



# Darren Holdway

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## INTRODUCTION

A highly accomplished and award winning integrated Creative Director with over 20 years' experience of building and bringing brands to life within luxury, lifestyle, fashion, food and interiors.

Creating, launching and redesigning commercial concepts for successful audience engagement, I bring a purpose and passion to all of my roles, immersing myself with creative enthusiasm to solve complex problems, relishing in the detail and execution to ensure projects are delivered flexibly and resourcefully.

Whilst making certain that creativity meets commerciality, I have the ability to digest and translate a market or product both online and offline.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Currently working with clients including **REDWOOD BBDO** on a global social video and animation campaign for a major interiors brand; **HEARST** on their commercial licensing ranges for Country Living and House Beautiful and special futureproofing and efficiency development projects within the business

Conceptually lead, storyboarded and directed video, animation and photoshoots for **NOT ON THE HIGH STREET** promoting the artisanal aspects of the business as well as key seasons for their online and social media marketing. Required good logistical skills as part of the project was filmed over three separate parts of the country, requiring decisive thinking, flexibility, leadership and strategic and common sense thinking

Strategised, lead, coordinated and directed ambient and practical videos; Introduced a 360 redesign to **COUNTRY LIVING** across all physical, experiential and digital touch-points, thereby increasing relationship building and brand awareness with the potential to sell off the back of these videos commercially; which in turn lead to us securing brand partnerships with brands such as **DFS, YEO VALLEY** and **INTERFLORA**

The creativity and trust that I had formed from stakeholders with my strategy of the CL 360 rebrand gave me free rein to devise and create **MODERN RUSTIC**, a luxury sister title to CL appealing to a contemporary younger audience. It's success resulted in subsequently expanded to three times a year and lead to launching in the US in year two

Devised and crafted the launch of **JAMIE MAGAZINE** redefining how food magazines were perceived by printing on luxury matte paper and art directing stunning reportage and food photoshoots with the launch issue selling over 100,000 copies

## KEY SKILLS

Creative Direction, Art Direction, Design, Content, Brand Strategy, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Premier

Darren is a talented creative director who, in his time at Swoon, led the team in producing our **strongest ever lifestyle photography shoots** and designed **engaging and innovative new advertising** formats

NOELEVES, CMO SWOON

I have worked with Darren for many years, he always brings out the best in his team, tons of creativity and flair. **He has a real eye for the unusual and beautiful**, I particularly loved his work on *Modern Rustic*, championing the one-off crafts people/makers, bringing their individualism for all to appreciate. There is never a dull moment on his projects. **I have done some of my best work with him** and look forward to more adventures

WEITANG, STYLIST

I have worked with Darren numerous times over the years, for various clients. His briefs are always creative, **detailed and considerate of my working methods** and visual approach. He allows a project to develop naturally, giving the whole team room to have creative input. No matter how long the day has been, Darren is always positive and quick to laugh

CHRIS TERRY, PHOTOGRAPHER



## CAREER HISTORY

APR 17 –  
ONGOING

### Freelance Creative Director

- Currently working with clients including **REDWOOD BBDO** on a global social video and animation campaign for a major interiors brand; **HEARST** on their commercial licensing ranges for Country Living and House Beautiful and special future proofing and efficiency development projects within the business
- Devised and art directed the S/S 2020 campaign for **GREAT LITTLE TRADING COMPANY** including print, online, social media assets and GIFs. Managing a young team this role required strong leadership, team development, decisiveness and persuasiveness to get the client the results required.
- Strategised, devised, storyboarded and directed the video, animation, and photoshoots for **NOT ON THE HIGH STREET** promoting artisanal aspects of the business including Father's Day
- Developed a storyboard format for **UNILEVER FOOD SERVICES**, directing a series of videos with renowned chefs around London for a paid for subscription service aimed at mid to senior food professionals, requiring strategic mindedness, detail orientation, critical thinking and creativity to produce great quality in challenging environments. Also required to work for **KNORR** where I conceptualised and art directed a series of food photoshoots for, to be used throughout all of their social media channels
- Working collaboratively with Tesco's head of Marketing I defined a new direction in photographic style for their seasonal photoshoots to be used in brochures, online and in-store. I also art directed their packaging photography for **TESCO**'s own brand food range refresh working alongside key client stakeholders which required resilience, self confidence and enthusiasm.

