

# RISING *to the* CHALLENGE

Bridget and Andrew Hall overcame many obstacles during this passion project to rescue a 400-year-old farmhouse

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## EXTERIOR

Gaia Farmhouse is five miles off the beaten track, a short walk from Ullswater and in the heart of one of the most beautiful valleys in the Lake District. The detail and integrity of the original building has been preserved without compromising on an interior that's suited to modern life





## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** A farmhouse that has been extended and reshaped over 400 years

**ROOMS** Sitting room, living room, kitchen-diner/sitting area, snug, five bedrooms, five bathrooms

**LOCATION** Lake District

### KITCHEN

Decoration was kept simple to highlight the farmhouse's beautiful structural features. The mezzanine has an office space above and a snug below.

Staircase, IPIG Inspiring Projects Involving Glass. Caravaggio pendant lights, Fritz Hansen. Log-burning stove, Morsø







‘The glass panel on the new stairs keeps the space feeling open and light’



**G**aia Farmhouse nestles within a remote valley in the Lake District and Bridget and Andrew Hall saw it as both an opportunity and a challenge. An opportunity to create a unique home just a short walk from the shores of Ullswater; a challenge as the farmhouse is at the end of a narrow five-mile lakeside road, ending in a steep pass with six tight hairpin bends. 'We never thought it would be easy, but there were times when we seriously questioned the wisdom of buying a dilapidated property in such a remote area,' says Andrew. The couple's five-year labour of love has paid dividends, however. With painstaking care and inspiring vision, they have rescued a semi-derelict and overgrown 400-year-old farmhouse and given it an exciting new future.

## UNCOVERING HISTORY

The first record of a building on the site dates back to 1589 and over the next 400 years it evolved from a humble pig shelter to a series of extensions and additions, which resulted, in its heyday, in a 32-acre farm. As an experienced architect, Andrew knew what to expect from the agent's description of a house 'in need of restoration' but even he found the project both complex and challenging in equal measure. 'It was like an archaeological dig above ground in that there were so many layers to the house and we kept having to peel it all back,' he says. 'We started by taking off the cement render and, in doing so, ended up dismantling most of the gable end wall because the lintel holding it up was rotten. The dry-stone walls were 2ft 6in thick but many large cracks had appeared, so we had to take down a significant proportion before rebuilding and restoring the farmhouse to its current condition.'

## BRINGING IN LIGHT

Although Andrew and Bridget created their own design, they employed a local architect and builder to oversee and construct the project. 'Fortunately, it was not listed, so we were able to bring in plenty of light using large windows, glass doors and carefully positioned roof lights,' says Andrew. Most of the build materials were reused or sourced locally. 'Access was very challenging,' he explains. 'At one point we were calculating the volume of concrete needed for the foundations and the builder said it would take six lorry loads instead of two, otherwise the concrete would have spilled out the back of the lorries onto the steep hairpin bends on the access road!'

When it came to the interior, Bridget collaborated with London-based Studio Indigo to create a style that unites the house using a nature-inspired colour palette, natural textiles, organic texture and Scandi-style furniture. 'We designed the interior as a home, but we have to be practical. As we can only stay here for part of each year, we decided to let it through Unique Homestays,' says Bridget.

The Halls still have plenty to do before they will consider the house to be finished. They have plans to landscape the garden and are currently in talks with a local designer. 'It's an ongoing project. We have already spent a significant sum of money and five years of our lives on this house, but we have absolutely no regrets,' says Andrew. 'When we are here, we can completely decompress and recharge. It's sheer bliss.'

Find Gaia Farmhouse on [uniquehomestays.com](https://uniquehomestays.com)



## DINING AREA

Large areas of glazing frame the stunning views.

