

# Life's a Beach

ON THE DRAMATIC NORTH CORNISH COAST IS BARFORD BEACH HOUSE, WHICH FUSES MODERN LUXURY WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF SALVAGE, VINTAGE AND RETRO.

LOMA-ANN MARKS VISITED, AND MET OWNER KEN AYLMER

Barford's back garden, complete with shingle boat from artist Luke Jerram's piece 'Withdrawn', given to Ken on condition that he transport it from the installation's site in Bristol to Cornwall.



If you go down to Cornwall today, you're sure of a big surprise. For set in the rugged landscape between Widemouth Bay and Crackington Haven, with views over the secluded beach of Wanson Mouth, is an elegant, larch-clad new build. Ken and Illona Aylmer of Tregulland & Co (they also have two other properties in the county) bought the 1930s bungalow that once stood on the site and knocked it down to create a six bedroom super-home, both for their family's use and to rent out to large groups. The result is a property, that from the moment you step in, has the 'wow' factor. And, moving from room to room, your jaw keeps getting closer to the well-chosen reclaimed floorboards. Still, despite the bespoke copper kitchen, the killer views, secret party room, wood-fired hot tub and 50m2 master suite complete with cocktail bar and enormous brass tub, you can actually relax in Barford. The reclaimed and vintage pieces give it bags of character, adding a soft, warm edge to all that luxury. 'Having a bit of wear and tear makes people feel more comfortable,' says Ken. 'You can't relax in an overly designed, modern house, where everything's pristine and square-edged. You can't let the kids go.'

**Playtime**  
And this house does have a cheery, playful vibe. Inspired by their children Scarlet, Ella and Leo, Ken and Illona have created bedrooms reflecting their personalities. Pages from *Alice in Wonderland* adorn Ella's room, whilst Scarlet has a pretty four-poster bed made from scaffolding poles. Leo's bunk, created from reclaimed wood, rises high into the

A vintage, high-mounted Burlington cistern is given a playful backdrop with pages from 'Alice in Wonderland'.



ceiling, and, between his room and Scarlet's is a charming 'Narnia' wardrobe, secretly linking the two spaces together. 'We wanted a place that was fun and creative, with a sense of adventure,' says Ken. Downstairs, past the sauna and cinema room, the most fun awaits, though. Through a low, curtained archway that you have to crawl through, lies a cavernous, underground party room. Emerging into it is nothing short of breathtaking, and it's clear that Ken's particularly happy with this adult playroom, complete with pool table and

retro arcade games. 'We kept the bunker a secret from our children, until it was finished,' he smiles. 'I said "there's a secret room somewhere" and they had to find it.' But getting to this point has come with its challenges, not least the build running over by a year due to problems including inclement weather, diluted concrete inadvertently being poured into the foundations (which then had to dry and be dug out) and the wrong timbers turning up. Luckily, Ken and Illona's builder John Steele was 'on our side' and

played a key role in keeping things moving, and ensured that the quality and finish was second-to-none. Their designer Marcus Crane, who the couple have worked with before, was integral in choosing and curating their pieces. 'We enjoy working with him, he brings out the best in us,' says Ken. 'We went on a lot of shopping trips with him, and got things we liked, as long as Marcus liked them as well!' Between them, they've made an alluring home, filled with rough-luxe character that's as cosy as it is plush.

A sitting room with the 'wow' factor. Aged copper, vintage pieces and curated collections are held together with a simple, but striking colour palette of brown and teal.

Sources

The copper kitchen (p98) and shelving is from [metalsheets.co.uk](https://metalsheets.co.uk)  
Designer: Marcus Crane, [mccullyandcrane.com](https://mccullyandcrane.com)  
Builder: John Steele, [horstuk.co.uk](https://horstuk.co.uk)  
Ken and Illona sourced pieces from Ardingly Fair, [iacf.co.uk/ardingly](https://iacf.co.uk/ardingly)  
Goose Shed, [gooseshed.co.uk](https://gooseshed.co.uk)  
Bristol Reclamation, [bristol-reclamation.co.uk](https://bristol-reclamation.co.uk)  
Dig Haushizzle, [dig-haushizzle.co.uk](https://dig-haushizzle.co.uk)



# Natural Textures

Wood abounds at Barford, making the whole place feel really warm and inviting. ‘Everything’s tactile,’ says Ken. ‘The kitchen table is Iranian, 18th century granary oak, 200 years old. I got it made up into two tables, including this one. I love them, but we’re in a dilemma about whether to fill the crevices, they get filled up with crumbs!’ This, along with the floorboards and numerous, time-worn wooden pieces throughout the property help build a natural scheme that reflects the dramatic Cornish location. And the statement copper kitchen, reflected opposite in the bespoke living-room shelving, is a clever use of a natural element. It was treated by specialists to give it a beautiful, aged patina and, with the wood, gives a sense of luxury without pretension.

