

COUNTRY LIFE

EVERY WEEK

MARCH 12, 2025

The COUNTRY LIFE Top 100

Our who's who of architecture,
interiors and gardening

COUNTRY LIFE
THE TOP
100
2025



The cake that conquered Everest
Sorry, sorry, sorry: why we love apologising
Village ponds, crowdfarming and Chatsworth's flowers



often with stone from its own quarry. It also sources and reworks reclaimed materials. Projects include Georgian townhouses, country estates and major heritage buildings. The company undertakes schemes across the UK with its complete site-survey, design and installation service. 01935 847333; www.artoriusfaber.com

Graphenstone

New entry: see page 122

Jack Badger

New entry: see page 122

Knowles

Founded by Robin Knowles more than 30 years ago, this construction company is respected for expertise in complex super-prime projects. The family-run, 250-person-strong firm provides a comprehensive service, from concept to completion, and undertakes construction and specialist heritage work in London and the Home Counties. It also offers a special projects and aftercare service. 020-3988 7994; www.knowles.uk.com

Lapicida

This leading luxury tile and stone specialist is headed by managing director Jason Cherrington, who founded the company more than 30 years ago. In addition to the impressive

showroom in Harrogate, Lapicida now has a new and inspiring two-storey London showroom in Pimlico, displaying natural stones, including antique reclaimed stone and a new collection of limestone floors produced in collaboration with English Heritage, and fine Italian porcelains. Custom design and bespoke manufacturing services are available. 01423 400100; www.lapicida.com

‘It employs more than 100 craftspeople, with in-house bespoke joinery’

Oakwrights

This award-winning firm creates oak-frame homes and extensions, garden buildings and garages. It uses renewable green oak and can advise on energy efficiency, creating bespoke structures with high performance characteristics in mind (the company built the first oak-frame Passivhaus in the UK, using its own encapsulation panels). It has an in-house architectural design team and offers opportunities to visit its workshops on open days at its Herefordshire HQ. 01432 353353; www.oakwrights.co.uk

Prime Oak

A UK market leader in the manufacture and construction of oak-frame garden rooms,

orangeries and annexes, Prime Oak also produces timber-frame garages and stables, employing sustainable oak that is air-dried in the company's own yards. The company, which was founded in 1999, manufactures in Staffordshire, where it has a show site, with another in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, and a new one in Hampshire. 01384 296611; www.primeoak.co.uk

Moulding

Established in 1798, Moulding is a residential builder that remains family owned and is today run by eighth-generation family member Tim Moulding. The firm employs more than 100 craftspeople and specialises in new-builds and renovations of country houses, with in-house bespoke joinery and planned preventative maintenance services. The company is also responsible for maintaining English Heritage sites throughout the West of England, from Herefordshire to Cornwall. 01722 742228; www.mouldingthebuilder.co.uk

R. W. Armstrong

This family-owned residential builder was founded in 1957 and operates across the South of England and London. It specialises in the refurbishment and renovation of country houses and listed properties, as well as the construction of bespoke new houses, both contemporary and traditional in style. The firm offers an in-house joinery service, plus design-led custom architectural interiors. 01256 850177; www.rwarmstrong.co.uk

Rose of Jericho

There is little this Dorset-based team doesn't know about the materials used in the conservation, repair and decoration of traditional and historic buildings. The firm also provides consultancy services and is currently employed at the Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace. A new natural and sustainable chalk wash paint, Lavaggio con Gesso, launches this month. 01935 83676; www.roseofjericho.co.uk

W. G. Carter

Specialising in the restoration and renovation of country and heritage houses, many of them listed, this full-service construction company operates from its Abingdon base across Oxfordshire, the Cotswolds and the surrounding counties. Established in 1947, the award-winning firm is now run by James Robertson, who leads a team of 65 construction professionals and skilled craftsmen. 01865 864626; www.wgcarter.co.uk

ZOTA

New entry: see page 122 🐉



Moulding transformed this notable house with views of the Beaulieu River, Hampshire



NEW ENTRY This soothing space is in Moor, by the specialist paint manufacturer Graphenstone, for interior designer Rose Uniacke

creating calm and personalised landscapes that subtly unify with the architecture of the houses they surround, as evidenced in the geometrically satisfying contemporary garden with loose natural planting at a cart-house conversion in Northamptonshire (*'Shaping the view'*, February 19). He is known for a meticulous approach and reflective water, including pools and rills.

