

In the sitting room, painted Slate II by Paint & Paper Library, the Gothic windows have been kept deliberately curtain-free, allowing views to blend seamlessly into the interior.

WHITE CHRISTMAS

Recycle, reuse and renovate is the motto of Jane Clark and her husband Mark Copping, who transformed a 19th-century house into a contemporary and comfortable family home

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHRIS EVERARD**



Jane Clark and Mark Copping's home in Rutland.

For Jane Clark and her husband Mark Copping, the prospect of breathing new life back into the historic stone walls of their beautiful house in Rutland was an opportunity they could not resist. Set on the banks of a picturesque lake, surrounded by mature woodland, the house was built originally in 1880 as three separate workers' cottages. It remained in the hands of one family for hundreds of years, and was transformed in the 1970s to become both a family home and the location of a standalone recording studio, frequented by, among others, The Who, Eric Clapton and The Rolling Stones. "We fell in love with both the setting and the building, and it was important to us that we honoured its integrity," says Jane, who embarked on a six-month renovation, changing whatever was needed to suit modern family living. "The house is inextricably linked to its natural surroundings, and we wanted the interior to have a greater connection to the landscape and the wonderful light that prevails."

To counter the long and narrow run of the house, the couple established a renewed sense of purpose for each room. "For us, a house is just a commodity, but a home is like a partner – spaces need to be connected, to feel loved and relaxed."



The classic kitchen by British Standard, with porcelain features a bench by Anna Valentine and a jute rug from The White Company.

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A reclaimed 1950s light hangs above the reconditioned Aga.



In the dining room, wooden screens have replaced sections of solid internal walls, allowing more light. The beautiful handmade table is by Matthew Cox. The floor is grey tumbled oak, also used in the sitting room and study.

In the centre of the house, a classic, clean-lined kitchen, designed by Jane and made by British Standard, offsets the decorative arched windows, while a timber-framed banquette creates an intimate nook, layered with Gotland sheepskins, Moroccan cushions and striped linens. The adjacent dining area leads into the elegant sitting room, to reveal a mix of antique chairs, including pieces from Claire Langley Antiques and Clignancourt flea market in Paris. "Our motto is: recycle, reuse, renovate. I like to buy timeless, quality pieces, but when things no longer fit or need changing, I am happy to sell them or give them away. It avoids feeling weighed down by possessions or becoming burdened with the guilt of not letting go – an underused sentiment in an increasingly acquisitive society." Natural fabrics add a textural honesty throughout the home: antique, Eastern European linen, sourced by Jane, has been used for upholstery, cushions and bedheads. This blends perfectly with newer de Le Cuona fabrics, jute from The Cloth House in London and a much-loved mohair velvet on the custom-made sitting room sofa. "Mark has made a lot of the mirrors, occasional tables and the sitting room floor lamps. If we can't find what we want, he designs his own," says Jane. Equally creative and resourceful, Jane handcrafts luxurious cashmere throws and jumpers from repurposed yarn in her at-home studio. "Mark and I met 22 years ago: he had sold his



In the master bedroom, there are simple linen blackout curtains that can be hung at night.

WINTER HOME RITUALS

Fill the house with candlelight – whether glowing tealights, tall elegant pillars or seasonally scented candles – to lift your spirits as well as your rooms. My favourite notes include cinnamon, clove, orange and myrrh, eucalyptus, pine, cognac and smoked woods. ✳ Restyle coffee tables, surfaces and shelves. One brilliant stylist taught me, when you are arranging surfaces, keep it "simple but strong", such as a bowl of winter clementines, which looks so beautiful and impactful. ✳ Add extra-warm layers so your home feels beautifully dressed for winter. Pile soft velvets and faux furs, as well as warm sheepskins and super-soft textural knits, on sofas, benches, chairs and beds. ✳ At this time of year, I love everything from potted heathers, winter pine needles and rustic wintry branches to white ranunculus, hyacinths and tall sculptural amaryllis. Small pots of trailing ivy are also wonderful for table centre displays. ✳ For guest bedrooms, my checklist always includes a pretty water carafe and glass, sleep pillow spray and a sprig of flowers beside the bed. A hot water bottle and a soft throw on a beautifully made bed make guests feel special, and I always add recent magazines, a robe and a hairdryer. ✳ Every bed will benefit from the luxury of a sheepskin mattress topper. They lend warmth and blissful comfort. ✳ In our guest bathrooms, I add piles of soft towels and a scented candle, along with a basket of might-need essentials (often collected from hotel stays).


In the inviting entrance hall, a double-sided Parkray wood burner connects to a relaxed snug and study, decorated with furniture and art chosen over many years – "pieces that resonated spontaneously, never of-the-moment trend choices".

design business and was on a stopover in London, en route from South Africa to start a diving school in Belize." After a serendipitous encounter in Marylebone, Mark never made the connecting flight and the couple have shared a sense of adventure ever since.

"We have enjoyed moving regularly and have renovated multiple period homes in London; a medieval townhouse and rural, vineyard farmhouse in France; and now this wonderful space in Rutland." Innately nomadic, the couple have experienced a number of diverse cultures and lifestyles, yet remain refreshingly grounded, understated and real. "The move from London was driven by a need for more open space and a desire to feel closer to both family and the changing seasons. It has fed our souls immeasurably but it has also been instrumental in our decision to re-evaluate our careers and life journey," says Jane. During the Covid-19 lockdown, Jane made the decision to close her successful head-hunting business, which sourced global marketers and senior management for top fashion and creative brands. "The pandemic has taught us that there is never a good time for change – if you want to make something happen, you just have to go for it." *www.janeandmark.co; @jane_and_mark.*■ *From: The Art of Living with White : A Year in Inspiration by Chrissie Rucker & The White Company is published by Mitchell Beazley, €40, www.thewhitecompany.com/octopusbooks.co.uk.*