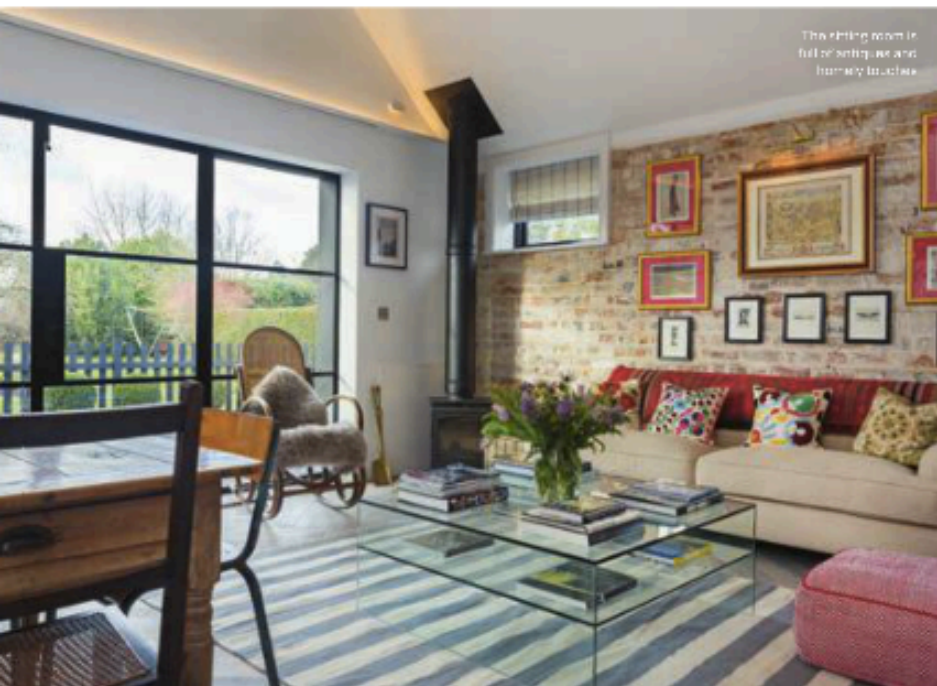


travel

Home from home

A converted outbuilding on the idyllic Kent and East Sussex border makes for a stylish and homely retreat that's easy to get to and hard to leave, finds Jessica Jonzen when she visits with her family





The sitting room is full of antiques and homely touches



TOP: The master bedroom
LEFT: The weather-boarded exterior, with a terrace leading out on to the garden
BOTTOM LEFT: The stylish and well-equipped kitchen



It was the bathroom that got me. During a late-night Instagram scrolling session, my thumb was stopped in its tracks when it fell upon an image of what might just be the perfect bathroom: a Cristal-style screen! Vibrant green Bert & May tiles! Hexagons and herringbone, brass taps and a marble basin! Be still, my beating heart.

I tapped on the account and it was for something called The Outbuilding Appledore, which turned out to be a holiday rental on the border of Kent and East Sussex. I promptly booked in for a long weekend for my husband and I and our two children, and counted down the days.

A weekend away *en famille* usually involves one of two things: an

eye-wateringly expensive hotel room filled with camp beds where you have to sit in silence once the little ones are finally comatose, or a meanly equipped and soulless holiday let that makes you wish you'd stayed at home.

The Outbuilding Appledore raises the bar for the perfect weekend away to dizzy (yet affordable) heights. Owned by lifestyle journalist Amy Maynard and her husband, Charlie, the Outbuilding was once the workshop nestled in the garden of the couple's beautiful home in the quintessentially English village of Appledore. After an extensive refurbishment, which saw just two original walls left standing, the Outbuilding opened to paying guests in February.

We arrived on a sweltering Saturday afternoon and all cooed appreciatively as we opened the door into the double-height kitchen and sitting room – even four-year-old Zac. Everything was perfect, from the Cristal-style French doors onto the deck to the log burner, white-washed parquet flooring, antiques and artwork to the generously kitted out navy-blue kitchen.

I'm not sure who squealed louder when we saw the bedrooms, me or my seven-year-old daughter, Ollie. The master bedroom is

restfully painted in Farrow & Ball 'Cromarty', with a gloriously decadent roll-top bath at the foot of the bed; it's at least as good as any you'd find in a luxury boutique hotel.

The children's room is a clever use of a small space, with bespoke built-in bunk beds and painted entirely in a deep racing green, giving the room a wonderful den-like quality. This led on to the bathroom, which brought me here in the first place – and even more gorgeous in the flesh.

The Outbuilding Appledore is an interiors enthusiast's dream, but it has as much substance as it does style. Age-appropriate toys were left out for the children, the television screen is cleverly hidden in a cupboard and a fold-out desk gives little ones a space to play. Everything has been considered.

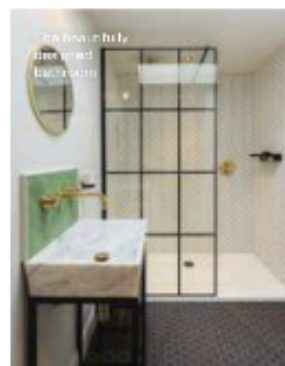
My husband was delighted by the array of 'proper' stemmed beer glasses, and the Nespresso machine was a lovely touch for our morning coffee. The biggest draw as far as my children were concerned though was the fact that Amy and Charlie's children were just a year

younger than the two of them, and after initial shyness, they were soon firm friends.

We managed to drag them away the next morning to the stony beach at Winchelsea, just a 10-minute drive away. Our final day was spent in Rye, and I can now understand why it's such a draw. From the gorgeous antiques shops to the plethora of cafés and ancient pubs (The Mermaid Inn is a must-visit), it's like stepping back in time but with better food.

We all felt rather downcast when we had to leave, and by the end of the week, we'd booked in for two further visits. The Outbuilding Appledore is a real gem of a find. God bless Instagram.

theoutbuildingappledore.com



The master bedroom bathroom

We all cooed appreciatively when we arrived – even my four year old