



Joanna's business is thriving



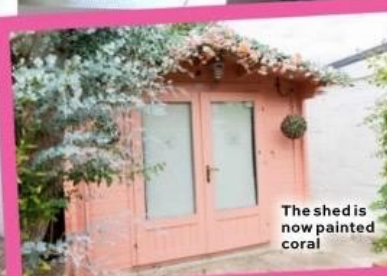
She doesn't have to go far to help



Sage green and white for the win!



The space is warm and intimate



The shed is now painted coral



Joanna won Shed of the Year!

Hooked on my Summer house!

Joanna Lyng took inspiration from her outside space and transformed her career...

As my then-boyfriend, Phil, and I looked around the four-bed terraced property we smiled encouragingly at each other as we followed the estate agent around. 'I love it,' I mouthed silently as each room assured us that this was the house for us.

It was nice, roomy and a little outdated, which was perfect for us. We wanted to put our own stamp on a place. It was also in a great location in Faversham, Kent, and I could picture us together there.

Then when we went out into the garden and the beautiful Summer house at the back immediately caught my eye. I thought about how lovely that would be on a glorious sunny day.

We moved into the house in September 2018. We started decorating and making it ours. As we were making big changes I started thinking about going self-



If there's one thing I've learned

'Always focus on the fun. That way, if you're ever feeling stressed you can think about why you're really doing this and cheer yourself up.'

employed. I'd worked for 10 years in the bra fitting industry and wanted to give it a go for myself.

I loved the idea of working the hours that suited me and creating a business that would be run as I liked it. Plus, I could oversee work in the house then too.

I went on a free business course at The Rebel Business School in March 2019 with a friend to hear tips on how to set up your own business. One of the nuggets was to start small and work with what you've got so that you're not outlaying too much money on something that might not work.

In the car on the way home, I had a brainwave: 'I'm going to use the garden shed,' I announced, as we shrieked with joy. 'This could really work. I could bring my clients there and it would be a lovely peaceful space.'

'You are such a boss,' my friend praised.

'And that will be my name,' I

laughed. 'The Bra Boss of Kent.'

Inspired by the meeting, I made the decision to hand in my notice at work and get the ball rolling. I spent the next four months renovating the shed.

The previous owners had housed their washing machine and guinea pigs in there so all it really needed was a good clean. Underneath all the sawdust and dirt, a beautiful wooden floor was revealed, and it already had electric and heating. I couldn't believe my luck.

After sanding the shed down I spent £150 on Cuprinol paint to tint the interior a crisp white and exterior sage green, £150 on storage, blinds for the windows and lights, plus £200 for hanging rails – made out of copper friend – and other

I sourced all of reputable brands: a changing room from family and friends.

The makeover cost

total from start to finish which was a bargain. It was wonderful to work on – I enjoyed every minute. And when it was finished I was so proud of the final result. It really did look like the calming and intimate environment I wanted it to be.

I launched my business in July 2019, and started drumming up clients straight away. I advertised on social media and networked locally, going to gyms and mums' groups.

But my business had only been going for eight months when lockdown hit. I was terrified of what this would mean for me. Being a new business I didn't qualify for any grants or compensation...

I was so scared all my hard work would go to waste that I put in extra effort to ensure I stayed afloat. I looked around for opportunities and because I'd painted my Summer house with Cuprinol, I entered the Cuprinol Shed of the Year competition, trying to keep myself out there.

I offered comfy bralettes to women to wear at home during lockdown and kept my social media up to date. By the time lockdown was over I had a waiting list of 100 customers wanting to

...were some who had lost or had taken them needing a 21 I received an

guess what, Phil,' I

“PHIL SPUN ME AROUND AND WE DID A DANCE OF JOY”

said once I'd got off the phone. 'I've only gone and won the Cuprinol Shed of the Year competition in the Summer house category!'

Phil picked me up, spun me around and we did a little dance of joy. What brilliant news after the hardship of lockdown.

It was great publicity for my new business and wonderful to be recognised for my hard work. I had a lovely photoshoot and have now got a plaque on my wall.

Since then, my business has continued to grow and I've now won two Kent Women in Business awards in 2021 and 2025.

Phil and I are now married and my business has flourished. The shed has come on my journey with me, too. Now it looks even better as I've repainted it in coral and I continue to put in the work to make it look good.

Now, at 39, I have 2,000 women on my mailing list and I'm usually booked a couple of months in advance.

My clients love the space, saying the Summer house lends itself beautifully to privacy, intimacy and warmth.

As for me, I love stepping outside and sitting out on a nice day to look at what I've achieved.

If you can build your business from a shed, it's a no-brainer – not only are costs low but it's in a brilliant location and the flexibility of a decent work/life balance is well worth it. If I can do it, so can you!

JOANNA'S TOP BRA TIPS:

1 Fasten a new bra on the loosest hook and eye. Once the bra starts to stretch with wash and wear, you can then tighten the hooks over time, and your bra will last longer.

2 Wash your bras gently by hand, not in the washing machine. The machine is too hot and vigorous and can damage the material. Take them into the shower with you to save time!

3 Always make sure to fully scoop and swoop your breast tissue into the cups when putting your bra on. This is to ensure the wire isn't sitting on breast tissue, and you'll fill out the cups better.

4 Don't tumble dry your bras! The heat of the dryer can shrink fabric, melt elastics and warp wires. Let your bras drip dry and hang them from the middle of the bra – not from the straps. Do not place on direct heat like a radiator.

5 Neutral, blush and even red bras will sit better underneath white tops. White bras will shine through as they are too stark/bright and will show through your top more.

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