

Kitchen-diner

Despite being a new build, the house has an older, country feel thanks to its rustic beams and Shaker cabinetry. Recycled elm dining table and chairs, Oka. Cabinetry, deVol. Oak flooring, White Hall. Aged copper pendant ceiling lights, Baileys. Cake, Bettys



**RAISE THE
RAFTERS**

Wendy and Steven Hunter's self-built oak barn is a wonderful place to spend the festive season

Living room

Wendy fills the home with greenery at Christmas time. Christmas tree, Pines and Needles



Utility room

Having this extra space means Wendy is lucky enough to keep her seasonal crafting out of the kitchen. Farmhouse sink, Villeroy & Boch Taps, Perrin & Rowe



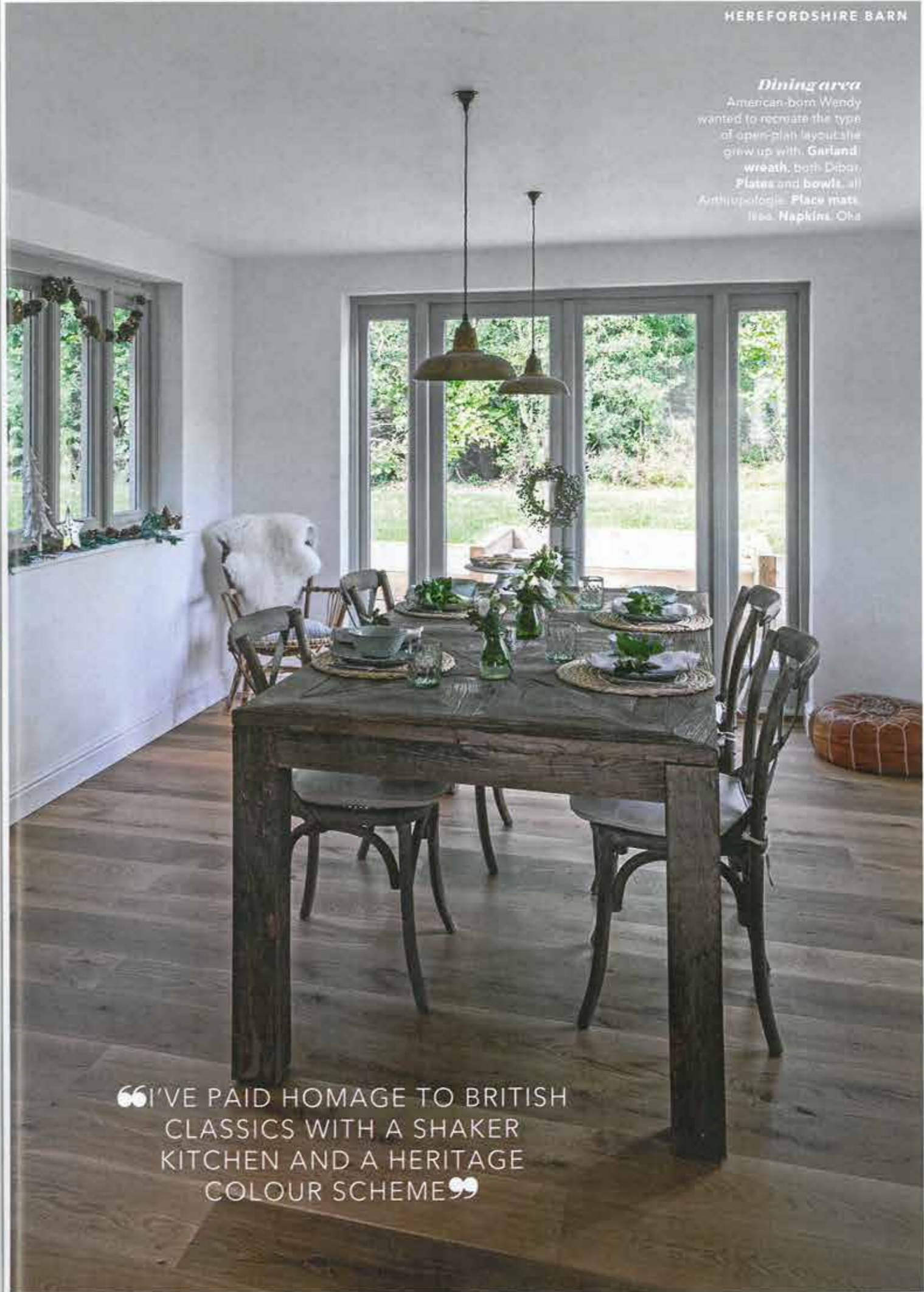
AT HOME WITH...

