



Wine cellar designed and constructed by Hutchinson Furniture and Interiors

## INTERIOR DESIGN TIPS

by Vanessa Hutchinson

# TRANSFORMING THE PERFECT HOME FOR A COUPLE INTO THE PERFECT FAMILY HOME

*Professional and retired couples use a home completely differently to how a family with small children or teenagers does. This extends from needing a separate dining room – or not – to having a TV or family room instead of a study or music room. It particularly applies to the simple, everyday things such as whether you'll use the front or back door, whether the washing machine should be plumbed in upstairs or down, or even how many dishwashers you'll need. Professional designer Vanessa Hutchinson provides her four top tips for getting your home's layout to work perfectly for you...*



A bespoke kitchen by Hutchinson Furniture and Interiors

## 1. Decide what your priorities are

We all know what rooms we have in our homes and how we currently use them, but how often do we stop to think what could be changed that would make a real difference to daily life? If your family is expanding, it is a particularly good time to ask yourself what your priorities really are when it comes to how you want to use the space in your home.

For example, many people have a utility room and back door close to their kitchen that doubles as a pantry, boot room and/or coat storage – but there isn't enough space to do all of these things properly. Would it actually be better to make a boot room by the back door and move the laundry area upstairs to a bathroom?

## 2. Work out a practical layout

This involves asking lots of questions about your lifestyle. The answers will be telling: is the layout of your home properly tailored to how you would like to live, or are you making do and adapting your lifestyle to a less-than-perfect layout?

For example, is your kitchen at the back of the house, making access difficult when you bring in shopping? Or doesn't this matter because you normally have your shopping delivered?

Or is your living room on the north side of the house and your (rarely used) dining room on the south side? Could these be swapped over and what would need to be changed to make each room feel right? ▶



A bespoke kitchen by Hutchinson Furniture and Interiors, created for a townhouse basement



Vanessa Hutchinson is a director of Hutchinson Furniture and Interiors Ltd, the bespoke furniture company which has a showroom and workshops in Long Compton. Vanessa initially studied Furniture and Interior Design, specialising in yacht interiors, and during her career has worked on diverse private commissions for clients both at home and abroad. She defines her passion as "getting to the bottom of a plan that isn't right, a layout that doesn't work, and finding the something that will make a difference or creating a style that both works and looks good, too."

### 3. Consolidate before extending

Properly plan your existing space before planning an extension up, out or down.

If you are considering extending your house 'to make the difference', think carefully about whether the expense of an extension would actually make more difference than, say, opening up a wall, moving a door or properly designing the flow and layout of your existing rooms.

If you are contemplating using your basement, should it be dug out further so it can be used as a media room or playroom rather than just for storage? Alternatively, a wine collection can be properly stored and displayed in a dedicated wine cellar (as pictured on the previous page).

### 4. Bringing it all together

As you work out your home's layout, it is very important to think about the individual pieces of furniture, whether new or old, that will make you feel at home. Their shapes and sizes should be considered as part of the design process so that the overall look, style and colours of each room as well as their proportions and use are all brought together at the same time.

This will give you the end result that you are looking for. **P**

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