

Pop in for the pop-up

IT IS not every day that you get to turn up at an interior designer's home to be welcomed in, offered a glass of Pol Roger champagne and delicious macarons from Bougie Macaron & Tea, and then encouraged to browse around their living room. Yet this is exactly what interior designer Lee Sowerbutts is preparing for when he and his business partner and fellow interior designer Anna Murray launch Rehab Your Home on Sunday, 25 April, at Lee's flat at 13a Kirklee Terrace in Glasgow's West End.

Lee and Anna launched their interior design consultancy Rehab Interiors three years ago, and their latest venture – a week-long pop-up shop held in Lee's living room – will showcase their first collection of re-imagined vintage furniture and limited-edition handmade products.

The spring/summer SS10 collection combines furniture, textiles, accessories, wallpapers (from Osborne & Little, Natasha Marshall, Kuboaa, Designers Guild and Zoffany) and artworks including Victorian Scottish prints and portraits, and reframed vintage share certificates floating in glass. The design duo are intending to launch two collections a year, having started work on the SS10 collection in September. They are already planning AW10.

"We've always had this idea of putting together collections of things that we like," Anna explains. "We've been buying and restoring vintage furniture on a piece-by-piece basis for clients – buying light fittings on eBay and chairs from Freecycle and then reworking them – and we buy pieces for ourselves. We'll go into an antique shop and re-imagine a piece with pink legs. And we've picked up an array of vintage fabrics without knowing what they were for. Eventually we thought: how can we express these things that we've been talking about?"

While the concept of the pop-up shop is nothing new, having one in your own home gives Lee and Anna's approach a person-

Interior designers **Lee Sowerbutts** and **Anna Murray** are welcoming strangers into Lee's home to browse and buy their re-imagined vintage furniture

Words **Fiona Reid** Photographs **Robert Perry**

alised edge. Comme Des Garçons is credited with starting the trend back in 2004 with its guerrilla stores, where shops opened for one year only in locations away from the fashionable hubs of each chosen city. Pop-ups have since appeared in the form of restaurants, bars and clubs, springing up in unexpected locations and creating a buzz.

For Lee and Anna, the pop-up concept provided a means of connecting directly with customers and clients – including people who might be put off by the more hallowed environs of a design showroom – in an informal way. It also provides a refreshing alternative to online shopping: this is personal, where you get to meet and chat to the designers.

"Someone might come in and say 'I really like that record cabinet' and a few of the cushions, and maybe a wallpaper or a light, and those things can transform a room," says Lee, explaining the ethos behind Rehab Your Home.

"We want people to come and play, to experiment," Anna continues. "We've put this collection together in such a way that people can do what they like and it will work, but not in a conventional matchy-matchy way. There are no rules."

This is an exciting collection with some lust-worthy pieces. Consider the Edwardian Bergere lounge chair that has been restored





Clockwise from main: Bergere lounge chair, £575, set against a backdrop of wallpapers priced £35-£70 per roll; Art Deco cabinets from £580; early 60s Danish sideboard, made from sycamore and walnut, £1,495. Lamps from £85; cushions from £45-£55; 'tea for two' sets of two cups, two saucers and two side plates from £12-£30; Lee Sowerbutts and Anna Murray



and re-upholstered in tweed fabric by Yorkshire-based company Moon. There are pieces for vintage lovers, including a walnut and sycamore sideboard, reworked with a petrol blue interior and a primrose yellow drawer; that quirky record cabinet, now with elephant grey side panels and a hot orange interior; two Art Deco glass-fronted cabinets with their insides decked out in silk fabrics by Designers Guild; and the "Kirsty" coffee table – Anna's favourite piece – named after its previous owner, which has been transformed using Rehab's signature palette for this collection.

The colours are gorgeous. Lee and Anna selected a restrained selection of shades (restrained in size, not hue) including hot

orange, iced pistachio, primrose and coral pink, played against petrol blue, elephant grey and dark grey. The handmade cushions and throws feature a riotous (but carefully considered) cacophony of fabrics including Lucienne Day's iconic Calyx print, Hebridean tweeds and an overscaled wool dogtooth, which are offset with pinstripe cottons and nostalgic prints. With a background in textiles, it is no surprise to find that this is Lee's favourite part of the collection. There are three sizes of each cushion, and limited editions of only two in each shape in each colourway.

As for the reversible throws, their names alone suggest the diversity of this col- ➔



← lection with Country Gent, Crazy Dog-tooth, Vintage Rose, Aubergenie, 50s Lime, Tartan Day, Tweedy Leaf and Candy Tweed. These fabrics were chosen for year-round appeal. You might feature the cotton side of a throw tossed over a bed in summer, but folding it back to reveal the tweedy side gives each piece a visual and tactile twist.

One thing links all these pieces: their sense of craftsmanship, which has been a crucial element in Lee and Anna's approach. While mass production may be the norm, there is an instinctive yearning for pieces that are unique and crafted. Which is why vintage fashion has gained in popularity in recent years, and why lovers of interior design hanker for bespoke or design classics – pieces that won't date.

And it's about thinking outside the box, something that Lee and Anna can probably do in their sleep. Consider their whimsical approach to lighting, where skeletal lampshades are spray-painted and fringed and decorated with little yellow birds. "We're pleasing ourselves with this in the hope that we'll also please the people that come to see it," Anna explains.

While some pieces, like the sideboard, are clearly at the pricier end of the spectrum,

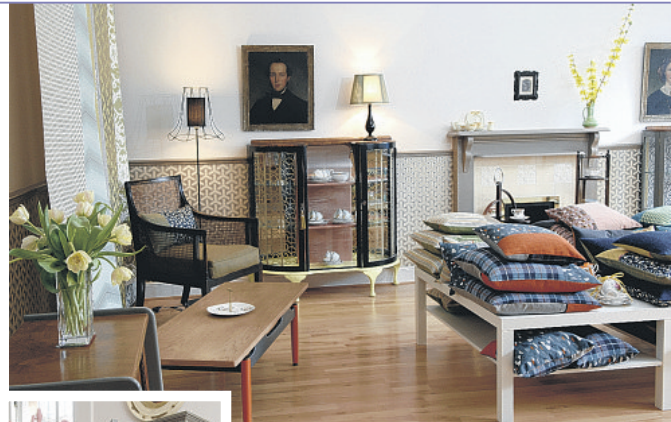
'We want people to come and play, to experiment... There are no rules'

you could pick up a cushion or some Designers Guild candles or a couple of pieces of vintage china – Lee and Anna have been sourcing vintage tea services for months – for £50 or less. And, of course, browsing is free.

"You're not going to find these pieces on the *Antiques Roadshow*," says Lee. "It's not about the financial value of each piece in its existing state; it's about what it becomes, once it has been renovated or upholstered or re-imagined, and the fact it's unique."

As for what happens post pop-up, Lee and Anna are planning to create a web catalogue where any items that have not sold during the event will be available to buy online. As Anna says: "We love things that have stories to them, and there is a story behind each piece here." We're already looking forward to AW10. *

Rehab Your Home is running Sunday, 25 April, noon-5pm; Monday to Friday, 10am-7pm; Sunday, 2 May, noon-5pm, at 13a Kirklee Terrace, Glasgow G12 0TH (www.rehabinteriors.com).



Clockwise from left: elephant grey cabinet with painted interior, £470; Rehab Your Home's pop-up store; the record cabinet is priced £280

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