JUL 18 –  
ONGOING

### PURPLE DRAGON Creative Director

A brand ambassador for ultra high net worth private members club – owning and evolving the brand with strategic thinking and creativity. Initiative and decisive skills are required to execute impactful creative ideas. Implementing seasonal cross-channel campaigns and events throughout the year.

- Ideated a new brand identity and 360 rebrand strategy from print, digital content as well as experiential and product development, in preparation for their global expansion.
- Produced and directed content for a digital TV subscription channel, 'At Home With...'. I coordinated, directed and filmed a series of videos featuring a series of art, music, STEM and cookery. With COVID restrictions in place, I devised a mobile studio set-up for delivery to presenters homes and also set up a pop-up studio in their Chelsea club. Created over 70 videos in the space of a month in a cost and time efficient manner. Required initiative, a good learning mentality and strategic mindedness
- Furthered skills in lighting, filming techniques, chroma key and Adobe Premier including video editing, illustration and animation.
- Conceptualised, coordinated and art directed seasonal video and photoshoots for fashion, lifestyle and food for social and print.
- Devised and launched a quarterly ABC1 magazine exclusively for members, attracting targeted advertising clients such as Harrod's, Stella McCartney and Patek Phillippe

JAN 17 –  
APR 17

### SWOON EDITIONS Creative Director

Strategised and lead the rebrand development and defined a new photographic style which was rolled out with the Spring '17 brochure which lead to Swoon becoming a household name. My role was to develop my team and working practise to take us through the next phase of growth.

- Oversaw chemistry meetings to shortlist an Advertising agency for further brand development to take Swoon to the next level for advertising and TV campaigns
- Conceptualised and coordinated a two-week Swoon pop-up event at the Oxo Tower, showcasing the Spring/Summer 2017 collection
- Managed a team of seven comprising of retouchers, head of design, copywriter and project manager

I brought Darren on board as Creative Director of Country Living in 2015 to carry out a complete redesign. I chose him over a number of other candidates because his work was **bold and striking** which added a completely new look to the magazine. We worked together for three-and-a-half years, during which time Darren showed himself to be a **committed, hardworking and highly creative individual**. He worked across all aspects of the Country Living brand from print and digital to video and events. His design work for print was also extended to a new publication, Modern Rustic. This **gave the brand a much more contemporary feel** and is still **highly successful today** using the design template Darren created.

SUSY SMITH, GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, HEARST MAGAZINES

JUN 15 –  
DEC 16

**COUNTRY LIVING** *Hearst Magazines UK*

**Creative Director** Showing leadership and strategic mindedness to undertake a 360 redesign of this iconic brand, introducing a digital presence as well as fresh new look and feel for the magazine, becoming the market leading homes title under my tenure. My role also required relationship building with key stakeholders in the business to develop its many brand extensions with DFS, Pashley and Interflora to name a few. As part of CL's 2014 redesign, I developed CL's website; an online general store; Country Loving – CL's dating site and TTL advertising and experiential design for the Country Living fairs.

- Coordinated and directed ambient and practical videos that accompanied many of our series features, from gardens, craft, smallholdings and food
- Introduced a 360 redesign to the magazine across all physical and digital touch-points, thereby increasing brand awareness and securing brand partnerships with brands such as DFS, Yeo Valley and Interflora
- Formulated creative design processes which in turn engaged and motivated the team increasing efficiency by approximately 25%
- Launched **MODERN RUSTIC**, a luxury sister title to CL. Subsequently expanded to three times a year and successfully launched in the US in year two
- Maximised editorial breadth of magazine by leveraging valued relationships with photographers, producing evergreen video content for online and social media, furthering brand credibility utilising existing budgets
- Rebranded 90s concept *Farmer Wants a Wife*, into a dating website called **COUNTRY LOVING** – now a BBC2 show called *Love in the Countryside* hosted by Sara Cox
- Worked collaboratively with Dating Lab, the team behind Guardian Soulmates, developed front end and UX of the desktop and mobile site.
- Redefined rights usage and fees with photographers, illustrators and picture libraries, enabling a standard fee structure with all contributors on an all rights basis, creating substantial savings on budget and flexibility with digital usage

