1809-1882)



Given that as of August 11th 2014 the world's population is estimated to be 7.182 billion (United States Census Bureau) and that the carrying capacity of the Earth is reckoned to be between 4 billion and 16 billion, space is already at a premium.

No excuses then, for not making optimum use of every last centimeter of space that you already have. And that includes all those radically under-utilized spaces that may languish amid the gloom and dust motes of your attic.

If you've already extended your living space aloft, you'll know all about the challenges attached to accessing such endangered spaces, but what you may not know, is that the technology of loft ladders has moved on. Forget those dusty old hatches into the darkened caverns of the past, the light switches that required the reach of an orangutan, the clunky ladders with the maneuverability an elephant, or the ones that hurtled out of the blackness with the screech of a fish eagle and the unpredictability of an enraged rhino.

No. The days of those spatial safaris are gone - and the millennium loft ladder is a thing of controlled beauty, which drops from above with all the control and elegance of a pelican on to a lake ... or a secretary bird on to a snake. Silent and silken, the modern loft ladder looks as good down as it does up; and, most important of all, it can be summoned with a touch as light as a sunbird's wing.

Where to obtain this paragon of evolutionary adaptation? Simple, just slip along to Classic Mouldings and review their selection of timbered or tensile steel ladders, all of which disappear from view with the finality of a leopard up a tree, while guaranteeing the grip of a hyrax in terms of tread, the unshakability of a buffalo in terms of stance, and agility of an antelope in terms of operation.

And as for all those who have not yet evolved to fill their roof spaces - remember that modern urban life is all about the survival of the fittest. It's not just that your property will sprint off the estate agency blocks with the acceleration of a cheetah, its also that your young will have space to exercise, your guests will be spared the confines of the box room, and your hobbies can finally descend from the trees and walk bravely out across the savannah plains of your middle-age.

Hesitating about the hassles of installation? The minefield of measurement? The doldrums of delivery? Don't - at Classic Mouldings we have the experts to advise, the professionals to install and a breadth of choice to suit the most exacting explorer of unused spaces.

Classic Mouldings, Kellico Complex, Mombasa Road, Nairobi - secure parking, informed staff, brilliant ideas and the widest range of world-class finishes and interior design applications that you're likely to find between here and Milan, Paris, London or New York.

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TOP TIP
of the month
REMOTE CONTROL
germs

Did you know that your television remote is one of the dirtiest items in your home? Other small electronics such as your cell phone and headphones can also rack up a formidable arsenal of germs. So – best to clean these items frequently with a disinfecting or alcohol wipe – and make sure to use a cell phone-friendly cleaner.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

There is nothing like staying at home for real comfort.

Jane Austen (1775-1817)

HOUSE DOCTOR

Fragrant **FRIDGE**

If your fridge smells less than pleasant try this trick. Remove the drawers and soak them for 15 minutes in hot, soapy water. Next, drain them, sprinkle the insides with baking soda, and wipe clean with a sponge. Still smell something? Use this age-old trick: Wipe down drawers with a cloth dipped in undiluted tomato juice, rinse with warm water, and dry.



HOW *Brighten* **UP YOUR MIRRORS**

Dip a lint-free cloth in a pot of strongly brewed black tea, the tannic acid works like magic. Rub in circles and follow with a fresh cloth to dry. Be careful not to saturate the mirror because if the liquid seeps into the silver coating, it can leave behind black tarnish marks.



THE CHEATERS GUIDE *to paint brushes*

If you can't be bothered to clean your paintbrush at the end of a hard day's painting – here's how to stop it solidifying overnight – wrap it tightly in waxed paper.



HOW TO KEEP YOU HANDS *onion-odour-free*

After slicing onions or mincing garlic, neutralize smelly hands by rubbing fingers on a stainless steel spoon under running water.



STORAGE *trick*

When storing coats or special-occasion clothes, cover each item with an old pillowcase (cut a hole in the closed end to slip over a hanger). It won't hold in mildew-causing moisture like plastic does.



THE BHUTANESE



Recipe for Happiness

The people of Bhutan are said to be the happiest in the world, and the reason for this has just been revealed in a newly published book called *The Bhutanese Guide to Happiness* by Gyempo Tshering. Drawing on the wisdom of a country where Gross National Happiness is considered more important than Gross Domestic Product, this fascinating little book offers 365 reflections on the pursuit of happiness, some of which have been included below.

