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HOME INSPIRATION

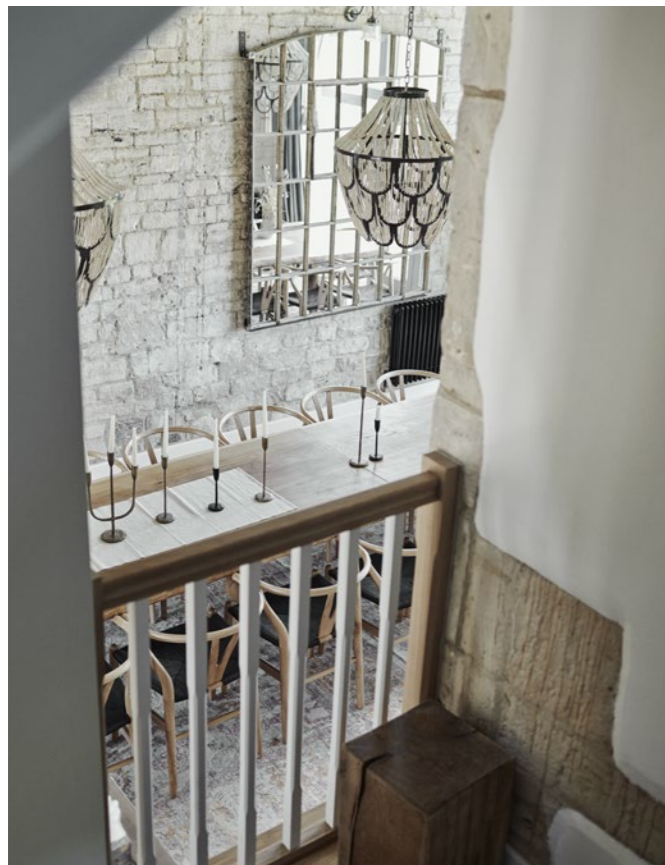
TWIN barns REBORN

Stone walls and old beams evoke the rustic heritage of two 18th-century barns, while crisp, contemporary styling brings them into the 21st century

WORDS BY **CAROLINE ATKINS** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BRENT DARBY**
STYLING AND PRODUCTION BY **BEN KENDRICK**



THIS PAGE The five-metre-long table was custom-made for the space in English oak from the Goodwood Estate and complemented with bentwood chairs



TOP LEFT Open walkways between the first-floor bedrooms create a gallery view of the dining room
TOP RIGHT The 18th-century barns sit within 500 acres of farmland
ABOVE The original date of the building is carved into a piece of old stone

Looking out over the rippling Cotswold countryside, and built with stone dug from the quarries on the opposite hill, the two barns at Anthology Farm seem to have grown out of the landscape as naturally as the trees. For the Barnes family, uprooted by the construction of HS2 from the Staffordshire farm that had been the ancestral home for over a century, this unique pair of 18th-century buildings offered the opportunity for a fresh start and an exciting new business.

The Grade-II listed barns, built in 1740, are sited within 500 acres of arable farmland, which the family bought in 2016. The property also included a house for Jo, Henry and their two daughters (Ophelia, seven, and Imogen, four), plus another across the valley for Henry's parents. Already partially converted, the barns were clearly ripe for transformation into an alternative source of income. Jo and Henry were no strangers to diversification: in Staffordshire, they had opened a farm shop and a wedding venue. With their stunning views and potential for up to nine bedrooms, the barns would clearly make highly marketable holiday accommodation.

But it would take five years, with the help of an architect and an interior designer, before the family could realise their dream. Built at right

angles, the barns had originally been converted into offices, creating a warren of dark corridors and awkwardly positioned staircases. The walls and floors were sound, though – all it really needed was an imaginative eye to reconfigure the layouts. In the larger, and more traditional, of the two barns (known as the Cotswold Barn), this meant moving the stairs, which were the first thing you saw on entering.

Now it opens – through a glazed porch – into a double-height dining room, with a five-metre table and a gallery walkway overlooking it between the bedrooms above. There are three bedrooms on the first floor and another two on the third, decorated in slightly different styles but all in harmony with the 1740 date carved into the original Cotswold stone. “The renovations had to be in keeping with the barns’ Grade II listing, but we needed to bring the buildings back to life, otherwise they might as well be derelict,” Jo says.

