

Where to spend and where to save: a room-by-room guide

Interior designers Katie Glaister of K&H Design, Jessica Buckley and Anna Haines give their recommendations on where to splash out and where to budget when designing each room of the house



PAUL MASSEY

Living room

Spend

Sofas and armchairs are universally agreed to be worth a bit of investment—you'll spend a lot of time on them, after all. "I would try not to skimp on your sofa," says Anna. "Like your mattress, this is an item that should last you a lifetime if you get it right. It can always be recovered if you move house and the fabric no longer suits its new environment."

Jessica agrees: "Far better to buy a good sofa and upholster it in an inexpensive fabric than to put a fabulous fabric on a cheap sofa which will look worse for wear within a few years. I love to use Kingcome or George Smith for hand built sofas and chairs that offer supreme comfort and quality that will last for a generation or more. Add a smart but inexpensive fabric such as a ticking stripe (Ian Mankin, or "Sutton" by Clarke and Clarke) or plain linen (Designers Guild or Notting Hill's The Cloth Shop are good options)."

Anna recommends avoiding foam wrapped cushions and opting for ones with a 60%/40% mix of feather and down. George Smith, Howe London, Lorforde and Pinch (for more contemporary designs) all have handsome pieces and are beautifully hand crafted."

READ NEXT



Interior designers' secret source for vintage and unique pieces

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VINTERIOR



RACHEL WHITING

Efficient storage for books and technology can also be worth spending money on. "Splash out on well-designed joinery and furniture to fit awkward areas and maximise the use of space in the room," says Katie at K&H Design. "In London homes, where every square foot matters, designing joinery that will maximise this space will benefit the whole family."

Save

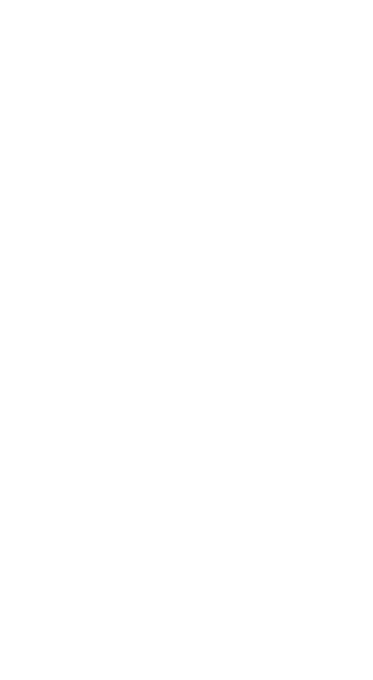
Window dressing doesn't need to cost the earth. "A pair of curtains can require a substantial amount of fabric, so costs can quickly escalate," says Anna. "There are some wonderful fabric suppliers who won't break the bank, and offer clever and charming designs like Tinsmiths or The Cloth Shop (for linens and their own expanding range of designs). Haines Collection is a platform for the resale of fabric offcuts that would otherwise be headed for landfill. They sell fabric offcuts from the likes of Soane, Penny Morrison and Christopher Farr so worth keeping an eye on their ever-changing stock."

Katie recommends compromising with "inexpensive linens and nice trims. Where there are lots of windows which need metres and metres of fabric, choosing an inexpensive cotton or linen and then embellishing with a decorative trim keeps the windows looking bespoke and saves money for other eye level pieces in the room."



PAUL MASSEY

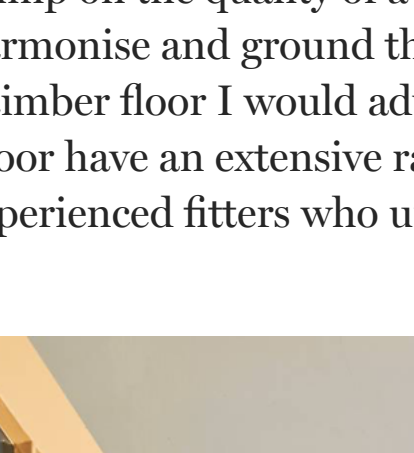
READ NEXT



Nicola Harding on how to design a study

Floor coverings are also an area where savings are possible, with inexpensive sisal flooring a favourite among interior designers. As Jessica explains, "we love to use a smart wool or silk carpet in sitting rooms but where the budget doesn't permit that we'll use an affordable sisal rug (we like Bubbleweave sisal from Alternative Flooring) to cover the floor area and perhaps add a much smaller patterned rug in the central seating area for a cosy, layered look."

