

# As good Asnew

From left, partners Gary Morley and Jeremy Adamberry, with interior designer Chloe Webster



Why dump your worn-out furniture when you can give it a super-chic new lease of life, writes **Denise Barkley**



I have been looking at our sofas of late and thinking that they are looking a bit scruffy. I want to change the colour scheme of the lounge but the rust-coloured sofas limit my options and I am bored with them.

We worked out that we bought them about 12 years ago, but they are solid well-made pieces of furniture that were not cheap, they are really comfortable, and it seems a shame to sling them out and then rack up several thousand pounds on new seating.

It never occurred to me that I might have them reupholstered — not only that, I can have the zip-off arms that I dislike ‘remodelled’, and I could even have a replica sofa or armchair made to my personal specifications. That is useful to know when you are only 5ft 2ins and your legs dangle a couple of inches off the floor when you sit down!

Enter the amazing Abingdon company Asnew who will give your existing furniture an entirely new look!

Let’s face it, a ‘three-piece suite’ requires considerable outlay, so why not update what you already have? If you like the style of

your sofas and they are comfy, reupholstering is cheaper than buying new.

If you want to ‘tweak’ the styling you can, and it is the environmentally-friendly option too.

Asnew can show you endless photos of, frankly, wrecked pieces of furniture with ripped covers spilling out wadding that have been totally transformed — plumped up to perfection, upholstered in your choice of contemporary or traditional fabric, wooden arms and legs rejuvenated and with, perhaps, some smart cord piping to add the finishing touch.

The two dynamic guys behind Asnew are Gary Morley and Jeremy Adamberry, who both have oodles of experience in the furniture trade. Gary, 51, trained in upholstery with the now defunct Minty, at Cowley, and Jeremy, 42, worked in product development with Parker Knoll, now also closed down, at Chipping Norton.

British furniture manufacture has been hard hit in recent years, but Asnew’s cost-effective upcycling option has proved a hit. Having grown from a two-man band, Gary and Jeremy now employ 21 people, including the apprentices who will keep the

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A chaise before getting the Asnew treatment . . .



. . . and after



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traditional upholstery skills alive, and are about to move to new premises having outgrown their present business unit. In early 2015 they are opening a showroom in Abingdon and launching their own range of furniture!

"Yes, we are doing very well," grinned Gary. "I always like to remember that back in Georgian times upholsterers were the only tradesmen who came in through the front door!

"Upholstery is our passion and the heart and soul of our business, and always will be, but we have expanded to provide a complete interiors service — we have exciting plans for 2015."

Like myself, many people have never considered upcycling their old soft furnishings — but it seems to have all the advantages without the drawbacks of sourcing new pieces.

"We hear over-and-over again how difficult it is to find the perfect sofas and armchairs," said Gary. "People say they love their existing furnishings, but the cushions have gone flat, the fabric is worn out — or they just want a whole new look.

"Which is where we come in — not only can our craftsmen revamp old furniture, but we can remodel, make a replica piece or another to match. Free home visits, advice and measuring have always been part of our service too."

The company also manufactures furniture for top London designers and I was particularly taken with a wing-backed armchair which was being upholstered when I visited the Asnew workshop. It was being covered in an extravagant and extremely hairy beige goatskin for a designer client. Over-the-top but fun!

Asnew has recently expanded its service to include hand-sewn made-to-measure curtains, and an interior design service which is overseen by Chloe Webster.

"We have been genuinely surprised how successful it has been to offer an interior design service to enhance our core business," said Gary.

"Chloe has fresh ideas on such things as fabrics, wallpaper and curtains — she looks at overall colour schemes and room styles, and her input has been invaluable, taking us in a whole new direction."

And that includes launching a new range of hand-made, solid beech-framed furniture under a new name — Adams and Moore (inspired by Gary and Jeremy's surnames). They plan to launch the exclusive upholstery range in the new year.

"Customers have told us that you cannot

buy quality furniture in Oxford, so we are responding to that," explained Gary. "We plan to offer beautifully made pieces with different styles of cushioning — some people like their sofas soft and squishy, while others want firm cushions. They will have a choice."

But alongside such major plans, Gary was keen to stress that a small upholstery job was just as important to Asnew, as a larger one.

"We often re-cover little nursing chairs which have been passed down the family from grandmother to granddaughter — it is nice to update items with sentimental value like that," said Gary.

Whether you have a down-in-the-mouth chaise longue, a lop-sided sofa, an outdated headboard or a tatty tub chair, with a little vision and TLC you can have a whole new piece of furniture. It is tempting isn't it?

■ *Asnew Upholstery Services, Unit 6 Isis Court, Abingdon OX14 1DZ, call 01235 522770, www.asnew-upholstery.co.uk*



A restored tub chair and ottoman



Transformed . . . a sofa before and after restoration

