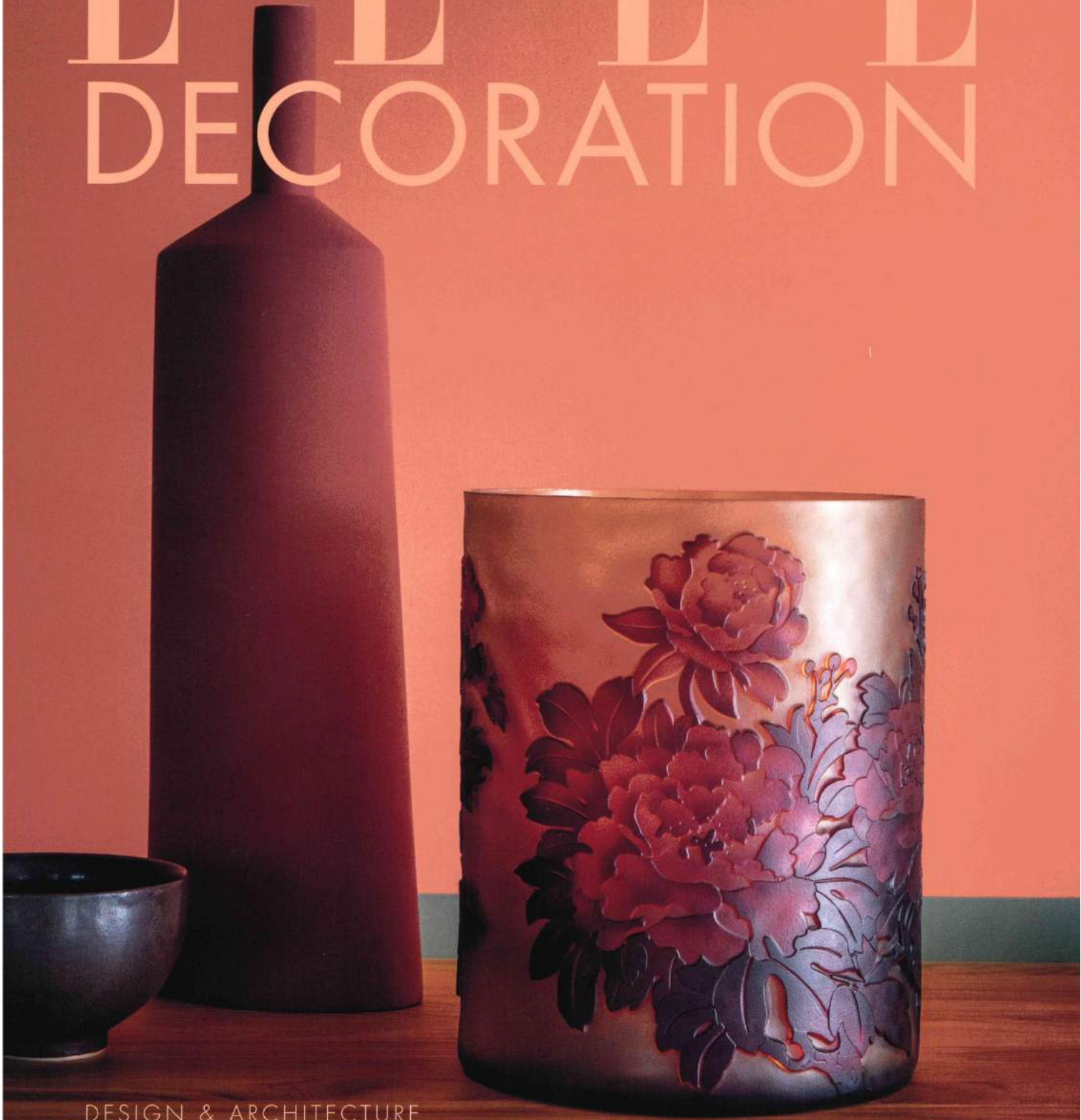


ELLE DECORATION



DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE



DESIGN DETAILS

INTERIOR DOOR FURNITURE

Get a handle on these important – yet often overlooked – finishing touches

What is door furniture? In layman's terms, door furniture includes door handles (that you pull), levers (that you push down), knobs (that you turn) and kick plates and push plates, which protect against fingermarks.

