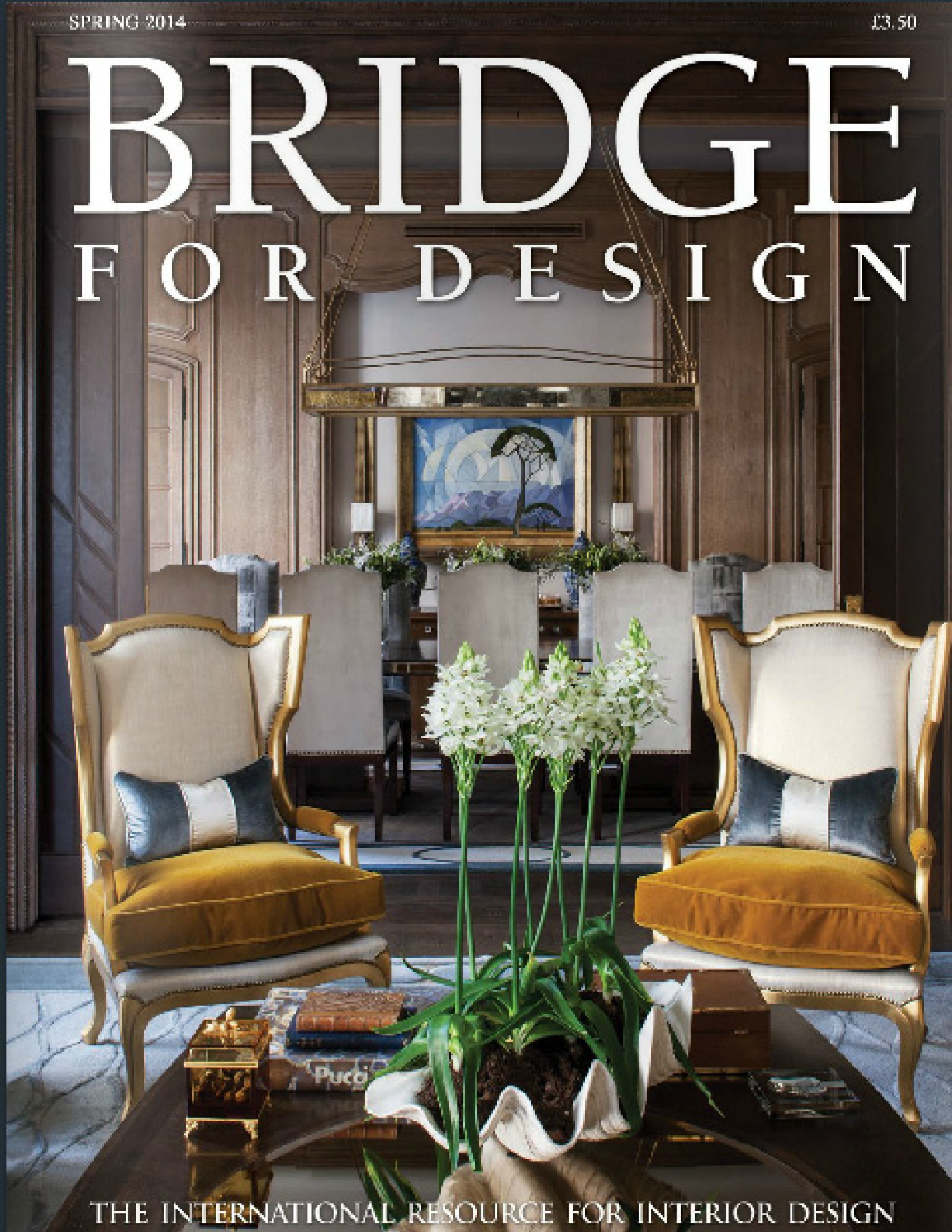


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THRILLING ME SOFTLY

Tina Nicole understands why furniture is becoming more relaxed and ‘pillowy’

For me, merchandising upholstered furnishings is like going to a party with all my friends. I have fun with them as a group, and I appreciate each one for their individuality. And, if I’m lucky after the many toasts and shared conversations, one lays claim to the title of ‘bestie’.

As the lead designer and co-founder of Nathan Anthony Furniture, my current ‘bestie’ in upholstered seating goes by the name Soft Modern.

Observing trend in the contemporary furniture category, I see that the clean lines are continuing to evolve towards rounded silhouettes and more relaxed looks, taking on noticeably sensual characteristics.

Design clients are moving away from choosing hard-edged frames that stand to attention in favour of softer, pillowy shapes.

Soft fills like down and trillium are being used to pad perimeters in seating areas, tops of arms and backs, as well as for the front apron and outside backs.

Wrinkles and puckers are intentionally added by loosening the upholstery application, or under-filling pillows to achieve the desired effect.

We punch and chop seating and pillows – it’s a cathartic experience – to relax the filling. The objective is to attain a sophisticated degree of lived-in cosiness.

The modern idea for more spacious environments will no longer be expressed in square footage, but through intentional decisions about décor and the careful selection of objects of desire. It’s minimalism with benefits, you might say.

In this scenario, furnishing items are treated like sculptural elements that are intended to stand alone and speak for themselves.

‘The emphasis on sensuality is seen in both the shapes and


materials used. Incorporating soft wood tones and unfinished metals help to complete the expression of this trend’, suggests Neil Kelly, of Neil Kelly Company.

There’s a rich selection of trending fabrics used as upholstery covers now. Expect to see muted floral-inspired patterns, but much less bold than in the recent past, they put me in mind of the glorious watercolour pastels in my grand mother’s Sweet Pea garden.

‘Even popular geometric looks are softened by increasingly tranquil colourways grounded in white, taupe and grey. Pops of colour like yellow walk the line between light and bright and should wake up the senses when combined with patterns that intentionally clash’, says trend source Laura Bielecki, of *Luxury Interior Design Journal*.

The hipster homesteading movement, with its focus on handcrafting, embroidery and homemade goods, is having an influence in the area of heavier cable knits and quilted fabrics available in the marketplace.

We selected the upholstery covers ‘Cozy’, ‘Desdemona’ and ‘Lightning’ in response to this trend and covered our down-filled Bounce and Boxx ottomans, with a nod to the influence of Patricia Urquiola and her unique cover choices for seating.

As you can see, it’s a lovely cast of characters indeed. All that’s left is to pour the wine and find a comfy seat. Cheers! 

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