



HALL
This double-height space creates an imposing, light-filled entrance. Walls painted in Dulux Pure Brilliant White matt emulsion, £20.99 for 2.5 L, Tesco



INSPIRING

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached new build

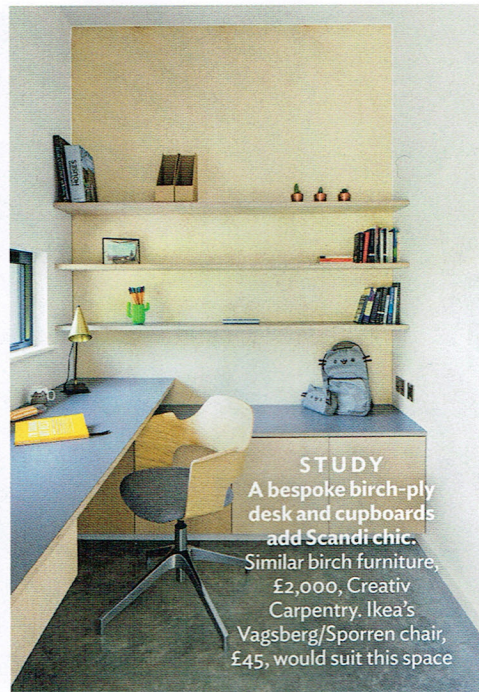
LOCATION Kent

ROOMS Hall, kitchen-diner/family room, study, utility room/boot room, cloakroom, three bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom

BUILT IN 2017

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We live in Broadstairs, and this is a bolthole where we escape to the countryside,' says Anthony.



STUDY

A bespoke birch-ply desk and cupboards add Scandi chic.

Similar birch furniture, £2,000, Creativ Carpentry. Ikea's Vagsberg/Sporren chair, £45, would suit this space

BLACK BEAUTY

Bold design, clean lines and industrial-style materials combine with tactile furnishings in Anthony and Teresa Ralph's contemporary home

FEATURE CAROLINE FOSTER | PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS SNOOK



KITCHEN

'The geometric patterns within the tiles are subtle, but powerful,' says Anthony.

Similar Schuller Cremona old oak-effect kitchen, from £20,000, Smallbone Interiors. The Forest & Co brass pendant light, £155, Notonthehighstreet.com, is a good alternative. Hot mesh yellow bar stools, £199 each, Heal's



FAMILY ROOM
Sumptuous velvet seating contrasts with the concrete floors and white walls, with vibrant cushions adding colour. Velvet Scott sofa, £999; Frame armchairs in Blush Pink, £599 each, both Made.com. Mexicana cushions, £39 each; felt gypsy cushions, £30 each, all Graham and Green



Anthony and Teresa Ralph devote their time and talents to bringing other people's

property dreams to life – they are the directors of TG Designer Homes. So when they found a beautiful plot in the Kent countryside, they leapt at the chance to create a unique rural retreat for themselves and their two children, Zac, 12, and Scarlet, 11. 'Owning a second home was something we'd considered for many years and initially we thought of buying a property in Ibiza, but felt it was too far away and we wouldn't benefit from it,' says Anthony. 'We live in a coastal town, so the idea of a countryside home really appealed to us.'

The couple bought the plot in the summer of 2016 on a subject-to-planning basis, so

although there was a good chance that a new build would be approved, they had no guarantees. 'It was a calculated risk and it was important we submitted a strong design that the planning team would pass,' says Anthony. 'Our initial application didn't go through as the plot is on green belt land, so our challenge was to convince the planners that the house would sit comfortably within the existing landscape.'

Their vision was inspired by the agricultural-style buildings that are scattered around the Kent countryside, 'A mock English barn-style dwelling wouldn't have looked right,' says Anthony. 'So we came up with a contemporary take on an agricultural shed using modern materials with a blackened zinc exterior.'

The planners didn't refuse the Ralphs' design, but couldn't



DINING AREA
A mix of chair styles adds a fun touch here. Natural Ningbo chairs, £195 each; bistro oak chairs, £155 each, both Graham and Green. Bespoke dining table, £600, Creativ Carpentry. Lighting Direct Moino oval ceiling light, £181, Notonthehighstreet.com



HALL
A reinforced wall next to the staircase dispensed with the need for structural beams across the vaulted space.



EN SUITE
Timber-effect flooring is a warm and practical choice for a bathroom. Moduleo oak chevron flooring, £49.99m; Zucchetti Simply Beautiful wall taps, £450; Aria 300mm shower head, £215; Merlyn Showering 8mm shower wall, £394, all Smallbone Interiors

DECORATING TIP *'If you have white walls like we do, introducing colourful fabrics and geometric patterns will help to bring the interior alive and offer interest'*

GUEST BEDROOM
Placing a rug under the bed frames the sleeping area and helps makes it cosy underfoot.

Revive Fade rug, £180, Blue Suntime. The British Blanket Company's grey and lemon throw, £59, is similar.

For alternative window blind fabric, try Beatrice by Harlequin, £60.35m, Jane Clayton



MAIN BEDROOM
Soft pink cushions add
a feminine touch.

H&M Home sells a pink
quilted bedspread, £59.99.
Similar flamingo cushions,
£15.60 each, Red Bubble



see how they could approve it either. It was suggested that the couple resubmit the application with a Heritage statement that supported the design and as a result, the family finally won approval in June 2017.

Minimal materials simplify the look of the building and include zinc in a black finish and black larch to add texture. 'Black is a bold colour, but it sits quietly within the plot, and the established surrounding trees contrast with the structure yet help soften its lines,' Anthony says. 'The interior was about breaking up the space to make the most of the views, so we added a double-height entrance with tall windows. We also wanted the staircase to feel like a gentle journey, so we made the treads deeper so it is more like a walk than a climb.'

Setting a challenging 17-week build time, the Ralphs'

home was completed in December 2017. 'We wanted the rooms to act as a blank canvas and opted for concrete, oak and white paint to achieve that,' says Anthony. 'If you keep things simple, it doesn't have to be clever or complicated.'

Oak furniture and fittings bring an organic element to the interior and contrast with the hard feel of the concrete floor. 'You have to bring colour and texture into the mix to avoid a harsh, bland interior that can look draining,' says Anthony.

With their new build now complete, the Ralph family escape every weekend to enjoy their peaceful retreat. 'To build our own home was like therapy and allowed us to do something for ourselves,' Anthony says. 'We always look forward to the end of the week when we can all pack our bags and head out to the countryside again.' 25

