

The house that Sarah and Andy built may be made of concrete and reclaimed wood,

# ROUGH LUXE

but it's also full of inspiring ideas, plush materials and back-to-nature textures

Photography/Paul Massey \* Words/Jenny Tucker

## TERRACE

The outdoors is a significant part of the overall design, so the terrace acts as another expansive 'room'. With a fire pit, barbecue and hot tub in the garden (plus Sarah loves pottering among her plants), relaxation is an enticing prospect.

**Get the look** The decking was made from reclaimed scaffold boards. Find a similar chair at Notonthehighstreet.





## HOME PROFILE

**THE OWNERS** Sarah Stanley, who owns Unique Home Stays, a luxury holiday letting company, and her partner Andy Davey, a builder. Sarah has three grown-up children – Morgane, Bryce and Josh – plus Precious, a Chihuahua/pug cross, and John, a Jack Russell puppy.

**THE PROPERTY** A new-built house close to Perranporth, north Cornwall, it comprises an open-plan living and dining area, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and outside terrace, all on one level.

## LIVING AREA

Simply beautiful and flooded with light, this space combines loose practicality with a unique aesthetic style. The concrete surface and reclaimed scaffold boards used on the unit doors provide a functional feel, while the pops of green furnishings mimic the luxuriant natural growth outside.

**Get the look** The sofa is from Sofa.com. The coffee table is by G-Plan. The trio of lampshades are by Graham and Green.

## DINING AREA

This snug corner is where Sarah can enjoy her garden views. 'I sit here and look out of the window, thinking, relaxing and whiling away the time,' she says.

**Get the look** The dining table was made using scaffold boards for the top and an iron base. The dining chairs are from a vintage shop. The lights are from Creative Cables. The artwork is by local artist John O'Carroll from Circus Contemporary Gallery.





**D**eep in the Cornish countryside, encased in nature, lies an unexpected home. In these parts – *Poldark* territory – you might expect an archetypal chocolate-box thatch or sprawling red-brick farmhouse. So this modern build, with its concrete casing, gaping terrace and impressive stargazing windows, is a bit of an anomaly.

The owner, Sarah Stanley, who escapes to this bolthole when in need of peace, agrees it's not a typical home. 'But it does have so many great things,' she says. 'The light is incredible. In the summer, it pours in from every angle and gives a gorgeous dappled effect as it filters through the trees. And I love the fact you can open the doors and feel you are alongside nature. I'm a keen gardener and it's so sheltered here, plants just flourish. I've put together a wellbeing garden – rosemary and thyme borders, and then a mix of agapanthus, lavender and euphorbia. Gorgeous!'

Just over a year ago, when Sarah was first looking for land to build on, this plot housed a crumbling car port – and plenty of weeds! The potential for a compact new build was apparent, but it needed an inventive eye to design something small but perfectly formed. Sarah turned to Jess Clark, an interior designer, who has worked in Sarah's business for 11 years.

'I trust her expertise. I knew she could come up with something original,' says Sarah. 'When we first decided on the concept, we wondered if there would be local objections, as there is nothing like it in the area. But we got planning permission straightaway. The design works because it isn't intrusive and merges with the natural surroundings. The muted grey of the concrete walls combined with the cedarwood shingles will age gracefully and soften the overall look. And while the house *feels* isolated and is surrounded by greenery, you can easily drive to the beach and nearby towns. It's the perfect combination.'

The outline for the house was inspired by traditional bird hides (camouflaged shelters used to watch birds without disturbing them). Here, there is definitely a sense of observing the natural world from the inside. The distinctive overhanging

### LIVING AREA DETAIL

A display of vintage finds – wood blocks, books and an aluminium jug filled with delphiniums – creates a sense of home. Sarah is a big believer that unique finds add a distinct personality to your interior. 'They don't need to be expensive. Just choose what you love,' she says, 'and it will work.'



main windows mean you can actually sit (or lay your head, in the bedroom) in their expansive sills for complete immersion in the outdoors. 'From being in bed and looking up at the stars on a clear night to relaxing on the sofa and taking in the views from the picture window, it's so relaxing just being here,' says Sarah. 'People often make the assumption that a concrete home will be cold and uninviting, but it's actually a very cosy space. We've got underfloor heating, but on a summer's day it's toasty in here.'

It's obvious that natural light is an intrinsic part of the design and Sarah admits that translating the design of the signature windows into a reality wasn't a straightforward process. 'The local companies had never created anything like this before. We gave them basic drawings, but we had to work closely with specialist engineers to develop the finished product. Then when the large kitchen window cracked during delivery, we all had to take a deep breath. But there are always going to be difficulties when you're looking to create something alternative and it was important for us to remain focused on the end result and not compromise.'

With a demanding home and work life, it's vital that Sarah has a get-out-of-the-mayhem haven. 'I live in the hamlet I grew up in and my home is next door to our offices,' she explains. 'That means I can get very caught up in both personal and professional commitments. I reach a point when I know I need to step back and take some time out. When I can escape to this place, the simplicity of it really clears my head and I get the opportunity to properly think and slow down. It really is totally restorative.'

*Find out about renting this house, The Hide, and other inspirational properties at [uniquehomestays.com](http://uniquehomestays.com)*



### LIVING AREA ↗

A view this good definitely calms the mind. The angled window means you can sit alongside nature, totally immersing yourself in its glory.

**Get the look** The cushions and sheepskin are from a selection at Cox & Cox.

### KITCHEN →

A rustic feel has been created with reclaimed scaffold boards, concrete work surfaces and plenty of wood and aluminium accessories: utilitarian, practical and beautiful.







## ← EXTERIOR

A simple, but striking example of modern design at one with nature.

## ↙ BEDROOM

Nature feels like it's just an arm's reach away with these huge windows overlooking the garden. Sarah wanted a place to sleep where she could look up at the stars on a clear night. 'This home is a balm for the soul,' she says.

**Get the look** The wardrobe doors are made from reclaimed scaffold boards. The overhead lamp is a vintage find. The mat is from Wayfair. The bedlinen is from Soak & Sleep.

## BATHROOM →

The oversized bathtub was originally created for use as an animal trough, but Sarah had other ideas. 'It took five men to get it in place,' she says, smiling. 'A difficult process, but I knew it would look incredible. The trough itself cost under £200. If I'd had something specially built, it could have been four times that amount.'

**Get the look** The bath is a concrete trough from Mole Valley Farmers. The white pottery is from Made.com. The bathroom sink is an old wood dough bowl from eBay.



## HOME TRUTHS

**What's the first thing you hear when you wake up in the morning?** Birdsong, closely followed by John the Jack Russell puppy yapping to go out and join them!

**Favourite beauty item?** I swear by Bio-Oil. It's my preferred face moisturiser, skin softener and bath soak.

**What are you currently reading?** Richard Branson's *Losing My Virginity*. One of the best autobiographies I've ever read. I find his down-to-earth attitude and seize-the-moment approach really inspirational.

**Your feel-good treat?** A glass of wine with my sister and daughter after a hectic day. That way, we can catch up on the latest news.

**Favourite place to chill?** I love cooking and socialising, so a day at home in the kitchen before friends and family join us for the evening.

**Summer plans?** Lots of gardening and a few family escapes - Spain to visit my dad and then Portugal in September.





## GARDEN

'There are green views as far as the eye can see,' says Sarah.

**Get the look** The concrete table and stools were cast on site.



## THE BLUEPRINT

