

Life *at* home

LOOK INSIDE ENGLAND'S MOST BEAUTIFUL HOMES

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**INSPIRATIONAL
HOME INTERIORS**

PARTY TIME

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Winter warmers

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A touch of vintage

Timeless designs for a classic look



Get the look: Fall back into Autumn reds and add a little icy sparkle

PLUS: Spectacular gardens - whatever the weather



Photo by
Colin Poole

Bringing the OUTSIDE IN

With botanical illustrations on the walls, wildlife guides on the bookshelves and triple-aspect windows framing glorious views of the surrounding countryside, the flora and fauna of Killerton are the stars of the show at Park Cottage.

One of five holiday cottages on the 6,500 acre National Trust estate in Devon, Park Cottage has recently undergone a huge transformation, incorporating all the fundamental aspects of sustainability and energy-efficiency in the design and décor of this 1920's Edwardian Grade II* listed carriage lodge.

"I wanted to bring the cottage into the 21st century and use it in a sustainable way, balancing the old with the new," said Killerton Estate General Manager Phillip Smart.

WORDS: ANNA TURNS
PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD DOWNER





Balancing act

When creating a bespoke holiday property, there is an art to getting the right balance between keeping a blank canvas that suits many whilst adding enough personality so that visitors appreciate its character.

“I wanted to make sure each of our holiday cottage locations would be special.

“I could see the potential in this property as a holiday cottage, so when a staff member moved out and Park Cottage became available, I got stuck in,” says Phillip, a trained landscape architect.

“I appreciate the expertise of design, and that’s why for this scheme we involved an external designer, Woodford Architecture and Interiors, and Exeter-based contractor Hindsite who know what we expect in terms of a high standard of finish.”

Being a listed building, everything needed planning permission and listed building permission to make sure it all stayed in keeping with the style.

“Structurally, only one internal wall was removed as we wanted to maintain the proportions, and we built a garden shed, but the whole interior has changed to fit with the historic landscape.” The purpose-built shed, built on-site from Killerton larch, is fitted with solar PV panels (these would have had too much impact on the cottage roof) and contains the mechanics for the air-source heat pump.

“It is amazing how much we pack into one shed and we have used all the resources available on the estate. The garden gates, pergola, fences and tree trunk seats around the fire pit are also made from timber produced in our woodlands.”







Informal elegance

Countryside prints in the living room bring a splash of colour and a reminder of the surroundings. Interior designer Sarah Woodford scoured vintage and charity shops for many pieces.



Keeping the story alive

As you walk in - through the new porch built to reduce heat loss - and step over the National Trust oak leaf doormat, the story of Killerton is prominent from the start.

Phillip explains: "This photo of Richard and Anna Acland was taken on the day they bequeathed the estate to the National Trust, as their gift to the nation, so you are immediately faced with the detail of Killerton's story."

Interior designer Sarah Woodford has used natural, calming colours throughout the house to give a relaxed feel. There's a continuous flow between each room and high ceilings are enhanced by the light colour scheme.

Hard-wearing quarry floor tiles run through the kitchen, hallway and dining room - these echo the original external wall-hung clay tiling, adapting familiar design elements to give a timeless feel.

The living room feels elegant yet informal, with the television concealed in an original alcove cupboard.

Chairs have been upholstered in different fabrics to give an eclectic feel, and Sarah chose contrasting piping to add a playful touch.

As much as possible was done to make Park Cottage energy efficient - a challenge in a period property. Double glazing was considered, but they agreed it would become a barrier and detract from the feeling of being in touch with the environment.

"Hearing birdsong through the windows

when you wake up and bringing the outside in is a big part of your stay," says Phillip.

The kitchen is light and practical, incorporating energy-efficient appliances and giving a nod to domestic spaces of the past. Shaker peg rails encircle the room, cream brick tiles give it a working kitchen feel, and decorative holes in the door of the larder cupboard provide ventilation.

Upstairs in the master bedroom, the ceiling is creatively decorated with handprinted wallpaper inspired by the arts and crafts era resulting in a dramatic effect whilst remaining light and airy.

A lot of thought has gone into each element of the bedroom. The mantle piece is peppered with upcycled house pots and inkwells true to the Edwardian era to accessorise in a simple yet effective way.

The shaker peg rails continue through both bedrooms and the ceiling of the twin bedroom is covered by soft sage green paper with the effect of a network of branches.

The third bedroom has been converted to a big, luxurious bathroom, with a restored fireplace.

The beautiful, free-standing, rolltop bath is painted to match the colour scheme.

Phillip is delighted with the end result: "I'm pleased that Park Cottage allows us to demonstrate that it is possible to live in an eco-friendly and sustainable way in this historic property." ■

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