

Sienna Miller
turns to her friend,
director *Gaby Dellal*,
to help breathe
new life into an
idyllic centuries-old
cottage in the
English countryside

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sleeping beauty

THE THATCHED-ROOF COTTAGE
IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, ENGLAND,
DATES FROM THE 16TH CENTURY.
VINTAGE CRITTALL WINDOWS
SOURCED ON EBAY WERE USED
DURING THE RENOVATION.

★ EXCLUSIVE VIDEO SIENNA MILLER
AT HOME, [ARCHDIGEST.COM](https://www.archdigest.com).



SIENNA MILLER, WEARING A GUCCI HAT, GABRIELA HEARST DRESS, AND GRENSON BOOTS. FASHION STYLING BY HANNAH BECK.



IN THE SNUG, THE ROSE UNIACKE SOFA WEARS A FUCHSIA DONEGAL TWEED BY SEQUANA. WALL LIGHTS, INCLUDING AN ANTIQUE SCISSOR LAMP AND VICTORIAN SCONCE, WERE USED BECAUSE THE CEILINGS ARE LOW. BENI OURAIN RUG FROM FRANCOIS GILLES CARPETS.

W

HAIR BY EARL SIMMS USING SAM MCKNIGHT FOR CAREN; MAKEUP BY WENDY ROWE FOR THE WALL GROUP

hen actor Sienna Miller first saw a 16th-century thatched-roof cottage in Buckinghamshire, England, she fell for it hard. “It was a time when there was a lot of press attention on me, and I wanted somewhere to escape. I bought the house on a whim—it offers a sanctuary. I also wanted somewhere where family and friends could gather. It has a nurturing feeling; it is a home with a heart,” she says.

When she isn’t starring in films and television series or onstage (including a role in the Apple TV+ series *Extrapolations*, set to debut next year), Miller, her daughter, friends, and family spend glorious times at the house. And for more than a decade she left the faded chintz-filled interior with its engineered flooring pretty much untouched. During the pandemic, however,

when the urge struck to restore the house, she knew just who to call. “I wanted a Gaby house!” says Miller, referring to her great friend Gaby Dellal’s houses in London and Cornwall, with their wonderful eclectic interiors where vintage fabrics and kilims, industrial fittings, and other homey elements commingle in unexpected unions that exude warmth, impeccable taste, and heartfelt character.

Dellal, a film and theater director by profession, was happy to undertake the project and set about the work with gusto, shuttling back and forth between London and the site while Miller, who was born in the U.S. and raised in the U.K., was grounded in New York during lockdown. “What was beautiful is that she just trusted me, and we had a deal whereby she was not allowed there for six months until I completed the project,” says Dellal.

The restoration process is as much a story about friendship as it is about the design vision. “I gave Sienna her first job right here at my kitchen table. She had never acted before, and I

“The house offers a sanctuary,” *Sienna Miller* says. “It has a nurturing feeling; it is a home with a heart.”

BELOW AN APRON SINK FROM THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM WITH HOLLOWAYS OF LUDLOW FITTINGS OVERLOOKS THE WILDFLOWER MEADOW. MADELEINES PAINT BY FRANCESCA'S PAINTS.



A FARMHOUSE TABLE AND CHAIRS PROVIDE A GATHERING PLACE IN THE KITCHEN. VINTAGE LIGHTING FROM VINTERIOR; LACANCHE RANGE; TILE FROM BERT & MAY.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE AN OUTDOOR SITTING AREA. 1950s WALLPAPER FROM SECONDHAND ROSE IN NYC ENVELOPS A BATH. IN MARLOWE'S ROOM THE TWIN BEDS ARE DRESSED WITH PROJEKTITYNYN QUILTS AND CUSHIONS.

ABOVE 1957 ROSEWOOD HANS BRATTRUD CHAIRS PULL UP TO THE CUSTOM DINING TABLE BY PINTOR. THE OTHER SEATING IS FROM HOWE LONDON. LEFT A TUB FROM THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM STANDS BEHIND A VICTORIAN FABRIC-COVERED SCREEN IN A CORNER OF MILLER'S BEDROOM.

“There are always lots of friends with muddy boots and dogs, yet, miraculously, the house never feels crowded,” designer *Gaby Dellal* declares.

FREYA JONES





ABOVE MILLER, IN A BRUNELLO CUCINELLI BLAZER, LOUNGES ON THE GUESTHOUSE'S SUZANI-COVERED BED. CIRCA 1930S SCONCES; CURTAINS OF A KATHRYN M. IRELAND WOOL PLAID. OPPOSITE A FORMER OUTBUILDING WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A GUESTHOUSE. THE VINTAGE TABLE AND CHAIRS WERE PURCHASED AT 52 METERS, ONE OF THE MANY ANTIQUES SHOPS ON LONDON'S LILLIE ROAD. COWHIDE RUG FROM THE RUG COMPANY.

remember our meeting so clearly—she had a cold and was wearing a cagoule and big old sweater and I fell in love with her. I made her first film, called *The Ride*, with Paul Nicholls, about kids on motorcycles, and her career catapulted after that,” says Dellal, who obviously has an eye for talent.

