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A black roof and window frames give this rustic building a smart, contemporary edge

BEFORE

The run-down barn had been used for storing grain and cattle

EXTREME
Transformation 2

AFTER

‘We turned a ramshackle cattle shed into a stylish space’

Hard graft and an eye for detail helped Siobhan and Mat Hayles convert a run-down barn into a stunning and relaxing holiday let

Dreams of living in Dartmoor with their sons, Connor, seven, and Fizzy, five, led Siobhan and Mat Hayles to take on a historic farm that needed a lot of work. Living in London, they'd come to Dartmoor camping and loved it, so in 2011 they took the plunge and bought the farm, complete with a derelict barn and a resident peacock that they named Peeky. 'Even though the buildings were crumbling ruins, we completely fell in love with them,' says Siobhan.

Once used for livestock, the single-storey barn had a rusty, leaky corrugated-iron roof,

and a stream ran behind it, so everything was mouldy and wet inside. The building was partly buried in the slope of the hillside, too, but Siobhan and Mat still had high hopes for it and planned to turn it into a holiday let. 'We wanted to combine the feel of a traditional Dartmoor farm building with the luxury of a designer hotel suite,' explains Mat.

Although the farm isn't listed, it's within Dartmoor National Park, so there were lots of planning constraints, including the materials that could be used in restoring it. Siobhan and Mat chose local architectural practice

▲ Restored stonework, a new corrugated roof and a wide stretch of bifold doors have given the barn a completely new lease of life

▶ A seating area, with a stunning view through the bifold doors, is the perfect spot for relaxing at any time of day

FEATURE DEBBIE JEFFERY PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD DOWNER, UNIQUE HOME STAYS PLANS PERSONA-ID



In the open-plan kitchen, sleek grey cabinets have been customised with a quartzite worktop and polished handles



Woodford Architecture + Interiors (01364 654888; woodfordarchitecture.com) to draw up a conversion that would retain the exterior, including the corrugated metal roof.

UP FOR A CHALLENGE The building work began in November 2014 and took seven months. 'We employed a local builder, who was amazing, and Mat helped with the labour,' explains Siobhan. 'They stripped out the barn, and the granite walls were rebuilt with stone from the farm. We tanked the back of the building and put in new land drains, too.'

Internally, the stone walls were repointed with traditional lime mortar, durable limestone flooring was laid over underfloor heating and hand-made timber windows and glazed doors were installed. The building now contains a bedroom with a roll-top bath, a shower room, a kitchen-diner, a snug and a seating area. The cart door has been replaced by a 4m stretch of glass doors. Finally, Siobhan chose colours inspired by Pecky the peacock's tail to decorate and furnish the barn.

Having cost £200,000 to convert, the barn can't be sold separately, but the couple do rent it out via uniquehomestays.com. 'It was hard work,' says Siobhan. 'But it's been worth it.'



Trials & triumphs...

■ **What was the high point?**

'Seeing everything come together, especially when the glass doors went in.'

■ **Any low points?**

'When we moved in, we all got ill from drinking the water – it came from the moor and needed to be treated.'

■ **What was the project saviour?**

'Pecky the peacock inspired our use of colour and texture.'