When it comes to furniture, antique fairs can be a good way to keep the budget down. "Kempton and Ardingly Antiques are great for picking up inexpensive Georgian side tables, antique lighting, antique textiles and throws, and decorative objects," says Anna. "Go with a firm idea of what you're looking for, the dimensions of furniture items to suit your room, a tape measure and pictures on your phone of the space. Ask about the provenance of the piece so you know its history before parting with your cash!"



SHOPPING

Interior designers pick their favourite pieces from the high street

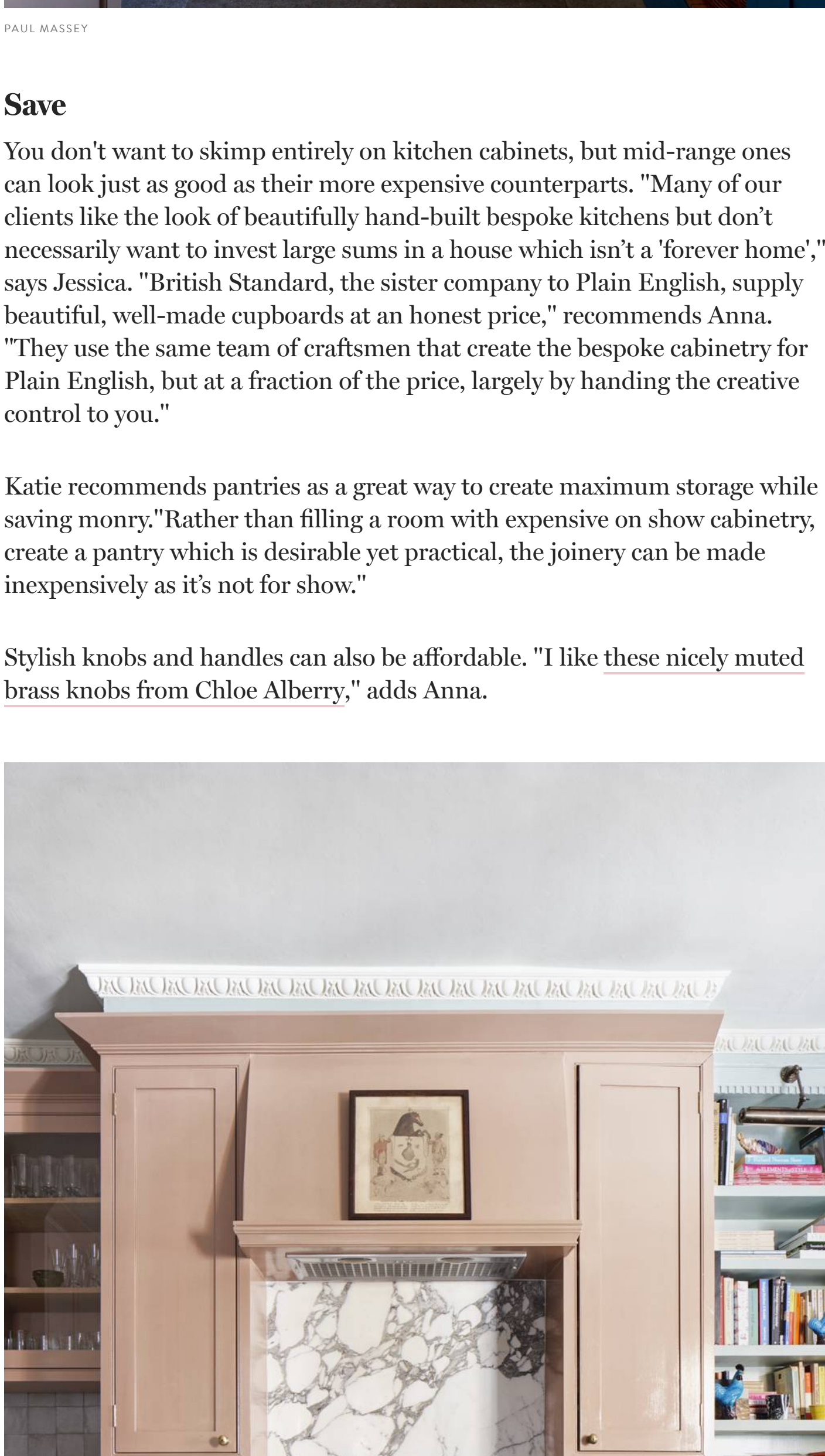
CONTINUE READING

Kitchen

Spend

Countertops and hardware can make a huge difference to the look of a kitchen, and can be a more limited investment than cabinets. "We use decent mid-range off-the-shelf cabinetry," says Jessica, "and then add flair with a smart countertop, beautiful lighting and special hardware which elevates the overall look. We recently selected some very smart lights from Hector Finch to elevate an otherwise inexpensive kitchen scheme."