Owners Wendy Hunter, who is a fashion designer, and her husband Steven, a civil servant. They live here with their daughters, Sadie, six, and Millie, four, plus Scout the Welsh Terrier. They moved into the house in 2018.

House A new-build oak-framed barn with four bedrooms, plus a one-bedroom garage annexe.

Dining area

American-born Wendy wanted to recreate the type of open-plan layout she grew up with. Garland wreath, both Diban Plates and bowls, all Anthropologie. Place mats, Ikea. Napkins, Oha



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Living room
A sofa with a removable cover is perfect for life with young children, and makes it easy to switch up the colour scheme. **Sofa**, Ikea. **Chair**, coffee table, both Oka. **Pouffe**, Graham and Green. **Milan cushions**, Bronte by Moon. **Biscuits**, Biscuiteers



Exterior
Grey-green paint brings a heritage feel. Try Mizzle exterior eggshell, Farrow & Ball. **Wreath**, The Great British Florist

but it was perfect timing for us. It's also a huge amount of work getting planning permission, so the fact that it already had it in place was a big plus.'

Wendy and Steven had also used Border Oak as the supplier for their previous self-build. 'I love the marriage of traditional building methods and modern technology that you get with Border Oak houses - it's the best of both worlds,' says Wendy. They were able to make some small changes to the original plans, such as moving the dining room from its original central location to the end of the kitchen and removing the downstairs doors to create an open-plan feel.

They took on the majority of the build themselves, subcontracting some specialist skills and using the Border Oak team to set up the oak frame and complete the watertight shell. Structural insulated panels, along with underfloor heating downstairs, ensure the house is always warm and toasty.

When it came to the interior, Wendy plumped for a neutral backdrop. 'I'm a bright white girl,' she says. 'I like white walls mixed with natural textures - that way the home can speak for itself. Because we've done back-to-back self-builds, we weren't so hard on ourselves with the interior of this one. I've

LIVING THE DREAM

Wendy and Steven Hunter were passionate about building their own house, and it's enabled them to create a bespoke family home

Why were you keen to do another self-build?

'We wanted to build a larger home in a different style and in a new location.'

Was it a lot of work?

'Absolutely. It is at least one year of your life that you have to stay focused, keep on task and get the job done.'

Tell us the hardest part

'The physical labour.'

And the most rewarding?

'The time spent with family. We can all look back at the experience together.'

What's your advice for other self-builders?

'Make sure you plan, budget, have a reliable team around you and be prepared to think on your toes.'

Main bedroom

A neutral scheme can be instantly warmed up with a few throws and cushions. Welsh blanket, Fforest, Red blanket, Bronte by Moon



paid homage to British classics - we have a Shaker kitchen, heritage colours, blacksmith ironmongery, wool carpets and natural oak flooring. I also paid a lot of attention to the taps - they're the jewellery of your home so I spend more on them.'

The house has proved perfect for bringing up a family. 'It's a great home for the girls,' says Wendy. 'The village school is only a five-minute walk away and we have a nature reserve, lake and two pubs within strolling distance. With the woods behind us and fields of cows as our morning view, it makes us feel that we are raising the children in a pure and simple way.'

Picturesque surroundings and plenty of guest space mean the house works particularly well at Christmas and New Year. 'I like to create little arrangements, such as festive floral displays, and we have evergreen trees all around us so I line the windows with foliage from our garden,' says Wendy. 'Last year, with my American family and my in-laws, we had 12 visitors in total. We decorated at the back with Christmas lights and had open fires in the garden. We put an extra table in the dining space to accommodate everyone for Christmas dinner and then we all went to the local pub afterwards!'

Border Oak, 01568 708752, borderoak.com



Millie's bedroom

A wrought-iron bed, Christmas lights and pretty bunting contribute to the fairy-tale feel. **Bed; wicker storage unit, both Ikea. Bunting, Numero 74. Garland, Dibor**

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