

THE 17TH-CENTURY HOUSE IS SET ON 43 ACRES, AN IDYLIC SETTING JUST 40 MINUTES FROM CENTRAL LONDON BY CAR. FOR DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.

For a young Anglo-Italian family, American designer Joy Moyer breathes fresh air into an English manse with a storied past

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british accents



THE LOUNGE IS SWATHED IN A LEE JOFA FLORAL. BESPOKE CHAIRS AND LOUNGES BY ARCHER & SMITH; VINTAGE SOFA UPHOLSTERED IN A RALPH LAUREN HOME LEATHER; ANTIQUE OUSHAK RUG ATOP A STARK CARPET. LEFT ANGELO AND NADIA MORATTI WITH THEIR CHILDREN, GRACE, ADAM, AND GIAN MARCO.

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ith its chimneys thrusting into the sky, its half-timbered brick façade and vast expanses of leaded glass, the stately structure exemplifies the moment when the English country-house tradition met the wealth of the Industrial Revolution and the aesthetic of the Arts and Crafts movement. It's not difficult to visualize swirls of cigar smoke rising to the rafters in the vast main hall, and brandy being served by liveried footmen. Indeed, the estate was once owned by famed tobacconist Alfred Dunhill, founder of the eponymous luxury empire that still bears his name.

Decades later, the scene in the Old Barn, as it is affectionately known, was far more raucous when it belonged to music producer Robert Stigwood, manager of Cream and the Bee Gees. "The house was the scene of legendary parties," says current owner Angelo Moratti. "It's where George Harrison's wife and Eric Clapton started their romance. Elton John stayed often. Virtually everyone who was important in the '70s music industry was a guest here. There are so many wonderful stories."

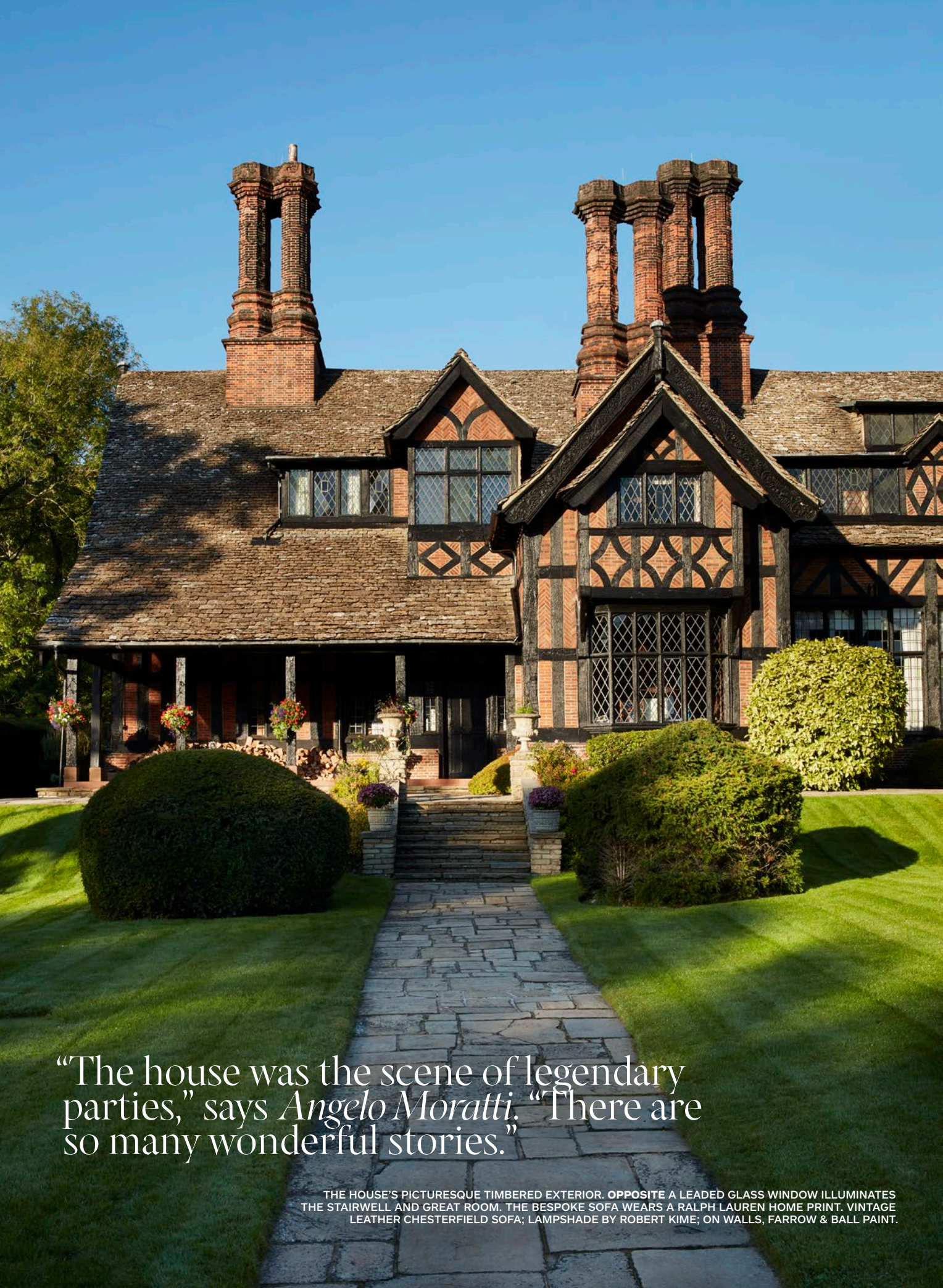
Stigwood sold the place to Moratti's father, Gian Marco, in 1976, shortly before relocating to Bermuda. Gian Marco Moratti, like his father before him, was head of one of Italy's

largest oil companies—where Angelo Moratti himself works today. (The family had also long been involved with Milan's championship soccer team Inter Milan.)