NOV 11 –  
JUN 15

**RESULT Creative Director**

This role required resilience, emotional control and empathy for developing others as well as strong leadership and strategic mindedness to manage a sometimes challenging client and CEO. Relationship building was a key part of working alongside our client, as was a strong sense of persuasiveness to encourage and allow us to develop our vision, and ultimately turn Morrisons into an award winning print and digital offering. Responsible for all creative output within the company in multichannel environments as well as securing and developing new business.

- Relaunched **MORRISONS MAGAZINE** with a new team, photographers, food and prop stylists as well as implementing a new online platform and launching the UK's first supermarket iPad magazine – which won the **DMA 2011** best customer magazine of the year for three consecutive years
- Secured several new clients producing print, iPad magazines and luxury catalogues
- Oversaw Result Pictures which included the visual development of Morrisons brand photography and video production

NOV 08 –  
JUN 15

**Freelance Senior Art Director**

Working independently for a number of clients required creativity, common sense, decisiveness, relationship building, resilience and self confidence with a huge amount of enthusiasm and flexibility.

- **FORWARD** conceptualising through the line print and marketing material alongside **KARMARAMA** and their TV campaign for **B&Q's LOVE YOUR ROOM**
- **LAURA ASHLEY** brought on board to inject an editorial feel into their fashion and home titles including a redesign their main homes catalogue
- **SEVEN** strategised the winning pitch idea for **HOUSE OF FRASER'S WONDERLAND** luxury Christmas gift guide in 2010, coordinating and art directing over 20 fashion, home and lifestyle shoots. Also part of the launch team for the development and production for **PROJECT, VIRGIN'S** iPad magazine
- Design consultant for **AB PUBLISHING**, lead and redefined working practice and improving workflow. Won several IOIC awards. Created efficiencies by launching a graduate photography competition at the LCC and employing an in-house photographer to increase quality and cost savings
- **SUNDAY**, conceptualised, designed and commissioned illustrations for **WESTFIELD's** luxury store guide
- **BIG FISH** art directing **WAITROSE** food packaging for their luxury desserts range

JUL 08 –  
NOV 08

**JAMIE OLIVER LTD Launch Art Director**

- Devised and crafted the launch of **JAMIE MAGAZINE** redefining how food magazines were perceived by printing on luxury matte paper and art directing stunning reportage and food photoshoots with the launch issue successfully selling over 100,000 copies
- Produced **JAMIE AT HOME** catalogue from inception through to design and launch
- Commissioned a unique typeface and devised a pull-out gatefold and bellyband device to hold the catalogue
- Launch magazine sold over 100,000 copies. My design collectively impacted the overall Jamie Oliver brand. The magazine also went on to be internationally licensed around the world



When I have work that requires a creative lead, **Darren is always the first person I call.** He is **wonderful to work with – creative and collaborative.** In terms of his creativity he has natural flare but also impressive background experience that instils trust and confidence. **He also enjoys exploring new boundaries, learning new techniques, and setting new trends.**

As for the way Darren collaborates; in the ten years I've worked closely with him, he is a good leader, encouraging and fair to those he manages. **Teams enjoy working with Darren and he is impressive when pitching ideas and creative projects to clients.** He listens well to feedback and works hard to make sure what he delivers is as close to perfection as possible.

