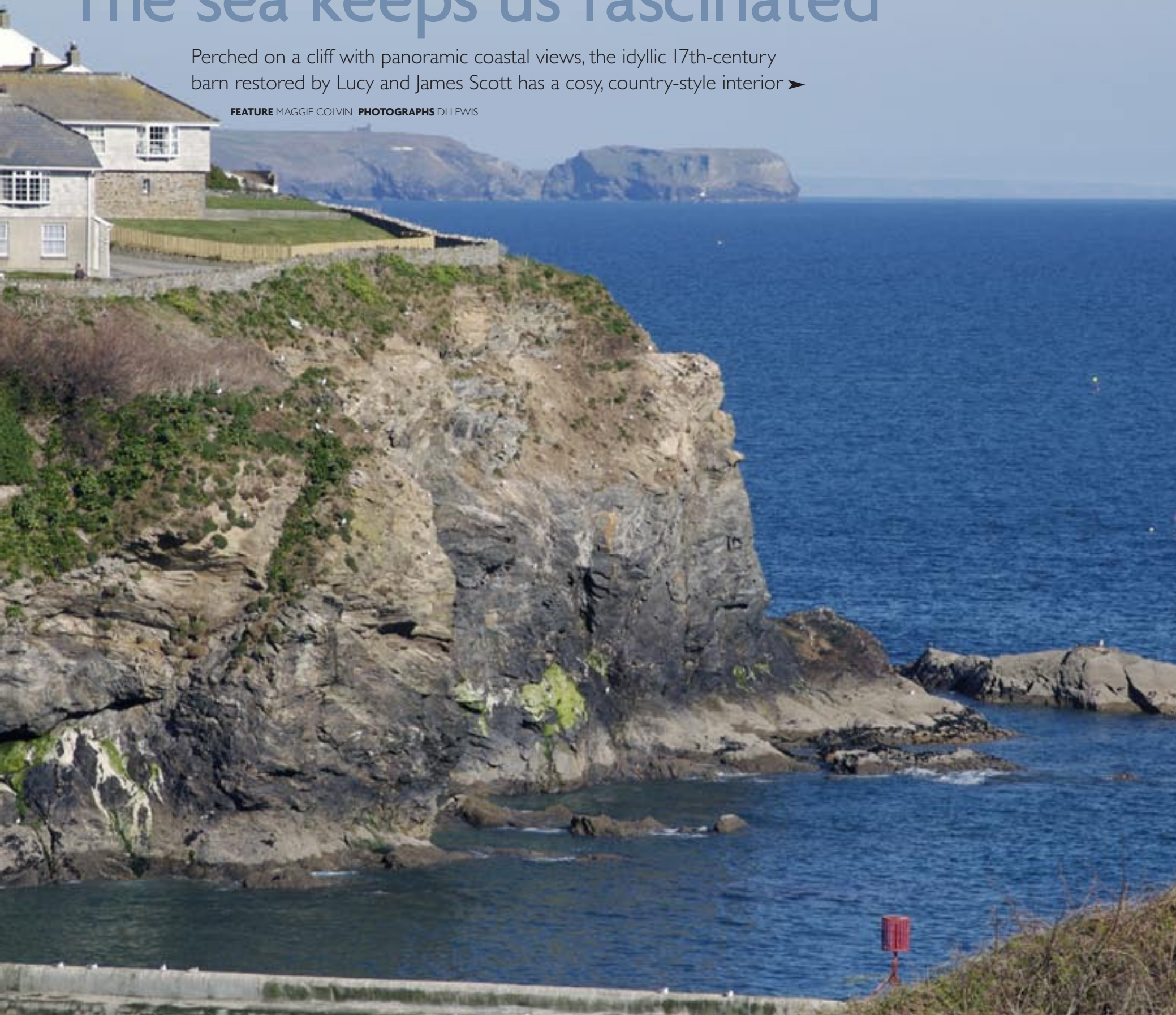


‘The sea keeps us fascinated’

Perched on a cliff with panoramic coastal views, the idyllic 17th-century barn restored by Lucy and James Scott has a cosy, country-style interior ➤

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN PHOTOGRAPHS DI LEWIS



Cornish barn conversion



About the owners

Lucy Scott is a retired theatrical wardrobe consultant and her husband James, who used to work in insurance and property, now runs a holiday letting business. They have four grown-up children – Emily, Harriet, Daniel and Fred, and three grandchildren, plus a border terrier called Maude and black Labrador Welby

What we love most about living here ‘The pace of life in Cornwall offers an unparalleled quality of life’

Our biggest decorating disaster ‘Buying a run-down farmhouse with three dilapidated barns has meant we’ve been living with builders ever since. But we wouldn’t change a thing...’



To tone with the slate and stone exterior, the window frames of the barn were painted in Parma Gray by Farrow & Ball. All the stones and slates were found on site and recycled.

At home in...

Location Cornwall

Building A converted mill dating back to the 1640s, set in 50 acres of farmland

Rooms Drawing room, hall-cum-sitting room, dining room, kitchen, laundry, four bedrooms, four en-suite bathrooms

Moved in 2004 from Surrey



The circular drawing room is painted in Antique Cream by Crown, the L-shaped seating unit came from Ikea and the end tables from RK Alliston. The Persian rugs are heirlooms. In the snug (left) the sofa is covered in kilim rugs from Nomad Ideas; the wood-burning stove was made in Denmark by Scan.

Buzzards circle around the cliffs and the sound of waves and seagulls can be heard from the terrace of Lucy and James Scott's idyllic home. 'We used to live in Surrey,' says Lucy, 'but as we have always enjoyed happy family holidays in Cornwall, we wanted to move here to be closer to our youngest daughter, Emily, and her husband and children who now live in Port Isaac.'

