



Rules? Who needs them – it's all about you

Interior designer Maureen Whitmore with her new monthly Cumbria Life column

“Where do I start?” is a common cry – and an appropriate topic for a new column – but to be honest, there are no rules. Even if there were, why not break them?

My job is to help you create a home that is truly yours. I recommend you take a dozen or so “homes” magazines – and recent copies of Cumbria Life, of course – and sit down and browse, attaching stick-it notes to anything you love, hate or could possibly grow to like. It is amazing how this process focuses the mind. Don't panic, don't rush and you'll build confidence in your own tastes.

But what if you already have an idea? I have been asked to work schemes around pictures, antique carpets, Granny's china, the colour of a glass, a mosaic floor – the list is endless. Most people like to work around an item they love or can't be without but there may also be something, such as a carpet or sofas, which you can't afford to replace. If you fall into the latter category I would go for a scheme that will sit with the item for now but anticipate replacing it, rather than basing a scheme around something you don't particularly like. I'd also advise choosing everything at the same time even if the work won't all be done at once.

And don't be afraid of involving an expert. Any designer will be happy to have an informal initial chat and, for most of us, no job is too small. My ideal is that a finished room looks exactly as you imagined it but didn't dare to hope for – with a bit of help from an expert friend!

SPOTTED LOCALLY...

Glass splashbacks in solid colours are very fashionable in kitchens and bathrooms and are easy to clean. For wow factor, try customised glass wall panels by the award-winning **Jo Vincent** of Kendal. www.jovincent.com



To add colour and woollen warmth, treat your sofa or a spare bedroom to a blanket or throw – **The Herdy Company's** Lodore and Aira designs are woven from 100 per cent British wool in the north of England. www.herdy.co.uk

Based in Penrith, Maureen has been in the interior design trade for more than 45 years. See her blog at <http://maureenwhitemore.co.uk>.