Fortunately, the planning officials were on their side: when Jo and Henry applied for change of use and renovation, the heritage consultants who visited encouraged them to take the buildings back to their pre-office state, giving them a blank slate for their redesign. The 1980s plaster could be stripped back to leave areas of exposed stone, concrete floors ▶

A traditional herringbone brick floor has been laid in the kitchen. Above the island area hang brass rise-and-fall lamps while tall rattan counter stools add contemporary style in a mellow material

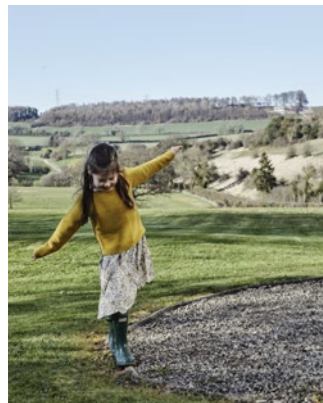


“We wanted to keep it neutral and comfortable with a slightly urban, industrial edge”

THIS PAGE Walls in Farrow & Ball's Shadow White create a backdrop for comfortable living-room sofas and contrasting neutrals
 OPPOSITE An old window has been transformed into a dramatic mirror for the exposed stone wall in the dining room



The dining table was custom-made for the room from a single piece of English oak



THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT A dramatic colour scheme sets the tone for a first-floor bedroom in the Cotswold Barn, with an ebonised armoire and dressing table and russet scalloped sofa TOP RIGHT Monochrome tones and a dramatic tiled floor in the Hay Barn bathroom ABOVE Imogen enjoys playing in the fields around the barn OPPOSITE A pine-patterned wallpaper highlights the roof angle under the eaves in the Hay Barn

(previously laid as a base for office carpets) replaced with engineered oak boards and a feature made of the beams high up under the steep-sloping eaves.

"We wanted to keep it neutral and comfortable but go a bit more contemporary than classic Cotswold - with a slightly urban, industrial edge, but not enough to alienate people of my parents-in-laws' generation..." Working with London-based design firm Run For The Hills, they chose Farrow & Ball paint colours, mostly light and neutral, with deeper shades creating occasional elements of drama to accent the deep-set windows and the steep-sloping ceilings under the eaves.

In the Cotswold Barn kitchen, a brick floor reflects a traditional farmhouse feel. Dark-painted cabinets and tongue-and-groove splashbacks suggest Shaker style while steel-legged, rattan stools add a more contemporary note. Across the hall, the big family sitting room manages to combine calm elegance with comfort. A dark wood console table inherited from Henry's family contrasts with pale-covered sofas and contemporary accessories.

Jo and Henry have incorporated a few pieces from their Staffordshire home, but most of the furniture was specially chosen for the barns. "We had a lot of rooms to fill, so it was a huge task," Jo says. The dining table, for instance,

was custom-made for the room from a single piece of English oak from the Goodwood Estate in Sussex. And a mirror on the exposed wall behind it was made from an old window, its arched shape following the curved top of the barn doors at the end of the room. "That room is a real feasting space," Jo says, remembering the first New Year they spent at the farm, with family and friends filling the barns ("as a test run!") and dinner around the long table.

The Cotswold Barn has five bedrooms and the Hay Barn four, two fitted under the eaves. "My girls love the only wallpapered room in the Hay Barn. It looks like a double room, but has two extra single beds tucked in end to end along one side, behind curtains that draw across - perfect for playing hide and seek," Jo says. Her own favourites are the bedrooms that look out over the valley, the hills lined with trees and dotted with Cotswold stone. And there are unexpected views from walkways and staircases throughout the barns. Their listed status prevented any changes to the size or position of apertures, so there are no big picture windows (except for the glazed walls of the dining room). "But there are lots of narrow slits showing 'snippets' of the outside," Jo says, "so wherever you walk, you find views to intrigue you."

ANTHOLOGY FARM is available for rent through uniquehomestays.com.

