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Words and Pictures

Noteworthy publications, chosen by Nicola Sanders

The Living Garden Jane Powers

.Frances Lincoln, £25)

Books on wildlife gardening are often written in an evangelical way and filled with photographs of dishevelled-looking gardens. Not so with *The Living Garden* by Irish garden writer Jane Powers, who has produced an informative and approachable book that also looks good. Much of what she writes is common sense - a garden must be 'suited to its space', and 'the more things that are living (and dying) in it, the healthier it is' - but it is often the simplest things that are the key to creating a garden in harmony with nature. This is not a step-by-step manual, but within each chapter there is plenty you can take away - lists of plants for different garden situations, easy-to-understand basics about the soil, and organic ways to deal with slugs and snails. Alongside the hard-and-fast information are interesting anecdotes: did you know, for instance, that Charles Darwin wrote an entire book on the earthworm? Even if you thought you knew everything about wildlife gardening, this book is an enjoyable and thought-provoking read that will remind you how easy it is to share your garden rather than keep it all to yourself. **CLARE FOSTER** Readers can order a copy for £20 (inc p&p) by calling 01235-827702, and quoting '46HGLG'



Life in a Cottage Garden

Carol Klein/Photographs

Jonathan Buckley

(BBC Books, £20)

Life in a Cottage Garden accompanies the BBC2 series of the same name that follows Carol Klein through the seasons in her garden in north Devon. Presented in the form of a diary and accompanied by Jonathan Buckley's stunning photographs, this book is more aspirational than her recent *Grow Your Own* series, taking the reader through the year as she sows, pots, plants and clips her way through each month. Each chapter begins with an introduction to sum up the mood of the month, and ends with a single plant profile timely to that month. The text is beautifully written, but also full of good practical information: for instance, the section on hellebores has instructions on how to hand-pollinate plants to create your own hybrids. Although the diary entries focus on the garden tasks that Carol is performing week by week, they also include observations on the plants that are out at that time of year. This is a book that you'll want to read in one go to absorb all the detail - but it is also one you'll come back to again and again as a reminder of what you should be doing in the garden at particular times of the year. **CF** Readers can order a copy for £17 (inc p&p) by calling 01206-255800, and quoting 'House & Garden'



Alberto Pinto Today Alberto Pinto and Julien Morel

(Flammarion, £45)

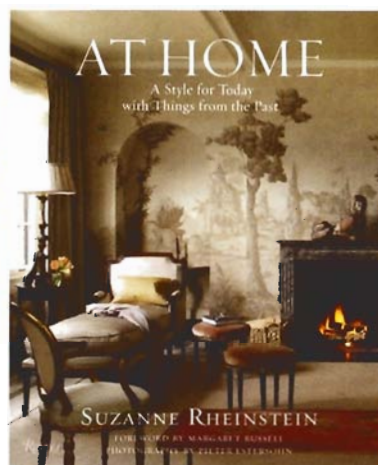
At Home: A Style for Today with Things from the Past

Suzanne Rheinstein

(Rizzoli, £37.50)

Can you ever judge a book by its cover? In the case of these two, both by decorators recording their own work, the covers convey fairly accurately the tone of the contents - and thus you may guess whether or not you will like them. The cover of *Alberto Pinto Today* depicts a modern staircase with graphic zig-zag lines, is luxuriously padded and has a high-gloss finish. It's a perfect 'fit', for if one had to choose three words to describe Alberto Pinto's style, they could

well be 'graphic', 'luxurious' and 'glossy'. In contrast, *At Home: A Style for Today with Things from the Past* has a dust jacket with only the merest hint of sheen, showing a restful, soft-toned room, incorporating traditional furniture and a welcoming fire. Here, all is quiet, understated elegance. Alberto Pinto works on an international scale, producing interiors, domestic and commercial, that are highly manipulated and detailed. The 17 projects in this, his latest book, jump from a huge country house in England to a Mediterranean villa with Cocteau-inspired wall decorations; from a hotel in Bordeaux to a pied à terre in Geneva; from a super-yacht to a private plane. The interiors are fascinating, not only for their variety of style and place but, frequently, for their eye-popping opulence. Suzanne Rheinstein's role as a decorator is smaller but she is nevertheless a considerable influence, since her shop, Hollyhock, in Los Angeles, is a magnet for anyone seeking beautiful, 'laid-back' antiques and the sort of special fabrics and



objects she uses in her schemes. The six projects she illustrates - all in the States, two being her own homes - have surely involved much deliberation and always refer to the past but they never appear ponderous or 'stuck'. She writes very personally and easily - whereas Julien Morel's text for Alberto Pinto's book, though informative, is less relaxed - and the reader senses the pleasure she has derived in creating these rooms, whether in her Georgian-revival house in Los Angeles, her pre-war apartment in New York or in a friend's farmhouse in Virginia. This may sound like a sexist generalisation, but I see her decorating as more feminine than masculine - and Alberto Pinto's as the opposite. **LEONIE HIGHTON** Readers can order a copy of 'Alberto Pinto Today' for £35 (inc p&p) by calling 01903-828503, and quoting 'HG/ALPI', and a copy of 'At Home' for £30 (inc p&p) by calling 01235-465577, and quoting 'H&G/ATSR' □