

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

House built around 1890

LOCATION Cornwall

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, larder/laundry room, snug, four bedrooms, three bathrooms (one en suite), boathouse, art studio

PURCHASED 2017

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We live in Western Australia when we're not here in Cornwall,' says Emma.

PICTURE PERFECT

Emma and Joe Barker's elegant retreat on the Cornish coast is a relaxing place to escape to

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN | PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT SANDERSON



GARDEN

The front terrace is a great place to gather for meals while taking in the river views. The Chilson table and bench set, £1,850, Garden Trading, is identical



HALL
Patterned floor tiles and a fretwork-panelled porch create an elegant entrance. Scintilla tiles, £45sq m, Walls and Floors



DINING AREA

Edwardian chairs, which are a family heirloom, are teamed with a new table. Conker oak table, from £845, Loaf. Large Dinard tablecloth, £195, Dka. Marilyn Beaded Paris Chandelier, £350, John Lewis



KITCHEN-DINER

Simple units and pale colours allow the original sash windows to remain the focus of attention. Cabinetry designed and supplied by CK Kitchens & Bathrooms, price on application



SITTING ROOM

'The large leather sofa and velvet seating fit eight people comfortably,' says Emma. Leather sofa, £2,100, Chesterfields of England. Sofa in Pewter Grey velvet, £799; chair (far left) in Midnight Blue velvet, £599, both Made.com. Oak floor planks, £775q m, Woodstock



As one of these fortunate couples whose careers often take them overseas, Emma and Joe Barker were looking for a UK base that they could call their own. 'Cornwall was an obvious choice,' says Emma. 'My husband Joe's love of water sports has meant that we have rarely lived far from the coast and the Cornish coastline is spectacular. When we found a period house overlooking the Truro river, close to my sister-in-law, interior designer Tabitha Barker, we felt it was the perfect spot for family holidays.'

South-facing and set up high, the property commanded a spectacular view of the salt-water tidal river, plus it had a private quay and boathouse at the water's edge and a tiered garden at the rear. The

sash windows, pretty tile-clad façade and Georgian-style porch also attracted the couple. 'The house had not been touched for over 30 years,' recalls Emma. 'To find a building of this era that was in such good structural condition was a huge plus.'

Having designed and developed a number of residential properties, Emma started to draw up plans. Previous owners had divided the property into two, a main house and a granny flat. 'Our initial job was to take down walls in the granny flat to create a large living space,' says Emma. 'We knocked four small rooms into one. By popular vote, we decided the cook should enjoy the best view of the river, which is bustling with activity at high tide, as boats, kayaks and fishermen take to the water. When the tide is low, it

is a haven for buzzards, egrets, shell ducks, sparrowhawks and herons.'

That decision pushed the sitting room to the rear of the space. 'This area lacked a feature, so we arranged seating around a woodburner and low table, which houses books and a small TV. We allocated a different room for watching films as a hang-out space for teenagers.'

The renovation and furnishing of the house took six months to complete and turned into a family affair. 'Tabitha, based in Cornwall, sourced local products and suppliers, and her partner Alan carried out the building work. 'We were so lucky to work with our family on the project,' says Emma. 'Tabitha and I were on exactly the same page when it came to the look of the house.' The style became one

FAVOURITE ROOM *'The kitchen-diner is the place where we spend a lot of family time together, drawn by the breathtaking riverside view'*



SNUG

Tabitha covered the seat cushions in mattress ticking. 'It is sturdy, inexpensive and never crumples,' she says.

Ticking fabric, from £19m, Tinsmiths. For a similar gold lantern, try the Obi, £39.95, Nkuku



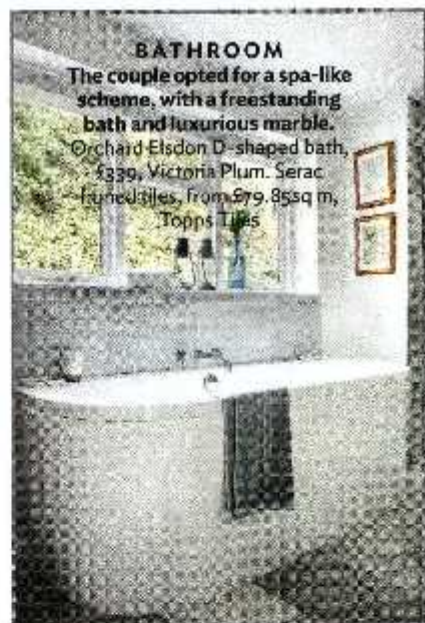
MAIN BEDROOM

Neutral colours are a calming choice, while gold accents add glamour. Start with table lamps, £125 each, Graham and Green Chesterfield tufted linen bed, £600, Nations du Monde. Star mirror (below), £225, Just Delights Cornwall. The house is available to rent through Unique Holiday Homes (uniqueholidayhomes.com)



BATHROOM

Bronze finishes lend a period feel. Try the vintage marine nautical industrial bulkhead wall light, £89.99, Vintage Electrical



BATHROOM

The couple opted for a spa-like scheme, with a freestanding bath and luxurious marble. Orchard Elsdon D-shaped bath, £339, Victoria Plum. Serac turned tiles, from £79.85sq m, Topps Tiles

of relaxed, faded elegance with a rustic patina, including traditional elements, such as window shutters made by a carpenter. 'We found a tile with a star pattern, which had a big impact on the look of the house,' says Emma. 'The star theme became our hallmark, and even inspired a new name for the house – now known as Stella Maris, meaning "star of the sea".' A gold-coloured

satin Sixties curtain found in the house also influenced the gold, grey and white palette. While the place was being fitted with a new kitchen, heating, plumbing, electrics and bathrooms, Emma and Tabitha made countless trips to vintage shops. Mixing their high-street finds with quirky antique pieces and artwork, they found frames to turn into mirrors and chairs to re-cover in

mattress ticking 'You'd be surprised what you can mix together if you stick to simple stripes, stars and coordinated recurring colour schemes,' says Tabitha. 'It creates a sense of order and tranquillity.' Peace is the superlative feature of this relaxed riverside home. 'When the sun shines, this place has no equal,' reflects Emma. 'We love spending time here' **S**