If you search for happiness, you will not find it. If happiness searches for you, it will always find you.
If you have not experienced great suffering and great happiness, you will find it hard to tell them apart.

Suffering always ends, and so does happiness.

Anger is a golden opportunity to practice patience.

We are all shepherds, so learn how to tend kindly to your flock.

Angrily rebuking a quiet and thoughtful person is like trampling on the petals of a rose.

It is better to plant flowers than to build monuments.

If your leader turns into a dog, be sure to ask why he is wagging his tail. Even while it sleeps, the cat dreams of the mouse.

Real intelligence is not about what you say, but how you behave towards others. Live simply. Leave only footprints and carry only your shadow.





Buying a property off-the-plan means signing a contract to purchase the property, be it an apartment, a townhouse, a maisonette, an office or a warehouse that is yet to be built or completed.

Imagine yourself committing to buy a 30 million Kenya shillings apartment in Lavington, just from viewing the design, building plans and a mere excavation of the site. This can obviously tell you that buying a property which is only at the starting phase of construction at such high prices is not for the faint-hearted. However, many home-buyers and investors have reaped the rewards for their bravery from taking this move, which if intended to be a form of investment and in a strong market can yield profits between 10% and 20% from an initial 10% deposit. As a result, demand for off-plan property from developers remains relatively strong.

The entire concept for investors is to buy a property off-plan at current prices and when the development is completed a year or so later, the capital appreciation will have made it worth much more. A typical 3 bedroom apartment in Ruaka right now will be going for about Kshs 7-8M off-plan, which with a one or two years completion period would go for Kshs 11-13M. Some who buy off-plan will then opt to resell the property after completion of the development or rent it out while many home owners will simply be looking to buy a home at a lower cost as compared to when the development will be complete.

DISCOUNTS FOR BUYING PROPERTY OFF-PLAN

Buying properties off-plan in the early phases of their development has traditionally presented an opportunity to secure a residential unit for home owners at a discount. However, investors need to be in a position to proceed quickly with their purchase and possibly even buy off-plan in bulk if they wish to secure a considerable discount that will make the investment much worthwhile. The earlier you get access to the property for sale, the greater the chance of securing one of the better units and of getting a discount on the price. Your negotiating position should be determined by the demand the development is attracting. The higher the demand, the less chance you have of negotiating the price down. Cash deals always get the best discount as would be expected with most business transactions. Banks do not accept mortgage financing of off-plan purchases, but you can put a 20% deposit with the developer from your own savings and still get at a discounted price and get the remaining 80% from the bank once the development is complete.



Project Before Completion



Project Upon Completion

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ADVANTAGES OF OFF-PLAN BUYING

1. Off-plan property is usually bought by putting down 10-20% deposit before completion of construction. Therefore, investors can benefit from property price growth with a financial leverage. Home owners have the advantage of buying a property at a lower cost as compared to when the development is complete.

2. Off plan property can be bought as a medium to long term investment or it can be re-sold before completion of construction. Upon completion, if an investor decides to keep a property, he can pay a balance with a mortgage or his own funds and rent it out.

RISKS INVOLVED IN MAKING AN OFF-PLAN PURCHASE

1. There is no guarantee that an off plan property will increase in value until completion. This risk is mitigated by ensuring the property is in a high growth area which is expected to perform better than other areas.

2. Theoretically, a developer may become bankrupt or does not complete a construction in time. Strive to work with reputable developers with a proven track record and a deposit guarantee.

3. If you are committing to buy an off-plan property, ensure you have the proper legal guidance. In the event that something goes wrong before completion of the project, then you will have legal guarantee that your deposit will be refunded.

UNDERSTAND THIS BEFORE YOU GO FOR OFF-PLAN BUYING

WHO IS THE DEVELOPER?

Whether you are looking to buy an off-plan property that will be your home, you will resell or rent out upon completion, who you buy from matters a lot in sparing you from being in a financially vulnerable situation. Before entering into a contract with a developer, it's important to perform a background check. Start by visiting the company's website. You should be able to access information relating to past and present projects, as well as business numbers and contact details. It should also be clear who the directors of the company are. Then, utilise online forums to find out whether other investors have had positive or negative experiences with the same developer in the past. From their previous projects, were there any off-plan sales made and were there any complaints arising from the same? Did they complete the project in time? Was the project up to the clients' expectations? How strong is their brand? Overall, it's all about the developer's track record – invest only in successful developers with a good name in the market.

