

Sarah enjoys the mild weather on her pretty patio with brightly painted iron furniture



Many of the treasures in Sarah's home have been items she's rescued or discovered on eBay and up-cycled, such as the Ercol coffee table which is painted with Annie Sloan chalk paint



The charm of a Cornish Pixie

Sarah Stanley envisioned a haven where guests could relax when she bought her chocolate-box cottage

Born and raised in the small tight-knit farming hamlet of Trebudannon in Cornwall, Sarah Stanley, had always felt a certain magnetism to the wild and dramatic setting of North Cornwall's moorland towns and villages. A successful business owner and busy single mother to three children; Bryce, 18, Josh, 17 and Morgane, 15, Sarah's rare moments of downtime were often spent enjoying long windswept walks on Bodmin moor. With its rugged landscape and whispers of legend harking back to times past, the moor was a special place where Sarah could really unwind and forget the stresses of the working day.



All of the windows in the sitting room have been given a bright outlook with gorgeous Designers Guild curtains, The sofa from Sofa.com adds a luxurious touch



During a bracing winter afternoon walk through the hamlet of Warleggan in November 2011, Sarah happened across a beautiful moorland cottage displaying a for sale sign in the front garden. With its chocolate-box appeal and bags of character and charm, she was instantly smitten. Sarah explains: 'With my three children growing up and becoming more independent, I'd often toyed with the idea of buying a ▷



Good idea!

Consider up-cycling old furniture and thrift store finds to give them a new lease of life and create unique and personal statement pieces which can't be found anywhere else.



▲ Sarah has utilised an unused alcove to provide comfy seating, with a view out of the window



INSIDER INFO

THE HOME

A Grade II listed 300-year-old former miner's cottage, in Warleggan, North Cornwall.

WHO LIVES HERE?

Sarah Stanley, a business owner and entrepreneur.

ANY DIY DISASTERS?

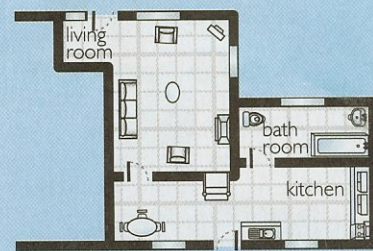
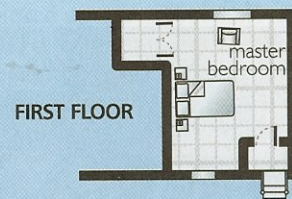
'I had been stripping and sanding floors for three days and was mentally and physically exhausted. I was ready to hang up my tools for the day when one of the expensive Venetian mirrors fell from its resting place and smashed all over the floor ruining all my hard work! I could've wept, but calmly walked away from the mess, locked the front door, and went home to return with a calmer outlook the next day when I could approach the damage with a clear head!'

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE

'I was looking to create a 'happy haven', somewhere that felt like a real escape from the rat race. I wanted to transform the cottage into a light-filled home with lots of interesting and quirky finds. 'Kitsch, contemporary, country cottage-style' perhaps best summarises the look I was aiming to achieve.'

WHAT WAS THE BEST BIT ABOUT THE WHOLE PROJECT?

'Pixie Nook is so original that it now achieves numerous bookings throughout the year when we are not staying here and has generated a great second income for me and my family. If you'd like to stay at Pixie Nook visit www.uniquehomestays.com and enjoy your own little slice of Cornish heaven yourself!'



GROUND FLOOR

For stockists see page 122



The original country-style kitchen cabinetry was retained, but painted to bring it up-to-date. The splashback tiles really add a feminine charm and shabby-chic flavour to the kitchen

‘My vision was to create a unique and welcoming home where guests could kick back and unwind.’

◀ small property to convert into a holiday rental to give me a renovation project to pour myself into.’ She adds: ‘As soon as I saw Pixie Nook I knew it would be perfect and, following a viewing which confirmed the great potential and cosy ambience within, I made an offer.’



▲ The beautiful patchwork hand-crafted tiles were chosen from the Vintage range at Welbeck Tiles

With her offer accepted, Sarah soon made a start on the project by seeking the expertise of a local building firm to advise her on the potential for renovation. She knew that the previous owners had already enhanced the period cottage by extending it to create a downstairs bathroom, adding a new staircase, and fitting a new country-style kitchen. The building firm advised that the overall structure of the former miner’s cottage was completely sound and so Sarah made the decision that, to remain within her budget, the work undertaken would be primarily cosmetic. Boasting characterful original features such as an inglenook fireplace, exposed stone walls and beamed ceilings, Pixie Nook already had all the country cottage basics in place. The challenge would be to give the cottage the modern twist Sarah envisaged, whilst still retaining the original features which gave the cottage its charm.

Sarah explains: ‘My vision was to create a unique and welcoming home where guests could kick back and unwind.’ She adds: ‘It was important that the renovation would

transform Pixie Nook into an interesting and stylish space, whilst also ensuring it was somewhere friends and family would feel at home when visiting.’ The previous owners had stained the floorboards and ceiling beams with an imposing dark wood stain, and so in order to brighten the cosy living areas and give the illusion of more space, the first thing to do was to strip and paint all the woodwork in the cottage and re-paint the drab magnolia walls. Sarah opted to use Farrow & Ball Old White on all interior walls to create a fresh backdrop which gave a nod to the vintage vibe, and a slightly warmer shade for the floorboards which were then lacquered to promote longevity. ‘Farrow & Ball paint has a wonderful luminosity with no undertone of grey which is sometimes present in other paints,’ Sarah explains. The result was an instantly brighter and more modern living space, and a clean canvas on which to begin the interior styling.

