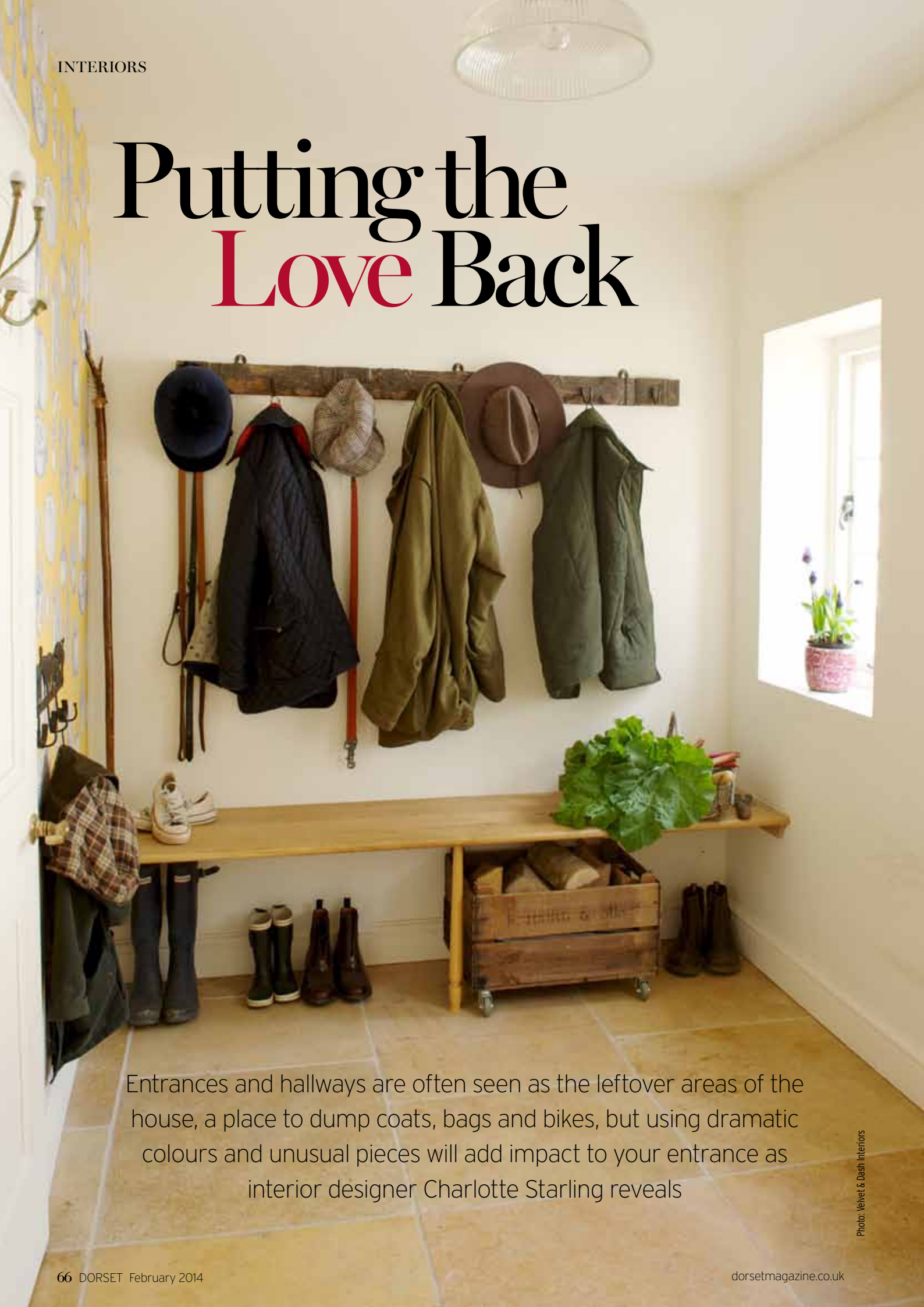


Putting the Love Back



Entrances and hallways are often seen as the leftover areas of the house, a place to dump coats, bags and bikes, but using dramatic colours and unusual pieces will add impact to your entrance as interior designer Charlotte Starling reveals



Boots, logs, toys, magazines - this bushel box on wheels is a one-stop stylish storage solution. £45 (velvet-dash.com)

Below right: This red locker key box can be attached to a wall. Drift Living £25 (driftliving.co.uk)

No one spends much time in a hall; it's a place to pass through, not linger so it is no surprise that entrances and halls are all too often unremarkable or neglected spaces. But as the entrance point to your home, they present the perfect opportunity to make a big first impression.

The front door itself is clearly very important. Whether you want to convey solidity with a stout wooden door or openness and light with a glazed door, always think about the security and the impression it conveys. Door handles, bells and knockers should match the style of the door and the house.

The key thing to remember when designing and decorating entrances and passageways is to be practical as these spaces are subject to considerable wear and tear. They are thoroughfares in constant use, so any clutter, slippery surfaces or constricted spaces need to be addressed. If you have to sidle past a hall table while you're trying to get your coat off, it shouldn't be there.

A common problem with hallways is that they are small or narrow. In which case use the walls and floor to create an impact. Wallpaper can make a dramatic and unexpected statement. The lower parts of the walls are particularly subject

to rough treatment. The Victorians solved this problem by panelling or tiling below the dado rail. Another solution is to use heavy-duty washable vinyl wallpaper.

A gallery wall of paintings or family photos injects instant personality and visual interest. A large mirror, positioned to reflect a doorway or staircase throws light around and makes the space appear lighter and larger. Unusual lights - such as a quirky chandelier - will force the eye upwards, distracting from spatial shortcomings.