DAWN ALFORD, AGENCY CONTENT DIRECTOR, MAGAZINE EDITOR & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

## EARLIER CAREER

- SEP '06 – FEB '08** **YOUR M&S Redwood Art Director**
- Redesigned the magazine and introduced world class food and home photographers – redefining their photographic style and pace to the pages, during my tenure, was tasked with looking after both magazine and all key seasonal brochures
  - Devised, coordinated and art directed food and home shoots
  - Launched interim seasonal spin off fashion and food titles, recruited a new art team and undertook a complete review of budgets and working practises amongst the team
- SEP '05 – SEP '06** **4HOMES MAGAZINE Media 10/Channel 4 Art Director**
- Devised and launched Channel 4's first newsstand magazine appealing to a contemporary market conceptualising a design approach that visually captured Channel 4's 'jeopardy' tone of voice
  - Responsible for visualising the overall concept, client liaison, design and art direction, commissioning, production and managing a small team
- 2004 – '05** **HAIRDRESSERS JOURNAL Reed Elsevier Freelance relaunch Art Director**
- 2003 – '04** **INK Group Art Director**
- 2000 – '03** **OLIVE BBC Worldwide Freelance launch Art Editor**
- 1998 – '00** **THE GUARDIAN GUIDE Freelance Art Director**  
**HARROD'S CHRISTMAS GUIDE & HARVEY NICHOLS Redwood Art Director**  
**VIRGIN INFO River Publishing Art Director**
- 1997 – '98** **FREEMAN'S OF LONDON Senior Graphic Designer**  
**THE INDEPENDENT Designer**

## EDUCATION

- 1992 – '94** BA Combined Honours **DESIGN STUDIES & AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA** (1st), University of Central Lancashire
- 1994 – '97** BTEC **GRAPHIC DESIGN** incorporating **A 'LEVEL ART**, Preston College
- 1991 – '92** Foundation **ART & DESIGN, MEDIA STUDIES, PHOTOGRAPHY**, Preston College

## ADDITIONAL SKILLS & INTERESTS

- Regularly attempt to keep fit and endure sessions with a personal trainer
- Continue to learn the latest software with Adobe CC including Premiere and After Effects
- A strong interest in interior design and have undertaken extensive projects in and around my home and two recently acquired rental properties as well as projects for private clients.
- We have two beautiful young Border Collie's, Dylan and Ziggy that accompany myself and partner on UK countryside and city breaks, as well as European trips. Weekends at home generally involve long relaxing walks, riverside pubs and markets accompanied by the dogs.
- Enjoy cooking and eating out, music, concerts, theatre, hosting and entertaining dinner parties as well as anything cultural which generally involves visiting photography and art exhibitions

# Moving image

Devised, Storyboarded, commissioned and art directed video for a variety of clients. More of my video work can be seen [here](#)



NOT ON THE HIGH STREET



NOT ON THE HIGH STREET



SARAH MOORE FOR COUNTRY LIVING



WALNUTS FARM FOR COUNTRY LIVING



WALNUTS FARM FOR COUNTRY LIVING



LOSELEY PARK FOR COUNTRY LIVING

# Interiors

Coordinating, commissioning and art direction of interior and lifestyle shoots, more of which you can see [here](#)



# Beauty

Coordinating, commissioning and art direction of beauty and fragrance shoots, more of which you can see [here](#)



# Fashion

Coordinating, commissioning and art direction of fashion for retail and editorial brands, more of which you can see [here](#)



# Still life

Coordinating, commissioning and art direction of beauty, fashion and homes still life shoots, more of which you can see [here](#)



# Food

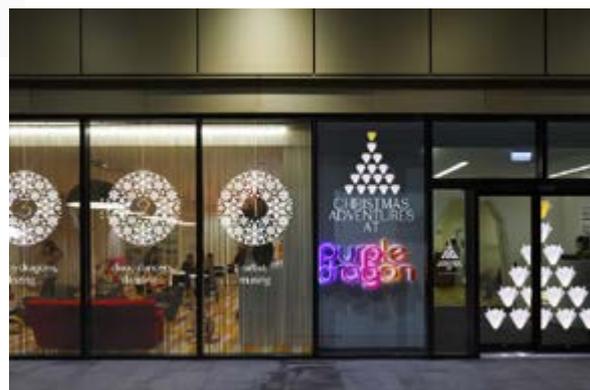
Coordinating, commissioning and art direction of food shoots, both studio and location more of which you can see [here](#)



COUNTRY LIVING, JAMIE OLIVER, MORRISONS, MARKS & SPENCER

# Brand strategy

Market trends, 360° multichannel thinking, rebrand strategy, brand photography and digital content. See my Country Living, Purple Dragon and Swoon case studies



# Editorial

Launch, 360° redesign, art direction, commissioning, briefing, brand partnerships, strategy and live events, more of which you can see [here](#)

