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# 25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

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**COVER STORY** 'We get up at 4am just to watch the wildlife' See p6



# Post production

Film memorabilia and inherited antiques have replaced needles, coal and paraffin in a village shop and store room that is now a lovely home

1 The sitting room wallpaper came from Liberty but is now discontinued. The tiles around the fireplace are Victorian. The shawl came from a film set

2 Alastair and Janet in their greenhouse with Fergus the cat

Grapevines clamber across the front of Alastair Reid and Jane Marten's riverside house, barely leaving the window panes free of tendrils and leaves. However, this house was not always so picturesque. It used to be an empty, derelict shop, store room, cider room and shopkeeper's house.

Both Alastair, a director, and Jane, an art director, work in the film business. They were living in London when they heard about an old shop in Somerset and drove down to take a look. 'Two things appealed to us immediately: the riverbank and the potential for a studio where we could work,' recalls Jane.

The shop had once been the hub of the village, selling everything from needles to coal. 'A town up the road used to be a dropping-off point for produce and supplies for the area,' says Alastair. The supplies, mainly coal and paraffin, arrived by boats and were winched through the store room roof.

'We had to start from scratch when we arrived; we needed a new roof and floors,' says Jane. 'We brought down the children – Alex, then five, Leonora, six, and Lucy, nine – and camped in one room in truly terrible conditions for months. But we had great fun.'

The present sitting room was originally two rooms. When they first moved in there was a sash window at one end with soil up to the frame. 'We knocked down the walls and opened up the end of the room, removed all the soil and put in a terrace,' says Jane. ▶



## PARTICULARS

### Location

Somerset Levels

### Age

18th-19th century

### Building

Former village shop, store room and shopkeeper's house

### Rooms

Sitting room, dining room, kitchen, studio, workroom, 5 bedrooms, bathroom, vineyards

### Moved in

1976

## 25 GOOD IDEAS

Jane and Alastair's 1970s wallpapers are no longer available, but *Nano* (01565 757400) has two ranges to suit similar tastes. *Revolution* features unusual patterning in a muted palette, while *Breezy* is made up of simple patterns in soft pastels and colourful brights. Prices start at £19.50 per roll.

Space/Revolution range

Pacifica/Breezy range



The sitting room is now a colourful den with comfy chairs and masses of pictures. The dining room, which used to be the shopkeeper's living room, is slightly more formal with a 1950s fireplace and 1930s furniture that Jane has collected over the years.

The store room, which was transformed into the studio, and the adjoining cider room date from the 18th century, making them the oldest parts of the property. The shop itself was turned into a kitchen.

Most of the couple's furniture came from their previous home or was inherited, but whatever was lacking came from auctions or film-prop houses. Most items have a fascinating history – usually from a film that either Jane or Alastair has worked on.

Upstairs, the master bedroom has a Scottish influence, with paintings by Scottish colourists and 1920s furniture from Alastair's parents in Edinburgh.

The couple are so happy with their home and its idyllic location. 'We are just so in love with the Somerset Levels and living on the riverbank. Our grown-up children and grandchildren love it, and stay as often as they can. It's home to three generations.' **bh**

**1** The Osborne & Little wallpaper in the dining room was bought in 1974. A 1930s cocktail cabinet sits in the corner of the room

used some of the curtain fabric to create a stage effect

**3** This bathroom was decorated in green and terracotta

**4** The studio is made up of lias stone with Roman tiles



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