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professional advice
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CREATING YOUR traditional home

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When you view a property, you usually see it in a furnished and complete state which inevitably makes a difference to how you perceive the space. However, should you decide to actually purchase and move into the property, it comes unfurnished in the vast majority of cases.

If you have bought a traditional property, whether it is a farmhouse, a cottage or a mansion, you probably bought it because upon viewing it was bursting with character and had great potential. When you finally move in to the property in its empty and unfurnished state, it will seem to lack some of its initial charm. But how do you create from scratch the character and warm welcoming feeling that we all yearn for when we come home?

Here in Cornwall, many of my clients request a traditional style and there are many ways in which the look can be created. The original farmhouse style ranges from hand painted to stripped timber, with picture rails, heavy cornices, curved or square fielded doors throughout the house, oak beams and stone floors downstairs with wooden floors upstairs. Inspiration can also be taken from the ‘Shaker’ movement with flat drawer fronts and door panels introduced to give a streamline feel to the space, whilst retaining the traditionally styled curved cornices and pillars.

The kitchen / dining room area is one space in the house where traditional styling can really be explored and emphasised. Natural materials such as stone floors, oak beams, ceramic sinks, granite or wooden worktops complement solid wooden cupboards and plate racks; oversized dressers and pantry cupboards with significant storage space also work well and are renowned for their aesthetic durability and practicality.

The traditional kitchen layout is usually L shaped or U shaped with an island unit or a large chunky table where family and friends can come eat and relax by the Cornish range, Rayburn or Aga.

To create a consistent, traditional style it is advisable to conceal all modern appliances such as cooker hoods, microwaves, and dishwashers with cleverly designed bespoke units and storage areas.

For the lounge, comfortable seating with a wood burner or open fire for the focal point will create a traditional and cosy



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atmosphere, perfect for those cold winter evenings. A traditional fireplace can be built from scratch with local granite, or an existing unit can be re-plastered and brought back to life with a reclaimed timber mantle piece, fitted with open fire surround or wood burners. Cupboards can also be designed to fill the recesses on either side. They can hide the essential but often unseemly appliances such as the computer, television or hi-fi system without interfering with the style of the room. An unpainted wooden staircase can also make for a real feature, adding a rustic touch.

For the bedroom, large free-standing wardrobes are perfect for hiding clothes and bedding away from immediate sight and high solid wood beds covered with heavy quilts or lacy bedspreads can create a sophisticated, atmospheric look. Warm colours on the walls and cleverly placed lighting will also reinforce the traditional feel of the property.

It is very important to use an individual approach when creating a traditional style in your home so that it suits your lifestyle and your property. Bespoke furniture is one way in which this can be achieved, enabling

you to replicate the traditional country look whilst also including all the contemporary features required for modern family living.

Traditional cottages and farmhouses are rarely square and rooms come in all sizes and shapes, which makes them very difficult to furnish effectively. To maximise the space and keep the same style throughout the house it is advisable to talk to an interior designer as the possibilities are immense. The end result has to fit your lifestyle, reflect your personality and the character of the property.

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