

COUNTRY LIFE[®]

APRIL 5, 2017

EVERY WEEK

Great English interiors The evolution of the exquisite



9 770045 885177
14
£3.50

Dew: nature's sweetest tears
The romance of Red Rum and the Grand National
Meet the modern-day woodlanders

My favourite painting Veere Grenney

Landscape Viewed From a Window by Henri Matisse



Veere Grenney is an interior designer



6 Matisse is among my top five favourite painters. In his Moroccan series, which I love, he captures the light, colour and exoticism of North Africa. *Landscape Viewed From a Window* is the all-time favourite because it's Morocco, it's Tangier (where I have a house) and the middle of the picture is dominated by St Andrew's Church. The green pantile roof against the cobalt blue is wonderful. It's a beautiful church, built at the very end of the 19th century, and it's where I worship on Sundays. Inside, it's plain and simply adorned with the Lord's Prayer in Arabic around the nave. Thus, a painting by one of the greatest Masters, in extraordinary shades of blue, with the subject and city that I love—plus a few palm trees thrown in—make it an absolute favourite!

Landscape Viewed From a Window, 1913 (oil on canvas), by Henri Matisse (1869–1954), 45¼in by 31½in, Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia

John McEwen comments on *Landscape Viewed From a Window*

FOR Matisse, marriage proved a cornerstone. 'I love you dearly, mademoiselle,' he told Amélie Parayre, 'but I shall always love painting more.' Amélie was unfazed; she yearned for a cause. 'I didn't know much about what he was doing,' she recalled, 'but I knew whatever he did could only be good.'

They were married in January 1898 and honeymooned in London so he could see Turners: 'What incandescence! What dazzlement! What jewels!' He later vowed: 'The painter of the future will be such a colourist as has never yet been seen.' Turner was one inspiration, the warm south another.

Van Gogh had blazed a trail; Matisse, another northerner, followed. Amélie's loyalty was compounded by the inspirational support of a Russian oligarch, Sergei Shchukin. In 1908, when Matisse's colour explorations were becoming unsellable, Shchukin, a born collector, arrived in Paris and bought him out.

By 1911, when Matisse visited Moscow, Shchukin had opened the collection that adorned his palace to the public—vestiges of its dramatic influence on young Russian artists can be seen in 'Revolution', the Royal Academy's Russian show (until April 17). Shchukin got Matisse to hang the palace's

Pink Drawing Room as a Matissean iconostasis, a 'beautiful hothouse of orchids'.

The following year, Matisse took the well-trod painters' path to Morocco. He was also commissioned by another Russian oligarch, Ivan Morozov, a commercial collector, to paint three 'landscapes', the so-called 'Moroccan Triptych'. This view was one of them; *The Casbah Gate* (featured as Lachlan Goudie's favourite painting on March 30, 2016) another. In his *Notes of a Painter* (1908), Matisse wrote that his aim was to find a subject's 'essence' in order to produce 'an art of balance, purity and serenity'.