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COUNTRY HOMES & INTERIORS

DESIGN YOUR HOME *from top to bottom*

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NEW NEUTRAL DECOR
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PLUS
**PAULA SUTTON
ON PICNICS AND
PICKING APPLES WITH
CLODAGH MCKENNA**

**'WE MADE
THE *move*'**

✦ COMING HOME TO THE COTSWOLDS ✦ NEW START IN SUFFOLK
✦ RURAL LIFE IN YORKSHIRE ✦ DOWNSIZING IN CHESHIRE

Exterior

The charming red-brick Carpenter's Cottage dates back to 1873 when it was built as a workshop and a barn



A WELL-KEPT
SECRET

A Victorian cottage, once a carpenter's barn, bewitched Laura and Patrick Butler-Madden and took them on an unexpected journey



Drawing room

A pale colour palette keeps this room calm, while the painting above the mantel flips up to reveal a TV. **Sofa**, MeliMelr. **Armchair and stool**, Love Your Home. **Painting**, Kristin Gaudio Endsley



Drawing room

The spiral staircase is a space-saving, unusual, and characterful feature, and allows light to flow in from above. Grey armchair, Soho Home. Cushion (left), Jonathan Adler



AT HOME WITH

Owners Laura and Patrick Butler-Madden, property renovators and designers, live here with daughter Lily, four, and two Maltese terriers, Coco and Lola.

House A red-brick Victorian cottage with two bedrooms when they bought it in February 2019. They have added a third bedroom with a shower room and extended the kitchen.

The Butler-Maddens caught their first glimpse of Carpenter's Cottage by torchlight, huddled over a tiny screen in a rustic farmhouse in Menorca. It was February and the couple, with baby Lily, were on a no-frills business trip. 'We sort of design and renovate properties,' they explain modestly, although they are experts at what they do. 'It wasn't part of our plan but something kept drawing us back to this small, dated cottage.'

On returning to the UK the couple headed straight to the Cotswolds. A quintessential honey-coloured village welcomed them, but the little red-brick property was nowhere to be found. 'Back and forth we drove until finally we saw a tiny footpath signed to Carpenter's Cottage,' recalls Laura. Virtually invisible from the road, it peeps out between two cottages, utterly at home yet quite unlike any other property in this area.

Hidden behind a jungle of a garden and smothered in a jasmine so overgrown that it threatened to bring this plucky little place to its knees, what Laura and Patrick could see was delightful. A symmetrical doll's house façade with a jaunty white painted porch, it looked cheerful even on that damp winter afternoon. 'Only a couple of the inside lights were working, so again we were reduced to torchlight,' Patrick says.

'It wasn't just small, but also quite narrow,' adds Laura. Downstairs comprised a sweet but compact >



Sitting room

Neat little flecks, a bold zigzag stripe, snakes and a rhino are unexpected and fun pattern choices in the traditional surroundings.

Sofa, Jonathan Adler.

Footstool, Made.

Wallpaper, Thibaut



Kitchen

This design contrasts traditional-style painted cabinetry with dramatic marble to striking effect. **Kitchen**, DeVOL; painted in Trinity Blue, Farrow & Ball. **Marble**, Porter. **Flooring**, Havwoods



Kitchen

An open wall shelf lined with decorative accessories and fresh greenery breaks up the marble and lightens the look. **Cachepot**, Burford Garden Company

sitting room, an even more compact dining room and a tiny lean-to kitchen. Upstairs two bedrooms flanked a bathroom. 'It was cold, slightly damp smelling, had peeling lino and absolutely no storage,' says Laura, 'but it had redeeming features - shutters, a spiral staircase and lots of character. We put in an offer instantly.'

After moving in on another soggy day in June, the couple spent a happy summer exploring their new surroundings and getting to know their neighbours. 'Wonderful details about the cottage came to light - a previous owner had been in the music industry and Mick Jagger and Eric Clapton were visitors. It made us laugh that this humble place had played unlikely host to rock royalty!' Fortuitously, it turned out that one neighbour, David Bradley, was an architect, and they had meetings together with paper plans spread all over the sitting room floor. They decided to lengthen the rectangular house on both storeys - enlarging the kitchen and adding a bedroom and bathroom above, and also planned to add a boot room off the kitchen.

The family moved in with friends, thinking it would be for just four months while the building work on the cottage was done. All was proceeding smoothly, until they made a significant change of plan while constructing the boot room. 'We realised the space would serve us better as a dining area,' says Laura, >

Dining area

A stylised botanical fabric brings bright colour notes and a lively flourish to this black and white corner scheme. **Table**, Wayfair.

Wall lamps, Pooky. **Ceiling light**, Georges Store.

Curtain fabric, Pierre Frey



🌸 I'VE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT A BANQUETTE IS BEST IN A COMPACT KITCHEN - IT'S A GREAT WAY TO SAVE SPACE AND CREATE A REALLY COMFY SEAT 🌸

Lily's bedroom

This room, with its smart bunk bed that's ideal for sleepovers, also serves as a dressing area for Lily's parents. **Bed**, Skandiborn. **Bedside table**, Cam Cam. **Light**, Anthropologie. **Wallpaper**, Cole & Son



Spare bedroom

A king-size bed and generous layers of linen ensure maximum comfort for guests. **Bedlinen**, Sophie Conran. **Bedside cabinet**, The Rattan Company. **Botanical prints**, Zara Home



Master bathroom

This shower room echoes the style of the adjoining bedroom in the new extension. **Fixtures and fittings**, Porter. **Wall tiles**, Mandarin Stone

a decision they don't regret as this created a spacious kitchen extension, flooded with natural light.

As the project was nearing completion in March 2020, the Polish builders headed home for a two-week break. Little did they know they wouldn't be returning for another three months as Europe went into lockdown. 'Initially we were devastated,' recalls Laura. 'But there was a silver lining. Living with our friends, Lily, Patrick and I were blessed with playmates during lockdown.'

It was with relief, however, when the family finally moved into Carpenter's Cottage, and there was another surprise in store. 'Originally we told ourselves that it was just another project, somewhere we might live for a while - but this house always had a plan to become our home,' says Patrick. 'There will be future projects and we may move from time to time, but this place has got under our skin and we will keep it forever.'

During these unsettling pandemic years, the family have felt great comfort here - the village, the countryside, the cottage and its beautiful garden have woven into their hearts. Lying in bed admiring the burgeoning apple tree outside and listening to birdsong with the scent of jasmine filling the air, Laura says there's nowhere in the world she'd rather be.

Carpenter's Cottage is sometimes available to rent. Laura is available for expert advice on property design and renovation, laurabutlermadden.com

ON OUR DOORSTEP

Visit... 'Just 10 minutes away, Blenheim Palace (blenheimpalace.com) is a magical place. It's great for children, with a train, playground and maze. Lily took her first steps there.'

Shop at... 'We love Eagles (eaglesfinefood.co.uk), a family-run deli/butcher that's been in business for 70 years. You can always find something unique and delicious, from higher welfare meat to breads and pastries or a local artisan liquor.'

Eat at... 'The George Inn (thegeorgebarford.co.uk), an atmospheric thatched pub in a nearby village, is ideal for families and dogs.'

Master bedroom

Neutral shades and soft textures have been expertly mixed to bring depth to this tranquil space. Frilled cushion, Cloth Collective. Wall light, Pooky. Throw, Johnstons of Elgin. Carpet, Crucial Trading