

THE TIMES

# MAGAZINE

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What's going on  
down there?

**MEN, LUST AND AGEING**

Alan Franks comes clean





Oscar Found in the extension his father designed. Opposite: the view from the lake



## OUR SECRET HOUSE

*When architect Richard Found was told he could not demolish the gamekeeper's cottage on his Cotswolds land, he simply built a modernist extension to blend seamlessly with the surroundings*

REPORT Carolyn Asome PHOTOGRAPHS Romas Foord



**W**hat strikes you most as you approach Ladlecombe, reached by a track through beech woods, is how little you can actually see of it as you come down the driveway. All that is visible is a lovingly restored cottage, two green “roofs” designed by the landscape gardener Lady

Mary Keen, and two 3m retaining walls made from local Cotswold stone. What you don’t see, until you head down to the lake, is the impressive, rectangular, modernist extension, an elegant paean to old meets new.

The project, which took architect Richard Found more than three years to complete and for which he won a Riba award, blends seamlessly into the countryside. Found designed Mario Testino’s office and the new Sak’s department store in New York, but this project proved to be one of his most enjoyable.

Set in a plot of 16 acres, it’s a rural idyll with nothing as far as the eye can see. Certainly, that’s how it was intended: a contemporary family home surrounded by nature, created as an antidote to city living, which Found shares with his art adviser wife, Jane Suitor, and their children. Olivia, 13, and Oscar, 8.

“Jane thinks she found it,” Found smiles, “but really I did. We’d been looking around the Cotswolds and came across this ruined gamekeeper’s cottage which dated back to the 1800s.” The couple bought it for £750,000 in 2004 but it was some time before they could start renovating. The planning process, unsurprisingly, was arduous. During the initial meetings, English Heritage was consulted and the cottage was listed grade II.

“When they got wind that I was considering demolishing it, they spot-listed it immediately, which in hindsight they were right to do because there were some original wrought-iron features on the windows. The planning and conservation officers were also not keen on the cottage being altered or adapted at all, arguing that if an extension was permissible it should be subordinate in size to the cottage.

“After a number of meetings, however, and once they had been shown a large-scale model where the new structure was set behind the cottage and into the slope of the landscape and clad with a local stone, they began to get excited and supportive of the scheme.”

The landscape and local vernacular architecture were the inspiration for the design, which is conceived as a series of three dry-stone walls terracing the landscape. Each terrace represents a part of the building: bedroom accommodation, living areas and the entrance section linked to the cottage.

The roof is the second elevation as the rear of the building is set into the hill. The private spaces of the house are set further back than

**Clockwise from this image:**  
Olivia Found; the cottage;  
the Found family; a bathroom;  
the master bedroom  
with art by Eddie Peake;  
inside the cottage

