

# ARCADIA HOME INTERIORS



# ARCADIA HOME HEATING



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## Fine Furnishings



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Brad Pitt is alleged to have once said, "I'm drawn to furniture design as complete architecture on a minor scale" and I think that makes perfect sense. For those of us who could not begin to contemplate designing a house, and as someone lucky enough to work with many brilliant architects, I regularly see examples of what an extraordinary expertise this is. Furniture, however, is a wonderful form of compact design – and ideally one that works in harmony with your home and makes your life more comfortable. Home should always be your sanctuary – and at the end of a hard day at work you should be rewarded by the embrace of a comfy armchair or sofa.

Some of my prized possessions at home are pieces of furniture that have been passed down through the generations – there are two chairs that take pride of place in my drawing room. One is a beautiful Bergere chair with mahogany arms and legs and woven panels on the back and sides that belonged to my grandfather; the other is a nursing chair that belonged to my great grandmother – in Victorian times the nursing chair was a low seated partially upholstered chair for mothers who were breastfeeding. The low seat and absence of arm rests allowed the mother, who would have been wearing a stiff corset, to interact with other small children without bending over.

This has been recently reupholstered in a lovely thick woven linen by Ian Mankin (in a rather impractical off white colour – which looks wonderful against the dark grey walls but I have to balance a small wicker basket on the seat so the dogs don't jump on it!). The rest of the furniture in the drawing room is quite contemporary, but these two pieces have so much history and so many tales to tell, that they bring an element of life to the room. That's not to say that there isn't something wonderful about having a bespoke piece of modern furniture made – to fit in a particular spot, or to an exact design you have created – a truly unique piece that can then also be a talking point for future generations. A good joinery firm will be able to sketch something to scale for you from an initial meeting, guide you through the choice of which material would work best and then craft your piece of furniture by hand – this gorgeous elm coffee table is a great example by highly esteemed Norfolk firm, Hawthorn Bespoke Joinery.

My other favourite pieces of furniture are desks and dressing tables. As lovely as it would be to have both an office and a dressing room in your home, this is not always feasible!

However these can easily be incorporated into other rooms of the house – my son has a fabulous desk in his bedroom – I'm not sure how much homework takes place on it, but it certainly sees many hours of drawing and sketching and is adorned with endless pots of coloured pens, pencils and paraphernalia. It would look equally stylish in the corner of our open plan dining room or in the corner of the drawing room, which doubles up as 'work' space. Mirrored dressing tables seem to be all the rage at the moment, although I can't help thinking about having to polish it regularly and the fear of inadvertently catching a glimpse of an unflattering double chin, from a peculiar angle, when opening a drawer...! But I do find the idea of sitting at a dressing table wonderfully glamorous and grown up. A stylish and practical console table can, of course, double up as either a desk or a dressing table, so as always – there are no rules in furnishing or decorating your home – one of the side tables next to my sofa is an upturned old apple crate for example. My final admission is one of the singularly most stupid things I have ever done – with two teenage boys and three dogs – in our last house I ordered sofas with non-removable covers. I have no idea what I was thinking – in fact I clearly wasn't thinking at all and spent the next two years feverishly stretching practical cotton throws over every inch of said sofas for fear of grubbiness – AND they weren't even comfortable.. Big mistake!

Eliza Miller's favourite pieces



## DESIGN STUDIO & SHOW ROOM

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