

# *Festive* WELCOME

This relaxed and inviting home set in the heart of the Wiltshire countryside has been designed with comfort in mind for all to enjoy

FEATURE CLAIR WAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY DAN DUCHARS  
STYLING SARA BIRD, ANNA JONES, FREYA WASTIE AND NATALIE MAWSON

An antique Persian rug in jewel colours was the starting point for the scheme in the drawing room, along with a much-loved eighteenth-century Japanese folding screen from Altfield on the wall. A pair of wall lights from Vaughan flank the Wells Reclamation stone fireplace. The Signature sofas are from George Smith.





Limestone flooring from Artisans of Devides runs through the hall and into the kitchen whilst a durable Bubble Weave stair runner with Smoke trim, from Alternative Flooring, flows up to the first floor. Lights4fun faux Spring Eucalyptus garlands, embellished with fresh foliage, adorn the bannister. The simple Shaker-style panelling and the Jack hall table are by The English Joinery Company.



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Having seven grown-up children and seven grandchildren between them, interior designer Stephanie Dunning and her husband, Peter Everard, are used to having a full house. Even more so at Christmas, when they can all gather together at the couple’s beautiful home in Wiltshire.

Inspired by how her mother used to decorate, Stephanie fills the house with fresh greenery and fragrant candles at Christmas. “I like to go out on long walks with the dogs and forage for ivy, yew and berries. We start to put up decorations in early December, and I try and stop work two days before the big day so I can get ready for the hordes to descend,” Stephanie says. “On Christmas Day morning we all go to the children’s service at nearby Salisbury cathedral. Then we settle down for lunch, followed by games and puzzles in the drawing room.”

On Boxing Day, the couple open the house up to local friends as well as family. “We do a bit of clay ►

ABOVE To create a unified feel in the entrance hall, the walls, panelling and architraves are all painted in Hardwick White by Farrow & Ball. The fairy lights on the mantelpiece are from Lights4fun.

LEFT Stephanie and Jerry, a Parson Russell Terrier, stand outside the bespoke Victorian-style front door and surround. A pair of Blenheim coach lamps from A Place in the Garden hang either side. The faux berry wreath is from Balsam Hill.





The English Joinery Company kitchen is a simple, practical design with striking Arabescato marble work top on the island. The cabinets are painted in Intense Ink by Dulux and the handles are from Chloe Alberry. The wood Rockport pendants are by Pooky.



*‘Top of our wish list was a spacious open-plan kitchen, dining and seating area. We’re all big cooks and like to chat whilst we’re cooking’*

shooting, play table tennis and pool, drink champagne and tuck into shepherd’s pie,” Stephanie says. “My main aim is for our home to feel relaxed, so guests can really unwind and enjoy themselves.”

The spacious six-bedroom property is tucked away within two acres of beautiful Wiltshire countryside. On first impression, it looks like it has been there for generations, but in reality it is a new build, standing on the site of a Victorian house which, sadly, was in too ruinous a state to preserve. The only remaining original part of the previous house is the brick facade.

As Stephanie specialises in interior architecture and Peter owns a joinery firm, they were undaunted when they first saw the run-down house and land for sale in 2005. “It had been let for many years and was in a pretty horrific state, but we weren’t worried about that,” Stephanie says. “We can design and build pretty much whatever we want. The location is everything, because you can’t change that once you’ve got it. We love Wiltshire. I grew up in the area, we have lots of friends nearby and it’s not far from ▶

**ABOVE** The Original BTC Diner pendant, festooned in foliage, creates an eye-catching focal point above the table. The chairs have been reupholstered by Hoolie Upholstery in San Giacomo from Zak + Fox. The tablecloth is from Volga Linen.

**RIGHT** The sturdy front door has been painted in Off-Black by Farrow & Ball, with a soft neutral, Dulux Burmese Beige, highlighting the door surround and windows.







ABOVE Farrow & Ball's Inchyra Blue on the snug walls creates a cosy feel. The rich orange sofa covered in Velluto Stretto Saffron, a wipeable velvet from Designers Guild is by Dunning & Everard as is the Downton stool, which is covered in a deep green wool by The Sign at Altfield. A pre-lit Christmas tree from Balsam Hill adds to the cosy scene.

