

Cool country

Moving to the countryside needn't mean sacrificing style or losing touch with your passions. We meet three couples who have made the move but still maintain lifestyles to rival any urban existence...

Words **TRISH LORENZ**



1 Angie and Simon Lewin's Norfolk retreat



2 Martin Barrell and Amanda Sellers in Suffolk



3 Charlie Gladstone's Scottish home ➤



The Lewins' Norfolk home was originally three farm-workers' cottages. The previous owner knocked the walls through and then decided to sell, leaving a shell for the new owners to develop however they

wanted. A garden studio (top left) provides ample room for the pair to work, and things have been kept soft and natural indoors with organically shaped furniture and the original rustic plasterwork

NORFOLK

Natural inspiration

ANGIE AND SIMON ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO SPLIT THEIR TIME BETWEEN CITY AND COUNTRY BUT RURAL LIFE SOON WON OUT!

Textile designer and printmaker Angie Lewin and her husband, graphic designer Simon Lewin, moved to Norfolk from London's East End in 1996. 'We've always enjoyed walking and cycling and realised we were leaving London every Friday night and spending all weekend away. We decided we no longer needed to be in the city at all; we're self employed and could work just as easily outside London,' says Simon. The couple initially planned to spend half the week in London, half in Norfolk, but were quickly seduced by the charms of the countryside and within a year they were living there full time.

The Lewins' home is a large, peaceful space that was formerly three cottages in a pretty north-Norfolk village. Inside, their style is pared-down and simple; natural materials predominate and the interior is warm and welcoming. The Fifties-inspired kitchen was a bespoke design in birch ply and Formica, which sits comfortably alongside the original beams and exposed brickwork. The couple's furniture includes a mix of local finds alongside vintage pieces such as the Fifties 'Kandya' dining chairs and a sofa by Brit designer Ernest Race. 'Our style isn't that different to when we lived in London but it has developed. We'd probably take a more modern, hard-edged approach in the city but that just wouldn't work here,' says Simon.

Angie studied horticulture alongside printmaking and now works from a studio in the garden. 'Plants are a recurring theme in Angie's designs and the scenery around our home continues to be a major influence on her work,' says Simon. Life in the country isn't all laid-back, though – the couple's textile business and gallery, St Jude's, is growing in leaps and bounds. 'Our working life has never been busier,' says Simon, 'but if we want to make the most of a sunny day, we can be walking in stunning scenery in just a few minutes because it's all right on our doorstep.' (www.angielewin.co.uk; www.stjudes.co.uk)



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PICTURES: DAMIEN RUSSELL

ANGIE'S **SECRET** NORFOLK ADDRESS BOOK

1 Hoecroft Plants Holt, Norfolk

One of those perfect little nurseries run with passion and supplying a really excellent selection of plants; a million miles away from the 'monster' garden centres.

(www.hoecroft.co.uk)

2 Old Town Holt, Norfolk

This shop is run by our friends Marie Willey and Will Brown down the road in Holt. People travel from all over the UK to buy their range of classic British workwear.

(www.old-town.co.uk)

3 North Norfolk Fish Company Holt, Norfolk

This is our favourite local fish shop. It sells top quality local fish, wild salmon and delicacies such as dressed crab and potted shrimps. (www.northnorfolkfish.co.uk)

Angie's prints (top left) feature motifs inspired by the countryside. The Formica-topped table in the dining area was designed by friend Anthony George and the Fifties 'Kandya' chairs

are by Carl Jacobs. The couple designed the Fifties-inspired birch ply and Formica kitchen themselves. 'It just seemed to work with the beams and exposed brickwork,' says Simon ➤