KNOW YOUR MARKET

If you plan to let or sell the property on completion, you should establish the target market for the type of property you are planning to buy. Discuss this with trusted estate agent, known developers and visit property websites to know where the demand is. It's also sensible to establish how many other units have been sold to buyers planning to let them out upon completion, as your property could end up competing with a large number of other properties in the same development.

PRICE

You should also try and see what similar properties in the area are being sold or let for. This will give you an indication of the possible return you could expect to see when you come to sell or let the property. Find out the off and on plan prices and determine whether buying the property early is a financially viable decision.

One of the important considerations you will need to make when buying a property is; should I buy an established home or off the plan? Whilst the excitement of being the first person to live in the home or buy the property at a lower price as an investment may be appealing, there are also some common pitfalls that you need to be aware of if you intend to buy off the plan. Discuss your expectations for the property with your developer, ask questions to determine what is covered as part of the purchase price and carefully review the contract with a legal professional. Off-plan buying can be risky, but the rewards to both home owners and investors can be immense – do your homework well and then try off-plan buying.

Martin Dias
CEO, Financial and Property Consultants Ltd



TWELVE *tips and tricks* FOR a QUICK HOUSE SALE

If you're planning on putting your home on the market, there are a number of things you can do to maximize your chances of a selling it as *quickly* and as *beneficially* as possible.

1

BOX CLEVER WITH AGENTS

In choosing an estate agent it pays to do your research – online and word of mouth. Look for an agent with a proven track record and up-to-date marketing techniques. As to the fee scale – some prefer percentage, others flat fee – but either way don't be afraid to negotiate – and to let agents know what you have been offered elsewhere. And remember, all's fair in love, war and property dealing.



2

SET THE PRICE RIGHT

There are always conflicting reports on house prices – one day they're rising, the next they're falling – but the fact is that they all rely on different data – and numbers, as we all know, can be manipulated. Varying agents can also offer different indications of value – so best to take an average of three valuations – and be ready to compromise.

3

READ THE SMALL PRINT

Before signing any agency contract – read the small print (the conditions and contract terms) before you instruct an agent or agents.



4

KICK IN ON THE KERB APPEAL



In Europe they're hot on what's known as 'kerb appeal', which is the first impression a potential buyer gets when pulling up alongside the kerb outside your property. OK – in Africa we don't always have a kerb – but the principle remains good – don't put off your buyer before they have even set foot on your property. Make sure the exterior of the property is looking good – brighten it up with a lick of paint, move the bins or the rubbish, add some potted plants or hanging baskets.

5

SPRUCE UP AND DE-CLUTTER

House buyers are fickle – they're spending a lot of money and making a life-changing decision – and they can be easily scared – and easily impressed. Forget a major décor overhaul – your taste will not be that of the buyer – better to freshen up the rooms with a neutral coat of paint in warm tones. Ensure your rooms are free of clutter and as light and airy as possible. A mirror hung in the hall can give the illusion of space and a few vases of flowers or some plants can freshen up the house. Similarly, a garden or any type of outdoor space can provide a powerful selling point – but it must be pleasantly presented. A garden full of junk will look smaller – a garden full of weeds will suggest that a team of gardeners is required.



6

FARM OUT THE FUR AND FEATHERS

Increasing numbers of people are allergic to pet fur. Others don't like dogs, hate cats, can't stand parrots and have a horror of gerbils. So if you are the owner of any such creatures and you know you have a viewing planned – remove them or lodge them with friends.

