

VISION OF BEAUTY

When Ricky and Denise Wrenn built a glass-filled house on a hilltop plain, the result was clearly special

Words Heidi Best Photography Mark Nicholson



Favourite aspect: 'Two-thirds of the external structure of a Huf House is made of glass, so it lets in an enormous amount of light'

Meet the owners...

Ricky Wrenn and his wife Denise, who are both retired, and their daughter Victoria

Previous home 'We lived just over the road in a house built in 1959,' says Ricky.

Current property...

New-build Huf House in Northamptonshire

Rooms Hall, open-plan sitting room/kitchen/dining room, family room, study, four bedrooms (all en suite), patio

Built 2006 Cost £840,000



I Patio Nicky and Denise love to entertain alfresco in the dining area under the eaves of their home, built by Huf Haus (0870 200 0035). Beyond, the couple and their guests can also enjoy the marvellous view of the River Nene. The stainless-steel, glass-topped dining suite from Indian Ocean (020 8675 4808) has been made waterproof by electroplating – prudent protection against the British weather. When it does rain, galvanised chains hanging from the guttering act as a conduit, transporting rainwater down towards circular pebble-filled hollows and dispersing it away from the structure of the house. Timotay Landscapes (01933 665151) designed this area

The original plan seemed simple. Ricky and Denise Wrenn loved the view from their Northamptonshire home, so when a nearby farmhouse came up for sale, they decided to purchase it, put a covenant on the property to prevent any development from spoiling their vistas, then sell the place on. 'But having bought it,' Ricky explains, 'we discovered that the farmhouse had a better view than our old place, so we decided to live there instead.'

But Ricky and Denise were used to the open-plan aspects of their 1950s home, and found the farmhouse's layout cramped by comparison. Converting the property seemed the obvious solution, but none of the suggested schemes proved suitable. 'We ran out of ideas,' says Denise. 'So two of our children moved in there instead.'

Then a friend showed the Wrenns an architectural magazine featuring a Huf House from Germany. 'As soon as I saw the photographs, I knew that it was what we were looking for,' says Denise. 'Huf ►



1 Sitting room Set around an Eileen Gray table is a collection of chairs and stools designed by Harry Bertoina; all were sourced from Pink Apple Designs (01234 818456). Denise bought the white leather sofa from DFS (01604 233210)

2 Dining room Ricky and Denise start the day seated around a Knoll Saarinen Tulip table, with side chairs, again sourced from Pink Apple Designs



Favourite shop: 'Pink Apple has a fantastic selection of Modernist furniture'

sent us details of the properties, and we fell in love with a structural frame stained white, both inside and out.'

Denise admits that their plan to knock down the brick farmhouse caused more than a few sharp intakes of breath in the village, until the residents saw the plans. 'Then it all went very smoothly,' she says.

Having chosen a layout, the couple went to Germany to visit the Huf factory and select the fixtures and fittings – everything from the flooring to the tiles, taps and baths. 'We spent a few days out there looking around the eight or so Huf houses on display, making notes and getting ideas,' says Ricky. 'Narrowing down our choices in this way made the fit-out much easier.'

After preparing the site by demolishing the farmhouse, Ricky and Denise were ready for Huf to prepare the all-important concrete slab on which their property was to stand. Once that was completed, inspectors came over from Germany to check all was well. 'Then the lorries carrying the house arrived,' Ricky recalls. 'They began unloading at 9am, and just four days later, the place was up and the roof was on, with everything tiled and watertight. It was ►



3 Galleried landing

A contemporary painting brought back from Spain adds a splash of colour to the view from the landing, down through the couple's kitchen

4 & 5 Kitchen Two built-in Gaggenau (01908 328360) ovens are perfectly placed for preparing meals. Ricky and Denise selected the metallic-silver tiles for their splashback while visiting the Huf factory. The triple-light fitting is from John Lewis (08456 049049)



1 Master bedroom The round, black-and-white Eero Aarnio Pod Chair from Modern Classics (modernclassics.com) and the white leather Le Corbusier chaise longue from Pink Apple Designs (01234 818456) are typical of Ricky and Denise's love of Modernist furniture. Their bed, with white leather headboard and surround, from Furniture Craft International (0870 770 1080) is dressed with Helena Springfield (01293 535845) bedlinen **2 Master en suite** Huf (0870 200 0035) supplied the tiled floor, the sanitaryware, the vanity unit and the black-granite worktop



Last word: *'The men who built this place took enormous pride in their work – everything was checked, and nothing was left to chance'*

amazing to watch – that bare concrete slab had suddenly become our new home.'

With the construction completed, the fit-out took another 12 weeks. The garden was landscaped at the same time, so all Ricky and Denise had to do was move in and enjoy furnishing their new home.

Introducing vivid shades of orange into the all-white scheme added an important element of contrast, while the furniture was also used to cleverly divide the vast downstairs space into separate zones.

And, of course, the Wrenns have made the most of the marvellous vistas. 'We feel so close to the landscape,' says Denise. 'We're blessed with this view and I can't imagine what else we could have built that fitted in as well as this place does.'

'The light is ever-changing,' she adds. 'But even on a dreary day, the house is bright and tranquil. We can see ourselves living here for the rest of our lives.' **BT**

Inspired buys

The Wrenns' contemporary sitting room is the perfect place for a well-designed armchair with matching footstool. Here a few of our favourite recliners



Tok recliner and footstool, from £1,749, Variér (0845 603 7074, varier.co.uk).



Ublo armchair designed by Sacha Lakic, £1,265; footstool, £859, Roche-Bobois (020 7431 1411, roche-bobois.com).



Shaman small armchair, from £1,125; Shaman small footstool, from £534, Ligne Roset (0870 777 7202, ligne-roset.co.uk).

