



PROPERTY DETAILS

Type of house *Two-bedroom detached cottage, built in 1840*
 Location *Aldeburgh, Suffolk*
 Price *£250,000*
 Money spent *£45,000*
 What it's worth now *£350,000*



COSY COASTAL CHARM
 Shades of white give a feeling of space in the living room and reflect the cottage's seaside location. Contemporary furniture from Dwell complements the property's original features



MADE AN ENTRANCE
 (top right) The exterior of Sandpiper Cottage was given a smart update with a new front door matching the original, built by local joiners. It cost £1000 but has set the tone for the whole renovation

Naomi Tarry, 37, lives with her husband, Alex, 38, in an 1840s detached cottage by the sea. Together the couple run a holiday home business called Best of Suffolk. Naomi explains how they came to settle in the area

HOLIDAY AT HOME
 (above) Naomi and Alex take time to relax in their courtyard garden. The patio set is from Habitat and the tablecloth from MooMoos in Aldeburgh

Early last year, Alex and I were looking for a cottage in Aldeburgh to renovate and then rent out as a holiday home. We went to view Sandpiper Cottage and found it was exactly what we wanted. Situated less than 100 metres from the sea and just off the high street, it was in need of some renovation but wasn't completely derelict, unlike some of the properties we've tackled. It hadn't been touched for a number of years so still had many of its original features.

It may sound surprising, but we never set a budget when we're doing up a property because we want to renovate sympathetically and without cutting

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SMALL SPACE STYLE

We love saving old houses

This couple moved into their newly renovated rental cottage to try it out and couldn't bear to leave



MADE TO MEASURE (above) The bespoke kitchen units were designed to make the best use of the unusually shaped space

corners. We're usually able to keep a rein on costs because Alex manages the projects and does a lot of the work himself, but with this property, we decided we'd also need the help of a local builder.

We started by taking the cottage back to its bare bones, but as we began stripping it back we found we were uncovering a wealth of hidden treasures. Underneath layers of old wallpaper in the dining room we discovered a wall of original timber panelling. And once we'd ripped up the carpets we

realised that the floorboards were in a good enough condition to sand and varnish.

The only structural changes we made were to widen the back door and split the bathroom into two. It was an awkward triangular shape, wide at one end but narrow at the other. Now we have a spacious family bathroom, as well as an ensuite shower room.

Adding the patio doors made the kitchen much lighter, and with the outside courtyard decking set at the same level as the kitchen floor, the two spaces



SPACE-SAVING STORAGE (above) A sleek glass console table sits against the painted panelled wall, and provides display space without making the small room seem cluttered

SOFT CURVES (below) The stairs are accessed through the dining room and Naomi and Alex chose furniture with curved lines, such as this circular table to make the space feel bigger. The dining chairs tuck neatly beneath the compact table.

merge together. In the summer it feels like having an outdoor dining room.

All the floors throughout the cottage were sanded by hand as machines tend to leave marks, and the walls were lime-plastered and then finished with six coats of lime paint. The paint helps to consolidate the plaster and it also allows the house to breathe, which prevents damp in older properties. Amazingly, it cost just £20 to lime-paint the whole house.

We commissioned local artist, Paul Crisp, to create the artwork in the living room and bathroom, while another local artist, Vernon Rose, painted the canvas in the dining room. I spotted most of the accessories in local shops. The seaside-themed pieces came from

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My most treasured possession

'I found this Savoy vase by designer Alvar Aalto in a shop in Copenhagen when we were visiting friends. I adore Scandinavian design and we spend ages in the design shops when we visit our friends there.'





'We love ALDEBURGH. IT HAS A LIVELY MIX OF PEOPLE AND EVERYONE GETS ALONG TOGETHER HAPPILY'



ECLECTIC STYLE
Bright red accessories look stunning against crisp white bedding and white gloss bedside tables. The hand-crafted bed looks perfectly at home in this contemporary setting



Alde River Pine, while the crockery, candles and log basket came from a local shop called MooMoos.


I love our beds, which came about by happy accident. We had some on order but our supplier let us down, so our builder, Gary, stepped in and offered to make them for us in his spare time. There's a tight turn in the staircase, so he had to make them up in pieces and put them together in each room. I'm really pleased that something that began as a problem has produced some beautiful furniture.

We like to spend time in our rental properties once they're finished to make sure everything is working properly. A door may not shut properly or the shower may leak, and we wouldn't want our guests to experience those sort of problems. So we moved into the cottage in October 2008 but just kept finding excuses to stay. We didn't expect to get many

A GOOD SOAK
(above left) A deep freestanding bath is set against panelling, painted in Lulworth Blue by Farrow and Ball. Quirky touches, such as diagonal floorboards and artwork by Paul Crisp, bring personality to the bathroom

NAUTICAL AND NICE
(left) A blue and white colour scheme plus seaside accessories give the bathroom a nautical feel

until March, when we finally decided to stay for good and rent out our farmhouse instead.

We pretend staying here was a business decision to be close to the cottages we rent out, but really we just love Aldeburgh. It has a lively mix of people – residents, holidaymakers, second homeowners – and everyone gets along together happily. In the mornings I take a long walk on the beach and watch the waves crashing onto the shingle – it's just a lovely place to be. 

• If you want to find out more about Naomi and Alex's holiday lets, visit bestofsuffolk.co.uk

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE 'WHERE TO BUY' PAGE AT BACK OF ISSUE

Diary of a coastal cottage renovation

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| February 2008 Naomi and Alex viewed the property with a view to renting it out. | interior fittings were stripped out, new plumbing was installed and the electrics rewired. | ensuite was cut out and the kitchen doorway was widened to make way for patio doors. |
| April 2008 They made an offer on the cottage, which was accepted. | July 2008 The couple had the windows repaired, and the joinery and plasterwork were all finished. | September 2008 Kitchen, bathroom and ensuite were fitted and the house was decorated from top to bottom. |
| June 2008 The sale was completed and work started on the same day. The | August 2008 A doorway into the | October 2008 The couple moved in. |