

CORNISH CREAM

Nicola Casperson has brought elements of boutique hotel design into her Cornish cottage, creating a stylish and relaxing home



Kitchen

Moving the wall of a downstairs shower room created space for a dining table in Nicola's smart, rustic kitchen. Zinc-topped dining table, Quirky Interiors. Dexter chairs, Cult Furniture. Range cooker, Esse



Kitchen
Vintage extendable wall lights have the flexibility to be angled where needed. Lindby Curtis wall light, from lights.co.uk, is similar



Garden
Slate tiles extend out seamlessly from the kitchen. **Table and bench**, Alexander Rose. **Chairs**, La Maison Chic. **Sun loungers**, Ikea



Kitchen
Distressed wood cupboards and a concrete worktop give an industrial yet traditional look. **Worktop**, Mortise Concrete. **Splashback**, Duchy Designs

CORNISH COTTAGE

“I NOTICE THE CHANGE IN SEASONS NOW BECAUSE I’M OUTSIDE SO MUCH MORE”



AT HOME WITH

Owners Nicola Casperson, interior designer and marketing consultant, lives here with her partner, Oliver Stretton-Downes, an engineer, and spaniels, Milly and Florence.

House A two-bedroom stone cottage built in the 1800s, which she bought in 2017.

At the heart of Nicola Casperson’s 1800s cottage are the original thick stone walls, exposed beams and slate floor. But she’s given these authentic features an update with soothing grey decoration and smart, tactile fabrics that evoke the laid-back luxury of a boutique hotel. ‘While renovating, I had an old French farmhouse in mind, inspired by Soho Farmhouse and the Artist Residence hotels,’ explains Nicola, an interior designer. ‘I love a rustic-luxury look that blends comfortable living with a sense of pampering.’

After 17 years living in London, Nicola found the city had lost its shine and decided to look for a place in Cornwall to retreat to at weekends. Her parents had owned a holiday house in North Cornwall, and she had happy memories of the area.

‘My house search was niche. I looked at properties in five villages – places we used to visit and I knew well,’ she says. ‘I didn’t want to be too remote as the coast can be quite bleak in winter, so it was about finding a cottage in a village with a community and a pub.’ It took Nicola two years to find what she was looking for, and when she did it was a property that needed her creative vision to turn it into a comfortable home.

‘The two-bedroom cottage was built pre-1840s. It was unattractive – a pebble-dash extension with a flat roof, uPVC windows, magnolia decoration and no >



Kitchen
A pitched roof was added to open up this space. Nicola asked her builder to make a tap from copper pipe remnants, liking their green tones



Living room
Nicola's used furniture to zone the large space, creating an open entrance hall and cosy seating around the fireplace. **Sofa**, DFS. **Vintage armchair** (below), Long Barn



Hall
Nicola upcycled a vintage cupboard left by the previous owner, painting it in Farrow & Ball's Purbeck Stone. **Lamp base**, Bleuven Florist. **Lampshade**, Oka. **Mirror**, Maisons du Monde



traditional features,' she says. 'But the village location was perfect, plus there were good connections to Exeter and Newquay for me to travel back to London.'

Despite the lack of character, the condition of the cottage was bearable, so Nicola spent the first two years visiting while saving up to renovate. In 2018, she put in a planning application to extend over the kitchen to add a third bedroom and a bathroom. 'The design wasn't well received,' she says. 'After some discussion, it was agreed I could partially extend to fit in a bathroom, but not another bedroom. In hindsight, it's a better design as upstairs now balances with the space downstairs. I was also able to put a pitched roof over the kitchen, which adds volume and light.'

During the renovations, Nicola reintroduced the character you'd expect to see in a Cornish cottage - wood-panelled internal doors with mortise-and-tenon joints, wooden casement windows and a new external door. 'I also exposed original roof rafters in the upstairs rooms, added tongue-and-groove panels in bedrooms and bathrooms, and used reclaimed scaffolding boards for the staircase panelling,' she says.

