

After years of stressful trips abroad, avid surfers David and Fiona Howden now spend their holidays closer to home

SITTING ROOM

White-painted tongue-and-groove was used to clad the walls, giving the room a maritime feel.

Eskdale sofas in Indigo, £1,317, Sofas and Stuff, are similar. Model yacht, £95, Bosham Gift Shop. Striped cushions, £49, Nordic Style

LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN ✦ PHOTOGRAPHY TONY TIMMINGTON



DINING ROOM

Part of the main dining room is set in a square bay window, from where the Howdens can glimpse the sea.

Checked tablecloth, £9.99, Ikea





Piling three small children and a host of paraphernalia into the back of a car and driving to France for their holidays finally got the better of David and Fiona

Howden. 'We realised our days of long-distance journeys were over,' says David.

This conclusion inspired the couple to start a comprehensive search for a holiday property closer to home. Before long, the family were tempted by a house set in an idyllic coastal location in Cornwall. The

property occupies an isolated spot on a cliff overlooking the Atlantic, with a private path leading to a sandy beach. Originally built in ship's timbers from Norfolk, the clapperboard exterior appealed to New Zealander Fiona, as it reminded her of home. 'It looked similar to the rustic beach houses that I grew up with,' she reflects.

Having a large family of siblings, nephews and nieces clinched the deal for David, who also treasured fond memories of Cornish holidays from his childhood. 'Amazingly, when I drove to see the ▶



HOME TRUTHS

- ◆ **THE OWNERS** David Howden, an insurance broker, his wife Fiona, and their children Talitha, Isabella and Kitty, plus Blue the Weimaraner and Lulu the spaniel
- ◆ **THEIR HOME** Wood pavilion, built in 1900
- ◆ **LOCATION** Cornwall
- ◆ **ROOMS** Hall, sitting/dining room, kitchen, billiard room, seven bedrooms, four bathrooms
- ◆ **PURCHASED** 2003
- ◆ **PREVIOUS PROPERTY** 'We also own a Georgian rectory outside Oxford,' says Fiona.

DESIGN ADVICE

'To create a large coffee table, we shortened the legs of an old kitchen table and reduced it to a comfortable height'

KITCHEN

The rustic units were inherited. Tiles behind the Aga were grouted in blue to create a colourful checked effect.

Dotty bowls, £15 for four, Cath Kidston. Walls painted in **Ocean Ripple** emulsion, £25.50 for 2.5 litres, Dulux

SHOPPING IDEAS RATTAN FURNITURE



Wave dining chair, from £331, Lloyd Loom of Spalding



Elmwood stool in Kingsland Stripe, £349, Marks & Spencer

Alexander Rose Ocean Wave bistro table, £249, Heal's



DINING ROOM
The pine table can seat 14, and has been teamed with wicker chairs. Find a similar table at Country Interiors. Harola chairs, £45 each, Ikea, are comparable. Blinds made in **Blazer Stripe**, £27.50 per metre, lap Mankin

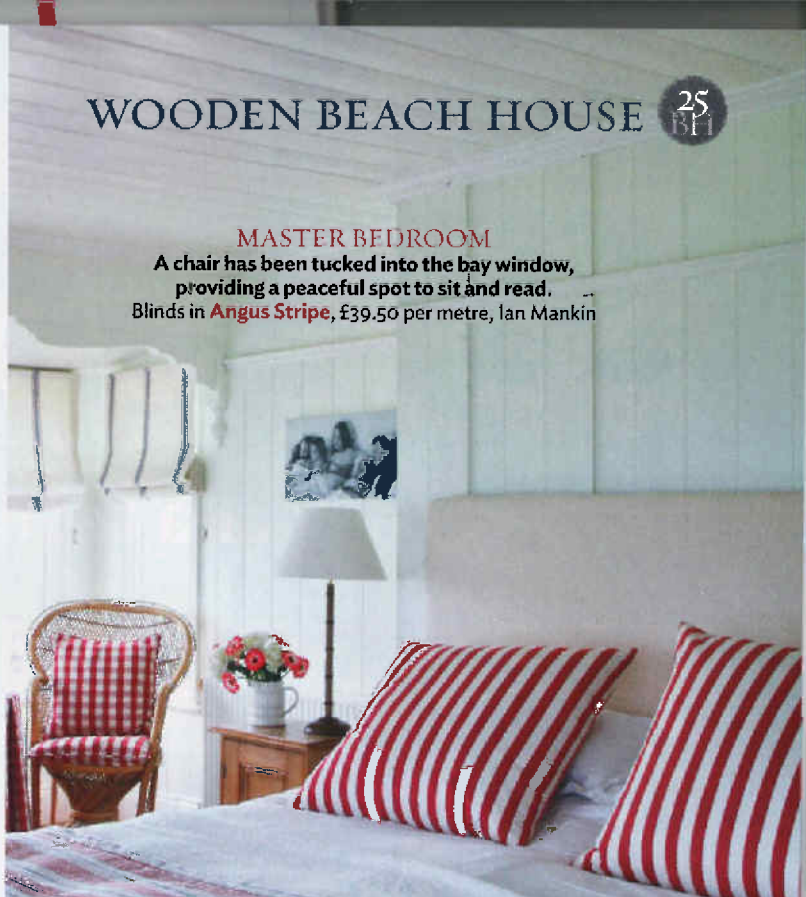




GUEST BEDROOM

The interior has been painted in pale turquoise to pick out the colour of the sea on a summer's day.

Walls painted in **Gentle Sky** emulsion, £27.50 for 2.5 litres, Little Greene



MASTER BEDROOM

A chair has been tucked into the bay window, providing a peaceful spot to sit and read. Blinds in **Angus Stripe**, £39.50 per metre, Ian Mankin

house, I realised it used to belong to one of my school friends,' he says. 'It was love at first sight.'

Having bought the house, Fiona decided to refresh the decor. 'I wanted to make each room cool, clean and beach oriented,' she says. Blue denim sofas and beach-style accessories have been teamed with natural textures, such as rattan and linen. 'Avoiding heavy curtains has made the sea view the most important visual element,' continues Fiona.

Meanwhile, David created a wind-proof courtyard with an open-air hot shower room,

so that surfers would be able to hose down before entering the house. 'We're passionate, hardened, all-weather surfers,' he explains, 'so the shower was an essential addition.'

Life at the family's newly renovated beach house is rarely slow-paced, yet their favourite aspect is the property's unique view. 'In the morning, we love to lie in bed and watch the waves,' says David. 'The noise of seagulls and the comforting sound of the ocean is so therapeutic. Our days of long, stressful drives abroad are firmly behind us.' 25



GUEST BEDROOM

Hand-painted beds, which originally came from Portugal, inspired the colour scheme in this room.

Nordic Style sells similar Swedish cotton **rugs**, £79, which are used here as bed throws



BATHROOM

This coastal-inspired room is decorated with a collection of seaside accessories. Bathroom accessories, Shabby Chic Shop. To rent this property, contact Unique Home Stays on 01637 881942 or visit uniquehomenestays.com