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Where is this painting? The mystery of Salvator Mundi

Why cash buyers are back

Boycott tech giants over terror, MPs urge

May attacked from all sides after EU exit deal unveiled

Advertisers 'must shun sites that aid extremists'

Johns & Johnson and McDonald's—suspended their advertising from YouTube. Some advertisers returned to the video sharing site last summer after its pledge to increase action against inappropriate content.

The committee heard, however, that big technology companies were still refusing to take down extremist material despite requests by the government. One company, which was not identified, would not remove videos with "violent and disturbing imagery" despite multiple requests, another refused to take down the website of an organisation proscribed in Britain.

Dominic Grieve, chairman of the intelligence committee, said that the sheer amount of such material online, which appeared to be tolerated by technology companies, was a "major national security" threat. "We recommend pressure is put on the communications service providers (CSPs) by the business community following the excellent example of companies such as Unilever."

"We strongly consider that actions which affect the CSPs' profits will be more harder than an appeal to them to do the right thing. It might actually force them finally to take action on this critical issue which is a national security threat."

The report said it was clear that companies took a commercial view.

Photo: strip Kander Paron and Lauren Cuthbertson became the first Brits to dance together at the celebrated Marinsky Ballet in St Petersburg. Pages 14-15

Francis Elliott Political Editor
Henry Jeffries, Oliver Wright

Theresa May warned MPs that the public wanted Brexit "settled" as she faced bitter opposition from her own party to her EU exit deal yesterday.

The prime minister presented the draft agreement on a future relationship with Europe to a largely hostile Commons after almost a 12-month negotiation earlier than expected.

Claiming that her deal delivered the referendum result while protecting jobs and security, she told opponents that she had the backing of a public weary of division and desperate to return to domestic peace. "The British people want Brexit settled," she said. "They want us to come together as a country and to focus on to focus on the big issues at home."

Whether the final agreement will be decided at a special EU summit on Sunday, Mrs May said "a good deal that sets us on a course for a brighter future" was "within our grasp". However, the scale of her task in forcing the deal through the Commons next month was exposed in a bruising debate of two and a half hours during which she was attacked from all sides.

More than half of Tory backbenchers have spoken out against the draft agreement, with only a few weeks to go before the crucial decision in parliament. Senior Tory Backbenchers criticised her commitments yesterday to look again at their proposal for a technological solution to the Irish border, which were criticised in a "political declaration" setting out Britain's new relationship with the EU.

Referring to the draft agreement, Ian Duncan Smith told Mrs May: "Continued on page 4, col 2"



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Frank for £2.5 million in Kilver near Bridgwater, Somerset. The property has views of the Quantock Hills.

Jump the queue

As a cash buyer you may get a discount on the asking price, even if your offer is slightly lower than one placed by a mortgage buyer, because having ready money available gives you the edge. Edward Church, the head of Strutt & Parker's office in Canterbury, Kent, says: "Time is money, and it is the speed of commitment that sellers value highly." Steven Spencer of Strutt & Parker, based in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, recently sold a property at £150,000 less than the asking price for this reason. Identify properties that have had price reductions, says Hirst. "Sellers who have already reduced their asking price will be ready to tie up a deal."

Ed Mead of Viewber, a property viewing service, agrees. "Sellers are fed up with waiting, often for years, to sell." Brighton in East Sussex is the best place to pounce on a discounted property, according to Zoopla, the property portal. It found that 46.6 per cent of properties on the market in the town have been reduced in price — the highest proportion of any area in the country. It is followed by Woking in Surrey (46 per cent), Mitcham in southwest London (45.92 per cent) and Slough in Berkshire (45.82 per cent).

Don't assume that you'll succeed

"When an exceptional property comes up, potential buyers are like bees to a honey pot," says Jonathan Bramwell, a partner at the Buying Solution. "In this climate most will sit tight until the first person makes an offer, and then they should expect to be in competition. Vendors of these properties, particularly around Soho Farmhouse (the members' club in Oxfordshire), will often have the luxury of choosing their buyers — those who offer a higher price, even if it's with a mortgage, will win."

Beware the overpriced house

When the market is slow, be mindful that some properties are advertised at inflated prices by estate agents eager to get a greater number of homes on their books. "Many agents are humouring vendors' aspirations on price, so at least they secure a sales listing that would otherwise not come to the market," says Brendan Roberts, a director of Aylesford International.

Jamie Hope, the managing director of Maskells Estate Agents in west London, agrees. "Some agents will suggest a high asking price to win the business in the knowledge that the property is unlikely to achieve a figure close to this. The hope is that they attract offers," he says.

Dangle a cash-buyer carrot

If you're selling a property, start with a low price. According to Hope, this is a sound tactic for luring a smaller pool of buyers to low-hanging fruit in a slow market. Once they're tempted, a bidding war will raise the property's value to its true level. "We have just sold a flat in W2 [west London] where we priced the property 12.5 per cent below the level we expected the flat to sell at," Hope says. "We carried out 71 viewings in two weeks and attracted 17 offers, resulting in a sealed bid."

If your price is too high, cut it

"The most successful strategy for generating an offer is a large price reduction on your property," says Nat Wilde, a manager at Hamptons International. "When buyers see the new price it encourages them to inquire about the property, but they're less likely to chip away at the price further."