Everyone agrees that a good kitchen floor is well worth the money. "Never skimp on the quality of a kitchen floor!" advises Katie. "A beautiful floor will harmonise and ground the overall scheme," says Anna. "If you're looking for a timber floor I would advise buying quality and sustainable boards. Solid Floor have an extensive range of elegant timber and parquet floors, and experienced fitters who understand the particularities of all floors."



PAUL MASSEY

Save

You don't want to skimp entirely on kitchen cabinets, but mid-range ones can look just as good as their more expensive counterparts. "Many of our clients like the look of beautifully hand-built bespoke kitchens but don't necessarily want to invest large sums in a house which isn't a 'forever home'," says Jessica. "British Standard, the sister company to Plain English, supply beautiful, well-made cupboards at an honest price," recommends Anna. "They use the same team of craftsmen that create the bespoke cabinetry for Plain English, but at a fraction of the price, largely by handing the creative control to you."

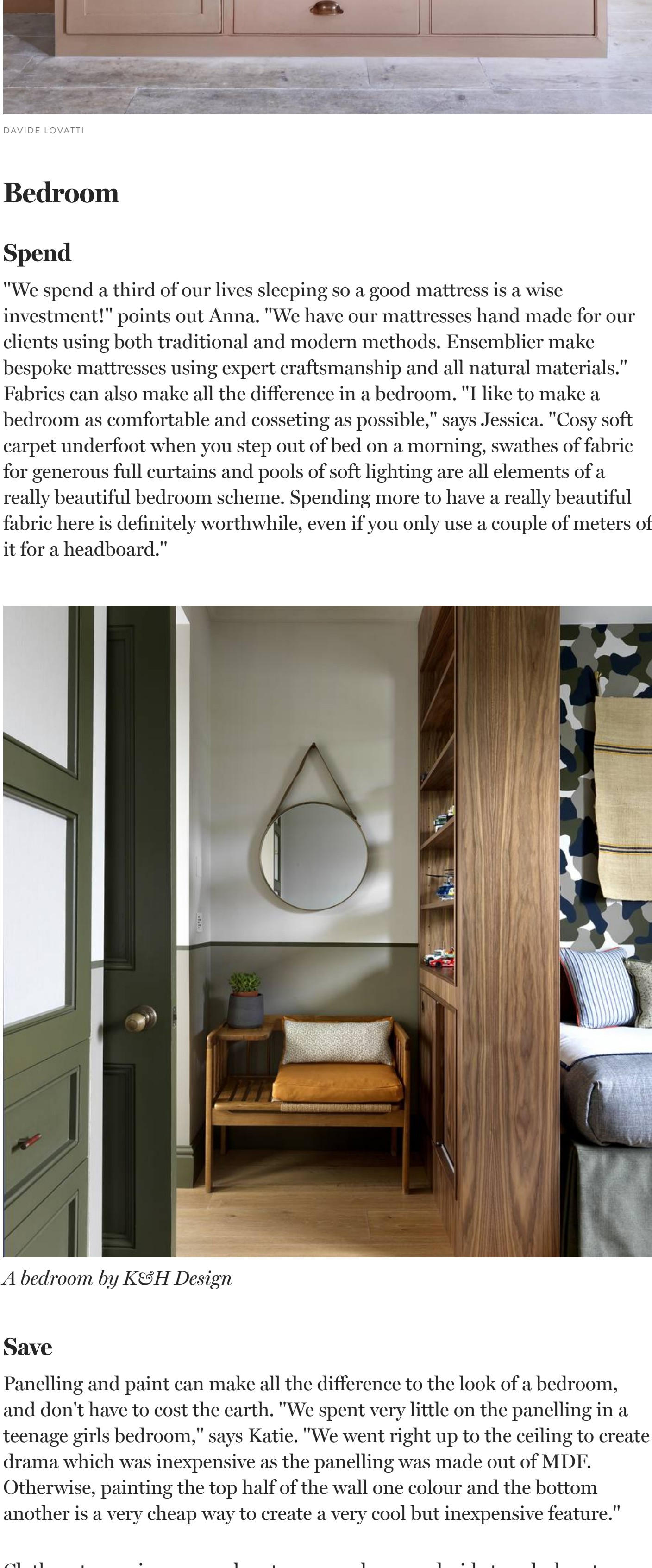
Katie recommends pantries as a great way to create maximum storage while saving money. "Rather than filling a room with expensive on show cabinetry, create a pantry which is desirable yet practical, the joinery can be made inexpensively as it's not for show."

