



**EXTERIOR** The Tardis-like cottage looks deceptively small from the road but is a lot more spacious inside. It's nestled into the landscape with amazing views all year round, whatever the weather

# HIDDEN COVE

It's a long journey for owners Lettie and Stephen Corbett to reach their beloved seaside cottage on the Isle of Mull, but the views are worth it

A colour-drenched palette across walls and woodwork blurs boundaries to expand a room



**KITCHEN AREA** The soft green shade gives the open-plan space a cocooning feel. **Kitchen**, John Lewis of Hungerford. **Island** painted in Stone Blue by Farrow & Ball. **Pendant lights**, Soho Lighting

**DINING AREA** When the door is thrown open, the room is filled with the fresh scent of the sea air and you can hear the sounds of birdlife from the dining table. **Dining table and chairs**, Justin Flint Antiques





Mull is where Lettie and her husband Stephen spend as much of their free time as possible. Stephen's family live here and the land surrounding Fern Cottage has been farmed by the Corbett family for over 100 years. Growing up, Stephen spent every holiday on Mull – a tradition the couple now repeat with their own young children. The cottage had been rented out for a while, but when the tenant passed away, it needed total renovation and Lettie and Stephen decided to take on the project.

'We had a site visit in early 2020 and as we drove back to London the news about Covid was becoming ominous. Lockdown soon became a reality, so we had to tackle the project remotely.' The couple split tasks between them, with Stephen managing the build, while Lettie planned the interiors. 'We were very fortunate that the project was being handled by an excellent builder and family friend, Donald Brown, but remote communications had many challenges – even the paint choices were made over video calls,' Lettie explains. 'I am not an interior designer, so it all felt a bit risky. I was particularly nervous with my choice of a bright green on the wooden panelling in the main living space. It felt like a big gamble not being on site when the first coat went on, but by this stage I was heavily pregnant.'

They removed walls in the front rooms to create an open-plan layout, as they wanted a space where they could all be together as a family. An extension at the back added two extra bedrooms and a bathroom, and meant they moved the porch to the side of the house. 'Now we can throw open the front door and enjoy the view in all weathers,' Lettie says. 'I wanted the living space to connect directly with the shore in front of us and for our home to have an air of informality. There are no barriers between the inside, the outside and the shoreline.'

The cottage was completed just after their daughter was born, so

Stephen got everything ready with a bit of help. 'Stephen was tasked with taking up a van load of furniture, an itemised spreadsheet and my mother, in lieu of me. After numerous video calls he managed to put the cottage together – a good bonding experience for them both! But it was pretty heartbreaking having spent months sourcing furniture and every last detail down to the knives and forks, not to have been on site to see my vision come together.'

Lettie wanted to bring comfort and convenience to the house but also retain the history and tradition it offered. The furniture and artwork are a mixture of items collected over the years, plus family pieces passed down to them, but importantly, each item has significance. 'We have bought very little new and when we do, we only buy things we love,' Lettie explains.

With a love of colour, Lettie has used it boldly throughout her home. 'I drew inspiration from many sources, including the calming, textural interiors at Killiehuntly farmhouse and cottages,' she says. 'But being so near the sea, I also wanted to inject extra warmth with colour and pattern for those wet weather days.'

The cottage and the whole island are very special to the couple. 'Our children love the freedom and the wildlife.' There is no Wi-Fi in the cottage, so the family read and play board games in the evenings. 'I do have an aurora app though,' says Lettie, 'and try to catch the Northern lights whenever I can.'

## AT HOME WITH

**OWNERS** Lettie and Stephen Corbett live here with their two children, Henry and Tabitha. Stephen works in finance.

**HOUSE** The property is a farm worker's cottage built in the 1850s. It has two bedrooms, a bathroom and an open-plan living/dining and kitchen space.



**KITCHEN AREA** Lettie and Stephen deliberately raised the ceiling to the rafters in here to give a feeling of space. The **wall lights** are from Pooky and are topped with **shades** from Yateley Papers

**KITCHEN SHELVES** Open shelving in the kitchen gives the space a more airy feel and makes the perfect spot for displaying favourite finds, glassware and crockery. For similar **wall lights**, try Pooky



A simple slender shelf, narrow bench and a few hooks creates the perfect small-space cloakroom area

**PORCH** The side porch is a useful boot room, ideal for hanging wet outdoor gear after muddy walks, and has plenty of useful storage. The cool blue shade on the walls reflects the stunning sea views outside



**LIVING AREA** They reinstated original features like the **wall panelling** from Atlantic Timber, which is painted in Calke Green by Farrow & Ball. The **painting** above the fireplace is a Mull seascape by artist Ernie Upton



Dual-purpose furniture can be invaluable, such as a trunk that doubles as a coffee table





Create areas of visual interest in tiny spaces with collections of interesting curios and objects



**GUEST BEDROOM** The headboard, blind and cushions are all made in various fabrics from Blithfield. The bedlinen and quilt are from Sarah K. The walls are painted in Ethereal Blue by Edward Bulmer

**GUEST BEDROOM** The large antique bread cabinet is an old family item from Lettie's grandmother's house – it doesn't serve much practical purpose but is very loved and makes a great place to display treasured items



**BATHROOM** Natural stone flooring and traditional wood panelling and fittings echo the house's rural setting. Sanitaryware, Burlington. Try Quorn Stone for similar flooring. King & McGaw has similar artwork



**BATHROOM.** The tongue-and-groove panelling is painted in Oval Room Blue by Farrow & Ball. The walls are papered in a design by Nicholas Herbert. The blind is made from a fabric by Blithfield.

‘It’s so peaceful on Mull; the beaches are empty and we look out for dolphins, deer, golden eagles and otters’




## LETTIE'S COUNTRY LIFE

**SIMPLE PLEASURES** 'You never tire of the view from the front of the house. It changes daily, depending on the seasons and the tides.'

**WHERE TO VISIT** 'The Glass Barn is a stunning café attached to the family-run Isle of Mull Cheese dairy farm ([isleofmullcheese.co.uk](http://isleofmullcheese.co.uk)), where you can observe the cheese-making process on frequent tours.'

**WHERE TO EAT** 'Croft3 ([croft3mull.com](http://croft3mull.com)) is a fantastic restaurant and working croft. It serves delicious local produce but often with a twist.'

**SHOP AT** 'Stephen's cousin's lovely farm shop and cafe The Old Post Office ([oldpostofficelochbuie.co.uk](http://oldpostofficelochbuie.co.uk)). Buy the farm's meat and other local produce.'



Roman blinds are a neat solution for windows when curtains would overwhelm the room

**EXTERIOR** 'The garden is unfenced, so we get lots of unexpected visitors: friendly cows from the nearby cattle herd, plus sheep, deer, and wonderful birdlife. We often spot otters playing on the shore too'

**MAIN BEDROOM** Walls and **woodwork** painted in Pale Parsonage Pink, Papers & Paints. **Bedding**, Sarah K. **Lampshades**, Pooky. The **blind** fabric is from Blithfield. **Cushions**, Wicklewood and The Mews Furnishings