THIS, HOWEVER, WAS NO simple makeover. Dellal, who had visited the house on many occasions, knew its bones and could see its true potential. First, she set about emptying the house from top to bottom—wardrobes, boxes, clothing, cupboards, furniture, and mattresses included. After that mammoth clear-out, Dellal contracted builders who began work on replacing all the lattice windows, ripping up the floors, and opening the eaves of Miller’s low-ceilinged bedroom. Outside, a gravel driveway and parking area were scrapped to make way for a poetic wildflower meadow with a simple track running at the perimeter for cars. An old garage was also transformed into a guest bedroom for family and friends who are invited to stay even when Miller is in New York (she recently purchased a West Village town house) or away filming.

“When I took on the project, I did tell Sienna that I would want to change everything—floors, windows, doors included,” says Dellal, who set about the multipronged sourcing work of locating suppliers, craftsmen, and dealers across the U.K., the U.S., and Turkey. “I found that people in the interior business are just so lovely,” says Dellal, whose own black book of dealers and suppliers has grown through all her years of making and producing films that are rich in detail and ambience.

Twenty reclaimed Crittall windows were found on eBay; dark brown Georgian- and Victorian-era floorboards were discovered at Norfolk Antique & Reclamation and other specialists; and the perfect fennel green kitchen tiles were turned up at Bert & May. The black and white Carrara for the kitchen work tops was purchased from Retrouvius and Verona Marble, respectively, and a pretty pair of French doors that filters the light in a magical way came from the French House in York. “All the beams were black, which I can’t bear. So we burnt the black off—it’s so much softer,” says Dellal, who envisioned much lighter, more open spaces with colors and textures that gently segue from room to room.



DELLAL'S VISION WAS A HOUSE for “good living” rather than a showpiece, a home that would embrace Miller’s joie de vivre, generosity, and spontaneity. “There are always lots of friends with muddy boots and dogs, yet, miraculously, the house never feels crowded—you can spill into all the different rooms and find space,” she adds. Dellal developed the complex jigsaw puzzle in her mind, working fastidiously on all the different aspects, spending hours choosing the colored cathedral-glass panels for the doors at Lead & Light in Camden, visiting Francesca’s Paints to find just that right shade of bubble-gum pink for the kitchen (Madeleines), and talking with makers in Turkey who vegetable-dyed the vintage Anatolian kilims for the bedrooms and staircase. There’s creativity to be admired at every turn, from the Hungarian striped linen kitchen curtains to the striking silhouette of the 1957 Hans Bratstrup dining chairs (one of the pricier investments). “I worked on the project over a period of months and looked at every tiny aspect—right down to every doorknob and hinge—because it is Sienna and I love her,” says Dellal, who transformed a big sitting room into a dining room, as Miller enjoys cooking.

Marlowe, Miller’s 10-year-old daughter (with actor Tom Sturridge), was treated to headboards of Welsh blanket fabric

adorned with sheepskin, blush and olive gingham bedding, and a tent-flap-style window shade, while Miller herself got a proper big bathtub in her bedroom, Maison C wallpaper, a Murano-glass light, and a rich purple vintage Gabbeh rug. “It is heaven sleeping in my room and waking with the morning light filtering through the curtains,” says Miller of the space, which opens onto a balcony.

“I had the confidence to think if I love it, she will too, and if she doesn’t, that’s also cool,” says Dellal.

When Miller came to visit after the project was completed, Dellal was at the property at dawn to check that everything was as it should be. Before the actor entered the house, she was immediately struck by the sight of the meadow and the romantic pergola. “I could not believe the transformation—I knew it had massive potential, but arriving to see this meadow in front of the house planted with wildflowers, I started to cry,” she recalls. “And it was all achieved in such a short space of time. Gaby is a true artist. Everything has a story, like the kitchen cabinets that were made from old school desks, and there is a real sense of place—it is an artistic retreat but not in any sense precious. Every time I stay here, I discover new aspects.” **AD**



MAISON C'S COVEN WALLPAPER COVERS ONE WALL IN MILLER'S BEDROOM. HEADBOARD UPHOLSTERED WITH STRIPED HUNGARIAN LINEN; BLANKET BY HERMÈS; VINTAGE GABBEH RUG FROM THE RUG COMPANY. OPPOSITE JOHN, A GREY LURCHER, SITS UNDER A PERGOLA BUILT BY NIC SKINNER AT A TABLE DRAPED WITH A CLOTH FROM PETERSHAM NURSERY.