8

IF IT'S BROKE – MEND IT

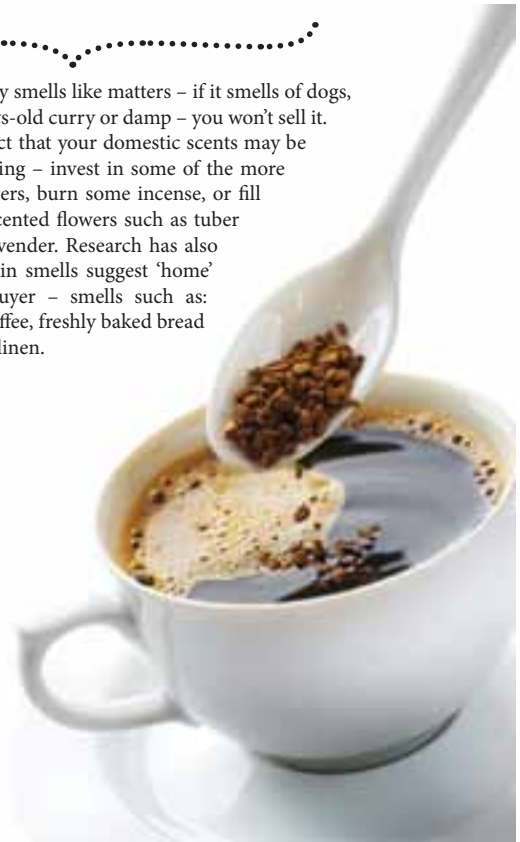
Not all of us are DIY friendly. But if there are things in the house that are broke – mend them. Little things matter and first impressions count.



7

GET ON THE SCENT

What the property smells like matters – if it smells of dogs, dirty laundry, days-old curry or damp – you won't sell it. So – if you suspect that your domestic scents may be less than welcoming – invest in some of the more subtle air-fresheners, burn some incense, or fill the house with scented flowers such as tuber roses, stock or lavender. Research has also proved that certain smells suggest 'home' to a potential buyer – smells such as: freshly brewed coffee, freshly baked bread or freshly ironed linen.



9

LET THERE BE LIGHT

One of the most powerful tools in the interior design kit is lighting. Bad lighting can make or break a sale and clever lighting can conceal all manner of faults. So – always ensure that you use multiple lighting levels, never rely on overhead lighting alone, steer well clear of fluorescent strips (which can make a palace look like a pit) and remember that bulbs that read WARM WHITE create enticing light while those that read COOL DAYLIGHT create lighting more suited to a fridge or an operating theatre. And if budget is tight – use candles.



10

DEFINE AND DEPERSONALIZE

A buyer needs to be able to see him or herself living in your property – so it is important to remove your own stamp from it and make it appear as owner-less as possible. It also helps to define each room to purpose. So, if your dining room is full of computer equipment or exercise bikes – you aren't helping yourself. Better to lay the table as if for a dinner party and throw out all the other stuff. Similarly if your spare room is full of junk – get rid of it and put a bed in there. Depersonalize bathrooms by removing clutter, take down posters and toys in the kids' room.



11

STAY CLEAR

When potential buyers come to view your property, let them wander freely around the house with the agent and keep out of the way. Give them time and space – but be available for questions later. Do not try and SELL the property – that's the agent's job.



12

CHOOSE YOUR BUYER WITH CARE

Just because someone makes you an offer – does not mean they will buy – some people make offers just for the hell of it. Safer buyers include those who have already sold their home and are in rented accommodation, chain-free first-time buyers, and cash buyers who do not need a mortgage.



GREEN fingers

THE MEDICINAL HERBFILE

IN THIS
MONTH'S ISSUE
we look at the lesser-known uses for some of the common members of the tropical herb garden.



OREGANO

Oregano (*Origanum*) Recent studies have shown that oregano is a potent natural antibiotic because it is packed with health giving antioxidants and vitamins. Oregano tea will soothe coughs and colds and if left unsweetened makes an excellent mouthwash. Do not use *Origanum majorana* and *Origanum vulgare* medicinally during pregnancy.

THYME

Thyme (and Lemon-scented Thyme) (*Thymus*) contains a powerful volatile oil called "thymol" which is known for its powerful antiseptic, antiviral and antibacterial properties. Thymol, which is still used by pharmacists today in cough remedies, acts as an expectorant, loosening phlegm in the respiratory tract. Fresh thyme tea is an effective treatment for the whole respiratory system and will strengthen the lungs; treating common coughs and colds as well as bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma and whooping cough; it is also an excellent gargle for sore throats and tonsillitis.



PARSLEY

Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) has detoxifying and blood cleansing properties, and builds up the immune system. A tea can be made from the fresh leaves, or it can be chopped and eaten raw on salads etc. It can also be juiced with other vegetables and fruit.

ALL ABOUT *Radishes*



WHAT

The radish is an edible root vegetable of the Brassicaceae family that was domesticated in Europe in pre-Roman times. It is grown and consumed throughout the world.

