

# Interior design – the magic of personal freedom

## *The new series by our expert Azra Zakir*

Home is where the heart is. Or is it? How do you feel when you step through your front door? Is your home somewhere you love coming back to? Or does the thought of getting home fill you with dread and despair, knowing that clutter and chaos await? Is it just somewhere to eat, sleep, wash and slump on the sofa, actions with little emotion? Is it home sweet home or a place that you don't want to share with anyone?

Your home is your most personal space. It can have a huge impact on your moods and emotions. Your home can nurture you, comfort you, fill you with joy just by spending time there. Or it can be a place with no warmth or emotion, a cold space with little joy or happiness. After a hard or stressful day, coming back to a place that gives you little emotional return is hardly good for the soul. But for many people home is just a place to come back to, never seen as anything more than that.

There are others who don't want to pay much attention to their current surroundings, as it's not the dream they aspire to. Many of us think about our dream home, think in meticulous detail about what it would be like, where it would be and how it would feel to live there. Some may even think that the dream home would bring out a better person, more relaxed, more open and communicative, a person who took pleasure in the simple activities carried out within the home. Cherish the dream and work out a way of achieving it – but don't neglect your surroundings until you get there.

Your home can reflect your personality, tell your story, create a mood. Your home can be a wonderful place where you love spending time. It's an intangible quality and it's often difficult to put your finger on what it is that makes a place feel special. It's not about throwing money at a place – some of the most wonderful homes have been created on tight budgets where considerable thought has gone into how to make the most of the space, where every detail matters. It's about thinking carefully about what you'd like your home to achieve, how you'd like it to feel. It's about creating a harmonious home, where how things work is as important as how they look. It's also about developing a fascination with the space you live in, seeing how you



*Wall-mounted basins enhance the feeling of space in this stunning bathroom overlooking the landscape in Es Cubells*

make best use of that space, how to unlock the potential within four walls. Ultimately it's about the desire to create the best possible home environment for yourself and to



*San Juan - running a window across the length of the room maximises natural light, as well as providing a beautiful view all year round*

take pleasure in living there.

It can be achieved by everyone – home owner or tenant alike. There may be limitations in what can be done within a space, limitations based on budgets, regulations or what landlords allow, but by following the steps in this series, anyone with the desire to get the best out of their home can do so. The steps are in a logical order – you won't reap the full benefits of decorating a room if it hasn't been decluttered in advance. There is emphasis on making the most of light and space throughout. The light in Ibiza is quite special so bring it into the home. Creating a beautiful home does involve time and effort but, as with everything, the more you put in, the more you get back in return.



*San Jose – using the same flooring inside and out unites the two areas and creates a feeling of flow. The double height room flooded with natural light and the open staircase both add to the spacious feel*

## DECLUTTERING

Clutter ... things that aren't used, you don't love or are needed but don't have a home within the home. For many people clutter can accumulate without anyone even realising it. Clutter can be one of those things that creep up on you – before you know it, clutter's taking over and you may only realise once you feel completely overwhelmed by it. If that does happen, the process of tackling it will feel all the more difficult.

If you consider how much comes into the home and how much goes out, the difference can often be vast. In a consumer society, we are constantly bombarded with information on what we should have, must have, need to have – without thinking "Do I really need or want this?" And we're not just talking about the clutter that you see, think of all the things hidden away, on top of cupboards, at the back of wardrobes, under beds, in spare rooms, in the garage or any other space. It's very easy to hide things away so they don't have to be dealt with. All that remains is that sense of unease that things aren't as great as they could be.

We become incredibly attached to our possessions and sometimes the reason for the attachment is how long we've had something, or because it was a present from someone in our past. How-



*A striking modern villa in Cala Carbo*

ever, doing an inventory of possessions is an alien concept to most. We never learn to look at our many things and think "Do I like it? Do I use it? Do I need it? Does it make any difference to my life?"

The first step towards making the most of your space and creating a harmonious home is to declutter. It doesn't mean throwing out all of your worldly goods. It does involve casting a critical eye over your possessions and seeing what needs to move on. Be honest with yourself about the things you own.

Start small and don't give up before the task is finished. For example, start by decluttering a cupboard. Empty everything out onto the floor or onto a table. Now go through everything quickly and allocate where items will go – things to keep, things to recycle, things to donate to charity, things for San Jordi market, things for the bin. Have separate boxes or bags for each. Once all items have been reallocated, things to keep can go back into the cupboard in a tidy fashion. All other items need to leave the home as quickly as possible – decluttering shouldn't involve creating a large pile of stuff by the front door! Often the process of decluttering involves making a much bigger mess than when you started, as you empty out all the drawers and cupboards. It will be time consuming and tiring, but don't stop halfway through defeated by the clutter. All that will happen is that you'll shove everything back.

Be ruthless. If you've had something for years but never used it or worn it or derived any pleasure from it, give it a new home. Personal objects with memories don't have to be sacrificed. But be selective too – some memories don't need to be held on to. Don't spend a long time deliberating over whether you might use something now that you've stumbled across it. Try and make decisions quickly – although the process of decluttering can be quite liberating and exhilarating, don't turn the session into a nostalgic trip.

#### Benefits of decluttering:

- ✦ You'll feel better knowing that the space you live in only has the things you need or want for a number of reasons:
- ✦ You can find things
- ✦ Household chores don't take as long
- ✦ There's more time to do the things you enjoy doing – clutter slows everything down
- ✦ Decluttering can be a cathartic process – helping you let go of the past and move on
- ✦ It can also be liberating and energising – clutter won't be holding you back
- ✦ Decluttering makes you more efficient in all that you do
- ✦ Decluttering helps to keep the energy in the home alive and vibrant. Clutter causes energy to stagnate.

Decluttering is an excellent task to undertake as part of a bigger spring clean. It doesn't need to be restricted to when you're about to decorate. However, it is something that you have to do yourself – the cleaner won't be in a position to decide what goes out and what stays!

**azra zakir – exploring space**  
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