Why should I update an interior door? 'You may redecorate a room every five to ten years, but you generally keep the door hardware for a lot longer, so think of it as a long-term investment,' says Paul Clifford, managing director of Croft. Make sure that what you choose is in keeping with the door itself. 'For example, a square rose lever looks good if the door has a geometric panel,' says Wayne Dymond, sales and marketing director at Turnstyle Designs. Keep the look consistent with the style of your home as a whole, too.

Should I choose lever handles or door knobs? Levers are the more practical option, as they are easier to operate. They also don't require such a strong grip, so are ideal for older users. Door knobs, on the other hand, are trickier to install, as they require a deeper backset (this is the distance from the edge of the door frame to the metal rod of the knob). 'If the door was originally fitted with a lever handle and you want to swap to a door knob, just check the backset dimensions,' says Dymond. 'If it's less than 75mm, then door knobs really aren't suitable.' 'If you're starting from scratch, though, the decision comes down to personal preference,' says Sarah Ehrlich, managing director of The Nanz Company.

What else should I think about if I'm replacing door furniture? It's crucial to always fit new latches at the same time as new door handles – don't just change the knobs. 'This ensures you have the optimum springing – and, therefore, that your lever handle will sit horizontally,' explains Dymond. 'Also, if using door knobs, you will need a two-way action latch so it can turn clockwise and anti-clockwise.' After all, there's no point in having a stylish new handle if it won't turn because it doesn't line up with the internal hardware.

Any rules when it comes to finishes? 'Firstly, choose one finish and make sure that it's available for every element of the door hardware,' says Dymond. 'Also, some finishes are more robust than others, so select something that is suitable for the environment you are in.' Living finishes – those that develop a patina – such as the brass 'Lama' handle by Gio Ponti for Olivari, used by Universal Design Studio for a recent retail project (above), are popular. 'Living or unlacquered finishes will change over time,' explains Robert Fodor, director of sales and marketing at SA Baxter, 'but that is the beauty of them.'

**FIVE OF THE BEST
DOOR FURNITURE
MANUFACTURERS**

**BEST FOR UNDERSTATED
DESIGN Ochre**

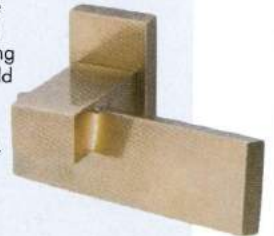
Since Ochre was founded 22 years ago, it's become renowned for its refined aesthetic. The collection includes walnut and oak 'Viking handles' and saddle-leather handles – both with distinctive patinated bronze or pewter knuckles. Leather handle, from £319.20 (ochre.net).



**BEST FOR CUSTOM
HARDWARE**

The Nanz Company

This US manufacturer makes custom handles, hinges, locks and fittings. There are nearly 100 finishes to choose from, including verdigris, burnished gold and red bronze. 'No. 2028' lever, price on application (nanz.com).



**BEST FOR CLASSIC
& CONTEMPORARY
STYLES Croft**

British brand Croft offers everything from Art Deco and Victorian to Georgian ranges. Its latest 'Elements' collection is refreshingly contemporary. Oval knob on school board backplate, from £78.20 (croft.co.uk).



**BEST FOR MODERN DOOR
HANDLES Mandelli 1953**

A contemporary style characterises Italian company Mandelli 1953's new handles, 'Grint' and 'Kuki' (right, from £173.93). The former has spherical engravings on the neck; the latter comes in a choice of finishes (mandelli.it).



**BEST FOR BIG NAME
DESIGNERS Olivari**

Italian manufacturer Olivari has teamed up with heavyweights Rem Koolhaas, Piero Lissoni and Vincent Van Duysen on its newest door handles. 'ABC' handle by Rem Koolhaas, £103.80 (olivari.co.uk).