WHY

Colorful and crisp, radishes make a great salad addition and are very easy to grow. They also mature in as little as three weeks.

HOW TO PLANT

Dig the soil to a depth of 6 inches for quick-growing radishes. Space seeds ½ inch deep and 1 inch apart; firm the soil and water gently.

Thin seedlings to 2 inches apart, mulch to keep down weeds. For quick growth and the best flavor, water regularly.

HARVESTING

Pull as soon as the roots mature. Oversized radishes often crack and are tough or woody.

HISTORY

Radishes were first grown in China thousands of years ago and later in Egypt, where they were a dinner delicacy at the time of the building of the pyramids. In Ancient Greece the radish was so revered that golden replicas were offered to the God Apollo. The radish arrived in England in the 16th century and was probably brought to Kenya by British colonials.

9 REASONS TO EAT RADISHES

1. NATURALLY COOLING

Radishes are a naturally cooling food and their pungent flavor is highly regarded in eastern medicine for the ability to decrease excess heat in the body.

2. SOOTH SORE THROATS

Their pungent flavor and natural spice can help eliminate excess mucus in the body and can be especially helpful when fighting a cold. Radishes can help clear the sinuses and soothe sore throats too.

3. AIDS DIGESTION

Radishes are a natural cleansing agent for the digestive system, helping to break down and eliminate stagnant food and toxins built up over time.

4. PREVENTS VIRAL INFECTIONS

Because of their high vitamin C content and natural cleansing effects, regular consumption of radishes can help prevent viral infections.

5. ELIMINATES TOXINS

In Eastern and Ayurvedic healing practices radishes are said to have effective toxin-purging effects, helping break down and eliminate toxins and cancer-causing free radicals in the body.

6. PROTECTS AGAINST CANCER

As a member of the cruciferous vegetable family (same family as broccoli and cabbage) radishes contain phytonutrients, fiber, vitamins and minerals that are cancer protecting.

7. RELIEVES INDIGESTION

Radishes have a calming effect on the digestive system and can help relieve bloating and indigestion.

8. LOW IN CALORIES, HIGH IN NUTRIENTS

With a very low calorie count, less than 20 calories in an entire cup, radishes are a great way to add nutrients, fiber and flavour to meals without compromising your health.

9. KEEPS YOU HYDRATED

With a high water content and lots of vitamin C as well as phosphorus and zinc, radishes are a nourishing food for the tissues and can help keep your body hydrated and your skin looking fresh.

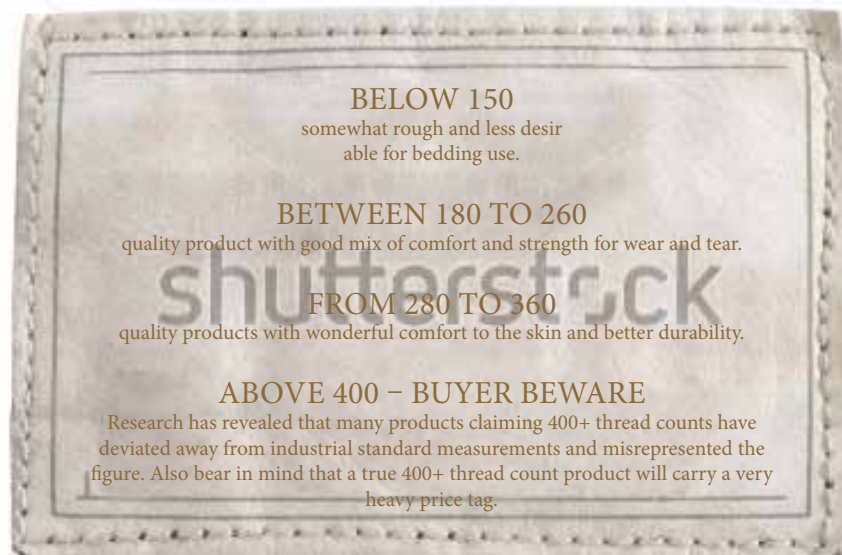


THREAD COUNT *decoded*

There was a time when a bed sheet was a bed sheet: cotton or viscose, flat or fitted. But not anymore. Today the quality of your sheet depends on its thread count – and, or so say the gurus, the higher the thread count the better the sheet. But what does this new buzz phrase ‘thread count’ actually mean?