Stylish knobs and handles can also be affordable. "I like these nicely muted brass knobs from Chloe Alberry," adds Anna.

READ NEXT



Marie Kondo's three best storage tips

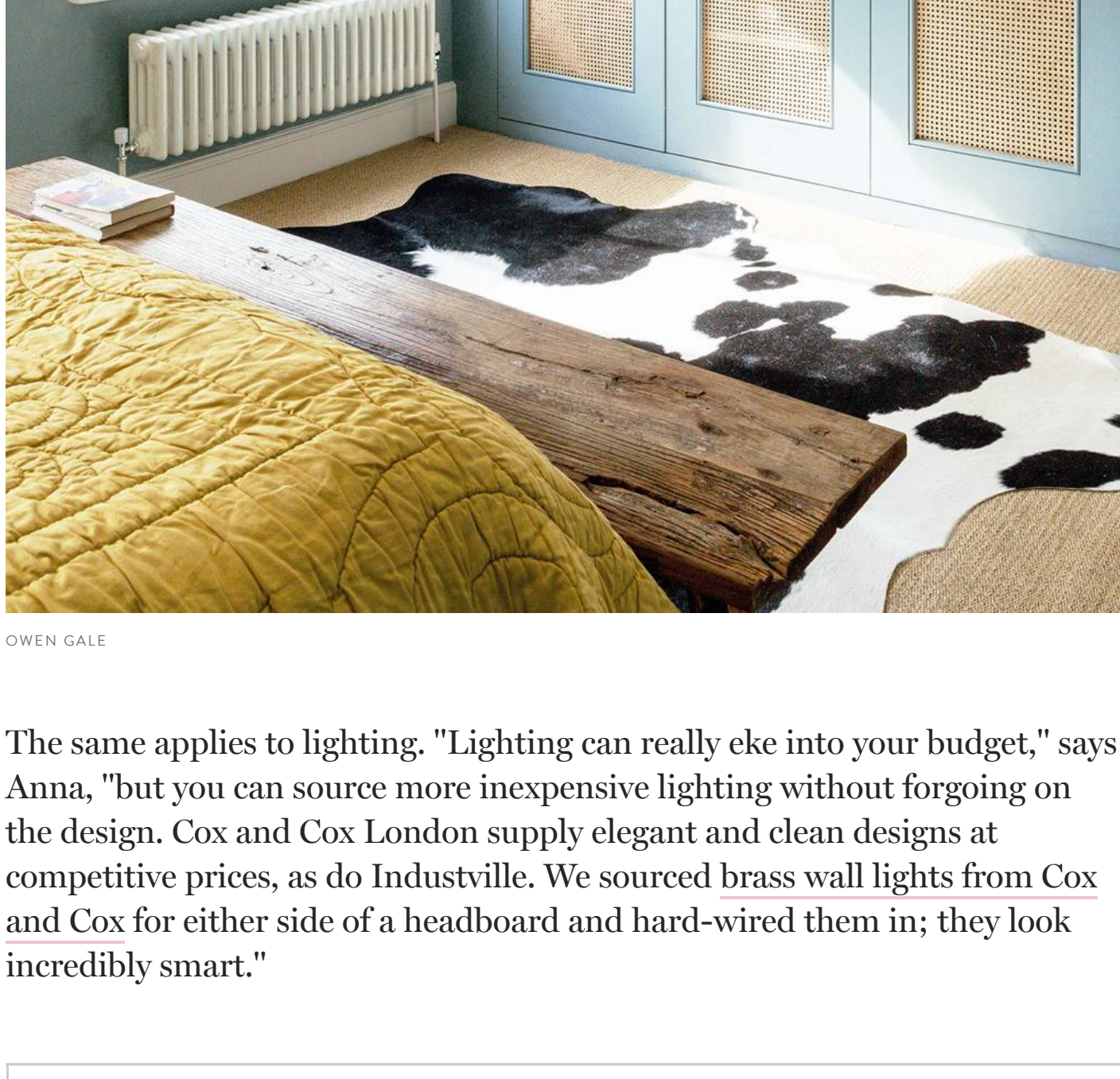


DAVIDE LOVATTI

Bedroom

Spend

"We spend a third of our lives sleeping so a good mattress is a wise investment!" points out Anna. "We have our mattresses hand made for our clients using both traditional and modern methods. Ensemblier make bespoke mattresses using expert craftsmanship and all natural materials." Fabrics can also make all the difference in a bedroom. "I like to make a bedroom as comfortable and cossetting as possible," says Jessica. "Cosy soft carpet underfoot when you step out of bed on a morning, swathes of fabric for generous full curtains and pools of soft lighting are all elements of a really beautiful bedroom scheme. Spending more to have a really beautiful fabric here is definitely worthwhile, even if you only use a couple of meters of it for a headboard."