If you are the type of person who always locks the door when having a bath, you may not like the latest in bathroom interior trends. Washrooms are becoming more of a "social hub", according to Vitra, a company that is reinterpreting the traditional bathroom layout. Its latest range includes modular storage styled with scatter cushions and comfortable seating. It's all about creating a zen "wellness space", with enough room to do your morning meditation.

Even those who are pressed for square footage are spending more time in, and on the design of, what is becoming the most relaxing room in the home. The aim is to make them a replica of a favourite boutique hotel. The most instagrammed areas of the Al the Chapel hotel in Bruton, Somerset, are its spacious, luxurious bathrooms. The deep stand-alone baths, fluffy robes and organic Ren products are often cited as reasons for guests to return, according to the hotel's owner.

James White of March and White, an architectural practice, says his clients frequently ask him to recreate hotel life at home. "Bathrooms are more of a feature than ever, and clients are being more adventurous," he says. "From yellow bathtubs to considered lighting, they are having fun with smaller spaces."

Jess Hurrell, a stylist who posts interiors pictures on Instagram at @jsgold is a neutral, decided she wanted to ramp up the glam factor at home by carefully redesigning her bathroom. "One of my favourite indulgences pre-kids was to book a fancy hotel for the weekend, which is always a great source of inspiration. Now, with two children and a money pit of a house to renovate, those hotel trips are few and far between, so when we started planning this bathroom I knew I wanted to recreate that luxury hotel feeling at home."

Metals

Hurrell's starting point was brass cabinet doors with Arabescato marble tile countertops. "The brass patinates beautifully over time and I love seeing it change," she says. The brass also reflects her patterned floor tiles. Metals work particularly well when paired with dark colours. Hurrell painted the walls and ceiling in Farrow & Ball Off-Black. "I thought it would allow the flashier brass and marble elements to stand out without fighting for attention."

"Painting the ceiling black helps to make the awkward pitched ceiling disappear and cocoons the room. I added lots of plants for texture and to bring the room to life."

Tristan de la Haye, the managing director of THG Paris, a bathroom company, says gold bathroom fixtures and fittings are taking over from matt black and chrome, which were popular in 2017, as people move away from minimalism to a more maximalist aesthetic. "Rose gold, satin and matt gold are only some of the more opulent finishes we offer in bathroom fittings. Some taps are available with precious stone inlays and guilloché [patterned] engraving."

Outdoor baths

Jonathan Carter, the marketing director at Victoria • Albert Baths, says outdoor bathtubs are increasingly common in boutique hotel suites, and customers are requesting them for use at home. Victoria • Albert uses a volcanic limestone composite known as Quarrycast, which is UV resistant and will not go yellow in the sun. It is also



A design by the architect March and White in a home in South Kensington, London

How to bring some zen to your bathroom

resistant to temperature changes, so will not crack.

"We've had people visit our showroom wanting the exact products they've tried on a holiday," Carter says. "Traditional roll-top baths are popular in trendy boutique hotels and this is influencing younger homeowners. Beautifully chosen materials, elegant lighting and simple styling are all achievable in domestic bathrooms, regardless of their size."

Pendant lights

The ribbed glass pendant by Fritz Fryer, a Herefordshire-based lighting company, is very popular in bathrooms, says the company's marketing executive, Callum Howells. "People want more interesting lighting. They see it as an aesthetic feature, not just for practical use."

He suggests layering light to provide ambience when relaxing in the bath.

White says he has included pendant and hanging lights in bathrooms, hung over a stand-alone sink or reflected in a vintage mirror.

Terrazzo

Terrazzo-like surfaces provide a retro look.

Oliver Webb, the director of sales and marketing at Gerald Culliford, a stone supplier, says more designers are experimenting with colour and pattern in marble and are requesting "wow-factor" pieces. "People get very scared about the design process, but natural stone gives you something to truly fall in love with. I rarely see a finished piece of stone in situ that doesn't look amazing. Statement bathroom countertops are definitely a trend at the moment. I'd like to see more vibrant surfaces used here too because people often say they're works of art."

Gerald Culliford's Opera d'Arte marble is a stunning blend of violet, lilac and green shades and scattered shapes, ideal for a counter or feature wall, to jazz up an otherwise minimal white bathroom.



Jess Hurrell's bathroom in Farrow & Ball's Off-Black, £45 for 2.5 litres. Inset left: Gerald Culliford's Opera d'Arte marble is from £1,100 a square metre

Scalloped tiles

The easiest way to get a maximalist look is with tiles, especially by experimenting with shapes. Hamish Smith, the creative director at Artisans of Devoes, a tile-maker, says that scallop tiles creating a fish-scale effect will be big in 2019.

He also tips penny tiles, "small and sweet with a mosaic design that can add a luxe look to bathrooms", and patterned hexagons. Very popular is the company's Lily Pad hexagonal tile, which works well in a shower area alongside herringbone shapes.

Herringbone mosaic tiles look great on walls with slim linear designs, in particular marble herringbone or blush colours. "Mixing herringbone and patterned tiles has become the most requested design trend in bathrooms this year, and it's set to continue," Smith says.

"Maximalism will be the trend to stand out in 2019, with clashing tiles, copper baths and dramatic brassware. Meanwhile, mixing a pink tile with industrial pieces can give a bathroom a modern and refreshed feel."

Laura Whateley