Technically, the thread count refers to the number of threads woven together in a square inch – counting both lengthwise (warp) and widthwise (weft) threads. So - 100 lengthwise threads woven with 100 widthwise threads will produce a thread count of 200: and thus it follows that the finer the threads you weave together, the softer and finer the fabric. As with most things however, when the marketing boys get going on the latest consumer conundrum things get complicated. Some manufacturers, for instance, claim to offer an 800 thread count – this however is a myth for the simple reason that it is not physically possible to squeeze so many threads into one square inch. The truth of the matter is that the marketing magicians have decided to count every fibre in a square inch rather than every thread. And given that a single thread can incorporate up to four fibres (or plys) – this complicates things even further – and a so-called 800-thread count using 4 ply threads could actually equate to only 200.

So how do you determine the quality of your bed linen? Well, as a general rule of thumb you can assume the following definitions for thread counts in cotton bedding.





This room uses all natural textiles, wall covering and flooring.

Sustainable interior design

Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.

Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect (1867-1959)



Buy classic items that will not date

It's the new buzz, the new 'take' on going green – it's sometimes known as ECO-ID and it's ultra-fashionable in Europe. What is it? Sustainable ID is all about creating inspirationally beautiful living spaces that are also environmentally sensitive. It's about

using materials that are locally available, globally sustainable and heritage enhancing. And it's about working with the environment rather than against it. So... think: preserve rather than replace; regenerate rather than refurbish.



Repaint old furniture



This room uses old pieces of furniture repainted or re-upholstered for ultimate ID impact



Choose items of furniture that are locally made by artisan craftsmen – which will serve as family heirlooms

THE RULES OF THE GAME

Ecologically inspired interior design is based on the concept of creating beautiful living spaces, inspirational work places and practical commercial spheres that deliver:

- A precise balance of aesthetics and functionality
- The efficient use of space
- Low environmental impact
- Reduced energy consumption
- Minimized pollution and waste
- Human health and happiness

HOW TO MAKE MORE OF LESS


If you'd like to go with the ECO ID flow, you'll have to embrace the concept of working with what already exists rather than buying new. You'll have to commit to consuming less rather than more, and if you DO buy a piece of furniture, you'll have to forget fashionable obsolescence and choose an item that can be handed down to your children as a family heirloom.



Look out for old fittings that can be recycled

THE RAW MATERIALS







In order to practice sound sustainable ID, you need to use products that are:






-  Organic and natural
-  Sustainably produced and manufactured
-  Recycled, re-purposed, on-site salvaged or capable of being up-cycled
-  Hand-made or craftsman produced
-  Locally produced
-  Good Environmental Choice Accredited (GECA)
-  VOC* free, non-toxic, non-solvent, allergy-free
-  Energy and water efficient
-  Sourced from sustainable forests
-  Produced without the use of herbicides and pesticides
-  Produced using minimum fossil-fuels

**VOCs are the vapours given off by paints, varnishes and finishes, petroleum products, pesticides, glues, cleaning products, building products, and synthetic furnishings. Some VOCs, such as formaldehyde, are known to cause serious health problems; others act as allergy-promoters, pollutants and irritants.*

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process relies on:

-  Using natural fabrics such as organic cotton, wool or hemp rather than synthetic fabrics and, if the latter are required, to ensure that they have been produced without the use of hazardous chemicals
-  Using natural rather than synthetic dyes
-  Using natural ventilation and daylight
-  Using sustainable materials such as bamboo, sisal or formaldehyde-free plywood rather than plastics or industrially produced block-boards
-  According to the tenets of global fair trade
-  To minimize and re-purpose waste

-  By harvesting and disposing of water on site and, where possible, generating
-  renewable energy on site
-  By always ensuring that you 'off-gas' new carpeting or furnishing.
-  Using recycled, salvaged or antique items
-  Using indoor plants for natural air purification.

You can't make positive choices for the rest of your life without an environment that makes those choices easy, natural, and enjoyable.

Deepak Chopra, philosopher



Use plants for natural air purification, use natural light, natural fibres and ecologically sound lighting



This room uses a natural timber ceiling, repainted antique chair, natural marble flooring and optimizes on natural light

People spend 90% of their lives indoors where the air pollution levels are 2-5 times higher than those outside. The largest source of this pollution is volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions or 'off-gasses' that are emitted from building materials and furnishings.



