

HOUSE & GARDEN

November
2017
£4.40

Brilliant English interiors

DECORATING INSPIRATION YOU NEED NOW

ADD WARMTH
RUGS, BLANKETS
AND AUTUMNAL RECIPES

DOUBLE UP
WAYS TO USE MATCHING
WALLPAPERS AND FABRICS

THE BIG ART ISSUE

WHO TO KNOW, WHERE
TO GO, WHAT TO BUY
PLUS EXCLUSIVE OFFER
3-MONTH NATIONAL
ART PASS FOR
JUST £10

(SEE INSIDE FOR TERMS
AND CONDITIONS)



Working in harmony

Since 2014, Hauser & Wirth's rural outpost in Somerset has been bringing the boldest names in the art world to Durslade Farm, a group of Grade II-listed buildings transformed into an artistic hub that embodies the very notion of living with art

TEXT EMILY TOBIN | PHOTOGRAPHS JAKE CURTIS

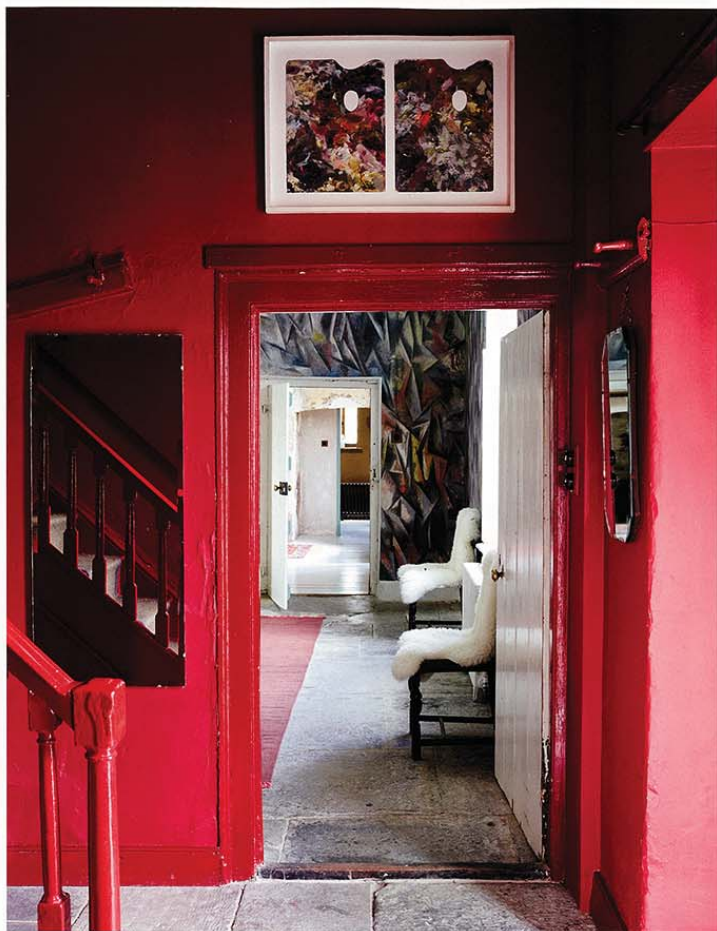
The Durslade Farm estate, with galleries to the left and sculptures by Subodh Gupta and Paul McCarthy





ABOVE The kitchen in the farmhouse, which is used by visiting artists and is available to rent. Each of the plates hung on the walls here was chosen specially for its historical reference to Bruton. BELOW FROM LEFT A collection of bottles displayed in the main bedroom. The entrance to the farmhouse. The study, where original Victorian stickers feature on the panes of an internal window. OPPOSITE Pipilotti Rist's video installation in the sitting room incorporates glass pieces, which were collected as part of an archeological dig performed by the artist





OPPOSITE A view from the hall into the dining room of the farmhouse. ABOVE The main bedroom has exposed plaster walls. BELOW FROM LEFT The original Gothic window panes have been carefully restored in the main bedroom. The dining room walls have been painted by Guillermo Kuitca. Much of the furniture in the farmhouse was found in local shops and salvage yards, including those in the bathroom



In the eighteenth century, the fashion for the picturesque was blooming across Europe. There were parts of the aristocracy who deemed the mechanisation of agriculture wholly unpalatable and so took to building model farms that romanticised rural life. Marie Antoinette was, of course, the most infamous culprit with her *Sèvres* milking buckets and lambs trussed up in silk ribbons.

In 1768, the Berkeley family built Durslade Farm on the edge of Bruton in Somerset: a collection of handsome buildings with neo-Gothic windows that could be admired from the family's mansion on the hill. It was as much a stage set as it was a working farm. In comparison to the wattle and daub cottages that were once its neighbours, Durslade must have stood out as a prince amongst paupers.

