

Heritage Reimagined

Nykke Jones Interiors revives a 300-year-old cottage in Milton Abbas

In the heart of the picture-perfect Dorset village of Milton Abbas — where rows of thatched cottages line a gently curving street — Nykke Jones Interiors has completed one of its most distinctive and delightful transformations: the full restoration and redesign of a 300-year-old Grade II listed cottage at 46 The Street.

Milton Abbas itself is steeped in history. Conceived in the late 18th century by the 1st Earl of Dorchester, with landscape design by Capability Brown and architecture by Sir William Chambers, the village's harmony and heritage are legendary. Yet when Nykke Jones was approached by homeowners Michelle and Dr Declan Keane, she took a refreshingly unconventional approach. Rather than defaulting to reverence and restraint, she set out to create something joyful, surprising, and full of personality — a home that celebrated history but also embraced bold modern living.



PICTURED ABOVE

Nykke Jones owner of Nykke Jones Interiors





ABOVE

Dining area boasts a generous table for ten, ideal for shared meals and celebrations, with French doors leading out to a lovely courtyard garden

RIGHT

Layered lighting highlights the building's gently undulating walls and original timber



A joyful, modern take on heritage

The brief was simple yet layered: bring the cottage back to life while expressing the individuality of its owners. Centuries of wear had left the interiors dark, divided, and weary. The vision was to honour the original bones of the house — its thick walls, beams, and lime plaster — but to inject colour, pattern, and fun. “We wanted a little chaos, a sense of humour, and warmth,” says Nykke. “Michelle & I have had a lot of fun with this project!” The result is an inspired blend of maximalism and heritage charm, wrapped in comfort and contemporary flair.

A three-year labour of love

The restoration journey was a long one. Western Design Architects spent three years navigating the intricate planning process for the listed building consent. Once approved, CPC Building Contractors brought the vision to life with extraordinary craftsmanship, carefully repairing rather than replacing historic materials. Every detail — from lime plaster finishes to reclaimed timbers — was approached with respect for the building's fabric.

Where new elements were required, they were made using traditional techniques and locally sourced materials, ensuring authenticity in every corner. The outcome is a structure that feels as if it has evolved naturally through the centuries — yet now gleams with renewed vitality.



A bold interior transformation

Inside, the transformation is both striking and unexpected. Nykke introduced a palette of deep muddy blues and earthy greens, inspired by the Dorset landscape and realised through Farrow & Ball's heritage paints. The tactile layers — brushed oak, hand-finished ironwork, and natural stone — bring depth and soul to every space. Warm, layered lighting highlights the irregular surfaces and timeworn textures that tell the cottage's long story.

The kitchen, reimagined with a large extension, perfectly balances practicality and character. Bespoke cabinetry, aged brass hardware, and natural stone surfaces provide understated sophistication, while hidden modern appliances ensure seamless functionality. In the living spaces, built-in joinery maximises the charm of low ceilings and thick walls, turning architectural quirks into standout features. Bedrooms and bathrooms are playful yet elegant — a conversation between heritage and modern luxury.

Folklore in the rafters

During the renovation, the project took a fascinating twist. While workmen were rethatching the roof, they discovered a mummified cat concealed within the eaves — believed to have been placed there centuries ago to ward off evil spirits, a superstition once common in English thatched cottages.

The find made national headlines when The Sun reported on the story, quoting Michelle and Declan, who affectionately named the cat “Jimmy.” In keeping with tradition, the couple decided to return Jimmy to his resting place within the thatch — preserving a curious piece of local folklore and adding yet another layer of history to their beloved home.

ABOVE

The master suite with a king-size four-poster bed and en suite, two further bedrooms that shares a stylish Jack and Jill bathroom and a charming twin room with two single beds





A living legacy

Today, 46 The Street stands as a testament to Nykke Jones Interiors' belief that heritage homes should be lived in, not preserved behind glass. This remarkable project celebrates craftsmanship, individuality, and the enduring beauty that comes from breathing new life into the past.

It's a story of respect and rebellion — a space where 18th-century structure meets 21st-century imagination. The result is a home that feels timeless, soulful, and unmistakably unique — a true reflection of both its history and its joyful new custodians.

For more on this project and Nykke's interior design philosophy, visit www.nykkejonesinteriors.co.uk or follow @nykkejonesinteriors on social media for behind-the-scenes inspiration.



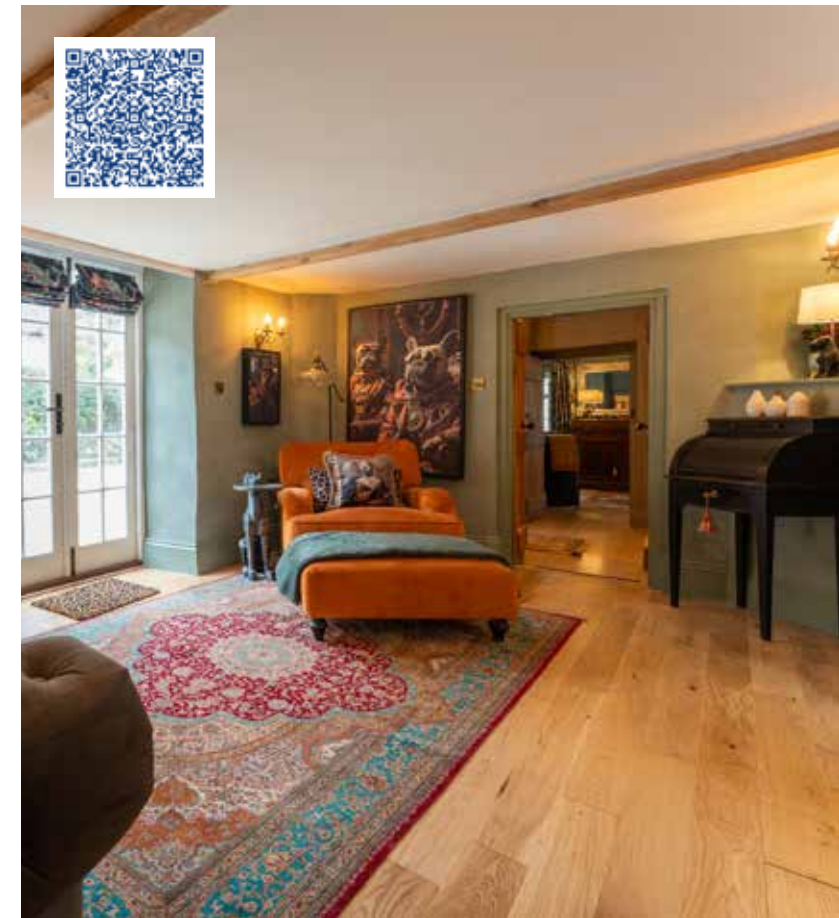
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ABOVE
With three inviting living areas and three fireplaces, there's ample space for everyone to relax

LEFT
The new extension's kitchen blends bespoke cabinetry, aged brass, and discreet modern appliances