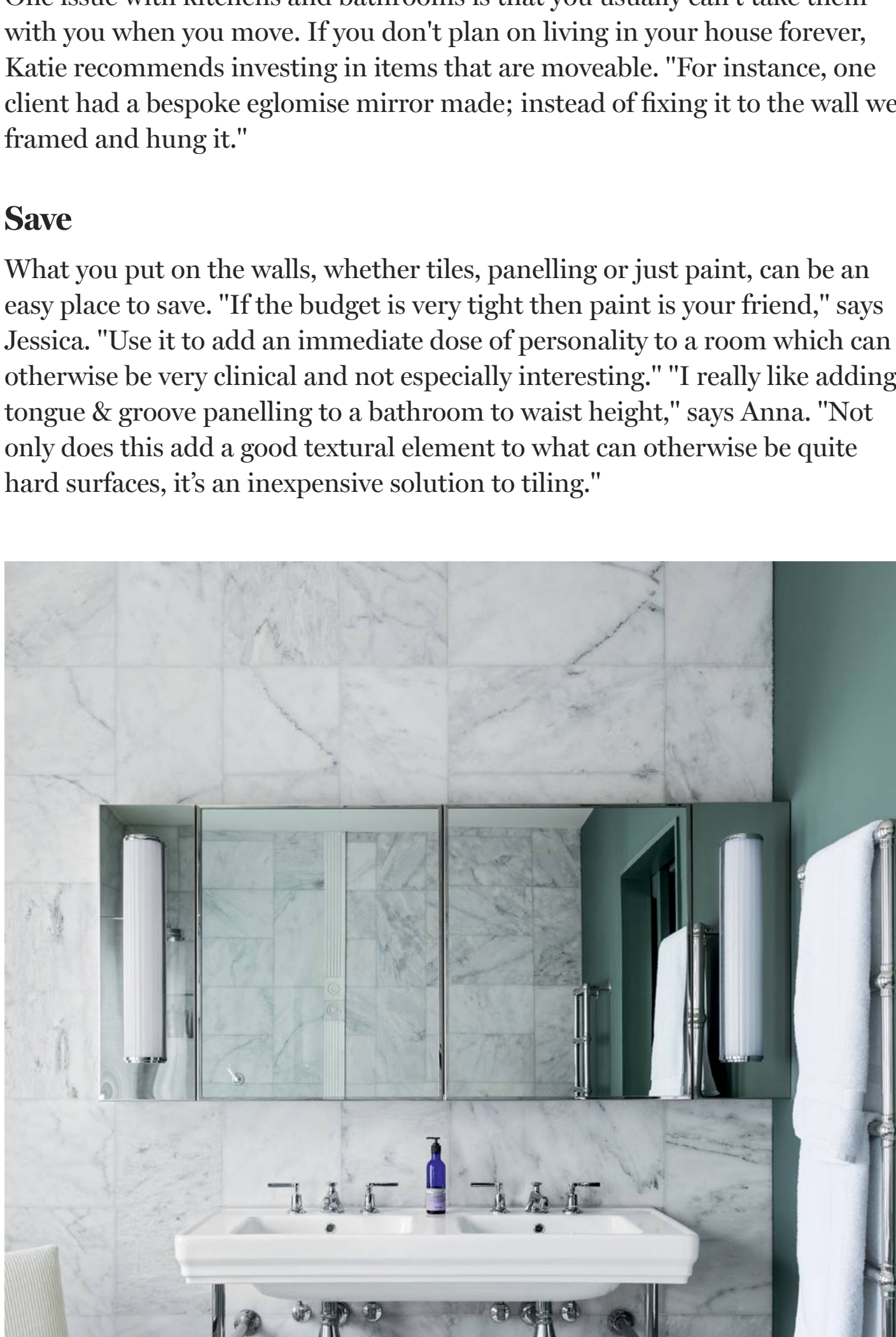


A bedroom by K&H Design

Save

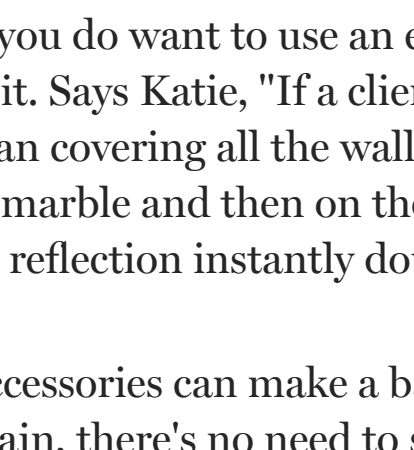
Panelling and paint can make all the difference to the look of a bedroom, and don't have to cost the earth. "We spent very little on the panelling in a teenage girls bedroom," says Katie. "We went right up to the ceiling to create drama which was inexpensive as the panelling was made out of MDF. Otherwise, painting the top half of the wall one colour and the bottom another is a very cheap way to create a very cool but inexpensive feature."

Clothes storage is an easy place to save, unless you decide to splash out on bespoke joinery. "I am sceptical of spending huge amounts on free-standing wardrobes which I find incredibly dull pieces of furniture," says Jessica. "I'd advise buying an inexpensive one and then have a carpenter make you some doors with cut out panels to which you can add caning or ruched fabric."



OWEN GALE

The same applies to lighting. "Lighting can really eke into your budget," says Anna, "but you can source more inexpensive lighting and clean designs on the design. Cox and Cox London supply elegant and without forgoing at competitive prices, as do Indusville. We sourced brass wall lights from Cox and Cox for either side of a headboard and hard-wired them in; they look incredibly smart."



SHOPPING

The best bed linen to buy now

CONTINUE READING

Bathroom

Spend

Taps have a good claim to be the things you notice and touch most in a bathroom, so these are a good thing to spend some money on. "Always spend on good quality hardware that works," says Katie. "The cost of installation is the same either way but you don't want to end up having to replace it all in a couple of years because you didn't spend the money initially." "Taps are where you can elevate your space and it really makes a difference," says Anna. "Drummonds and The Water Monopoly both produce elegant designs in a variety of finishes. The Water Monopoly Aged Brass finish is a particular favourite for taps. It sits well with the odd antique piece and has a charming faded glamour feel to it." Jessica also chooses to spend money on taps (Lefroy Brooks is a favourite), lights (Vaughan make beautiful IP44-rated lights) and wallpaper. "These will bring you much more joy than the 'label' on your loo," she says.

