

# COUNTRY LIVING

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## SWEET SCENTS of SUMMER

*Decorate with floral patterns*  
*Enjoy a house in bloom*  
*Visit a fragrant garden*

**DARCEY BUSSELL**  
ON HER SIGNATURE  
FLOWER

*Natural  
beauty*

ORGANIC  
SKINCARE  
DISTILLED  
FROM  
PETALS

PURE  
INDULGENCE  
SUMMER  
PUDDINGS &  
REFRESHING  
FRUIT CORDIAL

**OLD-FASHIONED ROSES HOW TO GROW THEM**



GOING WITH THE

*Flow*



A stylish selection of salvaged materials and upcycled furnishings has been used by ceramicist Mouse Martin to transform an 18th-century cart lodge into a unique retreat in the Cotswolds

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**OFFSHORE** The unusual property is situated on a grassy spit in a fork of the River Churn. **THIS PAGE:** French doors open from the sitting room onto a small riverside terrace.



**THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE**  
The striking corrugated steel feature wall in the kitchen was inspired by outbuildings in Australia where Mouse (above) spends a lot of time. Her own

simple, stylish ceramics are in daily use and stored in vintage metal wire crates that serve as shelving, while old fire buckets from a junk shop have been repurposed as lampshades.

Everything here is either upcycled, recycled or handmade," says Mouse-Martin of her thoroughly unusual island property in the Cotswold village of South Cerney in Gloucestershire. A former cart lodge, dating back to 1750, Draycott stands on a grassy spit in the River Churn (a tributary of the Thames), accessed via a humpback bridge and shaded by a sycamore tree. Ducks and otters often swim by – and even a kingfisher can sometimes be seen darting over the water. For a decade now, this idyllic scene has been the view from Mouse's kitchen window – she has lived in the cottage opposite since leaving London in summer 2005. So when Draycott unexpectedly came up for sale last spring, Mouse was determined to make the island her own. "At nine o'clock on the Monday morning, I put my offer in to the agent, and by 11 o'clock the owner had accepted it. So it had only been on the market for a few hours!" she says.

After picking up the keys in July 2014, Mouse – a ceramicist, photographer and cook – set to work restoring a sense of history to the characterful property, whose Cotswold stone walls are two feet thick. Converted into a dwelling in the early 1970s, the 35-foot by 10-foot space had been divided into four small separate rooms (a bedroom, kitchen, sitting room and bathroom), linked by a corridor on one side. Mouse's vision from the outset was to create an open-plan living/kitchen/dining area – adding height by removing the ceiling – and to link the property more fluidly to the outside space. To achieve this, she enlisted the help of Devon builder Colin Weeks and his team, who had done some work on her father's farm, and Matt Edwards of Cotswold Architects in Cirencester.

Her ideas cleared planning without a hitch, but before the scheme could begin, Mouse did some preparatory work on the mill stream, which runs to one side of the property. With the



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**THIS PAGE** An old Belfast sink, which Mouse re-enamelled herself, and the sofa were both finds from the local tip. A large vintage-style clock by Cox & Cox

makes a striking decorative and practical focal point **OPPOSITE** Jack Russell terrier Maisie in the 'outdoor room' created by the new porch with its river view





## The guiding ethos for the design was that all the features should be from the past

approval of the Environment Agency, she cleared out vegetation to improve its flow, and planted indigenous grasses on the 'nose' of the island to maintain the habitat for wildlife. She also had two dry stone walls built on either side of the spit to protect against flooding. Initial work to the unlisted building involved installing wooden windows, lifting the ceiling up to the rafters and moving the door to the back. The new porch was built using reclaimed oak, and re-roofed with old Cotswold slate by a sixth-generation tiler from the next village. It now provides shelter and an 'outdoor room', affording views of the fork in the river and the bridge beyond.

Serendipity went on to inform much of the interior design: "Everything found me - that was the most amazing part of it," Mouse says. Her guiding ethos was simply that all the features should be from the past, like the building itself. What followed was a series of 'lightbulb moments' - the first of which occurred when she was invited to scout round her neighbour's barn, which had been used for storage, and she chanced upon a Victorian mangle, now re-purposed as the dining table. Here, too, were stacks of vintage doors, which Mouse has sanded lightly and re-used for the kitchen cupboards, beautifully built by fellow villager and retired carpenter Andy Beard. In another flash of genius, she came across an Industrial Revolution era cartwheel on the side of the road in Devon, and decided to make it into a window, allowing light to flow through the regulation 'fire wall' between the living and sleeping areas, and making a clever visual reference to the cart shed's original use. The corrugated steel cladding on this wall

and the kitchen splashback is Mouse's 'homage' to the outbuildings of Australia, where she often spends time on holiday.

