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**COUNTRY CHARM**

The stable door is an appropriate entrance into the former barn. The granite slabs in the hall cope well with muddy boots, shoes and feathered friends!



# A west country tale

With its breathtaking views, this converted barn holds a special place in the heart of its owners. Find out how they restored it and retained its character

FEATURE PAT GARRATT PHOTOGRAPHS DAVID GILES

**D**ream homes are to be cherished, especially those with uninterrupted sea views, a fascinating history and strong romantic ties for both the owners. Christine and Charles Taylor have found the perfect home in their 17th century farmhouse in Ednoveyan, near Penzance.

Christine first moved to Cornwall as a teenager with her parents. Little did she know that the tumble of farm buildings bought to house her pony would one day become her own home. Initially, the barns proved useful for Christine's livery business, but were far from habitable. Later, they turned into a handy rendezvous spot for her and future husband, Charles, who is a horse trainer. 'His parents had relocated to Cornwall after the sale of their thoroughbred stud,' Christine remembers, 'and he brought a hunter along for me to look after.'

The granite buildings are in a breathtaking position, with views opening over St Michael's Mount and moorland offering shelter from fierce westerlies. 'The buildings were crumbling gently into the landscape,' Christine explains. When the couple became engaged, and were given the barns by Christine's father, they worked on renovating them every day for a year. 'We moved in on the day we married >



The barn enjoys views over sweeping moorland and the medieval castle and church on St Michael's Mount



#### NATURAL ELEMENTS

A hard-working Rayburn provides heat for the open-plan living area. The granite slab which Christine uses as a chopping board cost £20 from a local quarry



in 1991,' she says. 'Charles staggered through the door carrying me, and we spent our honeymoon here.'

### From cowshed to conservatory

The grain store with tack room above has been transformed into a dramatic first floor kitchen/dining/living area, with a soaring beamed roof and inspiring views. Below are the couple's bedroom and bathroom. The cowshed and dairy next door have been converted into a garden room and pretty en suite rooms for bed and breakfast. 'The whole process of renovating the main barn took two years,' Christine adds.

Initially, the couple did most of the dirty work themselves, including lowering the floors in order to gain ceiling height downstairs. 'Charles knocked out the old pointing and I took up every filthy cobble from the floor with

a pick axe,' Christine remembers. 'We felt that a barn should always look like a barn, so we altered the structure as little as possible and tried to re-use everything.' As an example of her recycling philosophy, she points out the beam above the Rayburn. 'It's got lovely brass rivets in it and is beautifully worn because it was once a cow tethering point.'

The Rayburn has a tale to tell. Bought through a local advertisement, it 'was brought over by tractor and heaved into place by two farmers,' says Christine. 'Then the installer announced, "I can't fit that. The walls are too thick for the indirect flue." By the following week, stonemasons had reduced the two-foot thick walls by half, the cooker was put in place – and I was able to use this beautiful beam!'

Finding kitchen units that echoed the rustic style of the house proved so difficult that >

'The house seems to wrap itself around us. It gives us a wonderful feeling of comfort'



**ARTISTIC TENDENCIES**  
The soft contours of a guitar adds contrast to the sketches and paintings hung on the stone walls

### RICH PALETTE

The rug, which belonged to Charles's grandfather, complements the curtains and sofa upholstered in a Liberty pattern





**BACK TO BASICS**

Christine spent two weeks stripping paint off the sideboard to reveal the mellow pine beneath. The chandelier is one of two Christine bought in Penzance for Charles's birthday





#### ROMANTIC REFLECTIONS

Glass perfume bottles, blown-glass lamps and a mirrored-glass box add sparkle to the bedroom



#### EASTERN INFLUENCES

A deep pink wallhanging from India covers one of the walls in the main bedroom. 'The detail in it is fabulous and the colour warms up the room,' says Christine

'I love the way the light moves across the white painted stone – it's just the way I imagined it'

Christine ended up drawing her own design on the back of a cardboard box and handing it to a local carpenter. 'He made it up for under £1000.' Initially pine, the kitchen units were later painted a soft, duck egg blue. 'It means we can change the colour, depending on our mood,' says Christine.

The renovations also involved letting in more light. Two small windows had to be chiselled out of the granite in order to lighten the living room end of the barn. French windows were also created in one of the cowshed bedrooms. Expert stonemasons were called in for the job because, says Christine, 'while they were working, the mortar was crumbling and, when it rained, the wall could have started to disintegrate.'

Much of the furniture was either inherited from Charles' family or picked up in local auctions. 'We went for good bones,' says Christine, pointing to the mahogany table in the dining area which was found in Marazion (a village near Penzance). The chairs were a chance buy. 'Charles's mother spotted them in an antiques shop and said, "Those are my

chairs!'", Christine explains. 'But they had been sold to a London dealer before being returned to a shop here. So Charles bought them back!'

#### Cornish crafts

Many accessories were sourced in the South West, as Christine and Charles are firm believers in supporting small businesses. Carved candlesticks and handmade pottery bowls from Cornwall sit alongside lamps, cushions and wallhangings bought in local department stores and interiors shops. The emphasis, though, is always on good craftsmanship. The four-poster bed in one bedroom, for example, came from The Crown Guild of Master Craftsmen and was hand-carved in the West Country.

The couple's most recent innovation is the bathroom adjoining the four-poster bedroom. Previously home to a conventional, pine-clad bath, the room needed updating, and Christine dreamed of a French-style free-standing bath. 'We were driving down the A30 when we saw beautiful bath standing outside a bathroom shop and we squealed to a halt!' she says. With



**LUCKY DIP**

The bath, a chance find at the Public Bath Company, makes a dramatic centrepiece to the pretty en suite



**CHRISTINE'S INSPIRATION**

'As this was the first home that I was able to decorate in my own style, I bought lots of interiors magazines – including BBC Homes & Antiques – looking for design trends and influences,' says Christine. 'I slowly built up a palette that I recognised as my own. As time has moved on, I have become increasingly fond of the French style, especially for bedrooms, and I usually restore one or two items of furniture each year from sale rooms. I look for – balanced, elegant shapes that are classic enough to fit into any surroundings.'



**SLEEP EASY**

Gentle toile, stripes and quilted fabrics mingle perfectly in this guest room, which was once a cowshed

that problem solved, they then found two handbasins in a similar rounded style and added terracotta mosaic tiles, an ornate mirror and chalky walls. The result is clean, serene and restful. 'I love the way the light moves across the white-painted stone. It's just the way I had imagined it,' she reflects.

Although the couple love their barn just as it is, they look forward to moving on with the times. 'I would like to give more room to our favourite objects,' says Christine. 'Our home isn't very large and would feel claustrophobic if it weren't open-plan. However, the house seems to wrap itself around us. It gives us a wonderful feeling of comfort.'

• For details about B&B at Ednovean Farmhouse, call 01736 711883, email: [info@ednoveanfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@ednoveanfarm.co.uk), or visit [ednoveanfarm.co.uk](http://ednoveanfarm.co.uk)

**CLEAN AND FRESH**  
Mosaic tiled panels and three mirrors introduce extra light into the room

