



TIMELINE

- **September 2006**
Bought the cottage
- **October 2006**
Commissioned architects
- **January 2007** Plans approved by council
- **June 2007** Builders began work: cleared site and placed gabions to form walls and hold back hillside. The Garners landscaped garden
- **September 2007** Built two-storey extension
- **November 2007** Renovated original part of house
- **February 2008** Rewired, plastered and decorated
- **March 2008** New kitchen installed. The Garners moved in
- **June 2008** Carpenter built sun deck

LEFT The Woodwarm log-burning stove in the sitting room was from Elaine's Stoves & Flues in Okehampton

BELOW LEFT The Garners landscaped the garden

BELOW The green oak sun deck offers wide rural views



TOP LEFT The black ceramic sink in the kitchen contrasts with the wood units and matches the granite-effect worktops

TOP RIGHT The electric Aga is programmable, which Deborah says, 'Gives us the best of both worlds – traditional with a modern twist'

ABOVE LEFT Deborah's china cheese dishes have a floral design and were made in Germany in the 19th century

ABOVE The Garners brought their wooden dining room furniture with them from their previous house. The red armchair was from John Lewis

'Quite suddenly we were gazing at this fairytale cottage in the woods'

Stuart, which was why he and John were determined there should be no discernible difference between the turn-of-the-century half of the house and the new extension. To that end, they chose exposed stonework, rendered cream walls, windowsills of Dartmoor granite and a roof of reclaimed local slates – specifically, Delabole slate, which has a matchless iridescent sheen.

'Wherever we could, we mirrored details from the original house,' says Stuart, pointing out the yellow brickwork round the windows, the Arts & Crafts-style gables, and even the master bedroom's new bay window that echoes the one in the sitting room.

It is this careful attention to period detail that probably helped persuade the local planning officer to agree to the design. Fortunately the cottage has never been listed and it has no near neighbours, so, with no official objections, builders could be appointed immediately and the work could begin.

'That was two years ago,' says John, 'and back then the track was often impassable, especially during all the rain we had that summer. Much of our heavy building materials had to be delivered via the river track and hauled up by crane.'

'The track, incidentally, was used by Queen Victoria,' he adds. 'She drove along it in her carriage during the rhododendron season to visit the owners of this land, then the Duke and Duchess of Bedford.'

He goes on to explain that it was an earlier Duke of Bedford (husband of the notorious Georgina) who first spotted the idyllic country setting and in >

