

# 25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

## CELEBRATE TOGETHER

### *Homes with heart*

CLASSIC NEW-BUILD ♦ BEAUTIFUL RENOVATED BARN  
LIVING ABOVE THE SHOP

EXCLUSIVE

**20%**

DISCOUNT AT  
**ALISON  
AT HOME**

### THE SOURCE

Clever ideas  
& tips for  
every room

## MOVING ON

‘WITH EACH NEW HOME I START AFRESH’



INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**

Stone cottage

**LOCATION**

West Cork, Ireland

**ROOMS** Sitting room/  
kitchen-diner, study,  
conservatory, three bedrooms  
(one en suite), bathroom

**PURCHASED** 2006

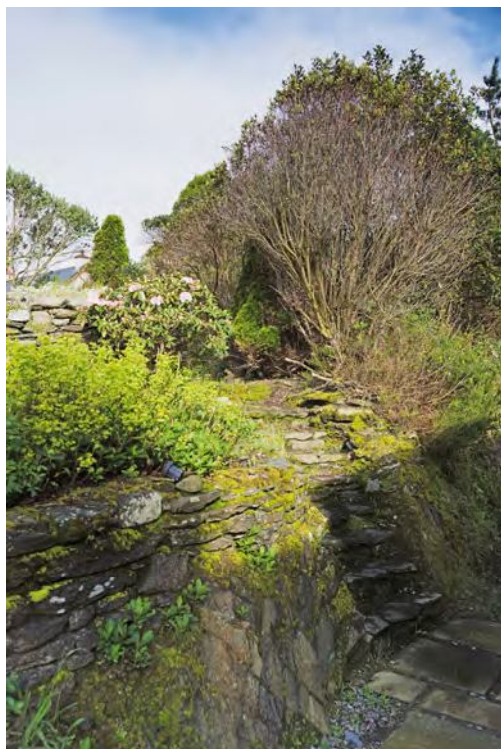
**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**

'My main residence is a Victorian  
terrace in west London,' says Julie.

# Force of NATURE

*Julie Fitzgerald Vitelli turned a cottage beaten by the elements  
into a restful retreat that makes the most of the coastal views*

**FEATURE** PENNY CRAWFORD-COLLINS | **PHOTOGRAPHY** PHILIP LAUTERBACH







#### SITTING ROOM

Check throws add a snug, country-style look. Wool throws, £79.95 each, Bronte by Moon. Ibsen sofa, £3,895, Leather Chairs of Bath, would work well. Rattan basket, £35, Cox & Cox



#### STUDY

The previous owner left this desk, which suits the room perfectly. Waxed pine desk, £75, and child's beech chair, £25, both Heirloom, are similar

When Julie Fitzgerald Vitelli set eyes on an old stone cottage on the coast of West Cork, it was love at first sight. 'I have always adored the Cork coast and was keen to buy a home in the area,' she says. 'When I first looked around nothing ticked the boxes, but months later I heard about a rundown cottage near Bantry. I hopped over from England to take a look and, though it was in a state of decline, the house had character and the views were spellbinding.'

Formerly owned by a retired American artist, the building had become weather-beaten over the years thanks to its unsheltered position, suffering from poor drainage, a leaky roof, rotten floors

and damp walls in places. 'But when I met the owner, his words of encouragement sealed the deal for me,' says Julie.

Despite the huge task that lay ahead, Julie was excited about turning this quaint cottage into a comfortable home. It needed to be fully renovated, with internal reconfiguration, new flooring, stairs, kitchen and bathrooms, and a replacement roof and windows. 'We had to dig out a lot of earth at the back of the property and install land drains,' says Julie. 'It was a bigger project than I had expected.'

Fortunately, help was at hand. 'My father is a retired architect so I knew he would have some innovative ideas for the layout,' says Julie. 'He drew the plans by hand and helped me make the most of the



#### SITTING ROOM

This cosy spot is full of charming features.

Try the lion oversized floor lamp, £250, Baileys Home, for a similar look. Lansdown leather chair, £2,495, Leather Chairs of Bath, is comparable





**KITCHEN-DINER**  
Pale wood and a cream palette keep this low-ceilinged space fresh and bright. Bastide countertop and sink unit, from £3,800, Fired Earth. For a similar table try Neptune Suffolk, £650, John Lewis. Bush cream retro radio, £39.99, Homebase

**DECORATING TIP** ‘Get your backdrop sorted and build on that. For me, it was whitewashed and exposed stone walls, grey flagstone flooring and timber beams for warmth’



**CONSERVATORY**  
This sunny space is great for enjoying garden views. Bower lambswool throw, £48, Avoca, has this look. Painted blue chest, £200, Heirloom





**GUEST BEDROOM**  
**Pretty bedlinen and soft furnishings add colour and pattern.**  
 Oliver single iron bed, £449, Feather & Black.  
 Original BTC rise and fall pendant light, £155, Heal's



**BATHROOM**  
**Julie opted for a slipper bath for extra old-fashioned charm.**  
 Canterbury slipper bath, £1,800, Fired Earth. Bath rack, £55, Baileys Home

available space. We decided on an open-plan living area on the ground floor, and three bedrooms and two bathrooms upstairs.'

When it came to the interiors, Julie took her inspiration from the traditional buildings in the area with their whitewashed walls, exposed stone, timber beams and flagstone floors. 'I was eager to stay true to the spirit of the cottage,' she says. 'I also wanted the atmosphere inside to be as appealing as the external experience.'

Julie sourced simple chairs, leather sofas and wrought-iron beds, and teamed these with vintage finds. 'It's an eclectic look, but I kept it simple with muted colours and sparse patterns – just a few checks and spots,' she says. 'The result is a comfortable, homely feel.' With

a keen interest in art, Julie also aimed to find unusual art and handmade items that would suit the cottage. 'There are plenty of talented artists here, so I picked up pieces from as many of the local galleries and craft shops as I could,' she says. 'I even have one of the previous owner's paintings, which he asked me to retrieve from an exhibition centre in Cork to keep in the cottage. I feel that art is an important part of the building's history.'

Needless to say, Julie enjoys escaping from London to her wonderful retreat. 'I'm so pleased that I managed to retain the property's integrity despite all the work involved,' she says. 'Now I can enjoy the breathtaking views in complete comfort.' 25



**BEDROOM**  
**Keeping some of the stonework exposed adds visual interest.**  
 Herriot headboard, covered in Adele Natural fabric, from £193, and Lemington Polka Dot throw, £55, both Laura Ashley, are comparable

