

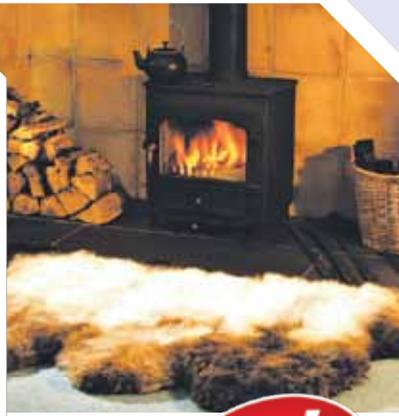
Homes DESIGN



JOHN

Amabile

THE TOP SCOTS DESIGNER SHARES HIS HOMES NEWS AND VIEWS



Skye's the limit in luxury

I HAVE had a 15-year love affair with Skyeskyns, the Waternish-based company that produces amazing sheepskins.

Despite being deeply immersed in tradition, Skyeskyns is a modern business. Clive Hartwell was in the Royal Navy when he first saw Skye and fell in love with the place, returning later to pay his way through university by diving for clams off the island.

After studying at Cambridge, he worked as an English teacher as well as keeping sheep then spent four years as a full-time crofter in Waternish.

In 1983 Clive set up Skyeskyns, inspired by a friend whose family had a leather business in the Midlands. Clive trained in tanning and over the years has collected a wide range of traditional tanning machinery.

There are 13 stages in the process of producing sheepskins which takes about two-and-a-half weeks.

"We've always understood that visitors to Skye and Lochalsh expect the highest standards of customer care, good value and a memorable experience to take away with them," says Clive.

"With the Isle of Skye voted by travellers eighth in the top 10 European island destinations, we must all work together to deliver this quality of experience and to meet visitor expectations.

"We hope our business will help draw visitors to the island and, in particular, to the north-west and Waternish. This will benefit the whole island by encouraging visitors to stay here longer."

In 2010 VisitScotland awarded Skyeskyns the five star Visitor Attraction grading. People visiting Scotland's only traditional exhibition tannery witness time-honoured methods of making leather.

The art of sheepskin production and the story of leather can be explained by any of the staff during the free guided tour before visitors have a chance to look over the huge variety of natural sheepskins and related products.

Skyeskyns have evolved over the years to appeal to the many demands of the design industry and boasts high-end clothing and footwear in wool, leather and sheepskin. They have also introduced new lines in lanolin-based beauty products.

As well as a wide range of sheepskins, Skyeskyns offer cow-hides, reindeer skins, and exclusive designer mosaic rugs and exotic throws.

New additions to the range this year include snuggles (sheepskin hot-water bottle covers) and Hamish Haggis, a children's hand puppet.

Skyeskyns are offering Sunday Post readers a special discount of 15% on all online purchases until January 31. Visit skyeskyns.co.uk and use the code 'sunpost15' when buying.

Ask Amabile



I'M looking for retro ideas for my husband's home office. K. Reid, Moffat.

This Trim Phone from Oliver Bonas is a lovely reminder of 1970s home fashion at its best. £30 from oliverbonas.com or call 0208 974 0110.

If you have a homes query you'd like some help with, write to: Ask Amabile, The Sunday Post, 80 Kingsway East, Dundee DD4 8SL or email askamabile@sundaypost.com

BEST BUY



THESE colanders are perfect for draining veg or pasta when you're cooking for one. £7.50 from The Contemporary Home at tch.net



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■ Right — a typical Maltese building. Below — a pretty Mediterranean finca.



The outlook's sunny again

I was a property bubble that burst the dreams of many a sun-seeking Brit.

By Bill Gibb

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The global recession saw prices plummet, with many who'd bought property abroad left shattered.

As *A Place In The Sun - Winter Sun* returns, though, presenter Sara Damergi (below) reckons there are signs of a brighter European future.

But she's warning those seeking a home abroad that price isn't the only thing to consider.

"Most of the local agents I have spoken to Europe-wide have indicated a cautious but clear upturn in expats buying property," Sara told *The Sunday Post*.

"At the moment Spain and the Costas are still the number one location for applicants to the show.

"You can see why as prices in overdeveloped areas have dropped by as much as 50%.

"But I wouldn't recommend buying in an area just because it's cheap.

"Relocation is about integrating and lifestyle as much as it is the property.

"So make sure you aren't basing your whole decision on price. Also think about resale potential.

"If you change your mind and want to sell later on and the market hasn't picked up sufficiently you will have trouble selling in an overdeveloped area where supply outstrips demand. Weigh things up." The various

versions of the Channel 4 series have proved hugely popular with viewers.

"I'm delighted to be part of the show," says 34-year-old Sara.

"It encompasses so many areas of life that I'm passionate about — property, travel and people achieving their dreams.

"I think the reason the show has been such a longstanding success is because the goals are achievable for everyone.

"We have everyone on this series, from people in their 20s to those retiring abroad to people with disabilities who want that extra guidance on getting the lifestyle as well as the property right.

"This time round we have seen a range of properties from one-bedroom flats in Malta to fincas in rural Spain that need renovation."

Sara, who lives in London with her dog Thor, says renovation is definitely something she knows about.

"My home is currently mid-refurb," she adds.

"I bought it as a doer-upper.

"I have brought out some of the character features, like the original floorboards and the exposed brick fireplace.

"Being in London I'm lucky enough to have a garden, which I love. It's not my 'forever home' but it's Mr Right for now!"

■ *A Place In The Sun - Winter Sun* goes out every weekday at 2.10pm on Channel 4.