The flooring needs to cope with heavy traffic, so have the biggest doormat possible. Coloured rugs or patterned tiles are stylish ways to camouflage any dirt trailed in. Storage is essential for anything scruffy like shoes and boots. A strategically-placed basket will deal with this. Use a hat-stand or row of hooks for coats. Give children pegs at their height - no excuses for stuff on the floor! Finally, if you can, squeeze in a console table or at least a ledge for keys and post.

If you are desperate for extra space in your home, why not consider using the hall as an additional room? Under the stairs, in an alcove or a blind corner, these dead spots can be transformed into a small office, workspace or extra storage space for heavy coats, boots or even bicycles.



About Charlotte

Charlotte Starling is Creative Director of Velvet & Dash Interiors based near Dorchester. A keen supporter of local businesses, she works with Dorset-based designers and artists to offer styling and sourcing services for the home. Find out more at velvet-dash.com or call 01300 320 657.





Above: Inspired by Scandinavian forests, these 'branches' can be used to hang coats and jackets
Hanna Francis Oksa Branch Hooks in walnut £60 (cotswoldtrading.com)

A quirky chandelier or interesting light will draw the eye upwards
Antique light - Velvet & Dash Interiors



Photo: Angela Vincent



Above: Cheer up a dark hallway with this zesty lime console table by Sweetpea and Willow £1345 (sweetpeandwillow.com)



Embrace Your Long Forgotten Rooms

If your New Year's resolutions are beginning to falter, a great way to get yourself motivated again is to commit yourself to small decorating project. This time of year is brilliant for dusting off your paint brush and actually doing something with the room that you've always meant to get round to but never have.

Rooms that are small with little natural light are the ones that seem to get pushed to the bottom of the decorating list, often because people just don't know what to do with them. Small bathrooms without windows or downstairs toilets are perfect examples of this.

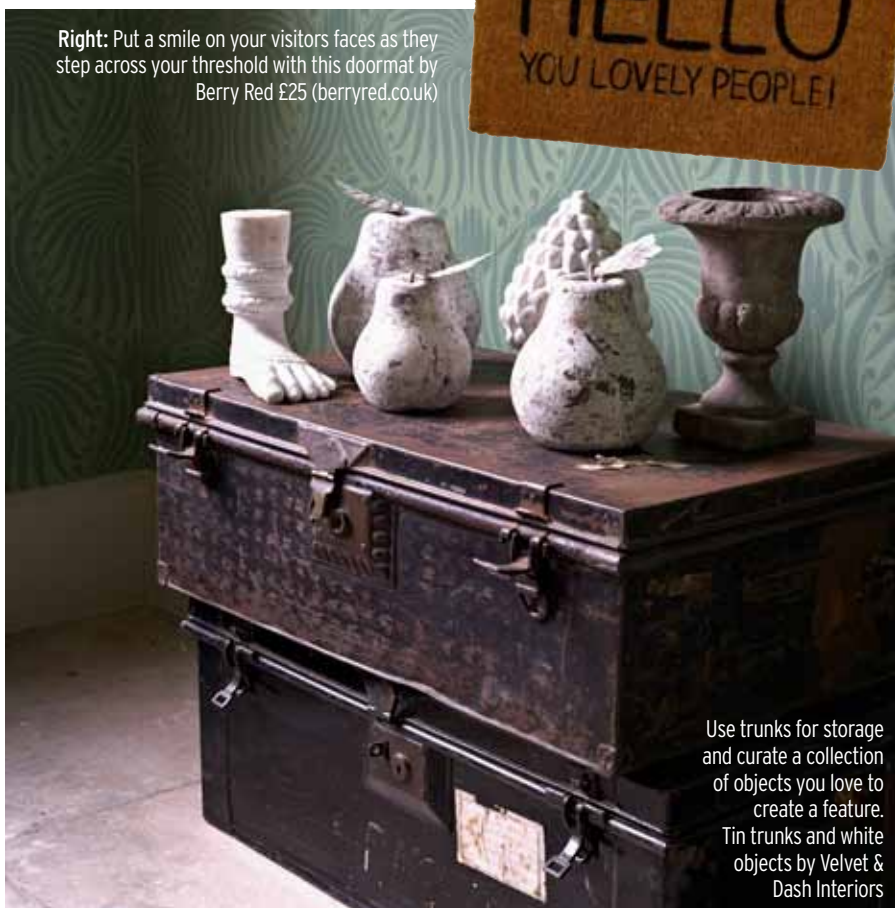
The most common way that people decide to decorate these spaces is to paint them white or light colours in the hope that this will make them appear bigger and brighter. However all this tends to do is create a dull room with no character.

Cloakrooms and powder rooms offer the perfect opportunity to add bold colour without committing to it for larger, more lived-in rooms in the home. Using strong warm colours, such as, Bringal, Pelt, Stiffkey Blue or Plummet, will help to create a dramatic yet intimate space. You could even use bold wallpapers like Silvergate (see image above) or Orangerie to the same effect.

By embracing the room for what it is, rather than what you want it to be, will help you to create a truly unique and glamorous space that you wouldn't have had if you had chosen to paint it white.

Sarah Cole, Marketing Director
farrow-ball.com

Right: Put a smile on your visitors faces as they step across your threshold with this doormat by Berry Red £25 (berrired.co.uk)



Use trunks for storage and curate a collection of objects you love to create a feature.
Tin trunks and white objects by Velvet & Dash Interiors

Photo: Nick Carter