



PORCH
'I love the mellow red of the old quarry tiles,' says Melanie. 'Terracotta is a colour that repeats throughout the house.' Reclaimed red quarry tiles, £1.32 each, Cawarden, are similar.

RURAL REVIVAL

Elegant antiques and muted tones inspired by nature ensure Melanie Cartwright's country house blends with its surroundings

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH



BREAKFAST AREA
'This used to be the butler's pantry,' says Melanie. 'We kept the original fireplace and brought light to the room with French doors and a limestone floor.' Chapel chairs, £60 each, Bridport Vintage Market. Contrast medium pendants in Soft White, £95 each, Amos Lighting. Moleanos honed limestone floor, £47.16sq m, Mrs Stone

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Edwardian country house, built in 1905

LOCATION

Devon

ROOMS

Sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast area, study, utility room, cloakroom, four bedrooms (two en suite), two shower rooms, children's den.

PURCHASED

2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a converted chapel not far from here,' says Melanie.

KITCHEN

'We painted the island in the same blue hue as our shepherd's hut; it looked so pretty that I decided to use it here,' says Melanie. Island painted in Inchyra Blue estate eggshell, £62 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. Suffolk kitchen painted in Limestone, £785 for 60cm unit, Neptune. Contrast mirror lamps in Stone, £29 each, Amos Lighting

When garden designer Melanie Cartwright began planning the colour scheme for her newly renovated Edwardian home in Devon, she found inspiration in the rural setting. 'Our home is a 40-acre smallholding with beautiful views down the Axe valley,' she says. 'The sky often has a greeny-blue hue and so I used this colour and shades of green with soft browns. I added warmth with splashes of dusky reds to bring out the

green, just like I do in my garden designs.' Melanie and her husband, Charles, now retired, bought their home seven years ago. The property was built in the early 1900s as a gentlemen's residence, but it had been barely touched since the 1940s, so they spent five years modernising it.

'It was as though the house had been asleep for years, waiting to be brought back to life,' says Melanie. 'It was originally designed for entertaining and relaxing, and in many ways that's what we had in mind too, albeit with modern plumbing. We

wanted a comfortable home where we could stomp in from a walk in our wellies and relax and enjoy a sociable evening.'

Large rooms with high ceilings and plenty of light were a huge draw for the couple, as were the original period features. After opening up the kitchen and adding French doors across the back, the couple reworked the former maids' rooms on the top floor into bedrooms and a bathroom for their then-teenage children. But when the builders had gone, the Cartwrights didn't rush into decorating and furnishing the

DECORATING TIP 'Rather than having lots of different cushions, I switch the covers around in summer and winter to change the look and feel of the sitting room'



SITTING ROOM

Rich fabrics and antique carpets create a relaxed and eclectic look alongside a modern sofa. The Anglo-Indian side table would have been a familiar sight in an Edwardian house. 'It was designed to travel and folds flat. People would

have had their tea and tiffin around it,' says Melanie. Antique Feraghan carpet, £1,193, Lawrences Auctioneers. Roman blinds in Sutton Ticking Stripes in duck egg, £17m, Clarke & Clarke at Country Seats Interior Design. Find similar Indian tables on eBay for around £300



rooms. 'This house was so different from our previous home — a converted chapel — that it took us a while to get used to the size of the rooms and the scale of furniture that would fit,' explains Melanie. 'I started browsing auctions and antiques shops for the right pieces. The local Carradale Farm Antiques, filled with intriguing finds from pretty little mirrors to enormous chandeliers, is a particular favourite.'

The couple preserved as much of the Edwardian character of the house as they could, adding to the charm with inherited Victorian furniture from Ireland, which had been beautifully kept over the years. However, Melanie didn't want to create a museum. She found inspiration in the

work of interior designer Ben Pentreath, admiring his skill at harmoniously blending antiques with contemporary pieces.

'Ben has an organic approach, which I like as I wanted our home to feel as though it had evolved over years of living here,' Melanie says. 'I've added modern furnishings; Helena Barrowcliff at TMO Lighting makes beautiful hand-painted and printed lampshades that sit very well with our antique lamp bases.'

Natural textiles in cotton, wool and linen are used throughout, with Melanie remaining faithful to nature's colours and prints. 'Sticking to the same palette helps to unify the look and the flow of the rooms,' she says. 'And modern furnishings made

with natural fabrics work well with the older pieces because the materials themselves are quite traditional.' A reconditioned 1930s Aga, recycled slate worktops and limestone flooring come together in the new Shaker-style kitchen, resurrecting the old country house.

The couple have recently added a shepherd's hut, Stargazy Sky, at the bottom of the garden, which is available to rent through Classic Cottages. 'We wanted to share our beautiful views and we picked a spot for the hut in the cider orchard looking out across the fields,' says Melanie. 'When we aren't hosting guests, I love sitting out and having drinks on the terrace — we're very lucky to live here.' 25



MAIN BEDROOM
Leaf-patterned fabric in a cream and brown palette echoes the treetops outside, while the brass wall lights were revamped with new shades. Headboard in Voyage Cerino in Opal, £41.50m, John Lewis & Partners. Lampshades, £35 each, TMO Lighting. Melanie made the cushions; Inverness Highland Tweed, £85m, Anta, is a similar check fabric.

BATHROOM
'I love having curtains in this room as it makes it feel more luxurious,' says Melanie. Curtains in Oxus in Greige, £112m, Lewis & Wood at Strummer Pink. Painted table, found at Bridport Vintage Market.



wren
KITCHENS

This complete Infinity Plus kitchen including all bespoke built units, cook's table, range cooker & extractor, quartz & solid oak worktops, sink, tap and handles.*

£177 per month over 5 years

Total amount payable £11,739.49*

For a Wren Kitchens brochure and to find your nearest showroom visit wrenkitchens.com

▲Kitchen price is for kitchen units, cook's table, range cooker & extractor, quartz & solid oak worktops, sink, tap and handles. Price checked on 21/12/2018 ▼Interest free credit provided subject to application and status. Minimum spend — £5,000 for five years (Infinity Plus Kitchens only). Total kitchen price £11,739.49, 10% deposit of £1,173.95 and then 60 monthly payments of £176.09 at 0% APR. Total amount payable £11,739.49. Interest free credit is available on all kitchen projects and Wren Installation services. Full details are available at wrenkitchens.com/finance

0% APR