

# A VIEW TO

*Tucked away but in a prime position, CHRISSEY HARRIS visits a light, bright and cheerful home with a very impressive outlook*

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# BUY FOR...



MOST new visitors to Sue and Tom Price's place in Dartmouth perform the same kind of pre-entry ritual: climb the steep steps to front door, gather composure in front of the perfectly pleasant 1960s bungalow exterior, turn to glance over shoulder and gasp at stunning view.

Sue, 45, admits she did exactly the same routine when she first came to look at what was to become her family's much-loved seaside home.

"We'd seen this house on the internet and I said to Tom: 'Why on earth would we go and look at that one?'" says Sue.

"It's really not that attractive. Well, anyway, it was about the third one we'd looked at that day. I came up the stairs, turned around and saw the view and said: Yep, we're going to buy this house! I hadn't even walked inside."

Call it an impulse buy but with an outlook like that, over the Dart estuary with all the boats criss-crossing by, who cares what's behind the front door – you just make it work, don't you?

That's exactly what the Prices did. The cosy little three-bed dormer bungalow was clean and tidy but the décor needed updating, plus the layout required some work to make it more user-friendly for Sue, Tom and their children, Hattie, eight, and Freddy, six.

The couple knew what kind of overall look they wanted and set about recreating the style of lakeside cottage Canadian-born Sue used to stay in on holiday as a child.

"I was going for a kind of beach house-type feel so we did the wooden floors and the panels on the walls and then I kinda went: oh, I don't know what to do now..." says Sue.

She enlisted the help of local architect and interior design firm Woodford Architecture and Interiors, based in Ashburton.



Canadian-born Sue Price and her family love their Dartmouth holiday home (l-r Hattie, Sue and Freddy)

Interior designer Sarah Watson and architect Gavin Woodford helped the couple design the style of the house and source fixtures and fittings, with Gavin creating some canny solutions to the slightly awkward layout.

Trusted builder (and family member) Colin Hares completed the dream team, which managed to revive the inside and make this house fit its view.

"I said to Sarah that I wanted nautical but not all blue boats and fish," says Sue. "She's done a brilliant job."

"We've been here for the last two Christmases and it feels just as cosy in the winter as it does seaside in the summer."



Bold shades have been used for soft furnishings to give bright pops of cheerful colour throughout



## **BEDROOMS AND BATHROOMS**

When the layout was redesigned, the bungalow's second bedroom was turned into a family bathroom. The existing bathroom was then made into the kids' bedroom. "It was just more logical," says Sue. "It was a funny layout as a bedroom, that's for sure. There was a single bed and a huge wardrobe in front of a window, which we didn't even realise was there."



The white floors and walls are broken up with touches of colour, stylish furniture and the occasional sentimental object.

“Ah, the driftwood under the TV,” says Sue. “Yes, that’s from up where my dad has a place on the lake in Canada. We brought it back in our luggage. It’s funny though because I was sitting there the other night and I said to Tom: that thing has shrunk. It’s because all the water has come out of it – it’s probably about a third smaller!”

As well as nods to Sue’s Canadian heritage, there is evidence of Devon-raised Tom’s love of sailing, including the cleat-style door handles in the kitchen. Little creature comforts like these have made this house a home from home and a place of peace and relaxation for an otherwise busy family.

The Prices live in London for most of the year, where Sue works in corporate property and Tom for a software firm.

Life is hectic so whenever they can, the family pile in the car and head down to

their low-maintenance home in Dartmouth to swim, sail and just enjoy the view.

“Being here is the one time we really relax,” says Sue. “We hardly ever turn on the TV to the point where we don’t even really need it.

“The kids will sometimes play on their iPads but just before you came, they were sat there, just looking out the window and talking about the boats going by.

“Freddy will quite often just sit on this little stool and just gaze out to the river. He loves watching the lower ferry, you know the one with the tug boat?” We all stop to watch the hive of activity for a minute – this really is better than the telly. It’s a great show and we’ve got the best seats.

“You can’t help but switch off,” says Sue. “It just feels so nice when you walk in and you don’t sit there and think, oh I wish we could do this or we should do that. You’re just in here, enjoying it all. “I think we’ll have this place for a long while yet – before we get too old to climb the stairs!” ♦

## LIGHT WORK

Interior designer Sarah Watson, director of Woodford Architecture and Interiors explains how she helped to create the perfect getaway: “We selected a light material and colour palette to enhance the feeling of space and to keep the focus on the extraordinary estuary views.

“The addition of horizontal paneling gives texture to the walls and brings warmth to the rooms. We used a bold, saturated sunshine yellow for soft furnishings to give bright pops of cheerful colour throughout.

“Part of the joy of designing a holiday home is that people tend to be a little bit braver and are more willing to experiment with colours and accessories to tell a story or complete a theme.

“We chose porthole mirrors, codes flags and oars to reference the beautiful estuary location.

“We’re delighted that the clients love it so much - Sue and Tom were an absolute joy to work with.”

## A PRACTICAL HOME

Sue says she is delighted with the “humongous” amount of storage that has been incorporated, particularly in the master bedroom where clever hidden cupboards conceal everything from clothes to lifejackets.

The house has also been designed with kids in mind. The thick carpets are great for wet or sandy feet and wooden floors downstairs mean any spills can be quickly wiped away.

Special deliveries:

Anyone who has been to Dartmouth will know that the roads are skinny and steep.

Getting furniture or building materials delivered needs careful consideration.

“Our builder had an estate car,” says Tom, 37. “He just used to stick stuff on the roof of his car and bring it in. He was fantastic.”

Sue adds: “We knew we had tight access so the sofa is all modular and all the beds were such that we could get them in and then build them on site.”