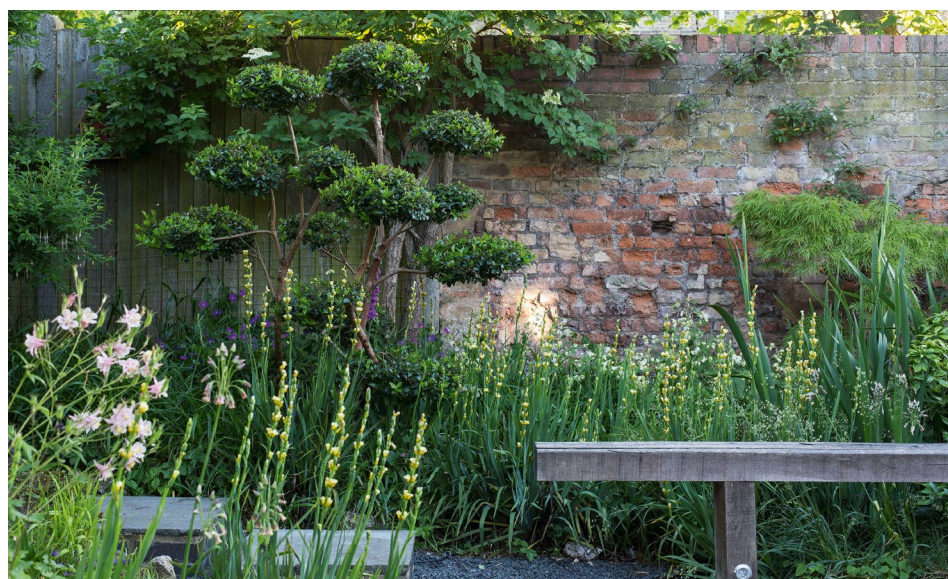
Mr Thompson founded his practice in 2004, counts a Gold medal at RHS Chelsea among his awards and continues to offer a personal service to UK-wide clients, focusing on Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and London. He is also currently working on creating a wildlife-friendly oasis of Nature at a town-sized property in Cambridge. 'My role is to marry practical considerations with elegant solutions,' he says. 'It is the relationship between proportion, plants and movement through the garden that makes it purr.'

01865 552446;

www.angusthompsondesign.com

Emily Erlam Studio

Headed by television producer-turned-landscape designer Emily Erlam, this London-based studio was founded in 2010, earning



NEW ENTRY A garden design by the Snowdonia-based practice Studio Bristow

a reputation for designs that are in harmony with their surroundings, be it a Georgian townhouse, a rooftop in the city or a large country estate. 'I like to create plant-led designs that relate to their locality, often creating structure using plants and trees, rather than leaning too heavily on hard landscaping.'

Her ability to create gardens with a relaxed, natural style ensures a wide variety of projects, often presented with beautiful hand drawings. Designs include the garden at Emmetts Mill in Surrey (*'Bourne to run'*, June 19, 2024), which cleverly blends a contemporary clean-lined terrace of pale →



sandstone, interspersed with colourful beds of perennials, with wilder planting beside the mill stream.

The studio has also worked at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire and is currently creating a large family garden with natural swimming pond at a property in Hampstead, London NW3. Commercial projects include working with Heatherwick Studio on a science park in Surrey, featuring a medicinal garden, and a culinary garden at Hambledon Vineyard in Hampshire.