So, in 2004 they bought 50 acres of farmland with a farmhouse and three dilapidated barns. Consequently they have been living with builders ever since, gradually restoring the property in a way that can only be described as a labour of love. 'I think a lot of our friends thought we were batty and I have to say we do feel a bit batty having lived with bulldozers for so long,' says James. 'We were about to buy a sensible house nearby, then an estate agent rang and said he had found something much more interesting. He warned us that the house was not up to much, but the location was breathtaking. How right he was. We bought the property for the location.'

High above the cliffs, overlooking a blue Atlantic seascape facing west towards America, the Scotts now watch a hundred different sensational sunsets with awe. 'Sometimes a red sun dips, hits the horizon and explodes red sparkle over a dusky sea. Other times we watch lightning flash over black stormy waters,' says Lucy. 'We never get bored with this dramatic view and we never take it for granted. We watch passing sea frigates, fishing vessels, sailing boards and windsurfers and huge air carriers on their way to Bristol. The sea traffic alone keeps us fascinated, quite apart from the wildlife.' The property hadn't been on the market since 1912, which meant it had ➤



1 2



The pretty dining room has a Scandinavian feel with the walls painted in Antique Cream by Crown. The chairs came from John Lewis; the painted dresser from Acorn Antique Interiors in Wadebridge; and storm lanterns from RK Alliston. The blue and white Cornishware in the dresser came from Glanvilles of Wadebridge.



‘We were about to buy a sensible house nearby, then an estate agent rang and said he had found something much more interesting...’

been passed down through several generations and was in a poor state. The farmhouse had plastic windows, concrete rendering and no central heating or running water. The stone barns had earth floors and were falling down.

As James and Lucy had their hearts set on living in the biggest barn, they hired a planning consultant to interpret James’s ideas and get them past the local planning office. ‘We bought the barns without planning consent, which is always a bit of a gamble,’ says James. The planning consultant I chose had already obtained permission to convert a barn nearby so I was confident he could do the same for us. I scribbled my ideas on to the back of an envelope and luckily he was able to draw them out professionally so that the builders could understand what we wanted.’

In order to fit in four bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms, Lucy and James decided to forfeit the luxury of a double-height living space – they still enjoy vaulted ceilings and exposed roof trusses on the top floor. They were delighted when news came through that they had not only got planning permission for the main barn, but also to restore the round room where the old granite mill wheel used to be powered – probably by a donkey. ‘Luckily the old foundations and a low stone wall still marked the outline of this circular shape,’ says Lucy. ‘It means we now enjoy the bonus of a round summer drawing room, as well as a winter snug laid out around a wood-burning stove. Our daughter Harriet, who is a landscape gardener, inspired us to attach an iron balcony to encircle this room. It has become the star turn – a really unusual architectural feature and the circular balcony is a great place to sit and watch the sunrise.’

Most of the building materials were recycled, such as the slate and the lintels that Lucy and James collected from the surrounding fields, often in ➤



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1 The neutral coloured kitchen has pale wood units by Moben, with a toning stone floor from Stone Supplies. The blinds are from Just Fab in Launceston.

2 The clock is an inherited piece; the chair came from Acorn Antique Interiors.

3 The dining room tablecloth is Cath Kidston; the white china came from Ikea.

4 The main bedroom is painted in Antique Cream by Crown. The carpet came from Crucial Trading, the pink patterned bedspread was made up in a Romo fabric,

and the white bedlinen came from The White Company. **5** The bathroom fittings all came from Antique Bathrooms of Ivybridge. The toile blinds were found at Just Fab.



4 5



'I like a combination of shabby chic and restful homeliness – quite conventional really. Some furniture was inherited, so I had a useful start'

the rain in winter. 'We were determined to recycle as much as possible,' says James. 'All the stone was already here, lying about, so we bought a stone-cutting machine to cut it all to the required size.'

Choosing colour schemes and furniture was the final task, which fell to Lucy, and, since she began life in the theatre as a wardrobe mistress, she obviously has an inherently good eye. 'I am a neutral sort of person,' she says. 'I like a combination of shabby chic and restful homeliness – quite conventional really. Some of the furniture was inherited, such as the kilim-covered sofa, so I had a useful starting point. James bought the leather chairs on eBay and I found the sandy coloured, L-shaped seating unit in Ikea. Other smart accessories, like the storm lanterns, came from my daughter Harriet's shop in London. Best of all, I discovered a great antiques shop in Wadebridge, selling old furniture from eastern Europe painted soft, chalky colours.'

Since the project began they have moved telegraph poles and discovered their own bore holes. Despite all this, they are thoroughly enjoying their labour of love so the conversion and restoration will continue. 'We never intended to buy 50 acres,' says James, 'and we never intended to start holiday lets. We really fell into it and now we love it so much we can't really stop.' *James and Lucy Scott's converted barn is available to let through Unique Home Stays, 01637 881942, uniquehomestays.com*



On our doorstep Lucy and James Scott's insiders' guide to what to see and do this month in Cornwall

■ **Visit...** 'The beach at Trebarwith Strand – the sea air is so refreshing and the landscape totally unspoilt. It's where we walk the dogs and watch the surfers'

■ **Go for a meal at...** The New Harbour Restaurant in Newquay (01637 874062) because it has a wonderful choice of fresh fish and a great ambience'

■ **Shop at...** 'Seapinks Gifts in Port Isaac (01208 880033) for vintage style. It has a collection of unusual nautical accessories'