

Ask Oliver



Q I live in a rented terraced house with old, ill-fitting sash windows. Could you suggest how to insulate them without breaking the bank? The ideal solution

would be to replace all the windows and fit them with double glazing, but the landlord will never accept such an expensive job.

Annette Kelly

A You have some classic thermal issues too costly to remedy for your tenancy, so in the short term think about the following to warm up your home and reduce your heating bills and carbon footprint. During the winter months, fit temporary double glazing. This can either be a polythene sheet that is adhered to the window frame and tensioned with a hair dryer, or a cut-to-size acrylic plastic sheet that is screwed to the frame. Fit thick curtains over the windows – think ready-made vintage from markets or second-hand shops, and make it stylish, too! Fit silver reflecting panels behind the radiators to kick the heat forward into the room, and cut draughts from doors and windows with foam or copper strips (try www.homebase.co.uk).

Q I live in a two-bedroom flat with a friend, and space is at a premium. My son (who stays once a month for the weekend) is now ready for his first bed. He sleeps in my room, so can you recommend a bed (not a Z-bed) that converts into a chair/sofa when he isn't staying with me? **Jonathan Maydew**

A Check out the range of brilliant AeroBed inflatable mattresses (pictured below). I've got one for guests: it pops up in seconds with its built-in motor and is as firm as a conventional mattress. Deflated, it can be folded into a bag and neatly stored away. Prices for single beds start from £50, so this makes it a space-saving budget choice (go to www.aerobed.co.uk). For the sophisticated option, take a look at the Dizzy range of fold-out single beds at www.johnlewis.com. Have it covered in warm brown leather, and no one will know that it's a bed by night. Prices range from £295 for fabric, up to £595 in leather. ★

If you have an interior design question for Oliver, email ask.oliver@observer.co.uk



AUCIA CANTER



WHAT WOULD YOU SAVE IF YOUR HOUSE WAS BURNING DOWN? LISA BUTCHER, MODEL AND TV PRESENTER

Ever since I was tiny, the thing I wanted more than anything in the world was a horse. While all the girls at school were running around after boys, I was running around after horses. When I was 13, I found this horse, Lady, in the field at the bottom of our garden – she looked like a really maltreated little pony. I found out who owned her and just said: 'Can I look after her for you?' They said yes, so I took her under my wing. The one thing I really needed, of course, was a saddle, which my father bought me for my 14th birthday.

My father died last November, so all of the things he gave me have huge significance, particularly this saddle, because it was the best present anyone had ever bought me. It literally made my birthday.

My father was trying to buy Lady for me, but she ended up getting laminitis in her hooves, so she would eventually go lame. I was left with a saddle but no horse – I just gazed at it lovingly, willing a horse to appear under it. Then I started modelling so that I could afford to buy my own horse. I moved to London with my parents and I ended up buying my first horse, Zilkah.

Whenever I look at this saddle it brings back fond memories – not only of my dad, but also of probably the happiest time of my life: when you're young and you have no worries. I'd just been launched as *Elle* magazine's Face of '87, and the world was my oyster – it was heavenly. **Laura Potter**

Lisa Butcher presents *What Not to Wear* on Thursdays at 8pm on BBC1