

barn dance

IT MAY LOOK LIKE IT WAS BUILT OVER A CENTURY AGO BUT THIS BRICK BARN ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF CASTLEMAINE IS ONLY THREE YEARS OLD.


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CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT The bedroom in the loft is a light and airy space with painted white floorboards; a view across the paddocks; vintage pieces, from scales to a coffee grinder, keep the kitchen in period; pet donkeys Ki Ki and Dou Dou; owners Daniel and Glenny with their Cairn terrier Molly. FACING PAGE The couple's differing preferences result in an eclectic mix of European and early-Australian antiques, including French industrial furniture and lighting, and Depression-era pieces.



The dining area, which features 1920s French Tolix chairs, opens up onto a sunny courtyard through rustic French doors. FACING PAGE, TOP Glenny's collection of jelly moulds makes an interesting display. BELOW "I like a bit more softness," Glynn says, "and Daniel likes it more industrial."



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A photograph of a rustic interior. In the foreground, a dark wooden coffee table holds a small yellow toy car. Behind it is a light-colored sofa with patterned cushions. To the right, a dark wooden cabinet holds a wooden bowl, and two wooden spoons stand on the floor. The background features a wall with vertical wooden planks and a white brick wall. A pendant lamp hangs from the ceiling.

LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING. Take the case of a red brick barn down the back of an old miner's cottage on the outskirts of Castlemaine in Victoria's goldfields. It faces out over grassy mullock heaps on the creek flats of Chewton and, like most of the neighbouring buildings, it looks as if it has stood there for a century or more.

While some of its components may well be of that vintage — the bricks, for instance, are all reclaimed from previous structures, as are other building materials — this very traditional barn is still just three years old.

Built and decorated by Daniel Burgermeister and Glenn Eastwood, the work has been an obsession for the couple and the way it fits so well in this landscape is testament to their skill in imbuing it with aged finishes and their attention to the finest details.

For the overall design, they drew ideas from the surrounding architecture, as well as their regular travels to Europe. "We wanted to build something that suited the historic landscape around here, and we were also inspired by the architecture we've seen in France," says Daniel. "We just like the style of the building, it's much like the dilapidated old barns you see in this area." >

The barn is the second project the couple has devoted themselves to on the site. For most of the week they live in inner Melbourne, where Glenny works in retail fashion. Ten years ago they had started looking for a weekender in a region they often visited. "At first we were going to buy a bigger house in town, but because we used to go away on weekends we thought it might be best to buy up here," Glenny explains. "We always felt comfortable in the area; we love the arts scene and the landscape, and it's an easy 90-minute commute from Melbourne."

Daniel and Glenny found an 1860s miner's cottage for sale on an overgrown, blackberry- and gorse-infested one-hectare block. For the next few years they renovated, clearing the yard and building stone walls around the developing garden. "The house had been owned by a darling 90-year-old lady who had lived here since the 50s," Glenny says. "We used to sleep in an asbestos [fibro] room; we didn't have a bathroom and showered outside for years, and it took us months to clear enough of the yard just to get to the clothesline." When the renovating was done the idea of building a barn for guests came into focus.

Daniel, who has an industrial design background and now designs and makes copper water features, initially drew up the building, adjusting proportions by eye as it materialised. He also did most of the physical building himself. He'd never built anything before, but the project soon became — and still is — an all-consuming passion to hunt down and use the most appropriate second-hand materials and fittings.

Used bricks were found locally, walls and ceilings were panelled with recycled lining boards and old floorboards were reversed to lend a rustic look. "Every single thing in the building is second-hand," Daniel says. "I've done everything myself except the brickwork; we've spent every weekend working on it."

"We don't accept invitations in town on weekends, we come up here without fail," Glenny adds.


Daniel and Glenny have invested their hearts and souls in every stage of the barn's development, not least of all the fitting out and furnishing.

"We have the same tastes, yet we fought like cat and dog about some details," Daniel says. "Glenny thinks more about function, while I'm into the aesthetics."

"I like a bit more softness," Glenny corrects him, "and Daniel likes it more industrial."

The barn is nevertheless furnished with many of the couple's prized finds. At every opportunity they scour markets for old furniture and household items. The annual Fryerstown antique market in January is a much-anticipated event. "We go early with friends, who come down from Sydney and make a week of it," Glenny says. >





Every few years the couple travels to France, making a beeline for second-hand markets in Paris: some of the floral paintings in the barn are French finds. Glenny also collects the wooden saltboxes displayed in the kitchen, along with jelly moulds, scales and coffee grinders. Daniel likes rudimentary Australian Depression pieces and French industrial furniture and lighting. Other, more functional items, such as the dishwasher, heating panels and hot-water service, were bought on eBay.

The barn is tucked away at the rear of the garden, shielded from the house by a silver pear orchard. There's an outdoor bath and shower on the deck — vintage, of course — and other thoughtful touches for guests.

When asked why they don't move in and enjoy the barn themselves, Glenny says, "I like being a hostess." For Daniel, the end of the project at least brings some comfort in knowing the barn looks and feels the way he intended — as though it was always there. "It went so smoothly from start to finish: it was all meant to be." *
Daniel and Glenny's guesthouse barn, Red Brick Barn, is in Chewton, Victoria; www.redbrickbarn.com.au

Glenny made the patchwork quilt that brightens the all-white loft bedroom.