07973 419097; www.erlamstudio.com

Miria Harris Design

With an MA in contemporary art and curation, London-based designer Miria Harris says she was drawn to landscape design by the 'slippage between architecture and the natural world'.

She is known for elegant, artistic gardens, featuring a painterly sense of colour, made with low environmental-impact choices and carefully sourced materials that blend well into the overall scheme.

Her boutique studio was founded about a decade ago and the portfolio of projects includes a dramatic and highly successful reinvention of the garden of a Decimus Burton villa in Kent (*'The odd couple'*, July 24, 2024); current gardens include ones in Suffolk, Cornwall, Norway and Jersey, as well as London.

'For something so solid, architecture is strangely emotional. I like spaces that give peace'

After suffering a stroke at the age of 44, Mrs Harris used her experience to design the Stroke Association Garden for Recovery at RHS Chelsea last year, considered to be one of the most calming spaces at the show. 'I wanted it to be as close as possible to the experience of a real garden, within the context of a temporary exhibition space,' she explains. 'One of my greatest delights was how alive with

Nature it became, with visits from bees, butterflies, hoverflies and even a duck.'

07887 993197; www.miriaharris.com

Studio Bristow

Dan Bristow is known for his work in harmony with the landscape and for incorporating environmental awareness into his designs. He set up his Snowdonia-based practice, Studio Bristow, in 2008, and won a Gold medal and Best All About Plants Garden prize at RHS Chelsea last year for the Size of Wales garden, which featured more than 300 different plant species. 'I want to encourage everyone to make planting in their own gardens more diverse, in order to benefit wildlife,' he explains.

Known as 'Propagating Dan', he is a widely travelled plant collector with extensive knowledge of using unusual species to suit specific locations, which may be why he is currently working on the design of a low-nutrient, high-exposure garden on the wind-swept rooftop of a multi-storey car park in St Austell, Cornwall. Mr Bristow is equally at home creating private gardens that celebrate his bold and irreverent approach, always designed to suit the surrounding →



NEW ENTRY A colourful dining room created by Kit Kemp's design studio for the Kips Bay decorator showhouse in New York, US



NEW ENTRY A scheme conceived by London-based Miria Harris for a garden originally designed by Decimus Burton in Kent

context. 'We create landscapes that are human-focused and eco-conscious,' he says. www.studiobristow.com

Specialists **Graphenstone**

Although many paint manufacturers have moved towards recipes made with more environmentally friendly materials over recent years, Graphenstone still stands out as a leader in the sustainability charge. Its 'Purifying Paints' are manufactured from a combination of lime, calcium carbonates and natural minerals, fused with graphene—a non-toxic material made from pure carbon, discovered in 2004 by two Nobel Prize winners at Manchester University.

'Our paints gently combine time-honoured materials, such as lime and silicate, with 21st-century graphene technology, ensuring they are ecological, sustainable and highly durable,' explains Patrick Foulkes, CEO and chairman of the UK arm of the highly certified Spanish company, founded in 2013. Such credentials make Graphenstone a favourite among designers (Tim Gosling, Michelle Ogundehin and Rose Uniacke all have colour collections with the company). Clients include The Ashmolean in Oxford, Grosvenor

'One of my greatest delights was how alive with Nature it became, with visits from bees and even a duck'

Estates and Historic Royal Palaces, with a range of 16 colours created in partnership with London's Royal Ballet and Opera, which was launched last autumn. In April, Graphenstone will unveil a new collection in collaboration with English Heritage. 01379 772940; www.graphenstone-ecopaints.store

Jack Badger

This traditional joinery company comprises a team of skilled craftspeople, known for its experience of working on prestigious projects—and is a firm favourite among leading architects specialising in the heritage sector. Taking its name from the traditional wood-working plane, Jack Badger was founded by managing director Ben Naylor 15 years ago. The company is admired for the full gamut

of period architectural joinery and carving, including internal and external doors, flooring, gates, kitchens, staircases and bespoke pieces, made at its workshop in Old Glossop, Derbyshire. Projects include panelling, doors and furniture made for Plumpton Place, an Elizabethan manor house in East Sussex that was once the home of the first editor of COUNTRY LIFE, Edward Hudson.