Keen to bring a sense of space and unity, Nicola decorated in Farrow & Ball's Cornforth White and Strong White throughout, and chose neutral linens and cottons by Annie Sloan, Clarke & Clarke and Ian Mankin for blinds and cushions. 'I wanted the >

Guest bedroom
 Vistors are guaranteed a warm welcome, with fresh flowers and a view out to the Cornish countryside. **Blind** in Broadway, Clarke & Clarke. Raspberry pink throw, Rural Urban



Bathroom
 Nicola has added layers of interest with panelling and tiling while keeping to the same colour palette. Scintilla Black Star floor tiles, Walls and Floors

“I STILL HAVE A BUSY JOB BUT LIVING HERE IT’S EASY TO SWITCH OFF AND WALK THE DOGS ACROSS THE FIELDS”



Bathroom
 Placing the tub beneath the skylight makes for a pleasant bathing experience. **Bath**, The Cast Iron Bath Company. Brass taps, Homary. La Vita print, King & McGaw



Vestibule
 The living room leads through to the kitchen via a small vestibule with hanging space and a bench with handy storage. Red stripe linen cushion, Maison Brocante





Guest bedroom
Neutrals are given an injection of colour with pinks inspired by the art print above the bed. Together Penguin Books print, King & McGaw. Glass wall lights, Pooky. Linen cushions, Maison Brocante



Main bedroom
Sticking to layered neutrals makes the space feel bigger. Cushion, Liberty London. Lampshade, Pooky. Lamp base, John Lewis & Partners



Main bedroom
Vintage pieces combine beautifully throughout Nicola's home. Mirror, Holly's House. Chest of drawers, Sunbury & Sandown Antiques

“I TOOK INSPIRATION FROM THE PALE GREY WALLS AND BLACK SLATE FLOOR IN THE LOCAL PUB”

ON OUR DOORSTEP

Visit... 'The National Trust's Lanhydrock House (nationaltrust.org.uk), a late-Victorian country property and estate where we enjoy walking the dogs. We also like going to north coast beaches at Daymer Bay, Harlyn Bay and Porthcothan.'

Shop at... 'St Kew Farmshop & Cafe (@stkewfarmshop) near Wadebridge, serves the perfect breakfast and the best coffee. It's also a great place to pick up homewares, like local artwork and St Eval candles. They also sell local produce and Rock Gin made in our village.'

Go for a meal at... 'St Tudy Inn (emilyscottfood.com), in St Tudy, our local pub and restaurant, right on our doorstep, that's owned and managed by local chef, Emily Scott, who makes the most amazing meals using seasonal ingredients.'

cottage to look traditional and feel relaxed and cosy with a refined elegance, much like a boutique hotel,' says Nicola. 'Overall, the rooms have a calming base and I've given them a rustic or industrial edge so that they don't look too twee.'

Black metal wall lights dot the living room and factory pendants hang in the bedrooms. The kitchen has a concrete worktop, distressed wood cupboards and a zinc-topped dining table. 'I'll always go vintage first, but if it's out of my budget, or I can't find something specific, then I'll buy new,' says Nicola. 'For example, the original factory pendants were easy to find as Mayfly Vintage had plenty. But I couldn't source matching vintage wall lights for the sitting room, so I ended up buying them new.'

Transforming the garden was last on the list. In 2019, Nicola installed slate paving to create a generous dining and social space, with flowerbeds around the perimeter. As the project came to an end, she realised she didn't want to live in London any more. Now she's moved here full-time with her partner, Oliver, and dogs, Milly and Florence.

'The cottage is so lovely, especially in summer when the doors are open to the garden. It's like having another room,' she says. 'I love being able to hop in the car after work and go to the beach for a swim. It's been a refreshing move. I'm so happy here.'

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR PHOTOGRAPHS JAMES FRENCH



Main bedroom
During the renovations Nicola exposed the beams, revealing the character of the cottage. Lucide Honore wall light, Online Lighting. Faux fur throw, Rural Urban