THE **spatial** BATHROOM

It's an idea that is not easily incorporated into the average bathroom, but the installation of a minimal, yet sumptuous, bathtub such as the one show below is the ultimate in bathroom decadence. Free standing, cocooned in white space, with a 360-degree view, and mirrored by an outdoor hot tub – it turns bathtime into an experience in spirituality.



THE NEW *Colour* PALETTE

There's a new colour palette on the block – ranging from the palest duck-egg blue, to eau de nil green, it's all about understatement, sophistication and light – and it works particularly well with retro furniture and wooden floors – as illustrated left. Or in the kitchen, as illustrated above.

ROCKING THE *Retro*

It's all about retro in the interior design portfolios of the leading European designers – so now is the time to go salvage hunting. Look for old school desks, old cinema seats such as those shown above, odd bits of antique colonial-styled furniture that can be reconditioned, or even old shop fittings. Tip: this look also allows you into the ranks of the sustainable design revolution – see article on page ____



ID PINboard

In this issue we bring you the first of our ID PINBoards – which have been designed to showcase a collection of contemporary interior design ideas, aspects of which you might like to incorporate into your own home.

INSIDE OUT, OUTSIDE IN

If you'd like to capitalize on the new craze for bringing the inside out or the outside in – consider using an outdoor lamp, such as the one shown above – on the inside.



Holding the fort

It's been a long time coming, but Mombasa's most visited feature, Fort Jesus, has finally been awarded UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage status. Recognized in June 2011 as one of the best-preserved examples of 16th-century Portuguese military fortification, it now joins the ranks of 936 other World Heritage Sites; 725 of which are cultural, 183 natural and 28 hybrids.



Dominating the shoreline of Mombasa's Old Town, you could initially regard Fort Jesus as a romantic relic of a more swashbuckling time. Haloed in sunshine and set against the Madonna blue of the Indian Ocean, it is alternately washed by waves of tourists and school children. In crocodiles that curl around the base of its massive bastions, they suck lollipops, hitch their socks up beneath its brooding battlements and nudge each other over the ancient graffiti that can still be made out on the rotting walls of the ruined guardhouse: lavatorial humour, it seems, hasn't changed much in five centuries.

Look into the history of Fort Jesus, however and there's precious little romance or humour to be found. This is a place of desperation, deprivation and death: a fortress that was hard won and bitterly lost nine times in just two hundred years of bloody survival on Mombasa, whose name means 'the island of war'.



the British hove into view, banned slavery, declared Mombasa a British Protectorate and, by 1888, had commandeered Fort Jesus into service as an outpost of the British Empire. Later, they turned it into what must have been one of the most God-forsaken prisons in Africa until, with Kenyan Independence in 1964, it underwent its final transformation. The great studded doors were flung open, a rickety ticket office installed, and Fort Jesus marched meekly into business as a museum.

Fifty-odd years later and you can still walk atop the blind-eyed malevolence of its grey-streaked walls, buy fresh lime juice in the ammunitions store, and be photographed in front of the rusting guns of the First World War German battleship *Konigsberg*. You can stroll down to the stone portcullis where once the slaves were loaded, browse the curio shops that cower beneath the walls, or circle the enormous brass coffee pot which inexplicably acts as the Fort's traffic island. Alternatively you can sample the excellent freshly-fried cassava crisps which, cooked in great vats of bubbling oil and served with a bag of lime wedges and a bag of ground chilli, have become Fort Jesus' trademark snack.

Later, you can experience one of the fort's most bizarre manifestations yet. As night falls, it is lit by Medieval-styled flares and acts as the backdrop for a five-course dinner, which is served beneath the stars of its central courtyard



Initially built between 1593 and 1596 by the colony-grabbing Portuguese, Fort Jesus was designed to protect their hold over the riches of Mombasa: slaves, ivory, gold, rhinoceros horn, iron, copper and more. Built in the shape of a man with arms outstretched, the fort enshrined the Renaissance belief that all buildings should mirror the perfect proportions and geometric harmony of the human body. Named after the savior of Christendom, it went on to reflect some of the worst abuses of the human body in the history of Africa.

