

# HOMES & GARDENS

## Imaginative interiors

EVOCATIVE HOMES LAYERED  
WITH COLOUR AND TEXTURE

▪ OUTDOOR ROOMS  
AND GLASS EXTENSIONS

▪ COTTAGE GARDEN  
IDEAS AND ADVICE

A BEAUTIFUL  
EASTER  
ITALIAN-STYLE  
FEASTS BY  
THEO RANDALL  
TABLESCAPES  
WITH SEASONAL  
FLOWERS

TIME TO ESCAPE  
WALLPAPERS  
AND FABRICS  
TRANSPORT US TO  
DREAM DESTINATIONS

DAZZLING  
& EASY  
DECOR  
UPDATES

APRIL 2021

# MAKING HISTORY

In his farmhouse home in the Belgian countryside, architect Bernard De Clerck skilfully combined the past and the present to form a flowing, harmonious whole

WORDS: JOURNAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY HENRY BREGUENNE ANDER



## HOUSES

**EXTERIOR**  
The grounds were originally all meadow, but have been transformed into a garden that grows with the house.



**DINING AREA**  
 Antique and modern  
 styles blend seamlessly,  
 with plenty of nifty  
 ideas for maximizing  
 the original space.

**ART WALL**  
 All the sights in the  
 landscape are a fine  
 work of art, and the  
 owners have chosen  
 to make their home  
 a gallery. The artwork  
 is a mix of modern and  
 traditional.



## HOUSES

**M**idway through the renovation of this 19th-century farmhouse, architect Bernard De Cleck struck upon exactly the right color palette for his historic home. The house came with its original doors and doors, but they had been overpainted by almost two centuries' worth of paint and lacquer. But after plenty of careful scraping, the first layer of paint was revealed. "There were all shades of grey, one a bit greener, the other a bit bluer, but all with a beautiful patina," he remembers. "These colors formed the basis for the house's palette." As a renowned architect, Bernard already had a reverence for the "bones" of his home, a farmhouse and adjoining barn in Lotbaldic, deep in the Belgian countryside. "The house dates from 1833, but architecturally it was still rooted in the 18th century," he says, with some of the windows resembling an ancient style seen in Bourgeois's paintings. And it was those details — the windows, doorframes, beams, doors and shutters — that captured his imagination. While he has added some modern touches in the form of ground concrete flooring and several pieces of contemporary furniture, Bernard's overarching aim was to capture the spirit of the property, while sensitively updating it for life in the here and now. "When you move into an old house, you don't need to make it into a museum. But neither do you need to throw everything away," he explains. "Your own history and the history of the house can combine to create a new history." Bernard's subtle interventions mean that the farmhouse's rooms now have a more opened-up feel and a sense of flow that would have been quite unfamiliar to the building's 19th-century occupants. Its spring and summer doors that had of the main sitting rooms are kept open, while modern

glazing has been added to link the spaces with the garden. The roof beams have been exposed and a former hayrack now houses bedrooms and bathrooms. The result is a sequence of living spaces that feel linked, but can also be closed off for privacy, or to retain heat in the winter. Bernard points out that where the old doors are shut, they almost look like wall paneling, adding to a more snug, private mood, set into walls that have been painted in a fine paint that closely resembles the beam-like finish that harks back to the farm's former life. A renovated barn is now joined to the house via a glazed conservatory and this is where Bernard works and meets with clients. In here, too, more generous modern windows look out onto the extensive garden, which has been transformed into a sequence of equally considered spaces, including a pool area, cultivated areas and then wilder meadows. "Perennials is about comfort as well as serenity and many items have been in the family for years — or are antiques that Bernard and his wife Isabelle have bought on weekend visits to French markets. I love the feel of modern and antique objects side by side," says Bernard, who has added a classic Arne Jacobsen Egg chair, contemporary art and his own large-scale photography to these rustic spaces. The rural setting was what initially attracted Bernard and Isabelle to this spot. "Twelve years ago, we left the city to move somewhere with a really open, outdoor feeling. When we stood upon this remote farmhouse, we were immediately attracted. It really, Bernard's wife says, has retained that sense of enchantment, while adding elements that reflect his own family's story, creating a home that will continue to inspire for years to come. ■

• Bernard De Cleck Architects, bernarddeleck.be



**DINING ROOM**  
Older tones and antique finds meet contemporary surfaces. For a classic table, look to this one. By Jonathan Adler. Find a vintage sofa at Urbanist.



**BARN RECEPTION ROOM**  
Striped back beams, a remarkable fireplace and the gallery level are reminders of the building's roots in this space that Bernard uses for client meetings. Roger Oates Design sets the style. For a closer look, see page 47.

by Original House



**EXTERIOR**  
Bernard is a keen gardener. "I'll come, I'll buy new plants and flowers every weekend," he says.

**BAR AREA**  
A bar space that caters once rolled into to now a bar area decorated with plants and photographs. "We often sit here for aperitifs with friends and family," says Bernard. "I'm a vintage bar ahead of Monaco de Monte. Original House can restore a table in this style." The photograph is by Bernard.

#### MEET THE HOMEOWNER

Bernard de Chant, 45 years old, is a former architect and interior designer. He lives in the house with his wife, Marie, and their two children, a 10-year-old son and a 7-year-old daughter.

**PLACES TO VISIT** The couple traveled to Madrid and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

**FAVORITE BUILDING** The modernist house in Brussels by Josef Hoffmann, a hobby architect of the Vienna Secession movement.

**REST GIFT YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN** Tools for the garden.

**LAST THING YOU BOUGHT FOR YOUR HOME** An evening lamp, a table and a chair made from dark stone.

**SECRET ADDRESS** Through fighting, give the name of the house.

**EXTERIOR**  
The garden is a mix of plants and flowers. Bernard de Chant is a keen gardener. "I'll come, I'll buy new plants and flowers every weekend," he says.