

HOUSE & GARDEN

JULY 2016 | £4.99

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- ◆ BEAUTIFUL BED LINEN AND SMART BLANKETS



interiors with
IMAGINATION

FROM A BARN CONVERSION AND CITY FLATS TO AN IDYLIC FRENCH HIDEAWAY

THE SHOPPING EDIT

EMBROIDERED FABRICS

ART TO BUY

STAND-ALONE SHELVING

Should we STAY OR SHOULD WE GO?

On June 23, the UK will vote on whether or not to remain in the European Union. David Nicholls spoke to professionals in the interiors, design and manufacturing industries to hear how the issue affects them



CRAFT & LUXURY
MARK HENDERSON
Co-founder, The New Craftsmen and director of Walpole

Europe is seen as the home of luxury and craftsmanship around the world, and there's a benefit in working together to promote that. Britain has a strong voice, but the EU creates even greater opportunities. At The New Craftsmen, we've just started a programme with the Crafts and Arts Councils to promote British makers internationally over the next two years, and Europe is a key market for that. Brexit might create uncertainty for this. The Walpole Group is active in Brussels on issues such as the selling of counterfeit goods online, and it's useful for EU members to lobby as a whole to stop this.

'My heart says that we should leave but my head is not so sure'

Mark Gabbertas



TECHNOLOGY
PETER VAN DER KOLK
CEO, John Cullen Lighting

The European Commission sets legislation for lighting technology and has ruled that, by 2018, all halogen mains voltage lights will be banned. That will drive a lot of UK and international business, as all customers will need to upgrade. As European manufacturers, we can participate in the Commission to form new legislation. If there is a drawback to being part of the EU, it's that it can be painfully slow to set new legislation. It can take years, and this could be speeded up if we came out. But the technology industry has become global, so it doesn't make sense to isolate yourself.



INTERIOR DESIGN
GIDEON STONE
Managing Director, Janine Stone

For our interior design projects, we purchase from many countries and, generally speaking, you see the ease with which trade can take place within EU nations. In the event of an 'out' result, there are question marks about whether this could be more difficult or if there would be more barriers. We also have many international clients who are investing in property in the UK. Here the question will be whether or not they would perceive a Brexit as somehow making the UK a more risky place to consider as a European base. Why not go to Switzerland or Monte Carlo? Whatever the decision, it will be better than what we've had for some time now - indecision.



MANUFACTURING
DR LAURA COHEN
CEO, British Ceramic Confederation

If we were outside the EU, we'd have no say and no influence over its legislative proposals. Over half our exports are sold to the EU. If, after a possible Brexit, we were to have a trading arrangement similar to that of Norway, we'd still have to comply with EU legislation but with no influence. Recently, Chinese manufacturers were 'dumping' (a predatory pricing practice condemned by the World Trade Organisation) tiles in the UK. Alone, the UK government wouldn't have seen this as a priority, as this is a relatively small UK industry, yet a large one in the EU. By collaborating with Europe, UK tile makers were able to get anti-dumping tariffs imposed, so jobs have been protected.



DESIGN
MARK GABBERTAS
Designer

In a way, it's a head versus heart thing. My heart says that we should leave but my head isn't so sure. My gut feeling is that, from a design point of view, it would be interesting for us to rediscover our sense of identity, freedom and uniqueness as a country. These things have an impact on the way we as designers go about our work. We tend to automatically look to Europe as the place for our exports and for the most important trade fairs, and maybe this has subconsciously produced a sort of European aesthetic rather than a British one. That said, EU legislation offers better protection for design rights and intellectual property, and these laws are benefiting British designers, which is hugely important.



RETAIL
MAGNUS ENGLUND
Co-founder, Skandium

We employ 50 people from 14 countries, and some of them are worried about what will happen if the UK leaves the EU. We are not hiring them because they're cheaper than British people - many have architecture or fine-arts degrees and use Skandium as a stepping stone into those industries. I'm Swedish, and for over two decades I've lived in London and paid millions in tax through Skandium and my income tax. I don't think I've been a burden on the British taxpayer. Much of what we sell is imported from EU countries, but we don't import much from Norway, which isn't an EU member state. Part of the reason is that there's so much additional paperwork, it isn't always worth it ☐

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