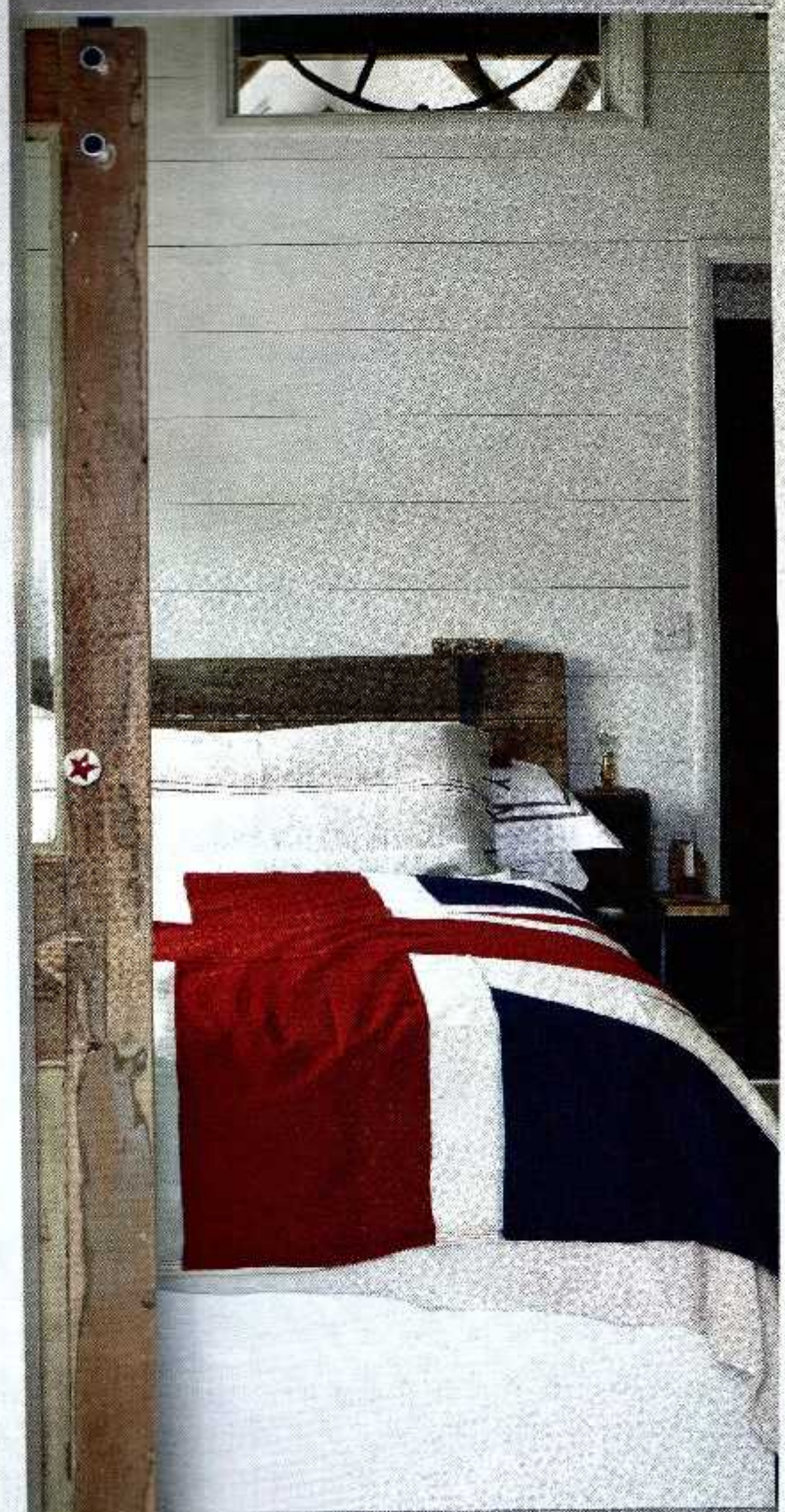
An apple ladder - also from the neighbour's barn - leads from the bedroom to the mezzanine, a perfect place for guests to store luggage. Mouse rents out Draycott when she is away, and its distinctive look and romantic location are hugely attractive to couples. She also runs a ceramics business - Made by Hand - based in a studio in her back garden, where she crafts slip-cast and hand-moulded pieces in pale porcelain or dark, textural stoneware. Her signature 'Mouse' tableware is decorated by her artist niece, Milla Eastwood. "I have a perfect life," Mouse laughs. "I walk ten paces to work on one side of my house, and 40 paces to my other work on the opposite side. And I live in this lovely village - you name it, I've got it all here on my doorstep."

When the building work was done, she invited the whole village to a party at the island, which went on late into the evening, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Having caught the hot renovating bug, Mouse says she would jump at the chance of another project - although it's unlikely to be as close to home as this one.

**1** Draycott is available to let through [uniquehomestays.co.uk](http://www.uniquehomestays.co.uk) - search under 'Filly Island'. For Mouse Martin's ceramics and photography, see [made-by-hands.co.uk](http://made-by-hands.co.uk).

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**OPPOSITE, FROM FAR LEFT** Vintage fittings and accessories bring character to the bathroom; an old apple ladder leads from

the bedroom to the mezzanine. **THIS PAGE** The eye-catching bedspread was made from a vintage Union Jack ensign.