

LIVING AREA A comfy chair is positioned by the large picture window to make the most of the magnificent views of the coast and surrounding landscape

KITCHEN/DINING AREA
One of Russell's nautical finds – a weathered oyster net – hangs from a beam. The central island provides ample storage for crockery. Island **worktop**, Yaffle & Bosk. Oak **stools**, Cox & Cox

SOUTHERN COMFORT

Perched on a remote Devon clifftop, a dilapidated stable block has been restored into a stylish and sustainable coastal retreat



though it may be a cliché, location, location and, yes, location, was the mantra that drove Russell Jarvis's property search and purchase of a pair of rundown adjoining buildings overlooking the sea just outside the village of Lynton, North Devon. 'For me, these three Ls were simple,' he says. 'First, there was the remote beauty; second, the access to Bath and friends; and third, the variety of the setting.' After living and travelling abroad for five years, Russell was keen to return home to settle, 'I was dreaming of one day owning a house in a special corner of the UK. And Exmoor has wildness, peace and natural beauty, with spectacular sea views and access to the coast.'

Rockton Mews is one part of the renovation. 'I now live in the neighbouring property, Rockton,' Russell explains, adding that the Mews now operates as a coastal retreat so others too can enjoy this beautiful spot. It is a superbly stylish space, and a far cry from its humble origins as a stone barn and open cart shed with stables and hayloft, built about 1870. Modifications over the years, combined with periods of neglect, meant that the building was desperately in need of repair. 'The roof replacement was an epic task,' says Russell, 'but the final job is a work of art. The roofer and I went to great lengths to find reclaimed tiles of the same design, age and even with matching moss and lichens!'

Perched on a rugged clifftop with incredible sea views and surrounded by forest, the property lies in the heart of Exmoor National Park. 'The Gower Peninsula is visible most days and it even enjoys views of the snow on Bannau Brycheiniog in winter,' explains Russell, adding that the house also lies within the North Devon Biosphere and the North Devon World Surfing Reserve.

The property underwent full renovation with rewiring, replastering and replumbing throughout, followed by a hugely

sustainable refit relying as much as possible on reclaimed materials, and adding plenty of character in the process. 'Some of the cabinetry is made from the original room divider boards that we discovered in situ behind 1970s plasterboard walls,' he says. 'We reused them as we found them.' There are also reclaimed pine floorboards and a smattering of vintage and antique pieces, all nicely weathered with time. 'The renovation was all about sustainability, reclaimed, reused and found items,' adds Russell, and all beautifully complemented with areas of exposed stone and varying shades of blue, acting as clever visual connectors to the outside. 'I knew from the outset that I wanted to use colours that mimicked the view of the Atlantic from the house. In a storm, at night or in the winter the sea can look jet black, but in summer it shimmers and is a fantastic azure blue.'

Russell was also keen to engage the skills of local craftspeople. The kitchen was made by a carpenter who lives in the village. 'He's an excellent cabinet maker and a fisherman and was just as likely to drop off some fish as he was to visit me for a design meeting.' The kitchen island work surface is made from local English oak, aged with cider apple vinegar; 'Rob, who made it, just happens to have his workshop next to a cider maker; you could say it's a match made in Devon!' Russell laughs. **Rockton Mews is available to rent via Boutique Retreats, boutique-retreats.co.uk, @RocktonMews**

AT HOME WITH

OWNER Russell Jarvis, who has renovated Rockton Mews from a rundown cottage and stable block, originally built around 1870, into a stylish, modern-rustic coastal retreat.

HOUSE The two-bed property is near to Lynton, on the north Devon coast.



LIVING AREA Situated on the upper level, the room benefits from views of the Atlantic coast, and has access to a terrace.

Sofa, Loaf. Reclaimed Windsor pine **floorboards,** Winkleigh Timber. **Lights,** Otto's Antiques

VIEW OF HARBOUR The village of Lynton lies on the North Devon coast and boasts a small but picturesque harbour. Russell was inspired by this landscape and moody colours of the sea when deciding his décor.

RUSSELL'S COASTAL LIFE

SIMPLE PLEASURES Walking; Rockton Mews is ideally placed on the intersection of the South West Coast Path, The Two Moors Way, The Tarka Trail and the Coleridge Way. It's a hiking and dog-walking paradise.

WHERE TO GO FOR A MEAL For Sunday lunch the Exmoor Forest Inn, now part of the Simonsbath estate, is unbeatable. The food is local, sustainably sourced and the menu changes daily (exmoorforestinn.com).

WHERE TO VISIT I am a member at Sauntton Sands Hotel Source Spa and I try to take a day a week down there, walking on the huge sandy beach before a swim, yoga class, massage or gym session. (saunttonsands.co.uk)

WHERE TO SHOP I like to stop at the coastal village of Porlock Weir to buy fresh oysters from award-winning Porlock Bay Oysters on my way to Lynton from Bath. (porlockbayoysters.co.uk)

LIVING/DINING AREA With an impressive vaulted ceiling, Russell has decorated with reclaimed pieces, including a charming stripped-back armchair. Chair, Emma Leschallas @emmalleschallas. Rug, Ruggable





ENTRANCE HALL Natural slate is perfectly complemented by a dark blue wall colour. Slate floor tiles, Ardosia Slate. Walls in Sumira, Atelier Ellis. Antique wooden bench, Bath Antiques Market (Green Park)



‘The property was once a barn and cart shed, and the sustainable refit relied on reclaimed materials that have added even more character in the process of the renovation’



BEDROOM Clever space-saving accessories such as the wall hanging clothes rail made by local blacksmith, Oli Shelley, add to the overall charm. Pendant lights, eBay. Clothes rail, Oli Shelley





BEDROOM Both bedrooms are en suite and situated on the ground floor. A dark colour on the panelling was chosen to be indicative of the colours of the Atlantic ocean during a storm. Bedside **lights**, Anglepoise

FEATURE SARA EMSLIE
PHOTOGRAPHS MATTHEW HERITAGE

EXTERIOR Surrounded by woodland and with an expansive sea view, Rockton Mews forms one part of the two adjoining properties. It is only visible from the sea, making it the perfect coastal retreat.

EN SUITE The compact bathroom has luxurious touches such as a roll-top bath and space-saving wall-mounted sink. Tubby roll-top **bath**, Albion Bath Co. Broadway **basin**, West One Bathrooms. **Stool**, James Yarrow