

# The Telegraph Magazine

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## GAME ON

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## SAINT OR SINNER?

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after five years  
of Pope Francis

PLUS THE FINE ART OF COSMETIC SURGERY ROSE PRINCE'S SPRING FEASTING SIMON WILLIAMS ON DEATH IN THE ARCHERS





LUCY RATHBONE and Tor Vivian have known each other since they were 18, when they met through friends in London. In the ensuing quarter of a century, much water has flowed under bridges: Vivian set up her own interior-design company, having worked at Sotheby's and for designers Anthony Collett and Chester Jones; while Rathbone has made a career as a jazz singer. Over the years, Vivian has helped her friend with the decoration of her London house and a chalet in Megève, so when Rathbone and her husband, Nick Addyman, bought a small estate in East Sussex, including three cottages and various outbuildings, she knew who to call.

Vivian is enthusiastic about working with friends. 'You already understand their taste, how they like to live, what their priorities are,' she says. For her part, Rathbone says working with Vivian is 'fantastic fun: I do my thing of being colourful and creative, Tor brings her practical knowledge and experience, and her eye for balance and proportion, and we meet in the middle.'

All these skills were required for this project. The house, which was built in the 1950s, is reached down a long drive through fields of wheat and barley, and sits on a gentle rise in the land at the foot of the Sussex Downs. The exterior has an Arts and Crafts feel: tile-hung, gabled, with tall, chunky chimneys; and the L-shaped structure has a half-timbered wing at one end that looks older than the rest of the building. Indeed, this part of the house was originally a barn from a nearby farm, dating from 1790, which was bought by the people who built the house, dismantled, and reconstructed here as an extension.

The more recent owners, from whom Rathbone and Addyman bought

# Something for the weekend

Lucy Rathbone and her husband have transformed a 1950s country house with an 18th-century extension into a modern home – and the perfect retreat for family and friends. By Ros Byam Shaw.

Photography by Alun Callender



**Right** The kitchen is one of the only rooms in the house that had been finished when Rathbone and Addyman bought it. The kitchen table has a sheet-copper top, which tarnishes to a beautiful patina



the house, had started an ambitious makeover, putting in a new kitchen and marble flooring. 'But nothing was finished,' says Vivian, 'so the interior was pretty much a blank canvas.'

It's a big house with big rooms. A double-height entrance hall with a grand staircase sits between the study and drawing room to its left, and the dining room and kitchen to its right.

**'I do my thing in being colourful and creative, Tor brings her practical knowledge'**

A second hall and boot room link the kitchen to the barn, and upstairs are six bedrooms, dressing rooms, bathrooms and a laundry room. The family brought some inherited paintings and a few pieces of furniture with them, but everything else had to be bought. 'We found things all over the place, from Sotheby's to antiques fairs, to shops such as Julian Chichester,' says Vivian. 'It helps that Lucy is really

**Right** The main bathroom features a Victoria and Albert boat bath from BC Designs. **Far right** Lucy Rathbone in the drawing room with the family dog



**Previous page** The double-height entrance hall sits between the study and drawing room on one side, and the kitchen and dining room on the other. The front door faces French windows that open on to the garden. Curtains are in a Nicky Haslam fabric, the stripy rug is from Vaughan and the zigzag cushions are from Portobello Road market





**Right** The drawing room has two seating areas, this one arranged around the fireplace. The sofas that flank the fireplace are Beaumont & Fletcher, while the wooden-framed sofa is antique and upholstered in a vibrant ikat by Kravet. The back of the sofa is upholstered in Osborne & Little Kediri silk.

**Far right** The exterior of the house, showing the renovated barn, which is an extension of the main, newer building

decisive. I could bring her an auction catalogue and she would immediately pick out the things she liked.'

Now the house is finished, the barn is restored and fully insulated, and vibrant fabrics chosen by Rathbone on trips to the Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour brighten every room, whether it's the apple green of the Christopher Farr curtains in the kitchen, the rich red of the Nicky Haslam fabric that hangs at the French windows in the hall and din-

**'There's a pool, tennis court, ponds, a boathouse... there's even a miniature castle'**

ing ROOM, or the large-scale ikat in fuchsia and tangerine on the antique sofa facing the drawing-room fireplace.

While the couple's two daughters are still at primary school in London, visiting the house is a weekend and holiday treat. 'We have camping parties for their friends,' says Rathbone. 'There's a swimming pool, a tennis court, ponds, a river, a boathouse... there's even a



miniature castle – a castellated 18th-century folly in the grounds of the local manor house. It's heaven for children.' They plan to move here full-time when the girls change schools.

'It works so well as a family house,' says Rathbone. 'We use the drawing room when we have guests, but when it's just the four of us, we tend to gather in the barn.' Here there is a deep corner sofa, piled with cushions, and a wood-burning stove. This is also the room they use when they host shooting parties. The sofa is modular and easily moved, and chairs and trestle tables to seat up to 40 guests are stored behind the chimney breast. 'A good example of Tor's practicality,' says Rathbone.

Her career as a singer is on hold while her children grow up. Meanwhile, she has been working part-time for Vivian, putting together mood boards for clients. 'Lucy has such an eye for colour,' says Vivian. 'I think our talents are complementary.' Stylish and relaxed, this house proves her right.

*torinteriors.com*