

# PEACEFUL SPIRIT



School cook Liz Hallam has built a house with outstanding views of the Sound of Mull, decorated with tranquil coastal colours that fit its dreamlike setting

## SCOTTISH COASTAL HOUSE

**LIVING ROOM** Views towards the Isle of Mull are reflected inside with walls painted in Pebble Shore, Dulux. Furniture upholstered in Chess Design's Balmoral wool plaid in Heather, Fabric Design

**DINING AREA** Liz designed the dining area to project out from the house with windows all around to make the most of the light and views. Liz uses the space for craftwork. Chairs; pendants and a pair of dining tables, Ikea





**T**he benefit of building your own home in a coastal location is being able to take advantage of the best views. Liz Hallam did just that, capturing widespread vistas of the Sound of Mull – and the Isle of Mull beyond – in a length of floor-to-ceiling windows, creating peaceful room schemes that complement rather than compete with the views.

Liz bought the plot eight years ago with her now ex-husband, intending to build two holiday houses to supplement their retirement on the Isle of Mull. But by 2018 the pair had parted ways, leaving Liz to reconsider her options. She decided to build one of

the houses for herself. 'This part of Scotland is wild, remote and very beautiful, but there's also a community and the ferry to Mull is only a five-minute drive. I chose which house I wanted to build and sold the other plot to my builder.'

Although not a trained designer, Liz has built a house before and completed 15 renovations. She had already drawn the barn-style designs for both planned properties and had started moodboarding the interiors.

'Back then, my instinct had been to keep both houses modern and pared back, with a Scandinavian look, as that would be best for guests,' she says. 'Once I knew I would be living in one of the houses, I decided to keep the Scandi vibe, but make it work with my antique and vintage furniture.'

Liz selected favourite pieces for each of the rooms – the kitchen butcher's block; the pine Irish dresser in the dining area; a Chesterfield in the living room. To settle her beloved old things comfortably into the brand new spaces, she sought inspiration from coffee table interiors books such as *The Nordic Home* by John Arne Bjercknes and *Imperfect Home* by Mark and Sally Bailey. 'I also took ideas from the interiors at the Kilchrenan Inn near Oban,' Liz adds. 'It's Scandi meets industrial, mixing greys, woods and plaids.'

The visit encouraged Liz to delve through her own treasured stack of

fabrics, where she unearthed a wool plaid with threads of grey, blue and mauve. This now features on one of the sofas, an ottoman, lampshades in the bedroom and cushions. 'I had other fabric samples in mind but I kept coming back to this one,' she says. 'The washed-out colours look more Nordic than traditional Scottish plaids and they reflect the watery coastal countryside around me.'

Nearly every wall and ceiling is decorated in Dulux's Pebble Shore – an arduous task Liz did herself. The white stone grey is a perfect match to Romo's Suvi wallpaper, which she fell in love with early on. 'Apparently, the design was inspired by a 1950s Scandinavian block print and the colour really complements the warmth in my old furniture,' she says. 'Timber plank wallpaper in the living

room was supposed to be a temporary fix – my builder wasn't keen on installing scuffed scaffold boards because they were too heavy – but I'm keeping it as it looks really effective.'

Along with the rustic-look wallpaper and plank flooring, interesting architectural elements such as the inset fireplace, corner kitchen window and recessed dining area all add character to the new build. 'I'm pleased with my design and that I kept the decoration low key as it feels very peaceful and the views

do all the work,' says Liz.

'I love walking down the stairs in the morning and seeing the huge panorama that runs the length of the house, it really takes my breath away. If I'm lucky, I might spot whales and dolphins in the Sound and sometimes in spring, if the nights are still clear, the Northern lights are still active – it's a magical place to live.'



#### AT HOME WITH

**OWNER** Liz Hallam is the village school cook. She built her house in June 2019, as well as a one-bed cabin, Naust, let through Airbnb.

**HOUSE** A three-bedroom property in Kilchoan on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula.



**KITCHEN** The corner window is one of Liz's favourite features giving her a dual aspect outlook. The vintage double laundry sink was rescued by a friend during a house renovation. Nordlux pendants, Dunelm

**EXTERIOR** Liz's garden slopes up towards the hillside but has a natural platform for building her new home, which is clad in Siberian larch. The elevated outlook gives her widespread views towards the Isle of Mull



'I felt inspired by the interiors at the Kilchrenan Inn near Oban – the look is somewhere between industrial and Scandi, mixing greys, woods and plaids'



**KITCHEN** Liz designed the open-plan layout with key areas for cooking, eating and relaxing, separating the spaces with Stovax's double-sided log burner. The chimney is painted in Craig & Rose's Chapelle. Chairs, Next



**STAIRCASE** Liz used a mix of leftover paints to paint the stair runner. She chose Krono click laminate flooring in Industrial from Leader Flooring to resemble worn grey concrete. Try Rafferty's Furniture for a similar wall clock



**GUEST BEDROOM** The glass corner cabinet adds character to the new room and came from Chesterfield Market. Liz made the curtains with a French sheet that she trimmed with pom-poms. Bedside table, Ikea

**LANDING** The open landing creates a reading nook beneath the roof window. The sofa was upholstered in French linen ticking years ago. Liz made cushions in a complementary fabric. Just Fabrics sells similar





LIZ'S COUNTRY LIFE

**SIMPLE PLEASURES** 'Ardnamurchan Lighthouse ([ardnamurchanlighthouse.com](http://ardnamurchanlighthouse.com)) is the most western point of the UK with phenomenal seascape views of The Small Isles and The Cullins on Skye – and it's great for whale watching. Just north of here is Sanna Bay, a white sandy beach famous for its spectacular turquoise waters.'

**SHOP AT** 'Island Blue in Tobermory on Mull ([islandbluetobermory.co.uk](http://islandbluetobermory.co.uk)) sells beautiful homeware and gifts. I can always find a treat for myself here.'

**GO FOR A MEAL AT** 'Mingary Castle ([mingarycastle.co.uk](http://mingarycastle.co.uk)) is just a mile outside the village and has an amazing fine dining restaurant. Puffin Coffee ([puffincoffee.co.uk](http://puffincoffee.co.uk)) is a wee coffee shop selling cakes and lovely coffee, it's a favourite with locals and holidaymakers.'



**MASTER BEDROOM** A splash of mustard is seen in Mulberry Home's Flying Ducks fabric from Graham Sanderson Interiors, which Liz used to re-upholster her parents' Parker Knoll chair

**EXTERNAL** The house faces south-east, making it the perfect place to see the sunrise, so Liz invested in Rational doors and windows. Aluminium guttering is by Lindab

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN  
PHOTOGRAPHS DOUGLAS GIBB STYLING ALISON GIBB