Attacked constantly by the Omanis from the day its flag was first raised, Fort Jesus was held by the Portuguese until 1696 when they faced an Omani siege that lasted fifteen crippling months. During that time, the initial garrison comprising several hundred Portuguese soldiers and several thousand trained locals was decimated by gunpowder, plague and starvation. At its end, the fort was defended by a ragged band of ten men, one boy and two women. Beyond fear, they refused to surrender. The Omanis scaled the walls and cut them to ribbons: and Fort Jesus was lost to its Portuguese builders forever.

From 1702 to 1845 Mombasa thrived under Omani rule and its people grew sleek on the spoils of slavery. In 1845,

and preceded by a 'Son et Lumiere' show, which offers a blessedly sanitized version of the bloody excesses of its past.

Best not wander too far from the lights after coffee though, because behind the crumbling coral of the ancient water cistern a skeleton curls in a glass casket. And through the moss-green foundations of the ruined chapel creeps the faintest breath of desperation, darkness and despair. Fort Jesus may have achieved the educational, scientific and cultural recognition of today's United Nations, but its black heart still beats to the drums of the warring nations of the past.





In this month's edition
we're taking a look at colour
schemes. And we're kicking
off with RED. Decorating
with red takes confidence and
courage, but it can also deliver
drama, glamour, warmth and
sophistication.

Red is the great clarifier - bright and revealing.
I can't imagine becoming bored with red -
it would be like becoming bored with the person you love.

Diana Vreeland, 1906-1989

SEEING *Red*

Red and ?

Red looks great when paired with a variety of other colours, but is most popularly paired with the following;

WHITE

YELLOW

BLUE

BLACK OR GREY

ORANGE

PINK

VIOLET

GREEN

GOLD

RED: need to know

Red is the warmest of all the colours and the one most often chosen by extroverts and males. On the negative side red can portray temper or anger; it is also the colour of passion and lust. Red roses symbolize passionate love; Red is Tuesday's color and it is also the colour of Mars, the planet known as the God of War.

THE COLOUR THAT ATTRACTS Attention

Red is the colour that most attracts attention. Surveys show it is the colour most frequently associated with visibility, proximity, and extroverts. It is also the colour most associated with dynamism and activity.

WHICH RED TO CHOOSE?

There are some basic rules: Modern styles tend to look best with bright, primary reds, traditional looks call for deeper and more burgundy tones and country looks are better done with softer, chalkier reds.

WHERE AND HOW TO USE RED

Red can be used anywhere in a home in a number of different ways.

- Even a small amount of red can add a burst of energy to a room, so start simple: a vase, a cushion, a throw – and take it from there.
- Red works great as an accent colour, particularly in a simple black and white color scheme.
- Red is known to stimulate the appetite as well as conversation – so it's great for kitchens and dining rooms. Consider a deep, rich red paired with dark wood furniture for a sophisticated and stylized antique look.
- Because of its passionate nature red can be a great colour for romantic bedrooms. The brighter the red, however, the more energy is delivered to the room – which can make it less than restful.
- A traditional oriental or Persian rug with a good amount of red in it is a classic way to bring red into a room without it being overwhelming.

A *Red*
CUSHION
provides contrast and
vivacity in the calm of a
grey room



Red
works great as
an accent colour



Red walls in
a kitchen suggest
warmth and
stimulate appetite





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The background image is a modern interior. On the left, a black wall is decorated with several red, cube-shaped shelves of varying sizes. Some shelves hold white and silver vases. In the foreground on the left is a large, white, modern vase with a circular cutout, containing dried reeds. In the center, a bright red leather sofa is positioned. To the right of the sofa, a black square clock with white hands is mounted on a red wall. The floor is a light-colored wood or laminate.

Did you know?

The word crimson comes from the ancient word Kermes or Kirmizi and relates to a type of insect called Kermes vermilio, which lives on the dwarf 'Kermes oaks' of the Mediterranean region. In days gone by, the dried bodies of the female insects of this species were used to produce a particularly vivid red dye, which later came to be known as Venetian Red and was exceptionally fashionable in the Italian Renaissance. However, because the dried insects were shipped in barrels and looked like grains of wheat, the people of the Middle Ages thought that the colour red was produced by means of immersing the cloth in a kind of grain – hence the expression 'died in the grain' – or very deeply ingrained. The earliest use of Kermes dye was found in the Neolithic caves of Aix-en-Provence.

