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Stroud photographer Tammy Lynn Kwan

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# TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COTSWOLDS

Interiors guru Pippa Paton has a magic touch with the Cotswolds' homes – whatever she touches turns to design gold, **Denise Barkley** writes

**P**ippa's unique skill and success in a highly competitive sector has been achieved through her unerring ability to mingle old and new and imbue all types of Cotswolds properties with a timelessness that reflects the heart and soul of the buildings and the region.

Three years ago, Pippa published her first book *Twenty First Century Cotswolds* – charting a decade of innovative architectural and interior design work, creating homes which both delight her clients and preserve historic and listed buildings for generations to come. This gorgeous glossy volume became a coffee table essential, and Pippa's subsequent projects are now charted in her follow-up – *Twenty First Century Cotswolds Volume II*, published just before Christmas.

“Having worked on some truly inspirational projects over the last three years,

I couldn't resist writing Volume II,” Pippa reveals in her introduction to the new book.

“While my ethos is founded on exposing and enhancing the original fabric of the buildings which I am working with, I am always seeking out new ideas and materials to fuse with them.”

“Wherever I go in the world I find inspiration, invariably in the most unexpected of places, which is often incorporated in a design idea – sometimes several years later.”

Pippa's award-winning company offers interior design, architecture and project management and is based in the village of Longworth, in South Oxfordshire. She always had a love of colour and texture and had an instinctive ability to see the potential of a space, but as a chartered accountant there was no outlet for her creativity until 2006, when, with husband Scott, she followed her heart and launched her business.





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Our busy 21st century lives, said Pippa, have had a great impact on interior design – lifestyle choices such as increased travel, an emphasis on personal wellbeing, endless technological advances resulting in 24/7 lives, and the current pandemic boosting the need to work from home.

She explained further: “Spaces need to work much harder and be more flexible, allowing easy adaptation for a plethora of different activities, with additional areas being sought within the home to situate gyms, home offices and technology-free spaces to enable a separation of work and downtime.”

Pippa’s glorious projects are captured in dazzling pictures within the pages of her latest book. A trio of Oxfordshire-based homes are among those featured and include an 18th century farmhouse and a Grade II listed Elizabethan manor which Giles Kime, executive editor of *Country Life*, describes in his foreword to Pippa’s new book as one of her “most exciting, progressive and complex projects to date”.

The owners of a mid 20th century house, located near Oxford, presented Pippa with an exceptional challenge. They felt that the project to update and insulate the property involved more compromises than solutions, and it became clear that a simple refurbishment would not provide the family with the spaces and functionality they desired.

The solution was to knock down the existing house – including the removal of an unused swimming pool under the living →



room floor – and rebuild it, largely on the same footprint, creating a five-bedroom home to suit the family’s needs perfectly.

“Working with the architect on the look and feel of the internal and external finishes, we also took on the responsibility of the interior and spatial design of the newbuild,” Pippa revealed.

**A** double-height entrance hall provides light and a sense of arrival, with a staircase leading to the first-floor gallery or, through an oversize pivot door, to a series of ground-floor reception rooms which flow seamlessly from one to another. New features include a back kitchen, utility/boot-room and cloakroom.

Pippa’s unique style has made each room feel welcoming and comfortable, something that can be difficult to achieve in large spaces. Each area has been subtly defined and given a focus – such as a jute rug in the living area, dark oak flooring laid in a herringbone pattern in the sitting room that continues up the wall to add a little drama, plus a double-sided fireplace to separate it from the kitchen-diner.

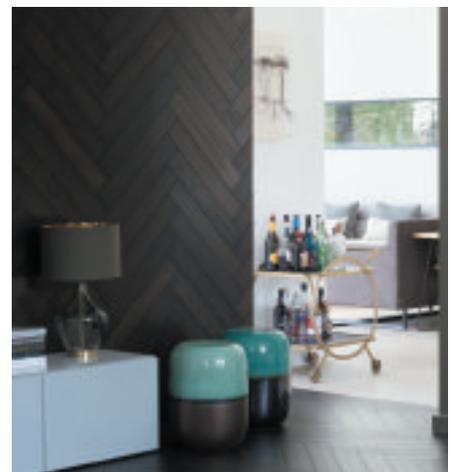
Pippa’s assured use of different textures to add interest is also evident in the master bedroom where the wall behind the bed is clad in oak, again arranged in herringbone pattern, while slim slices of riven stone cover an adjoining wall.



In its secluded location, the master en suite bathroom fully exploits the drama of the floor-to-ceiling glazing, with tactile pebble flooring introducing an indoor-outdoor feel while the rich brown bespoke vanity counter runs up the wall to accentuate the strong architectural shapes of the room.

There are interesting touches too, to add personality, such as the old prison door in the kitchen which Pippa found at an architectural salvage yard. It is set into a glass and black steel frame to create this home’s stronghold – a wine cellar. Copper accents and rich, dark timber cabinets add warmth to the contemporary white kitchen.

The finished house was just how Pippa envisaged it. “The result is a beautifully



executed, 21st century contemporary home spread over two floors, clad in powder-coated steel and timber batons, and designed to make the most of the view of the garden and beautiful woodland setting,” she enthused.

Country Life’s Giles Kime heaped praise on Pippa. “She addresses every aspect of the transformation of a building,” he said. “The result is a new incarnation of vernacular architecture that defines our own age with a seamless mix of ancient and modern, giving it new purpose and preserving it for centuries to come.”

**Twenty First Century Cotswolds Volume II, £35, is available from [pippapaton.co.uk](http://pippapaton.co.uk)**