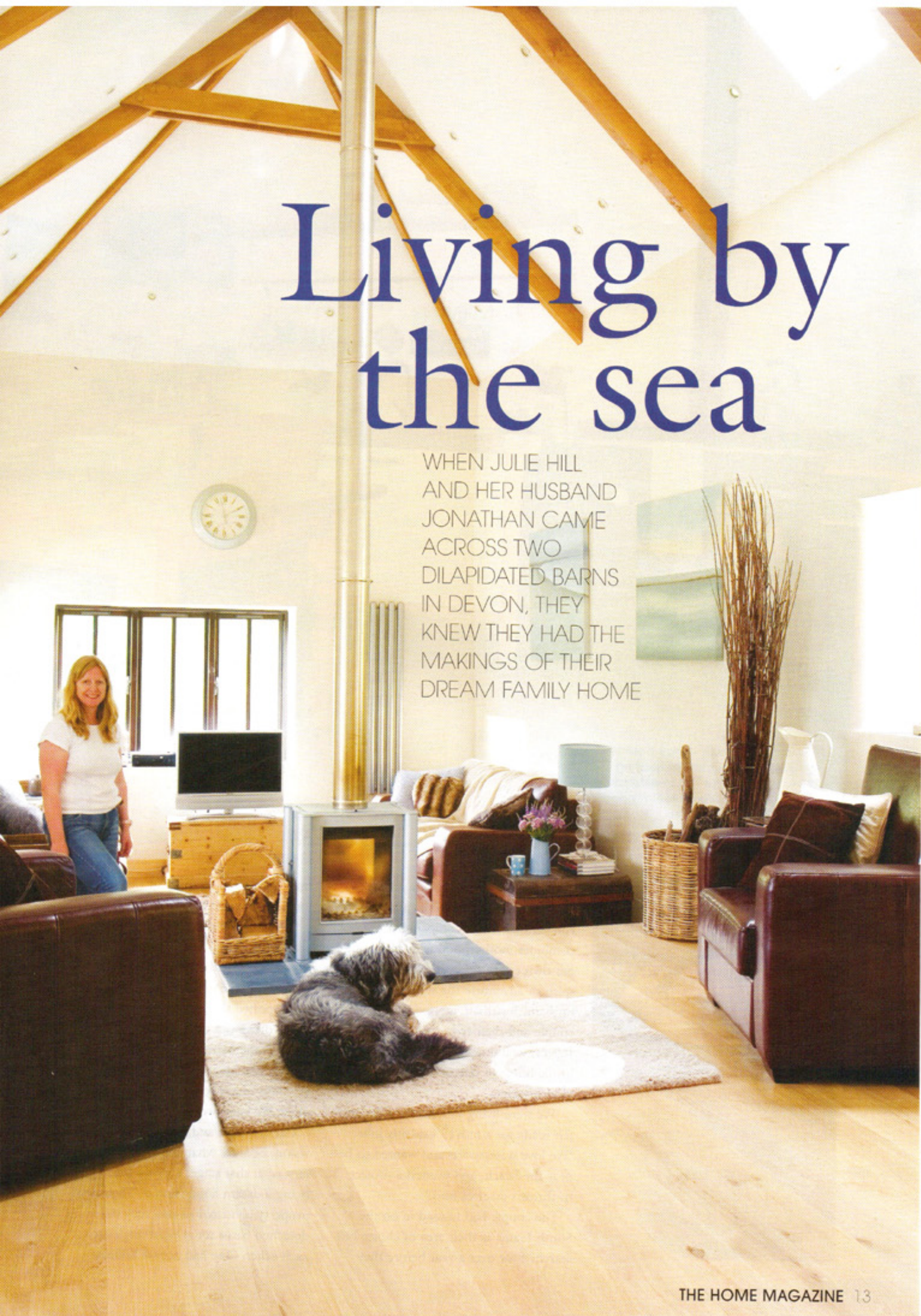


Living by the sea

WHEN JULIE HILL AND HER HUSBAND JONATHAN CAME ACROSS TWO DILAPIDATED BARNES IN DEVON, THEY KNEW THEY HAD THE MAKINGS OF THEIR DREAM FAMILY HOME



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Julie's glossy black range cooker also controls the central heating and hot water. Like the freestanding drawers, her stainless steel-topped sink unit came from Ikea



Julie Hill thrives on change and challenge. She's worked in photography, run various online companies and now combines motherhood with managing her own estate agency. Without the spirit of adventure she shares with her husband Jonathan, an optician, the couple and their two children, Sam and Jessica, would never have come to their idyllic home in one of Devon's most glorious spots.

'We were living in Leicestershire and felt ready for a move,' explains Julie. 'We love watersports and wanted to be near the beach, and wanted a project to throw ourselves into.'

The couple had homed in on the South Hams as their area of choice but searched for over a year before they

finally struck lucky, right at the end of a long day's house-hunting,

'We almost didn't look at this site at all,' recalls Julie. 'We'd already viewed two houses, neither of which was for us. We were on the point of going home, but we'd spotted this place on the internet, so we drove out and walked up the lane towards the barns. The sun came out, the sky was blue and it was so peaceful. We didn't have to say anything to each other. We knew we were going to buy it.'

Luckily, Julie and Jonathan both have vision, because what they were investing in was, at that stage, very far from being a dream family home. Their new property consisted of two very old detached barns set at right-angles to each other. One had been a holiday