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# Design Q&A

LUKE IRWIN

Homes shouldn't follow fast fashion, says the rug designer

**What was your first job?** Aged 17 I was assistant stage manager on a production of *HMS Pinafore* at The Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. My main job was to keep the lead actor – who was a struggling alcoholic – off the booze. I succeeded until the third from last night when he stormed off stage, hit the conductor and insulted two nuns.

**Which space has left the biggest impact on you?** There are certainly two – one is Versailles for the sheer scale of its ambition, and the other is the Royal Pavilion in Brighton for the glory of its folly and the confidence of the execution.

**Top tips for buying a rug?** Colour, size, design. In that order.

**Advice for updating our homes?** Do what you like, not what you think others will like. Homes are not like wardrobes, there is not a fast-moving fashion in interiors. I always think it is a good idea to be bold with detail and more reserved with big structural pieces.

**First piece of furniture you bought?** I was always more interested in paintings than furniture but the first piece was a 19th-century French cheese cupboard that we still have all our plates in.



Claudius rug detail

**Last thing you bought for you home?** A wonderful painting of a Scots Pine by George Young.

**What would you most like to change about your home?** I would love to put a huge kitchen on to the side of the house. The one we have is tiny and the light would be better.

**If money were no object, I would buy...** The Frick in New York.

**Whose home would you most like to nose around?** I have the great fortune of going to a lot of people's homes to help them with their rugs and I find them all fascinating. It is the

objects that tell the stories rather than the interior design and I am fascinated by the stories that the objects conjure up. Wealth or fame does not necessarily make for a home that is more interesting than others.

**Which building would you most like to bulldoze?** Any out of town supermarket. Or, better yet, all of them.



Claudius rug



Ikat rug



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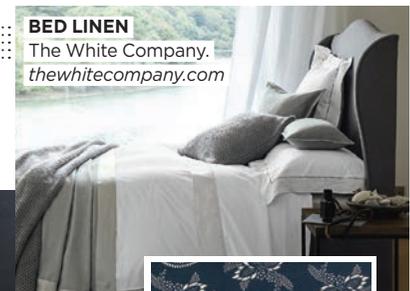
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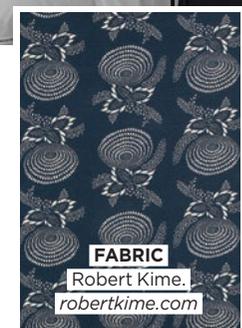
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