

The Book of
Property Horrors

Top 20 BOTCHES & DIY Disasters

CONTENTS

[See sample pages pdf](#)

A HOME IMPROVEMENT HORROR STORY

Life's a Botch

Top Trumps Disaster Ratings

How to slash the value of your home – 'negative value' home improvements

THE TOP 20 PROPERTY BOTCHES (samples)

- 20** 'Dubious Taste'
including 'a tribute to good old avocado'
- 17** Textured ceilings and walls
The true horror of artex, polystyrene tiles, pine cladding, woodchip
- 16** Dodgy DIY Plumbing
- 10** Spray Foam roof treatment
- 3** Artificial stone cladding

SYNOPSIS

For the last 3 years 'Top 20 Property Botches' has been a highly successful stage presentation performed on numerous occasions as a Powerpoint show. Feedback has consistently been excellent with highly positive responses from regular home-owners as much as from property professionals. Delegates have frequently enthused about translating the presentation into a popular book. Below you can see how a typical 'Top 20' presentation is billed, in this case for a performance at the National Self-Build & Renovation Centre:

Feature Seminar 2 – Top 20 Property Botches! - Ian Rock, Author & Surveyor

"Schadenfreude (noun) a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction when something bad happens to someone else"! It's easy to make mistakes, but it can be expensive to rectify them, especially when renovating. Of course, we'd never make the same mistakes, as we show here, would we? In this must-see feature seminar, Ian Rock shows us some of the classic howlers made by renovators and explains how you can avoid falling into the same trap. Watch and potentially save yourself time, money and embarrassment!

The concept

Each year, large numbers of homeowners spend considerable sums of money and many hours of hard labour improving their properties. There is usually an assumption that such works will add significantly to the value of their most important asset. But in some cases this can backfire spectacularly, wiping thousands of pounds off the value. So which 'improvements' should be avoided? From the merely quirky to the positively lethal, this book exposes the worst offenders.

The '*How Not To*' format was pioneered very successfully by John Cleese's *Video Arts* management training videos in 1980s. More recently, a number of TV shows have adopted this formula. A recent example of hugely successful 'negative humour' is the best-selling title '*Crap Towns*' published by Boxtree in 2003.

Content

At its heart, 'Property Horrors' features 20 'classic botches'. The book is highly visual with a large number of unique photos as its prime focus. Photos are a mix of 'plain funny' (e.g. highlighting seriously naff improvements like artificial stone cladding) and others that are technically quirky or alarming (such as lethal DIY electrics).

This offers instant appeal on a 'pure fun' level. But for readers who want to know more, there's plenty of punchy comment (which is also technically informed). This extends the humour by further exploring the tragic depths of botched DIY. In other words, the content is more than skin deep. We explain why it is that some featured botches are considered dreadfully naff, or are seriously dangerous or value-destroying. The book takes a dig at 1970s and 80s fashions for such things as coloured bathroom suites, artex and woodchip, with appropriate photo captions. On a 'Watchdog' level, the book also exposes a number of misleading 'Sunday supplement' advertised miracle remedies (products like spray foam and roof paint).

The ranking of individual botches as a 'Top 20' is of course fairly subjective, but is based on the personal experiences of the author and associate surveyors over many years. To qualify, each defect is given a 'Top Trumps' rating.

Marketing

The instant humour apparent in most of the photos should make this book immediately appealing to casual browsers. However, this subject has popular appeal across a broad social spectrum of homeowners and their families, especially DIY fans, as well as all those professionally involved with residential property (builders, estate agents, mortgage lenders, solicitors etc). Perfect for the birthday and Xmas gift market.

In terms of marketing, this is a fresh subject with unique photographic content by a proven author. The media are likely to warm to the novelty of the idea.

The subject appeals on a number of levels:-

- Light entertainment,
- Snobbish voyeurism (will I recognise the homes of my friends and neighbours?)
- The quest for technical advice.
- A hint of insecurity amongst readers (will our own home improvements be ridiculed?)

As far as we are aware there is no direct competition for this title. It's a fresh take on the DIY / residential property sector – which should help the promotional campaign.