Last year, Mr Naylor and master carver Rob Poole won the inaugural 'Outstanding Craftsmanship' award from the Traditional Architectural Group for their work on a medieval manor house in Oxfordshire. 'By choosing authentic, handmade joinery, owners of period buildings can not only do what's most appropriate for their homes, but also help preserve traditional skills,' notes Mr Naylor. 01457 854440; www.jackbadger.co.uk

ZOTA

This Cirencester-based construction company is known for its work in the Cotswolds, taking on both new-builds and renovation projects across a variety of traditional buildings. It works closely alongside leading architecture and interior-design studios, including Simon Morray-Jones and Sims Hilditch, to deliver a co-ordinated and ➔



NEW ENTRY Cirencester-based construction company ZOTA worked with Sims Hilditch to transform this house in Warwickshire

well-executed result. Founded in 1997 by director Nick Moffat, who now heads a team of 40 staff, ZOTA provides a complete service, from initial planning to realisation.

In addition to construction, the company's services include bespoke cabinetry made by its in-house joinery workshop, plus audio, lighting and home technology, heating systems, solar energy and other sustainable solutions. It also has an in-house decorating team that offers specialist techniques and a spray workshop. 'We bring 28 years of expertise in blending historical architecture with modern adaptations to deliver exceptional results,' says Mr Moffat.

01285 708708; www.zota.co.uk

Architecture

ADAM Architecture

This leading practice specialises in traditional architecture and urban design from its studios in London and Winchester. Five distinguished directors lead a team of 100, often working on listed buildings to bring them up to modern comfort and energy-efficiency standards, always retaining their historic fabric and character, as evidenced in the practice's work at Spetchley Park, Worcestershire ('*An architectural accident*' and '*Making history live*', September 13 and 20, 2023).

01962 843843;

www.adamarchitecture.com

Adam Richards Architects

Adam Richards is based in the South Downs, from where he takes on projects across the UK and overseas. He has designed several award-winning buildings, including Nithurst Farm, his own home in West Sussex ('*Stairway to Heaven*', August 5, 2020). A recently completed project to refurbish and extend

a listed manor house was the 2024 winner of the Georgian Group's Giles Worsley Award for a New Building in the Spirit of the Georgian Era. The practice is currently working on a major renovation of a Grade II*-listed John Nash house in London's Regents Park. 020-7613 5077; www.adamrichards.co.uk

Ben Pentreath

Ben Pentreath has an outstanding reputation for breathing new life into traditional buildings and for designing elegantly proportioned and timeless new ones. He heads an architectural and interior-design team of just over 40, undertaking a wide variety of projects in town and country, some of which can be enjoyed in his recently published book *An English Vision: Traditional Architecture and Decoration for Today* (Rizzoli). His delightful

homewares shop, Pentreath & Hall, which he runs with Bridie Hall, offers a window on to his playful take on classic style.

020-7430 2424; www.benpentreath.com

Benjamin Tindall Architects

Renowned for repairs and alterations to historic buildings, this practice has been based in Edinburgh's Old Town for more than 40 years. Benjamin Tindall's love of craftsmanship means the firm offers a full range of services, from landscaping to the design of light fittings, furniture and ironmongery. Notable projects include Bonnington House at Jupiter Artland Sculpture Park, Edinburgh, and an upgrade and net-zero work to a writers' retreat, Hawthornden Castle, Midlothian.

0131-220 3366;

www.benjamintindallarchitects.co.uk →



A classically inspired house designed by George Saumarez Smith of ADAM Architecture