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A BARNSTORMING PERFORMANCE

Many might have been daunted at the thought of taking on not one, but two Grade 2 listed barns, but not Cotswold designer Pippa Paton, who launched into the project with great gusto

WORDS: Victoria Jenkins ♦
PICTURES: William Goddard



As soon as the old barn came into view at the end of the drive, designer Pippa Paton knew she loved it. It was built in 1867, was Grade 2 listed and, even better, came with a second barn of the same age and listing close by.

“The first barn had been converted in 1992 and actually had underfloor heating, good insulation and double glazing so we kept it all,” says Pippa. “However, the ground floor seemed full of walls and corridors, plus the main room was in pale green and pink with an orange pine ceiling. The second barn was still in its original state except for a tiny flat.”

At the time of viewing the Patons had not yet sold their own house; but once they had, and after a series of coincidences, they were able to buy the barns in just 24 hours. “And that includes the exchange of contracts. Our lawyers sat up all night,” says Pippa.

That was in 2011, and for nine months the Patons, with their children, Scarlett 14 and Max 17,

‘The dining area is double height and open to the roof where the purlins and trusses have been sandblasted and white waxed’

lived in the first barn along with Summer the sprocker spaniel and their four cats.

“We spent the time deciding what to change and waiting for planning permission and listed building consent,” says Pippa. “Then when this was granted, we moved into the tiny flat in the barn next door. Somehow we managed to cram ourselves into that for another nine months while work began on the main barn.”

The tiny flat consisted of a very small kitchen, bathroom, sitting room which doubled up as a bedroom plus another small bedroom for the children. “All our possessions had to be stored in two big containers in one of our other outbuildings,” says Pippa.

The work on the first barn included installing an air



A corner of the open-plan seating area near the main entrance



Pippa's dining table is an old steel work table. She had a smaller version made to add on to the end so up to 24 people can be seated. Enormous vintage Murano chandeliers hang over the table and the pervasive paint colour is Anthracite



source heat pump, rewiring and replumbing, designing an inside glass walkway, moving both a staircase and the front door, laying underfloor heating and removing almost every wall and door downstairs.

“We stripped everything back,” says Pippa. “We wanted to make it all open-plan for the kitchen, dining and sitting rooms. Many people do this, then seem not to know how to fill such a big space – it’s what I call “broken-plan.” One of the ways we’ve delineated each area is by having different flooring and using layered lighting which can be dimmed or brightened.”

However, the couple built a few walls too to create a boot room and pantry.

“These act as extra work areas to the kitchen,” says Pippa. “So although the main kitchen is on view to guests they don’t see any clutter. Plus we had to keep one particularly solid wall as the structure of the barn did not allow us to demolish it. So we had to design the new kitchen round it.”

In fact just about every aspect of the original barn has been



changed except for the enormous glazed panels on either side “These were the original open-air barn entrances, big enough to allow farm carts to enter and leave,” says Pippa.

At the same time they demolished an adjoining garage and designed and built a structure with a deliberately-contemporary look on its site. This was to link the two barns and also create their entrance hall and a formal drawing room

TOP:
Pippa’s own joinery team made the cabinetry to her design

ABOVE:
The sofas are by George Smith, the chandelier and wall lights are vintage Murano glass, and the clock has a vintage face

on a slightly lower level.

The work took until the Easter of 2013 and finally the family could move into their newly renovated barn.

Then they began redesigning the second barn.

“This now contains two bedrooms and a bathroom above while the ground floor is a largely open-plan kids’ area so they can have their friends over without disturbing us,” says Pippa. “There’s also an en suite

CLOCKWISE

FROM RIGHT:

A vintage Murano glass chandelier resembling icicles hangs from the pitched roof. The bed and side tables are by Simon Horne and Pippa painted them white; The wallcovering is by Tektura with a design by Laura Hart. The console table is by Andrew Martin; The bedlinen and cushions in Scarlett's bedroom are by The White Company; This shows the newly-built glass link between the two listed Grade 2 Victorian barns now converted into a five bedroom home; The couple's own bathroom was particularly hard to design as it was a long narrow room with a low-hanging beam. The joinery is bespoke with a resin floor. The basin and bath are from Bathstore with a bespoke frame and the shower is lined in Corian

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guest bedroom at the end. We now have five bedrooms, one of which is used as a study, and three bathrooms."

The Patons' new home is certainly dramatic. The dining area is double height and open to the roof where the purlins and trusses have been sandblasted and white waxed. "They were in a rather orange pine but now they visually recede," says Pippa.

In some rooms she has exposed the original Cotswold stone for a textured effect and has made the formal drawing room sunken to take advantage of the garden views.

Her joinery team hand-built her kitchen which includes an extra-long stainless steel-topped island while the dining table is an old steel work table. "It's incredibly heavy and I had a smaller version made to add on to the end so we can seat up to 24 people," she says.

Enormous vintage Murano



chandeliers hang over it and a bronze Highland bull made by sculptor Tessa Campbell-Fraser presides over the scene.

"It's a big space but it still feels cosy," says Pippa. "And although we're in the middle of an Oxfordshire village we feel we're deep in the countryside. You can't

see any other houses from the rear of our home." ♦

*Award-winning interior designer and spatial planner Pippa has now launched her first book **Twenty First Century Cotswolds**, published by Momentum Books and Amazon.*

