

stylish living

OPEN SEASON

Charlotte and Boris knocked the kitchen through into the dining room to create one big space. Using large accessories, such as this clock face that Charlotte found at an antiques shop, helps to lessen the effect of the high ceilings by bringing the eye down. The ceramic artichoke candleholder is from Velvet & Dash Interiors.

SUBTLE COLOUR

Charlotte chose neutral shades in the kitchen and continued the theme through to the dining area. The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Pointing and the cupboards are in Fired Earth's Oak Apple.

VINTAGE MIX

An upcycled Victorian housemaid's cupboard from theoldcinema.co.uk provides storage for all the children's toys, while the industrial-style pendant lamps are from baileyshomeandgarden.com.

Home is literally where the hearth is for Charlotte and Boris Starling. Their Georgian rectory boasts two wood-burners and an open fire – a marked contrast to the freezing days of its renovation. “There was only one radiator and it was minus ten degrees in here!” remembers Charlotte.

With logs piled up in baskets and shutters closed against the storms, the house now comes into its own during the dark days of midwinter.

Charlotte, an interior designer, Boris, a writer, and their children, Florence, six, and Linus, four, moved into the house during the summer of 2010 following a relocation from London. “We’d driven around Dorset and along its Jurassic coast, and there was something about the light and the countryside that attracted us,” says Charlotte.

They discovered the listed rectory in a village in the west of the county and, after noticing its price had come down, made an offer. “After we had the children, we thought it’d be lovely for them to grow up in the country, rather than London,” she explains. “And I was also keen to achieve less stress and a better work/life balance for myself.” >>

OUR WARM & WELCOMING winter home

Charlotte and Boris Starling breathed new life into a neglected Dorset rectory and made it a fabulous sanctuary on cold winter days



Charlotte and Boris Starling's Dorset rectory

WARM AND WELCOMING

The cosy sitting room comes into its own during the winter, when Charlotte draws the sofa nearer to the fire and the ottoman doubles as a table for afternoon tea. The mirror above the fireplace was found at lotsroad.com and the sofa was sourced from afternoah.com.

“I love the idea of being cosy at Christmas with our family, lighting scented candles and gathering round the fire”

LUXURIOUS TOUCHES

Charlotte upped the luxe factor in her bedroom with silk curtains as well as stunning Caravan wallpaper from neishacrosland.com. She layered up the bed with damask bed linen and an elegant eiderdown from lauraashley.com. Try made.com for a similar chair.



RELAXED FEEL

Charlotte continued the neutral colour scheme throughout the house, and the walls in the sitting room have been painted in Fired Earth's subtle Verd-Antique.



ROOM WITH A VIEW

The roll-top bath creates a striking focal point in the bathroom. For similar, try vandabaths.com.

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The property was in a poor state of repair as the last vicar had retired and the house had then lain empty for 18 months. “All the lower windows were covered in brambles and ivy, and inside it had a bit of an institutional feel,” says Charlotte.

As well as rewiring and replumbing, the couple oversaw the removal of asbestos floor tiles and put back traditional fireplaces. They also took the opportunity to reconfigure the layout of the house, knocking the kitchen and dining room into one and converting the attic into an extra guest bedroom and bathroom.

Now the children are settled in school and the family are enjoying their new life at the Old Rectory, Charlotte is building her web shop and design service, named after her greyhounds, Velvet & Dash. “The pace of life here is slower than in London, but we’ve found we’re embracing lots of new pursuits, meeting new friends, getting involved in village life and cooking meals with local produce,” she says. “We’ve even started keeping chickens and making jam. We have really put down roots.”

GOLDEN GLOW

The chic Fan Tree wallpaper from cole-and-son.com brings warmth into the guest bedroom and its distinctive pattern helps open up the space. The bed was bought many years ago in Habitat, and the bed linen and throw are both from thewhitecompany.com. The breakfast tray is from johnlewis.com. w&h