(right) Time-worn wooden furniture gives depth to a crisp, white bathroom.

(far right) A wooden dresser adds a touch of cosy, country charm.

(bottom, right) Dark wooden floorboards are complemented by the unadorned wooden furniture. The white wall and pale curtains keep things fresh.

(bottom) The 18th century Persian dining table and bespoke copper kitchen create a fantasy kitchen.



**Many homes** have wooden floorboards underneath the carpet. Try exposing them, but then just sand and wax or stain, rather than painting or varnishing, to bring out their organic beauty. Choose unpainted, raw wooden furniture rather than painted and accessorise with aged metal pieces – iron, copper, brass and gold for a touch of natural gleam.



# Storied Collections

Part of Barford's charm are the treasured collections and pieces, many of which are from Ken and Illona's family. 'There's lots of "us" here,' says Ken, 'things from our parents like the old copper kettle and thermos flasks.' The couple commissioned artist Sara Newman to create an artwork out of Ken's parents' old 80s TV, by adding little model figures of windsurfers being pulled along by butterflies. And his dad's old projector takes pride of place on those copper shelves, with the films once shown on it all put onto DVD to watch in the cinema room downstairs.

(far right) Ken's father's old thermos flasks are front and centre on the bespoke copper shelving. Their colour and patina match the rough luxe feel throughout Barford.

(right) Another of his dad's pieces, an old projector adds further story to the collection.



Rather than letting them fester in the loft, or, worse, throwing away, keep favourite family objects and display. Ask your parents or relatives for something that may not be expensive, but reminds you of them. Thoughtfully displayed – by colour, type or patina – these pieces can create arresting art that's full of depth and story.



# Have Fun

Barford is all about enjoyment, and the décor reflects that. In the party room, original signage from Blackpool fairground adorns the walls, whilst rows of tinned food with classic design such as Heinz baked beans and Green Giant corn, makes a witty installation. Retro arcade games – including Pac Man! – add to the fun. Outside, a decadent wood-fired hot tub offers views across Wanson Mouth, and what seems to be an abandoned fishing boat was actually part of artist Luke Jerram's piece 'Withdrawn' and was given to Ken after the two met. Now, it's the perfect children's playhouse, and has been upgraded to include a console with lights, knobs and buttons, that adults love too.



*Throw out the rulebook and do what makes you smile. Whilst most of us can't stretch to a hot tub in the garden or party bunker, we can create a party area with vintage cocktail chairs and a low glass*



# Statement Pieces

Barford’s building is impressive, all high ceilings, sweeping staircase and balconies. But Ken and Illona have made full use of the space with some stand-out pieces. In the entrance hall hangs a set of reconditioned 1960s bauble lights from the Paris Metro – this is Ken’s favourite piece, as the sparkle and reflections they create are so gorgeous. A 1940s postal desk also sits at the entrance, and, in the living room a large wood-burner takes centre stage. Upstairs, the double aspect master bedroom itself is something of a statement, but its en-suite is the star. The William Yeoward brass bath would impress Cleopatra and, once in it, the unexpected porthole in the facing wall, offering a sea view, would mean she’d probably never leave.

(right) The master suite – a mixture of reclaimed and vintage pieces and sumptuous soft furnishings.

(right) A collection of convex mirrors add shine to the upstairs landing.

(middle) Ken’s favourite piece – Parisian, reconditioned 1960s bauble lamps that catch the light just-so.

(bottom) The spectacular master en-suite. If a large group rents the property, who would bag this room?



© BRETT SYMES



© BRETT SYMES



© JIM MARKS



© JIM MARKS

*Large, beautiful pendant lights (see our feature on page 68) are a great way to make a statement. Vintage French chandeliers are stunning, but if budget won’t allow try a few smaller pendants in a cluster, or use over-sized vintage lampshades.*



# Upcycle

Although Barford is luxurious, there's a lot of creative upcycling. The hot tub is screened by a railway track that was found in the grounds, and timber from the original bungalow clads part of the living room wall. In Scarlet's bathroom, a Singer sewing table is now the washstand and the corrugated iron on the basement bar was the old property's garage roof.

» Barford Beach House sleeps 16, and is available for holiday rental. Visit [tregullandandco.co.uk](http://tregullandandco.co.uk) for more information.

(far right) The en-suite for Scarlet's bedroom, where an old Singer sewing table has been cleverly re-purposed to create a washstand.

(right) Timber from the original bungalow clads part of the living room. A vintage toy car completes the look.

(bottom) Corrugated iron, once the old property's garage roof, is turned into the party room bar.



*If you're renovating, think twice about throwing materials in the skip. With a little imagination, timber, palettes, corrugated iron, old furniture and hardware can be re-used, giving new life to your home without costing the earth.*