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Show and tell

Have you ever wondered how and why show homes look so perfect? We spoke to three of Surrey's leading interior designers to find out how you can make your property show home standard

WORDS: Zoe Richards

Flawlessly co-ordinated décor and without an item out of place, show homes are the ultimate in style perfection. With new build developments cropping up all around Surrey and beyond, there's plenty of competition to create the ideal home. And it's up to a clever team of stylists to make the vision of dream-living a reality. From a colour scheme that flows through every room to furniture and accessories that just seem to fit, it's no wonder it takes a professional eye to pull it all together. But what are the tricks of the trade for achieving an immaculate finish?

STEPHENSON WRIGHT

Natalie Stephenson and Juliette Wright of Stephenson Wright have worked on a multitude of exclusive projects. Their lifestyle studio in East Horsley serves as a masterclass in how clever lighting, fitted joinery and layered textures combine to create a beautifully serene space.

Photo: Andrews Gramer

Lighting is critical to both the look and feel of a room

'The most successful show homes feel like you could instantly move in, but they also ooze personality. Adding in treasured possessions and antique pieces help to give a more collected feel rather than all newly purchased.

'Invest in your lighting design and lighting control so all the carefully considered details in the rest of the home are always well lit, a comfortable colour temperature and designed to make you feel relaxed. Fitted joinery is the perfect solution for small spaces as it's made to measure and can utilise every millimetre. It always makes for the smartest solutions and is a key technique we use to elevate our interiors.

'Invest in your lighting design and lighting control so all the carefully considered details are always well lit'

'Layering texture is something we do instinctively. Without it, you can't create the same level of interest and feeling of warmth. In more recent times people are moving away from the shiny, pristine look and introducing more of a textured, layered feel. We find wallpaper – whether it's woven, linen, silk or grasscloth – adds the most impact into a space and lifts it above and beyond any paint finish.

'When it comes to accessories, always go bigger than you think and add more than you think! Small items can often get lost, while bigger pieces create more sculptural impact. Also, flowers – whether real or faux – are a great way to create luxury. We are big believers in the "shot of green" which can be brought in through indoor plants and flowers.'

Photo: Anders Gramer

Stephenson Wright: 'clever lighting, fitted joinery and layered textures combine to create a beautifully serene space'

Photo: Hill House Interiors

ABOVE: Styled by Hill House Interiors – offering a relaxed yet elegant feel to the bedroom

HILL HOUSE INTERIORS

Jenny Weiss is co-founder of multi-award-winning Weybridge design practice Hill House Interiors. Today, its team of more than 20 designers, architects and craftspeople, bring high-end couture interiors and diverse projects to life.

'Show homes are always spacious, light, bright and designed to fit the projected purchaser profile perfectly. However, a home should be full of your personality and that's what differentiates a showhouse to a home. Once you have established a style for your home you can then introduce timeless pieces to complement your interiors, from family hand-me-down furniture items to accessories gathered on your travels.

'When it comes to accessories, use a combination of heights and textures and make them relevant to the room. Dress in groups of three and have the odd item by itself. Don't apply symmetry to accessorising, but make sure the overall space is balanced with levels of interest all around. Remember, all elements need to complement each other and to follow a theme such as geometric, abstract or linear and this can be applied to soft furnishing fabrics, joinery designs and accessories.

'Don't underestimate the power of organisation. Tidy away any mundane, everyday objects in convenient wicker baskets and your space will immediately feel calm and organised while also being aesthetically pleasing. Make sure you have plenty of storage or introduce decorative boxes to your open shelving so only the items you want to see are on show.' ▸

Photo: Hill House Interiors

BELOW: 'Make sure you have plenty of storage or introduce decorative boxes to your open shelving'