

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Natural paint specialist and architectural
historian, Edward Bulmer

WORDS EMMA J PAGE PHOTOGRAPHY ALUN CALLENDER



Paints are housed in a former hotel mail or key rack in Edward's studio. The wall behind is painted in Nicaragua.



An old plan chest houses Edward's collection of drawings from the many projects he has worked on.



A selection of paints ready to be labelled, packaged and sent to customers.

I believe in painting with a conscience. It was when I took on an historic restoration project at Goodwood that I began to think seriously about how to return paint to its roots. It's only in the last one hundred years that it has been made from crude oil, which requires the use of chemicals, rather than plant oil.

I have always been used to working with natural materials, so the idea of developing environmentally friendly paint appealed to me. In my opinion, it is the most significant material in interior decorating when it comes to impact, surface area and style. I created 25 colours that I used in my own projects. From there, I expanded into deeper and more modern shades.

I live and work out of a Queen Anne building in Herefordshire. Myself and my wife, Emma, ensure that it earns its keep as office, showroom, family home, farm, factory, colour workshop and restoration project. A large brick fodder barn houses the Paint Room where emulsions are made with minerals combined with a plant-based binder, while earth and mineral pigments provide colour. Eggshell paints are made with linseed oil, natural resins and pigments.

Our own home is a brilliant proving ground and we change its hues frequently. Recently, we updated our hall with Lilac Pink, which has given it a wonderful light and subtlety. I grew up in a Georgian home and my first decorating job was for interior designer David Mlinaric, before going on to a research role at the National Trust. So, my understanding of pigments, paint mediums and tonality began from an early age.

Emma and I are business partners – she leads our marketing efforts and runs the finances while I look after production, design work and colour making. We are a team of 13, all told, and for us, the key is not to be trend-led, but to do our own thing. However, we do enjoy coming up with colours that strike a chord, which our recent plaster pink Jonquil and dusty pink Cuisse de Nymphé Emue have done. We all believe in changing the way paint is made. The trend I want to see is for plastic-free, non-toxic, non-polluting paints. That would be a satisfying achievement.

■ Edward Bulmer Natural Paint, 01544 388535, edwardbulmerpaint.co.uk.

Edward, at his studio desk, checking the 20 newly developed hues for his paint collection.



LIFESTYLE



Paint is mixed and prepared, ready to send out to a customer.



Colours from the new Edward Bulmer Natural Paint collection.