

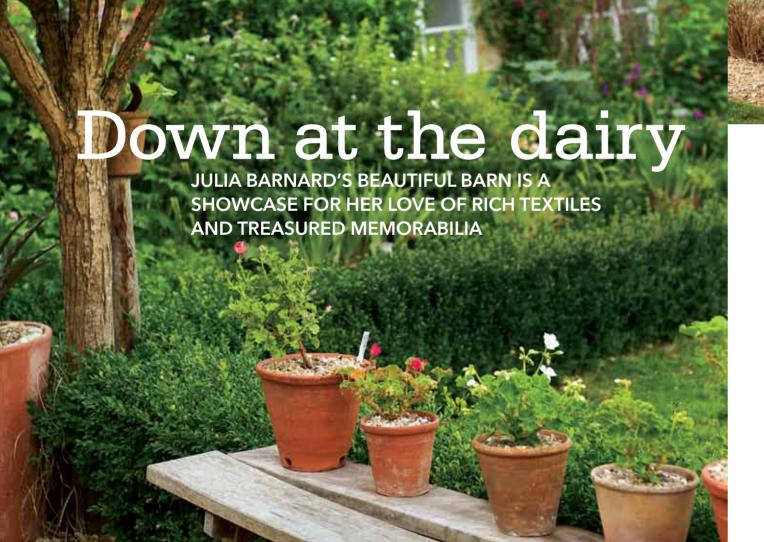
**OWNER** Interior designer Julia Barnard (below) lives here with her daughters, Rose, 24, Helena, 21, Margaret, 17, and Plum their Jack Russell. They moved into the house in 2004 **HOUSE** Victorian barn conversion

ROOMS Main open-plan space featuring living area, dining area and kitchen, hall/library, cloakroom, study, four bedrooms, two bathrooms



**THIS PAGE** Julia's home was originally the dairy for the nearby farmhouse. She began planting her own garden, which is almost mature after seven years' work, as soon as she bought the house.





LIFE IN YOUR

country home





**SITTING AREA** The maple cupboards were custom-made and already in situ. The sofas and chairs were bought at auction and the window seat cushion was embroidered by Margaret. The freestanding solid oak bookcase (left) was made for Julia by a cabinet maker. **KITCHEN** Julia has transformed the room into a friendly, informal space for cooking and eating. She commissioned a cabinet maker to create the tall, curved oak cupboard. The beech table (above right) is painted in String by Farrow & Ball. Pan hanger, Dinghams. Chair fabric, similar from Larsen. Curtains, Julia Barnard. Walls, Lead I by Paint & Paper Library.

was important for me to have a blank canvas and to know that all the structural work including the plumbing and wiring had been done properly,' she says. 'I wanted to have a fresh start removing all extraneous detail and having beautiful plastering into the eaves, as well as arranging the shapes of the rooms as I wanted them – and then applying the detail.'

Once the work was done, Julia was able to concentrate on getting the decor right – she has a head start on most people because she learned her trade as an interior designer, working closely with the late Laura Ashley and her husband, Bernard (which Julia describes as 'an extraordinary privilege'). Her maxim is:

'if you like various items, unify the space with colour and then very different pieces will go together'.

'I think my house is a good example of that principle,' she says, 'because it's full of things that are part of my history and the history of my children. There are textiles and pieces of furniture that weren't meant to go together at all: a mix of things that we love and have meaning to us. But because we've put them against a neutral backdrop, they work as a whole.

'Everything in the house is simple, functional and of good quality and allows me to indulge in flights of fancy like the copper bath – it's French, double-skinned copper dating from the 1870s and is very

practical. It was a present from my sister who didn't want it any more.'

Orange and red are key colours throughout the house and Julia has used them because she finds rich shades warm, welcoming and invigorating. 'They're the colours of happiness.' she says. 'When thinking about interior design, adding texture and pattern with natural sustainable materials can be important too – but, really, if you have a neutral canvas, it's all about choosing what you like.'

She believes that wildly contrasting fabrics and items of furniture can go well together if the space surrounding them is unified with different intensities of the same colour. Julia used four shades





COPPER BATH

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LIBRARY Julia has created a haven of peace away from the open-plan living area. Bookshelves, made to Julia's design, painted in Lead I by Paint & Paper Library.

BATHROOM A subtle backdrop emphasises the drama of this luxurious freestanding bath. French copper bath, Drummonds. Walls, Lead III by Paint & Paper Library.

from Paint & Paper Library to create base colours for her large open-plan space, bathrooms, corridor and library, which has the effect of 'theming' the rooms.

She finds that the main advantage of the open-plan area is that it is big enough to allow everyone to be together yet do their own thing. 'One person can watch a film, someone else can be drawing, another can be cooking,' says Julia. 'A lot of modern spaces are isolating – but this one isn't.'

The barn conversion isn't simply one big open area, however. There are more intimate rooms, such as the impressive vaulted spaces of Julia's library and bedroom, which change the feel and pace of the house.

'I love the interaction between the spaces,' she says, 'and it is wonderful to have room to assess, change and constantly refine. I enjoy this house every day.'

Tor further information about Julia's interior design, call 01749 813506, juliabarnard.com.



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