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Simple things like putting up art and adding scatter cushions can make a real difference to your home

Improve your home *IN A DAY*

Never more have our homes been our sanctuaries and now a new service from design duo, Stephenson Wright, promises to help you find your style and transform your interior into a space you'll truly love

WORDS: **Zoe Richards** ◆ PHOTOS: **Abigail Fahey and Darren Chung**

Have you ever thought, "I really want to refresh my home, but don't know where to start"? It's a dilemma that interior design duo Natalie Stephenson and Juliette Wright have heard a lot during their careers. The pair met and struck up a friendship while working at a leading London design studio 18 years ago before going on to launch their own studio, Stephenson Wright in 2013. With an impressive portfolio and skill set – including stints at Harrods and overseeing large, commercial and residential projects around the world – these days their base is The Post House, a luxury lifestyle showroom in the smart village of East Horsley.

'Savvy lighting always enhances a home'

Natalie and Juliette collaborated with leading lighting designer Mark Kavanagh of Future Light Design, along with River Woodwork, and Cornflake Audio Visual on the design and launch of this breath-taking space. In its previous life, the building was a Royal Mail sorting office. Now, with its double height lounge area, striking staircase, bar area and roof terrace garden created by award-winning Fiona Stephenson Designs, it's a multi-functional showroom and office, not to mention a glamorous location for gathering clients and entertaining.

While Mark was responsible for securing the building, it was Natalie and Juliette's vision that really transformed it. "Mark invited us to be a part of the journey when he bought the sorting office," Natalie explains. "It needed to showcase the clever lighting concepts that Mark creates, but he gave us a blank canvas with the design." The duo decided that they wanted to give the space a homely feel by introducing plenty of textures and intricate, considered details. "Comfort doesn't just come from a cosy sofa or bed, it's how you incorporate layers and depth," says Juliette. "Savvy lighting always enhances a home," Natalie also points out. "Good lighting and good interiors go hand in hand." So naturally the showroom is a masterclass in innovative and thoughtful lighting systems. The pair know that to embark on a successful project it is critical to understand the function of a space and consider the fundamental aspects such as lighting, electrics and joinery. "These elements all need to be cohesive to make an interior truly work," Natalie continues.

ABOVE: Table styling at home

BELOW: Juliette and Natalie have adapted their business during the pandemic

Shortly after its launch in late 2019, Natalie and Juliette started using The Post House as their base to meet clients and also to host intimate supper clubs and immersive design experiences. It was as a result of their first Design Discovery Day this March that the idea of offering a taster into the world of interior design really took off.

Such was the success of this event, where people could come and gather inspiration and tips through live workshops and expert advice, the pair saw potential for adapting their service. When new social distancing guidelines came in during the lockdown, the idea of a concept day, which can be delivered remotely, came to life.

"We'd been considering ways of making our service more accessible," explains Juliette. "The Design Discovery Day was just the start, but with the Concept Day it offers people the chance to benefit from our advice and guidance in a more flexible

and affordable way. Whether you've just moved house or are looking to breathe new life into an existing space, the Concept Day takes away the daunting process of interior design and breaks down some of the most basic design concerns into bitesize pieces."

Capitalising on the new-found appreciation of technology since lockdown measures were put in place, Natalie and Juliette will take a virtual tour of your home.

Then, using dimensions and a snapshot of your favourite inspirational images, they create a presentation of suggested transformations based on your brief. As it's a personalised experience, the service can cover whatever you need it to.

"So many people find themselves in a rut with their interiors," Natalie confides. "Whereas, we can look at a room and instantly spot the gaps or see how it could be enhanced."

The consultation can include ideas from joinery to lighting, window treatments, how to use pattern and colour, working out how to best use your existing furniture or finding inspiration for new pieces.

The end result of the day is a fresh insight into your home with tangible suggestions and solutions, not just on how to improve your interior, but crucially that all-important route map of how to get started. ◆

ABOVE: Create a stylish working from home environment

5 SIMPLE WAYS TO UPDATE YOUR INTERIORS

With all of us taking stock of our surroundings due to spending more time at home, we asked Natalie and Juliette for some simple, affordable ideas on how you can update your interior right now...

1) Look at the positioning of your furniture

"Can you move it around, rotate things, make more of a window or a view? Most people position their furniture around the edges of a room, but by bringing it 'into the round' you can actually create a more sociable space."

2) Add character with cushions

"One of the most affordable off-the-shelf updates is to introduce some new scatter cushions to your bed or sofa. Whether you go for a beautiful, soft colour palette or something more striking it's a chance to instantly add more personality."

3) Go green with plants

"Fresh flowers are of course fabulous, but while they're in shorter supply, artificial can work just as well, or pick some seasonal foliage or flowers from your garden and bring them inside. Having greenery in your home is a great way of capturing the mindful benefits of being outdoors."

4) Dining in is the new eating out:

"Make meals at home a bit more special by putting extra oomph into your table settings. A metre or two of lovely fabric ordered online can become a tablecloth, drag out your best china from the cupboards and get creative by accessorising the table with unusual and unexpected objects from around your home."

5) Rearrange your shelves

"Organise the things you already have to make for a more interesting display on your walls. Books can be sorted into colour tones or by size; prop up pieces of art or prints and team together gathered objects from nature to create a sense of layering."

To sign up for a Stephenson Wright Concept Day you can find out more on the website stephensonwright.com or call and book an appointment on 01932 508440. Prices from £1,050. You can also find a step-by-step guide to creating your own tablescape on the website under the Events section.