


TEXT ELIZABETH METCALFE | PHOTOGRAPHS MARTIN MORRELL

# It takes two



Involving an ambitious restoration project and a reconfiguring of the layout, James Thurstan Waterworth and Scarlett Supple's transformation of a Wiltshire farmhouse has resulted in a calm, pared-back interior defined by James's eclectic antique finds



SITTING ROOM (*both pages*) A bespoke Thurstan sofa and an African throne chair, sourced by James, are arranged around a coffee table that he had made from an old piece of chestnut. The abstract painting is by Basil Beattie. Treasured pieces, including a Jacques Adnet lamp and a Carl Aubock brass ashtray, are displayed on the 18th-century French desk, which is paired with an Eighties 'Quinta' chair by Mario Botta. James and Scarlett bought the kimono on honeymoon in Japan



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**DINING AREA** A primitive, circa 17th-century Pyrenean **cabinet** found in the South of France and an antique Spanish **dining table** – one of the few pieces James sourced specifically for the house – set the tone at this end of the kitchen. The weathered flagstone floors are original and the addition of a raised fireplace provides a focal point. A former bread oven to the left of the fireplace was fitted with two wooden doors and turned into a drinks cabinet. The early 20th-century **armchair** is upholstered in 'Naka' in the turmeric root colourway, from Scarlett's recently launched collection for Aldridge & Supple. The boot room and loo beyond were originally a log store



**KITCHEN** James and Scarlett with their daughter Bibi. A vintage Noguchi 'Akari' pendant hangs above an island in wood reclaimed from an 18th-century barn. Walls in 'White Truffle' from Francesca's Paints are the backdrop for cabinetry in 'Invisible Green' by Little Greene Paint & Paper, made bespoke by Thurstan's joiner. **EXTERIOR** The 19th-century farmhouse has been extended over the years. **WINTER SITTING ROOM** Exposed brick on the chimney breast is set off by walls in 'Ice House Blue' from Francesca's Paints. James found the early 18th-century cabinet near Avignon in the South of France



# B

Back in the summer of 2019, James Thurstan Waterworth had just started work on the redesign of The Bradley Hare, a then little-known village pub on the Duke of Somerset's estate in south west Wiltshire (featured as a 'Little Gem' in *House & Garden's* October 2021 issue). Site visits saw the antique dealer and interior designer regularly zipping off down the M3 from the mews house in Notting Hill that he shares with his wife, the interior designer Scarlett Supple.

On one such trip, he heard about a 19th-century, L-shaped brick farmhouse that was coming up for rent on the estate. 'We weren't thinking about living in the country at the time,' explains James, who founded design studio Thurstan in 2018, following three and a half years as European design director of Soho House. Intrigued, he went to look at it from the outside, but admits it 'wasn't anything more than a dream to start with'.

A few months down the line, however, Scarlett and James found themselves falling for this area of Wiltshire as they spent more time there. Add to that the fact that they had just found out that Scarlett was pregnant and the prospect of having a weekend bolthole in the country grew increasingly appealing. With the previous tenants having already vacated the property, James and Scarlett decided to investigate the farmhouse properly. Inside, the scope of the work needed became evident: the plumbing and electrics had not been updated for years; an old cheese maturing room existed upstairs; and two staircases remained from the days when it had been two smaller cottages. 'Scarlett was peeling off wallpaper, hunting for evidence of what lay behind it,' recalls James.

Unfazed, the couple committed to renting the farmhouse and, over the course of 14 months, transformed it into a family home. How did the restoration project work, given they are both interior designers? 'It started off being James's baby, but we planned the new layout together,' says Scarlett, who co-founded interior design studio Aldridge & Supple with the model and art consultant Saffron Aldridge in 2020.

The ground floor required the biggest rethink. The driveway was repositioned to curve round the back of the house – rather than running parallel to the kitchen – to bring more light into the previously dark downstairs. 'We had to manipulate the outside to make it work internally,' explains James. 'And then it was a case of opening it all up.' A poky kitchen and separate dining room became one long and





lovely space, with a simple raised fireplace added at one end of the dining area. Next to this, a doorway was punched through to a former log store, which has been turned into a boot room and a downstairs loo.

