



BARNSTORM

Greys Court Barn in Norfolk has been spectacularly transformed, thanks to the vision of architect Anthony Hudson and his designer wife Jenny Dale



The large kitchen-cum-dining room has a relaxed, friendly feel, with an antique French refectory table accentuated by a Swedish candelabra from Coach House Antiques. Simple dining chairs from Ikea add to the Scandinavian feel.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

To make the most of the spacious living room Jenny chose two generous sofas from SofaSofa and a large, simple wooden coffee table from Ikea; Jenny and Anthony outside the barn; the small painting above the doorway is by Monica Vinader, as are the cushions on the sofas in this room; a wood-burning stove gives the room a cosy feel and complements the building's rustic quality.



WALSINGHAM IS A PLACE of pilgrimage. Ever since an aristocratic local woman had a vision of the Virgin Mary here back in the 11th century, people have been coming to this north Norfolk village in their numbers. They still visit, although the ranks of true devotees are today rather diluted by holidaymakers.

At the edge of this picturesque village, architect Anthony Hudson, who is known for his innovative commissions, and his wife, designer Jenny Dale, have taken on and renovated a handful of barns – dating from the 18th to the early 20th centuries. The buildings, including Greys Court Barn, all renovated in contemporary style by Anthony, have become an enclave of holiday

lets, overlooking the rolling fields. "Each had its own characteristics and the first thing to do was to make the most of these," he says. "Some are three-storey, some just single-storey cart sheds, so there are a lot of variations and each barn had to be treated separately. We used existing walls and new walls to create courtyards and private gardens for all of them."

The couple also decided to add interest by giving every barn a distinctive and individual interior, and Greys Court Barn is no exception. Here, the couple chose to create a Scandinavian theme, with simple colours and furnishings. "We wanted the barns to be individual, although that made life more difficult in terms of ideas and



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CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT Jenny discovered this two-seater bench at an auction and had it re-painted and re-upholstered; the second bedroom features a solid wood bedstead from SJS Furniture, flanked by antique blue-painted bedside tables from Coach House Antiques; tiles in the en suite bathroom continue the muted colour scheme; a red cashmere check blanket and matching bedside lamps from Homebase add colour in the main bedroom, where the wrought-iron bench is from Holt Antiques.

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The house is a long, single-storey building, created from an old stable block and a bullock shed. Fortunately there was already a large number of openings for windows and doors, but the roof trusses were rotten and had to be replaced. The walls – a mix of brick, flint and chalk – are rich with texture so have been left exposed in places. In other areas they were badly damaged and so it made sense to add tongue and groove, which enhanced the interior's Scandinavian feel.

"We decided on a pared-down, simple scheme, using pale colours," says Jenny. "The main issue for Anthony was getting all the levels of the building working together, as it is built on a slope. There was a section

that dropped down quite sharply to what is now the main bedroom, so we put in a half stairway to remedy this."

The bedrooms – five in all – were placed at either end of the barn, with the living room and kitchen-cum-dining room at the centre, plus an entrance hall. The kitchen was a particularly large space with bespoke units built by Anthony at one end of it and concrete grey and white flooring tiles set in a diagonal pattern. "It was such a big room that it needed something decorative," Jenny says, "so I designed the shelving unit at the other end, which works well in holding the space together."

Furniture was sourced from lots of local antiques shops and fairs as well as from mainstream stores such as Ikea. "It was quite a challenge to achieve the exact look





we wanted without spending a fortune," says Jenny. "You have to take a practical approach when it's going to be a holiday house. You need as much storage space as possible, surfaces that aren't going to mark easily – things like that all have to be considered. But at the same time it needs to feel like a real home." With its private garden overlooking fields and a flint church, the barn is now a deeply relaxing place to

be. The combination of traditional and contemporary style works well towards creating a feeling of warmth and comfort.

"I didn't want to go over the top," says Jenny. "We were lucky to have five blank canvases to play with. A lot of the fun came from having the chance to experiment rather than picking one set look." ■

To find out more, contact Barsham Barns, (01328) 821744; barshambarns.co.uk.

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SOURCEBOOK

ACCESSORIES Homebase, 0845 077 8888; homebase.co.uk. **Monica Vinader**, (01485) 512133; monicavinader.com. **FURNITURE** Holt Antiques, (01263) 711991; holtgalleryandinteriors.co.uk. **Ikea**, 0845 355 1141; ikea.co.uk. **SJS Furniture**, (01328) 864576; sjsfurniture.co.uk. **SofaSofa**, (01495) 244266; sofasofa.co.uk. **FOR MORE STYLE IDEAS SEE PAGE 172**

