

Bespoke beauty

DAVID KIRKBY'S DREAM WAS A HOME WHERE HE COULD RELAX AND UNWIND AND BE THE PERFECT HOST - TO MAKE IT A REALITY HE BUILT IT HIMSELF



House The oak frame of the barn is a beautiful feature both inside (as shown in the living room, right) and out. Similar front door paint colour, Vert De Terre by Farrow & Ball.

SURREY NEW-BUILD BARN



Living area Blue accents are pulled out to give the neutral palette interest. Bespoke sofas, stools, Alexander James Interior Design in Romo fabric. Coffee table, Andrew Martin. Console, Decorus. >>



AT HOME WITH...

Owner David Kirkby, the owner of Kirkby Homes (kirkbyhomes.com). He moved in in 2015.

House A four-bedroom new-build house with a French oak frame.

Surrounded by mature trees and paddocks filled with horses, David Kirkby's new-build barn with its rustic wooden cladding and pretty red roof tiles occupies an idyllic country setting. So it is difficult to believe that the location hasn't always been so picturesque. 'Originally there was an old run-down pig farm here that had been out of use for more than 60 years,' says David. 'It was a bit of an eyesore, but I liked the surrounding land and the fact that it's very easy to get to the South Downs.'

As the founder of Kirkby Homes, David knows a thing or two about building houses and he was keen to create a weekend bolthole for himself in this part of Surrey. He bought the land in 2014 and got planning permission to build three houses – one of which he planned to keep – with five acres, stables and a manège.

'I wanted to build a modern rustic barn filled with light,' says David. 'My vision was to create something bespoke in French oak.' To make this a reality, David worked with architectural technologist Jason O'Donnell of Arktec to come up with an oak-clad property. 'In the end, I drew up the design for a chic yet comfortable country home and Jason made it work,' says David.

The bespoke French oak frame was made by a company that David has worked with before. The »

Living area Bi-fold doors allow for easy entertaining indoors and outdoors. **Dining table, Andrew Martin. Dining chairs, Eichholtz. Bespoke cushions, Alexander James Interior Design in fabrics by Ashley Wilde, Designers Guild, Kai and Thibaut.**



Dining hall This vaulted space with floor-to-ceiling glazing is a wonderful place to entertain. **Table, chairs, Julian Chichester. Bespoke rug, DSH Flooring.**



*What I love most living about here...
‘It is such a pleasure to head out into the countryside for my regular afternoon stroll’*



The property also includes stabling for several horses.

building work took around 10 months and included the installation of underfloor heating throughout the property and the addition of concealed solar panels on the roof to help keep bills low.

David was determined that his home would have the wow factor and so wooden beams and vaulted ceilings are a feature of every room. ‘I wanted to see the wooden framework and I am delighted with the finished result. It looks beautiful and I love how it blends into the surrounding area,’ he says. In addition, his desire for a light-filled house was achieved with floor-to-ceiling glazing at the entrance and in the main bedroom at the rear, plus large bi-fold doors in the dining area and skylights in the kitchen.

The glazing at the entrance sets the scene for an impressive dining hall. ‘I love entertaining and I decided to use the large reception room at the front of the house as a dining space. The high ceiling gives it a wonderfully atmospheric feel and it also looks lovely when viewed from the outside at night-time.’

In good weather, David entertains on the patio at the back of the house where doors in the breakfast room can be opened up. ‘I love the way the space flows and outdoors becomes part of indoors,’ he says.

As the outdoors was an integral part of David’s vision, he employed garden designer Clifford Stanley, »

Kitchen

Skylights above the island flood the space with light. Units, similar from John Lewis [of Hungerford]. Bar stools, similar from Garden Trading.

Dining hall

(Above left) Bespoke armchair, Alexander James Interior Design in Thibaut fabric. Occasional table, Porta Romana.



En suite David opted for a freestanding bath, which is reflected in a mirrored wall panel. **Bath**, similar from Soak. **Blind**, similar from John Lewis.

Main bedroom An oversized headboard makes the most of the vaulted space. **Bespoke bed, sofa**, by Alexander James Interior Design in Romo fabric. **Bedside tables**, Julian Chichester.

What makes this house a home...
 'The open-plan layout creates a relaxing space that's ideal for spending time with family and friends'



Guest bedroom
 A headboard in leather adds another textural element to the scheme. **Bespoke bed**, Alexander James Interior Design in Crest Leather fabric. **Bedlinen**, The White Company. **Bedside table, Flamant. Lamp**, Chelsom at Houseology.

an RHS Chelsea Flower Show Gold Medal winner, to design and landscape the garden.

When it came to styling the interior, David enlisted the help of Alexander James Interior Design. Rebecca Soulsby, the interior designer who worked on the project, says, 'Our brief was to create an interior that was sympathetic to the structure and style of the property. David wanted to achieve rooms that had personality, but that still had a luxurious feel.'

The elegant look that David wanted is underpinned by a pale colour palette and extensive use of natural materials. 'The chosen accent colours of soft blues and chalky greens were influenced by the rural surroundings,' says Rebecca. 'And at every point we aimed to enhance the beautiful beams in the property.'

David selected handpainted Shaker cabinets to complement the oak framework in the kitchen, adding skylights to bring in more light. 'I was after a particular look that was achieved by having extra light over the island,' he says. The modern rustic style continues in the bathroom with a contemporary freestanding bath and wooden washstand.

'A house like this is a lifestyle choice,' says David. 'It's so relaxing here – it recharges my batteries.'

✉ **Alexander James Interior Design, 0118 932 0828, aji.co.uk.** »

ON MY DOORSTEP...

Visit... 'The South Downs Way - I love to cycle from Shackleford to the Devil's Punch Bowl. The views are stunning and there are loads of country pubs on the way.'

Shop at... 'Greyfriars Vineyard (01483 813712, greyfriarsvineyard.co.uk).

Set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, this vineyard produces a wonderful English sparkling wine.'

Go for a meal at... 'The Kennels at Goodwood (01243 755132, goodwood.com/estate/the-kennels). This restaurant offers a lunch experience that is off the charts!'

FEATURE VIVienne AYERS PHOTOGRAPHS BRENT DARBY