

PICTURE: ALAWAY (THE WRITE STUFF), 3OBJECTIVES (THREE OF THE BEST)



THE WRITE STUFF

Hands up: how many of us are secretly embarrassed by our handwriting? British schools, unlike those in France and the US, have historically been reluctant to teach the skill of elegant, legible penmanship. Which means many of us are either underachievers or downright dysfunctional when it comes to communicating on paper. Cherrell Avery is a lettering specialist who's passionate about the benefits of improving your handwriting. 'There are scientific studies that suggest writing by hand encourages creative thinking and aids memory, so it can really improve your confidence at work,' she says. 'It's also lovely to receive a letter or card in a pleasing

hand – it's a tangible physical link with someone's thoughts and emotions.' Avery offers correspondence courses (£400, cherrellavery.co.uk) and eight-week Transform Your Handwriting courses at The Idler Academy (from October 1, £200, idler.co.uk/academy), pointing out that practice makes perfect: pupils start by finding a pen that suits them, and writing large letters slowly to analyse entrenched habits. Success stories report unexpected results. 'Many people say how meditative it is,' says Avery. 'They discover a renewed interest in literature and all sorts of other things beyond the practicalities of writing.'

Stop press! Head to contemporary furniture firm Aram Store to grab a bargain at its summer sale. There's lots to choose from, but between June 15 and July 20, much of its lounge range will be discounted by up to 50 per cent (aram.co.uk).



THREE OF THE BEST... PRETTY CHOCOLATES

These beautifully packaged chocolates are almost too pretty to eat. Take colour inspiration from Creighton's Chocolaterie bars (1), which combine pastel wrappings with surprising flavours – 'Makin' Bacon' actually contains bacon-flavour pieces (£4.25 each, liberty.co.uk). Amelia Rope's boxed chocolate cubes (2) are like edible paint palettes and come in flavours such as lemon & sea salt and rose (£29 for 24, ameliarope.com). And Marou's gorgeously patterned bars (3) are a first – artisan chocolate from Vietnam. Each of the five varieties is made with beans from a different region: we love Bà Rịa, which has a cherry-like fruitiness (£5.95 each, harveynichols.com).