LEFT French windows open out from the kitchen onto a paved patio area.

London. Also, the house is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and just a 20-minute bike ride to the centre of Salisbury."

Having given the property a quick cosmetic makeover, Stephanie and Peter settled in with their children and planned the new build; little did they know that obtaining planning permission would take six years. Upon finally gaining approval in March 2011, they bought a cottage in a nearby village to live in during the two years it took to demolish the old house and build the new one.

Strict planning rules meant they had to keep the facade intact and replicate the roof and chimney design. "Everything else was replaced because it was in such a bad state of disrepair," Stephanie says. The facade's bricks were cleaned and repointed, and, not wanting to create a pastiche of the former dwelling, the couple used new bricks for the rest of the house.

Having built four properties of their own over the years, as well as countless clients' houses, Stephanie and Peter had a clear vision of what they wanted. "Top of our wish list was a spacious open-plan



*'I like painting panelling, architraves, doors and cornicing in one colour. It gives a nice weight to the room and is a really smart look'*

kitchen, dining and seating area," Stephanie explains. "During the week, when it's just the two of us, we live in this space. I didn't want to have a separate dining room because we're all big cooks and like to chat whilst we're cooking. It makes it so much easier when everything is in the one space."

Stephanie drew up the floor plans and designed the interior architecture, and Peter organised all the building work. "All the joinery in the house came from Peter's firm, The English Joinery Company, including the kitchen, the panelling, architraves and doors, which are 50mm thick and close with a good clunk. Good joinery gives a building real gravitas and weight."

The couple installed traditional architectural detailing in keeping with the original Victorian house, but then introduced a mix of furniture styles and artwork for a relaxed feel. The large hall, with its reclaimed fireplace and panelling, is reminiscent of

a country house entrance. "I always try and have a decent-size hall because that makes the rest of your house feel quite substantial," Stephanie says. "If you have a narrow, small hall, with great big rooms leading off it, the house won't feel spacious. Having a fireplace in the hall was another big thing for us, especially in winter. When people come for Christmas, we always like to have the fire lit."

With seven grandchildren, practicality was key for the couple. "We chose limestone flooring for the hall and open-plan kitchen-diner so that when the dogs come roaring in and the grandchildren are cycling around on their bikes, it doesn't show the dirt."

Stephanie has created streamlined spaces with the clever use of colour. "I like painting panelling, architraves, doors and cornicing in one colour because it gives a nice weight to the room and is a really smart look," she says. "Interest is created with the detailing ►

ABOVE A tall headboard by Dunning & Everard, in a Mark Alexander fabric, brings a luxurious feel to the master bedroom. Blue Maroq table lamps from Cox & Cox sit either side of the bed whilst a cushion made from Tittley & Marr Paisley fabric from Tissus d'Hélène contrasts with red velvet cushions. Floral arrangements throughout the house are by Paloma Lily.





*‘Interest is created with the detailing on the walls, along with lamps and artwork’*

**ABOVE** Drapes in Stroheim Biron Strie Check fabric from Turnell & Gigon have given the antique four-poster bed a new lease of life in the guest bedroom. The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball’s Pigeon. Wrapping paper and ribbon throughout is from The Danes and Jane Means.

**RIGHT** The bath in the master en suite is from The Cast Iron Bath Co.

on the walls, along with lamps and artwork. I have a passion for Paint & Paper Library’s Slate I to V.”

The couple have created a warm, inviting house that perfectly suits their needs, with a simple layout that flows effortlessly from one space to another. The house is a resounding success, and the idyllic location has proved to be a real tonic for nature-loving Stephanie. “We have fantastic wildlife. Swallows live in the barn and wild ducks fly in and live on our pond. We even have a colony of bats in the roof.”

Stephanie also proudly explains that they have planted over 60 trees and leave a lot of the land to long grass for insects. “We also have our own bees and fruit trees and grow our own vegetables,” she adds. All this, combined with her generous spirit, means Stephanie will be welcoming a constant stream of visitors to share in the delights of her beloved Wiltshire hideaway. ■

