

no. 7

MODERN country

It's hard to believe that pink carpets and faux French fireplaces used to rule the roost in Tamsin and Paul Clarke's chic and contemporary barn conversion

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH
STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR



KITCHEN

An antique enamel sign adds original style and captures the couple's love of antique finds. Similar sign, £525, eBay. Bulkhead light in gunmetal is similar, £99 each, Industville. Henley cupboards in Salt eggshell, £65 for 2.5ltr, Neptune. Similar stools, Bolero Bistro, £154.23 for four, Nisbets

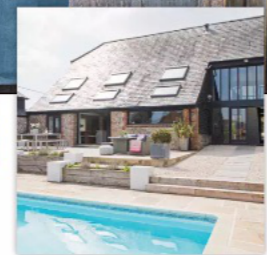


DINING AREA
Light walls make the dark Victorian oil paintings pop. Refectory table, £1,000, Threadgold Studio



SITTING ROOM
Tamsin and Paul's barn was once the main cow shed on a farm estate, and the vaulted roof can be admired at its best in this space on the first floor.
Large sisal rug, £900, County Carpets.
Monterosso blue velvet corner sofa, £2,225, Made

INSPIRATION 'I get ideas wandering around antique markets – I knew the large cockerel cages would make great lampshades hung from the vaulted ceiling'



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Converted barn
LOCATION East Sussex
ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner, two studies, utility room, cloakroom, six bedrooms (three en suite), bathroom
PURCHASED 2015
PREVIOUS PROPERTY
'We renovated a listed farmhouse in a nearby village,' says Tamsin.

Tamsin and Paul Clarke love a project and can't help but feel the urge to move every six or seven years – they've owned Victorian houses in London, a Georgian house in Ramsgate and sold a listed farmhouse in East Sussex to buy this barn. 'We can't imagine moving to a modern property because so much of our belongings are antique, vintage or repurposed – they're our passion,' says Tamsin. 'We loved the village we were in,

but wanted more outdoor space for our sons, Zach, now 14, and Jake, 10.'

A local barn proved the ideal match with five bedrooms, a swimming pool, outbuildings and a two-acre paddock. Tamsin could continue commuting to London, where at the time she co-owned an events agency. However, the couple had reservations. 'Although the old beams were incredible, thick timber posts segregated rooms and the beauty of the oak was lost in

the busy decoration,' Tamsin recalls. 'Three of the bedrooms were located downstairs and the huge sitting room was on the first floor.'

After pondering the purchase, the couple decided the glorious oak barn and all the space were just too good to pass by. For a few years, they lived with everything as it was while they concentrated on family and worked out what they wanted to change. 'One of the villagers told us he used to milk the cows here,' says Tamsin. 'We



BATHROOM

Vintage paintings balance out the modern updates. Parquet Thistle grey flooring, £55sq m, Harvey Maria



BATHROOM

Tamsin updated the bath by painting the feet black. Oxford Slipper bath is similar, £419.95, Victorian Plumbing



MAIN BEDROOM

This second-hand headboard prompted a green colour scheme. The Roscoe double bed in Olive, £550, Made, is similar



BEDROOM

'We've had the marble side table for years and the glass pendant wasn't needed in my old office,' says Tamsin. 'I like to make the things we already have fit in.' Similar Italian marble side table, £352, Vinterior

DESIGN IDEA *'We changed the diamond leaded windows to plain glass to let more light in'*

wanted to embrace the barn's heritage, put the focus back on the oak beams and make it more like a home for us.'

Tamsin and Paul made plans to get rid of the faux French fireplaces, pink carpets and modernise the dated decoration. They took down a wall to make the dining room part of the kitchen, and the upstairs bathroom became another bedroom. They decided to keep the large first-floor sitting room where it was. 'Beneath the vaulted ceiling, it's the dramatic space you expect to see in a barn and it felt wrong to chop

up the room with internal walls to make bedrooms, and it would have been impractical as the kitchen,' Tamsin explains.

The couple pared back decoration to bring light into their home. And they were conscious about repurposing as much as they could, reusing pieces they had, as well as recent second-hand buys.

'The barn has amazing bones and the space absorbs us and guests with ease,' says Tamsin. 'Despite this, the itch to move again is back and we're keeping our eye out for the next project.' 25