

Unique!

TRUE STORIES • IDEAS & SOLUTIONS • INSPIRATIONAL STYLE

25 BEAUTIFUL HOMIES

Add some colour to your life - see inside for inspiration!



25 REAL STORIES

a BUNGALOW in black & white,
gypsy CARAVAN, medieval BARN
plus lots more

May 2000
£2.60



COVER STORY 'We wanted country charm - but could only afford a town house' See p46



1



2

1 The long unit in the kitchen is an old cobbler's bench that Jane picked up for £10. John and Jane made the elm and oak table and re-seated the chairs, which were bought at a sale, in seagrass

2 The converted barn was previously a cowshed and a milking parlour



Particulars

LOCATION
Somerset

AGE
13th century

BUILDING
L-shaped former cowshed

ROOMS
Sitting room, pantry, kitchen/living area, 5 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, loo

MOVED IN
1997

PURCHASE PRICE
£125,000

RESTORATION COSTS
£42,000

CURRENT VALUE
£285,000



John Wratten and Jane Henderson's converted medieval farmstead is now a thriving artistic centre and happy family home

Positively medieval

As soon as John Wratten and Jane Henderson saw a derelict barn in the grounds of the ruined medieval Muchelney Abbey, they knew that it was exactly what they had been looking for. John, an architect, ran an art gallery in nearby Newbury, and Jane, a gilder and carver, needed a workshop.

They also wanted to run residential art courses, and the separate farm buildings just across the cobbled courtyard would make a perfect home for them and Jane's daughter, nine-year-old Georgie.

The 13-century Almonry barn was where travelling monks rested and dined after ▷

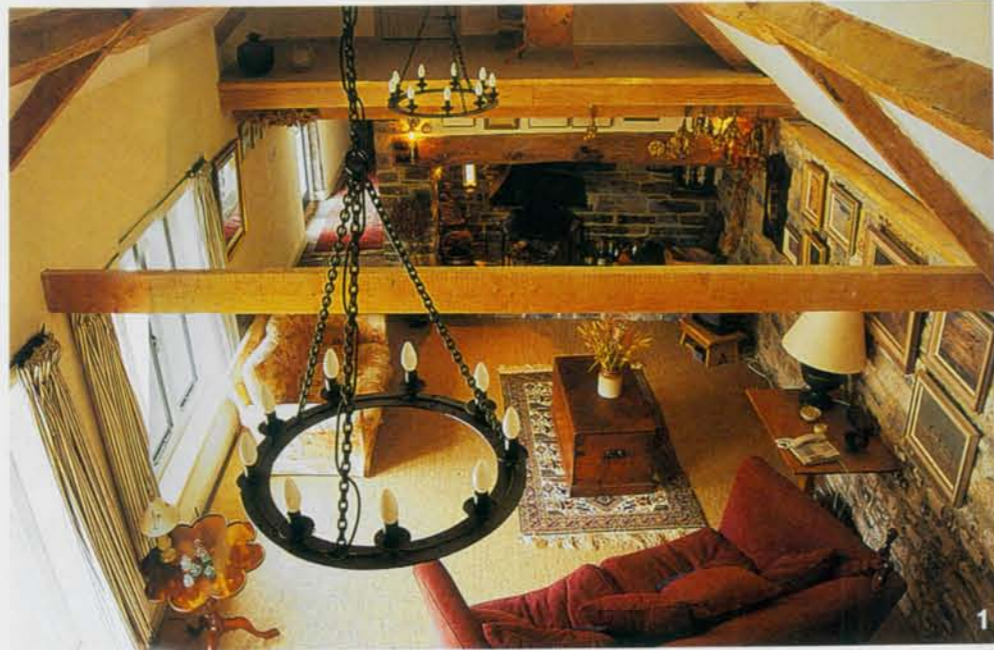
1 One end of the house is a sitting room and gallery for Jane's large picture collection

2 Open stairs in the barn lead up to the workshop

3 This bedroom, called Martha, is fitted with a pine four-poster bed draped with muslin. The old laboratory stone sink came from a demolition yard in Newbury

4 & 6 In the kitchen, a Belfast sink has been fitted into the old ticket desk from Bridgewater station. At the other end is a comfy living area. The door is a copy of a church vestry door Jane found at South West Reclamation (01278 723173), while the spiral staircase came from an old tram

5 The downstairs loo, with an old milk churn and stool



1

The house is furnished with bargains



2



3



4



5




6

arriving at the Abbey, and as it is an historic monument, restoring this to its former magnificence was Jane and John's first priority.

Across the courtyard, the farm buildings were slowly transformed into a home. It was quite a task. Old compacted manure had to be removed from the floor, underfloor heating installed and the original flagstones replaced. The roof also had to be re-tiled.

The house is furnished with a medley of bargain finds, tracked down at sales and

salvage yards. The main kitchen unit, for instance, was formerly the ticket office desk at Bridgewater railway station, while the spiral staircase at the other end of the room came from an old tram.

The wonderful double-height sitting room makes a wonderful gallery for Jane's collection of paintings. And with art courses and concerts held regularly in the ancient hostelry barn, Jane and John have made Muchelney a place of thriving creativity. 

WORDS Olivia Temple PHOTOGRAPHS Mark Bolton

25 Good ideas

If you're looking for a traditional-style sink, try this model from Brass & Traditional Sinks. Made in stain- and heat-resistant fireclay, the Belfast sink measures 595 x 455 x 255mm and costs from £230. Call 01291 650738 for a brochure pack.

