

Going green

A high street giant backs the British craft industry while a family farm goes from strength to strength

BY REBECCA FISHENDEN



HANDS OF TIME

Go for a rustic look with a large clock made from recycled wood. It measures 60cm in diameter and will look even better with age. It's available from Idyll Home for £67 (01630 695779; idyllhome.co.uk).

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Mango wood is not only hard-wearing but wins first prize for sustainability. Once fruit bearing years end, mango farmers have to cut down old trees to plant more; the old trees can then be sold for timber, providing extra income.

This handcrafted mango wood bowl, from Nkuku, is certified by The World Fair Trade Organisation and costs £35. Visit nkuku.com or call 01548 821184.



Doing my bit... alpaca farmer Kerry Lord

'Toft Alpaca is a family business in Warwickshire started by my parents in 1997 with just four alpacas. When I left university in 2005 my parents gave me the job of selling the alpaca fleeces which were a by-product of the breeding programme. We are now the biggest producer of alpaca wool in the UK and produce a range of more than 12 natural shades, achieved by blending fleeces. The wool is considered to be one of the most luxurious natural fibres and we regularly run workshops for people to learn how to knit or share new skills. In December we are planning to run a couple of knitting day courses. The demand for alpaca yarns has grown enormously as people turn to natural products. So now, in addition to selling yarn from our own herd, we buy fleeces from farmers all over the UK.'

The Toft Alpaca Shop (01788 810626; thetoftalpacashop.co.uk)



CUTTING COSTLY DRAUGHTS

With heating costs set to rise, it's a good time to look at insulation around the home. Fitting draught-excluding seals around the loft hatch frame could help keep temperatures inside from dipping and reduce bills too.



QUEEN OF CRAFTS

High street champion Mary Portas is giving a helping hand to British craft with a new collaboration with House of Fraser in which she aims to bring craft pieces to a wider audience. One featured textile designer is Carola van Dyke from the South Downs. Inspired by the countryside and animals she hand-makes cushions, for £50, using vintage fabrics (left). Others include ceramic artist Naomi Ryde, who uses images from her embroidered artwork and Kaoru Parry who works with small family-run potteries in Stoke-on-Trent. Buy online (houseoffraser.co.uk) or at House of Fraser in Oxford Street, London.