Taking inspiration from her beloved moorland, Sarah embraced the cottage’s setting by opting for Designers Guild fabrics with a floral theme which reminded her of

Good idea!

Something as simple as painting a radiator can add depth and character to an otherwise neutral room.



▶ Sarah says: 'The kitchen dresser was already in the house when I bought it. I asked the previous owner if he could include it in the sale and luckily he agreed. It fits like a glove into this corner of the kitchen and with the addition of pretty crockery from Pip Studio, really enhances and brightens this cute nook.'

▶ Sarah has made good use of boxed-in pipework by incorporating small shelves to store a collection of candles and using the surface above to store her cookery books

▼ The Ercol bi-fold table and matching chairs were a lucky eBay find which were then painted with chalk paint to tone in with the jewelled-hue theme. The pink blinds from B&Q finish off the space perfectly



the wild flowers found on Bodmin moor. 'The bold over-sized curtains add a feminine twist to the living room and bedroom, whilst also suggesting a certain elegance and romance which is quite unexpected in an old miner's cottage!' smiles Sarah. A vibrant palette of jewel-inspired hues was introduced, and these vibrant pops of colour really enhance the feeling of luxury and sumptuousness. The pure cotton matt velvet sofa was a purchase from sofa.com, and is aptly named Bluebell. Teals, punchy pinks and deep purples were peppered throughout, and it is this thematic approach which provides a calming continuity to the cottage and ensures each room flows beautifully to the next.

One of the things Sarah relished most about styling and furnishing the cottage, was the thrill of finding pre-loved items which she then up-cycled to transform into original and quirky pieces. The stool in the bedroom was picked up at a car boot sale and given a new lease of life by transforming it with chalk paint from Annie Sloan. 'Chalk paint creates a lovely wash which looks like old painted furniture,' explains Sarah. 'It is very easy to work with as it allows people to be creative without having to get involved with the technicalities of preparation.' The bedside tables were an eBay find and revitalised with chalk paint and handles bought from Graham & Green. The charming bedside tea cup lamps have the look of a quirky homemade project, but were actually bought from Next, a great find which fits in perfectly with the romantic and whimsical nature of the bedroom. The 'Angelica' upholstered king-size bed enhances this theme, and was found at sofa.com and adorned with crisp white ▷



The cushions on the bed are from Dunelm Mill and add a luxurious colour pop to the fresh white backdrop. The tea cup lamp is from Next but Sarah has made it her own with a pompom trim



‘I wanted to frame the traditional cottage windows with swathes of gorgeous floral fabric to reflect the wild flowers found on the moor.’

◁ bed linen from The White Company.

The clever fusion of old and new, combined with flourishes of luxury-boho style throughout the house has brought about a very special cottage which Sarah Stanley is proud to call home. The crowning jewel being the hot tub in the pretty cottage garden which truly affords her the getting-away-from-it-all escapism she longed for when originally taking this project on. Sarah grins: ‘It is the perfect place to watch dramatic moorland sunsets whilst enjoying a glass of wine after a hard day running the business, it is pure bliss!’ **YH**

◀ Beautiful oversized Designer Guild fabric curtains were the final touch in the bedroom. Sarah explains: ‘I wanted to frame the traditional windows with swathes of gorgeous floral fabric to reflect the wild flowers found on the moor, these work beautifully and provide a sense of drama!’

5 IDEAS TO STEAL



▲ This vintage sideboard was actually a pre-loved item belonging to Sarah's mum. She gave it a modern twist by painting one of the doors to tone in with the blues of the bedroom, and recovered the old stool she found at a car boot in the same colour

Good idea!

Introducing different textures is a great way to create interest; knitted floor stools, velvet headboards and frilly shower curtains are all clever ways to add to the overall effect.

Drama is the theme in the bathroom. This cosy space was given a splash of rainbow flavour with a flamenco-style shower curtain courtesy of Anthropologie. The ruffles cascade from tangerine to hot pink and echo the ruffles of a flamenco dancer's skirt. The bath tub was from the Cast Iron Bath Company and up-cycled with Annie Sloan chalk paint

▼ 'The Venetian mirrors in the bathroom and bedroom were both from Graham & Green and were more expensive than planned, especially with the breakage and needing to replace one of them, but I think that they make a fabulous addition,' says Sarah



Rectangular log basket in Grey Wash, £29.97, Tesco Direct

1 ADD SOME COUNTRY CHIC

Wicker and woven accessories can add a really cosy feel to any room. This simple but pretty basket from Tesco Direct is perfect for storing firewood in your living room, but also works as a great way to disguise clutter or even hold magazines.

2 CHEAT A LUXURY BOUDOIR

Sarah's bed is the epitome of luxury and is the main feature in her bedroom. If you don't have enough space for such a luxurious and extravagant bedstead, try purchasing a headboard for a more affordable and space-saving alternative.

3 DON'T BE AFRAID OF COLOUR

Sarah has proven that being bold with colour can create a really striking room. Choose smaller accessories like cushions and footstools to add vibrancy to a room without being over-powering.



Caravan embroidered pouffe, £75, M&S

4 DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

Sarah's home is adorned with unique items that create a truly individual and magical feel. To re-create the look, choose unusual and wacky designs when purchasing accessories.



Ceramic teacup lamp, £50, Next

5 USE PRETTY TILES

Patterned and coloured tiles can make kitchen splashbacks a dominant feature. Sarah has used Welbeck's hand-crafted patchwork wall tiles to achieve this look. Try Topps Tiles mosaic tiles, which are less daring, but still as effective.



Arabia blue mosaic tiles, £14.99 for a 30.3cm x 30.3cm sheet, Topps Tiles