Over two centuries on, Durslade Farm is still concerned with aesthetics, but this time it has a star-studded list of artists gracing its doors. Since 2014, the 1,000-acre estate has been a rural outpost for contemporary art gallery Hauser & Wirth, and has played host to exhibitions of work by the likes of Elisabeth Frink, Louise Bourgeois, Martin Creed, and Phyllida Barlow.

With its consistently impressive exhibition programme, presided over by director Alice Workman, the gallery takes up inordinate column inches each year but its quieter siblings are the farmhouse – an offbeat building that embodies the very notion of living with art, and the rest of the working estate. Combined, these three strands draw in 2,500 visitors each week.

The Swiss gallerists, Iwan and Manuela Wirth – who have owned a house in the area since 2005 – are no strangers to converting unexpected spaces into artistic hubs. First came the Löwenbräu Brewery in Zurich, then there was the Lutyens-designed Midland Bank in London, followed by the former Roxy roller disco rink in New York. Unsurprisingly, Hauser & Wirth Somerset is not a stark white box plucked from the capital's artist enclave and plunked in a field: it is an intelligent and considered project where each area artfully connects with the next.

The job of converting the Grade II-listed buildings fell to the Argentinian architect Luis Laplace, who created the gallery spaces around a cloistered courtyard. But the art displayed here is far from monastic. It is challenging, expressive and often irreverent. This autumn, work by Hungarian artist, Rita Ackermann will be on show alongside a retrospective of the Swiss sculptor Josephsohn, while Bharti Kher will take up residence in the town.

It was Luis who renovated the six-bedroom farmhouse that is now used by visiting artists and is available to rent. Before the project began, the farmhouse had been unchanged for 50 years and abandoned for 10, but Luis has conjured a fabulously off kilter interior by taking inspiration from what was there before. The house is a bewildering rabbit warren of scarlet corridors and counter intuitive

stairs that creak at every step. There are exposed copper pipes and doors in a dangerous array of head-bashing heights. As renovations began, internal windows and chimneypieces were discovered, and shoddy dividing walls were knocked down. Furniture was found in local antique shops and the colour scheme was determined using traces of original wallpaper or paint, hence the bathrooms in kitsch shades of calamine pink and mint green.

Naturally, the house is packed with artworks from Hauser & Wirth's fêted stable of artists. In the dining room, Guillermo Kuitca has painted directly on the walls to create a Futurist-style mural. It took him four weeks working 10-hour days to complete the space and the effect is mesmeric; it is rather like being swallowed by an abstract canvas. 'The summer at that particular moment in Somerset was very warm and dry,' he says, 'and though I didn't expect to change my usual sombre palette, the sombre tones grew vibrant and bold.'

In the sitting room, a film by Pipilotti Rist, who spent 12 months living in Bruton as a pilot artist in residence, dances across one wall and a cascade of glass uncarbed from a Victorian dump behind the farm is suspended from the ceiling.

At the back of the gallery is a perennial meadow designed by the Dutch plantsman Piet Oudolf. He has created a living painting in the shades of an artist's palette, which incidentally, can be admired from a pair of Louise Bourgeois granite benches. In 2015, the pebble-like Radic Pavilion took up residence at the far end of the garden having finished its stint as the Serpentine Pavilion in Kensington. It's a fitting retirement home for the artwork. The responsibility of maintaining the gardens falls to head gardener, Mark Dumbleton, who plants some tens of thousands of bulbs a year and nurtures Piet's scheme as it shifts through the seasons.

The Durslade estate produces beef, pork and lamb; there are wild deer, pheasants and angora goats; next year the first bottles of local wine will be available to order at the on-site restaurant, The Roth Bar and Grill. This is the domain of farm manager, Paul Dovey who often takes tours of the estate on his tractor and extols the virtues of beekeeping. There is a kitchen garden and in 2013 the Wirths donated a plot of land to the local council as part of a community garden project.

In other circumstances, the combination of art and agriculture might seem unfathomable. Yet, three years on Hauser & Wirth Somerset continues to upend expectations. No longer is Durslade Farm a picturesque play thing for the aristocracy: it is a constantly changing artistic hub that educates and entertains in equal measure. □

hauserwirthsomerst.com

NO LONGER IS DURSBLADE
FARM A PICTURESQUE PLAY
THING FOR THE
ARISTOCRACY: IT IS A
CONSTANTLY CHANGING
ARTISTIC HUB THAT
EDUCATES AND ENTERTAINS
IN EQUAL MEASURE



ABOVE Piet Oudolf designed the garden around the Radic Pavilion, installed at Durslade in 2015.
BELOW FROM LEFT Farm manager Paul Dovey, Senior director Alice Workman, Head gardener Mark Dumbleton