Two awkward staircases – one of which bisected the large main sitting room – were swapped for a generous central one. This leads up to a landing that joins the two wings of the house. They opened up the attic above the main bedroom to create a double-height space, while a small single bedroom was turned into en-suite bathrooms for the main bedroom and second largest bedroom. The cheese room became a nursery for their daughter Bibi, now almost two, and a family bathroom was slotted in between the other two bedrooms.

Although the couple kept what they could – such as the original elm floorboards in the bedrooms and the flagstones in the sitting room and kitchen – they had a relatively blank canvas to work with. ‘We slightly sheepishly showed each other our moodboards and took it from there,’ says Scarlett, laughing. ‘I veer towards the more monastic,’ James chips in. ‘Whereas Scarlett likes more colour and pattern.’

Other than a minor battle about the paint colour for the hall – in the end they settled on Farrow & Ball’s ‘Lime White’ – the couple shared the same vision. ‘We wanted the house to be pared back and calming, with lots of texture and warmth,’ explains James. The rooms unfold in a series of elegant yet earthy tones. In the kitchen, dark green painted units are paired with an island made out of reclaimed wood, which was left over from The Bradley Hare pub renovations, while there are soft blue-grey walls in what is known as the winter sitting room, which form the backdrop to an exposed-brick fireplace. The larger main sitting room has serene off-white walls, with the original flagstones, curtains made from linen sheets and a windowseat upholstered in one of Scarlett’s fabrics, which she sells through Aldridge & Supple.

Along with a few special textiles, the starting point for rooms was often antique furniture. Although much of it looks as if it has been chosen for the exact spot, James already had most of the pieces stowed in his warehouse. ‘I’ve been going off on sourcing trips round the world for years – I would see so many beautiful things and feel pained when I couldn’t buy them all,’ he says, confessing to a particular love for early-English and Welsh, and 20th-century European pieces. ‘I guess the antiques arm of Thurstan grew out of that – it was a way to feed my addiction.’

He delights in creating contrasts between pieces, such as in the winter sitting room, where an ornate Palladian cabinet is teamed with two chairs – one an original Pierre Jeanneret, the other a primitive Welsh stick-back. ‘I love how they represent totally different worlds but somehow work together.’

The wooden desk behind the bespoke sofa in the sitting room is another favourite piece. It came from a house in the South of France and still bears flecks on its legs of the red paint traditionally used on floors there. ‘I’d have to be broke to part with that,’ admits James. ‘And I feel the same about this piece,’ he adds, pointing to a beautiful primitive wooden cabinet in the dining area, which stands alongside a Spanish table. ‘The table is one of the few things that I bought specifically for the space. I paid way too much for it. But sometimes I fall for something and just can’t let it go’ □



Thurstan: [thurstandesign.com](http://thurstandesign.com)  
Aldridge & Supple: [aldridgeandsupple.com](http://aldridgeandsupple.com)

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HALL Elm floorboards, reclaimed from other parts of the house, were laid in the hall, and a new staircase was added to unite the two wings upstairs. The round 18th-century Italian table is from a market in France, while **canvases** by a young local artist Alyssa Dabbs are stacked against the walls. **MAIN BEDROOM (opposite)** An Eighties Ron Rezek 'Orbit' lamp for Bieffeplast on the bedside table provides a minimalist contrast with the headboard upholstered in an antique fabric sourced by Scarlett. The freestanding **bath** in the en-suite bathroom, added by James and Scarlett, is from Burlington. **SPARE ROOM Walls** in Farrow & Ball's 'Bone' showcase the pretty headboard fabric – a gift from Scarlett's business partner, Saffron Aldridge. A late-20th-century marble lamp and a **sketch** by Roger Hilton stand on an antique Spanish walnut table. On the landing, Akiko Hirai **ceramics** are grouped on an early English oak cabinet