"My father immediately hired Renzo Mongiardino, who had designed our home in Milan," says Moratti, referring to the legendary 20th-century Italian interior and set designer. Located on 43 acres, with two lakes, the property is only a 40-minute drive from central London, which made it an ideal refuge for the family. "I was attending boarding school only about a half hour away and would go to the house on weekends. My family had an office in London as well, so they were often there, and I still used it a lot when I was in my 20s and 30s."

But over the years, the family's connection to their country retreat weakened, and it was used only sporadically. "When my father died two years ago, I inherited the house," Moratti says. By then, his own circumstances had changed as well. Through his work with the Special Olympics International, he had met his wife, Nadia, whose son, Adam, now 10, has disabilities. The couple had twins, Grace and Gian Marco, now 4. And the appeal of a home near London, where Nadia has family, only increased.

It was then that Moratti turned to AD100 designer Joy Moyer. If buildings come with diverse and fascinating histories, so do designers. Moyer's background includes stints with



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THE HOUSE'S PICTURESQUE TIMBERED EXTERIOR. OPPOSITE A LEADED GLASS WINDOW ILLUMINATES THE STAIRWELL AND GREAT ROOM. THE BESPOKE SOFA WEARS A RALPH LAUREN HOME PRINT. VINTAGE LEATHER CHESTERFIELD SOFA; LAMP SHADE BY ROBERT KIME; ON WALLS, FARROW & BALL PAINT.





ABOVE A LAKE ON THE PROPERTY. BELOW VINTAGE WICKER CHAIRS SURROUND AN ANTIQUE REFECTORY TABLE IN THE DINING ROOM. A LEE JOFA PRINT COVERS THE WALLS. WOOL SISAL RUG.



LEFT A VINTAGE LAURA ASHLEY PATTERN DRESSES ANOTHER BEDROOM'S WALLS. BEDCOVER AND CURTAINS OF A SCHUMACHER COTTON AND LINEN STRIPE; PENNY MORRISON CUSHION. BELOW A WELCOMING GUEST ROOM.



PORTRAIT: NICK CARTER

Thierry Despont Ltd., Ralph Lauren, and Armani/Casa, giving her the widest possible range of style touchstones. Moreover, her years at Armani had endowed her with the ability to work with high-profile personalities, including Leonardo DiCaprio and John Mayer. "I'm so lucky to have worked at so many firms," she says.



JOY MOYLER
AD100 DEBUT

"One thing I always wanted to take away was an open mind. I am blessed not to be known for a particular style."

And she and Moratti had worked together before. She designed his first New York City apartment in 2008 and is about to start work on their fourth project together, a getaway in Portofino. "He's like family to me now," she says.

"My brief was simple," notes designer *Joy Moyler*, "to freshen the place up and update it for a young family. But to retain the essence of an English country house."



ABOVE A BRAQUENIÉ PRINT DEFINES THE PRIMARY BEDROOM. OPPOSITE THE SHOWER BOASTS CUSTOM TILEWORK BY FANTINI MOSAICI. FITTINGS BY AXOR.



“My brief was simple,” she adds, “to freshen the place up and update it for a young family. But to retain the essence of an English country house. When I first saw the place, I was agape at the elaborate and fantastic timberwork. But I knew immediately it all needed to be lightened up. I wanted to give it the feel of a home.”

WHAT FOLLOWED WAS two years of frequent plane travel and, after Moyler’s mother fell ill, hundreds of Zoom calls and emails. “Fortunately, I know lots of European vendors,” she adds. “I was coming off another London project, so I already knew plenty of reliable artisans in England. In fact, I know London almost as well as I do Manhattan.”

Moyler retained the home’s shell but filled the main spaces and 11 bedrooms with lighter textures and textiles, many by such British firms as Colefax and Fowler and Penny Morrison. The carpets and rugs were pulled up, replaced by modern neutrals by Stark and vivid antiques sourced by Joshua Lumley. “I wanted to bring in even more color,” she acknowledges, “but Angelo likes a muted palette. Fortunately, he approves of my love of Ralph Lauren, and we brought in lots of their accessories. The timbers remained,” she adds with a laugh, “but the surroundings changed.”

“It was essential to bring the house back to life,” says Moratti. “Now it is a happy house, and most of all livable. Joy is amazing at that. She added, took away, and brought back. The mantra was to change but not to change. The house retains the legacy of Mongiardino, but with the special touch of Joy.” ▲