

ISLAND *dream*

Guernsey meets California with a touch of New England in this stunning home in St Peter Port

The words 'never again' trigger lots of laughter in the Sinclair-Stott household when property projects are discussed.

Having agreed that they would 'definitely not' tackle another major house challenge, Richard and Catherine have just completed their latest beautiful home after a complete rebuild – and are still smiling.

The couple have a strong sense of personal style and their clear ideas translate into knowing precisely what they want from their living space. The latest success is a perfect amalgamation of California style meets New England, with an additional individual twist. There is no evidence of the uninspiring bungalow that preceded it and even the plot

itself has been transformed.

Catherine described the process as 'evolutionary rather than revolutionary' and the family are happy to continue to add the final flourishes as and when they find pieces which are perfect, or as their ideas solidify.

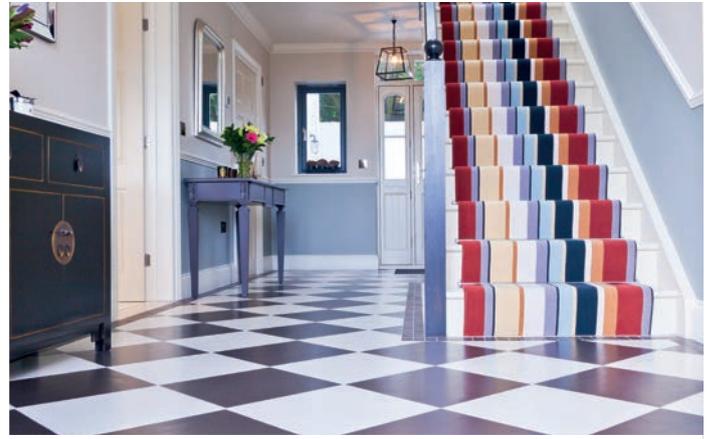
"In the past, we have carried out far larger projects and the basis was very different in the sense that I wanted everything to be finished as part of one process. Here, the house has such a relaxed feel that it doesn't matter to me that, for instance, the formal living room still needs to have soft furnishings changed and a few features sorted out. We just love being here."

It's easy to see why the property is casting some magic. Perched in the peaceful outskirts

of St Peter Port, Guernsey, it enjoys views of the spectacular east coast and other islands and every inch of the house is flooded with natural light. That is the result of a very careful thought process being applied to the aspect on the site, window sizes and the clever use of a large, glazed roof light, among other things.

Richard echoes his wife's enthusiasm for the new family home and is also still impressed with the fact that it came in on budget and deadline. "Amazing! We both know very well how rare that is and it is a tribute to the team that it went as smoothly as it did," he said. 'The team' includes Guernsey-based Bonsai Group's expertise – the timber experts were responsible for supplying the distinctive white timber floor.





Bonsai Installed a custom 'Artwood' diamond white oak floor in the kitchen-diner and added an ebony hand-finished oak one in the snug and sitting room. The Group also supplied British-made 'Turnstyle Designs' custom ironmongery throughout for windows and doors. Architect James Barker from Create worked closely with the couple on the whole project, together with Jason Powers at Northgates Construction, and the build was brought in on time and budget thanks to building contractor Gavin Rihoy and his team at Rihoy and Son Ltd.

Whitewashed floors, internal white wooden shutters and a cohesive mix of mellow blues, greys and greens give the house an impressive sense of space and style. "The interesting thing is that it is not a large house but it feels spacious and I think that is the ultimate success really," said Catherine.

The couple were interested to read recently that total open-plan living is falling out of favour with a growing number of homeowners because they had already decided to buck that particular trend. "We have two boys and love the fact that they enjoy having friends around. We both agreed that there was a good case for having a nice roomy kitchen/diner but separating off other living spaces."

That insightful line of thought resulted in a well-equipped den with TV and squashy sofas, and a formal living room for 'grown up time

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with friends.' Richard pointed out that the formal room has hardly been used "But we still love the fact that it's there is we want it."

The whole place has a 'pared back' feel which is more warm and cosy than minimalist but still cleverly avoids any sense of ' twee'. Catherine confirmed that it was 'a bit of a juggling act' because New England style can be slightly too fussy for their taste.

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While the couple have laid-back personalities, particularly enjoying family time and cooking for friends, they also had firm ideas about what they wanted to achieve from the property project. Every detail has been considered. "I suppose one example of how we

focus on this sort of thing is to point out that we had a very definite radius as to where we would buy a property and that was immovable," said Catherine.

When a friend mentioned that a redevelopment project at Fermain Road could be available, they knew immediately that the location was perfect. "The site looked really small because everything was overgrown, with massive shrubs taking up lots of space," said Richard. It didn't put them off because they could see how landscaping could open up the south-facing side garden and that the plot was actually a generous size.

"We had been renting for a while since selling our last home and we were both absolutely determined that we did not want to take on another big property project. The trouble was that Richard and I both knew we would not find exactly what we wanted either so there was always the suspicion that we would end up with a redevelopment," Catherine conceded, laughing.

The end result is a stunning success and has already prompted one passer-by to ask for the plans so that she can build exactly the same property. If it's true that imitation is a form of flattery, there is going to be a very visible compliment developed elsewhere on Guernsey.

Further information
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