One issue with kitchens and bathrooms is that you usually can't take them with you when you move. If you don't plan on living in your house forever, Katie recommends investing in items that are moveable. "For instance, one client had a bespoke eglomise mirror made; instead of fixing it to the wall we framed and hung it."

Save

What you put on the walls, whether tiles, panelling or just paint, can be an easy place to save. "If the budget is very tight then paint is your friend," says Jessica. "Use it to add an immediate dose of personality to a room which can otherwise be very clinical and not especially interesting." "I really like adding tongue & groove panelling to a bathroom to waist height," says Anna. "Not only does this add a good textural element to what can otherwise be quite hard surfaces, it's an inexpensive solution to tiling."

ROMAIN RICARD

If you do want to use an expensive material in the bathroom, limit the extent of it. Says Katie, "If a client wants marble walls in their bathroom, rather than covering all the walls in this rather expensive material, create one wall of marble and then on the opposite wall install a more economical mirror; its reflection instantly doubles the value of the marble."

Accessories can make a bathroom feel more comfortable and homely, but again, there's no need to splash out. Jessica recommends getting a "small vintage table from Ebay or your local antique shop and use it for displaying your prettiest and most spoiling lotions and potions." "I love to put a chair in a bathroom if there is space," adds Anna. "It can create more of an unstructured aesthetic, as does an antique rug, artwork and antique mirror. These elements can all be sourced in antique markets like Ardingly and Kempton."

Anna Haines: annahaines.co.uk | [@annahainesdesign](https://www.instagram.com/annahainesdesign)
Jessica Buckley: jessicabuckley.co.uk | [@jessicabuckleyinteriors](https://www.instagram.com/jessicabuckleyinteriors)
K&H Design: kandhdesign.co.uk | [@kandhdesignltd](https://www.instagram.com/kandhdesignltd)