Dining table, Heal's. Chairs, Ikea





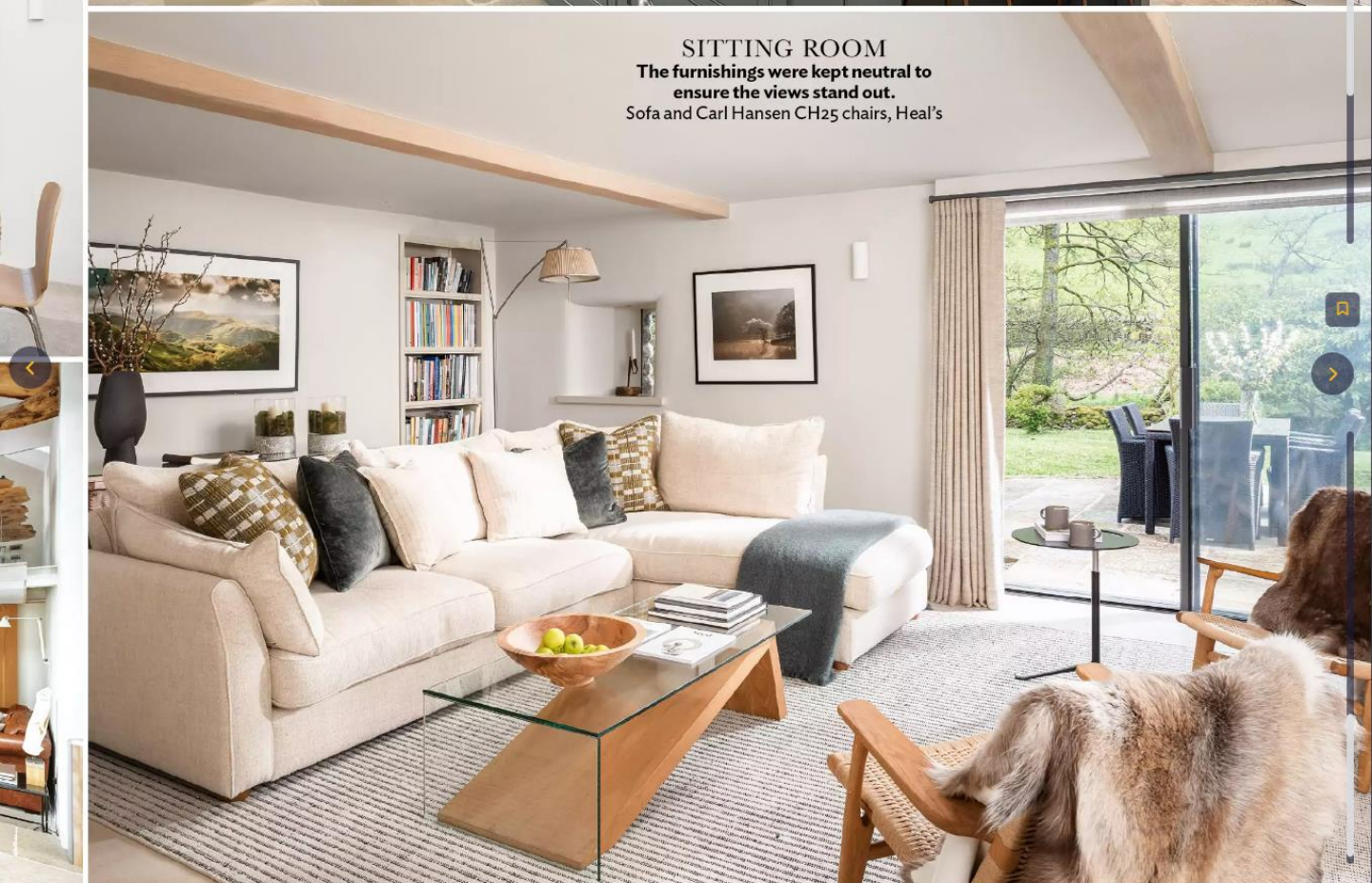
## KITCHEN

The beautiful original structural roof trusses are a most striking feature throughout the house.  
Units, KitchenHaus, Battersea



## SITTING ROOM

The furnishings were kept neutral to ensure the views stand out.  
Sofa and Carl Hansen CH25 chairs, Heal's







## MAIN BEDROOM

Andrew is 6ft and Bridget is 5ft 3in so finding a bath that suits them both is a challenge! 'This one is the best we've ever had - incredibly comfortable for us both,' says Andrew. Bathroom fittings, C.P. Hart. Tiles, Salvatori. Bed, Heal's