

Property

Plots, wrecks and homes to kickstart your project **Words** Cherry Maslen



WRECK OF THE MONTH

There are barns, and then there are barns. This one near Tenterden in Kent is huge, timber framed and has a stunning mansard roof that could provide the wow factor for anyone wanting a home with plenty of headroom. Planning permission is in place to turn Huntbourne Barn into a 3,500sqft, four-bedroom, four-reception

residence. 'We had thought it could be divided in two because of the size,' says owner Chris Rahr, whose family has been farming here since the Forties. 'But I'd be very happy for someone to make it into one spectacular home.' Guide price is £425,000 from Chesterton Humberts (01580 765 858; chestertonhumberts.com).



Take a leaf

If you want your house to be special, both to you and future buyers, Phil Spencer's latest book, *Adding Value To Your Home* (£12.99, Vermilion), has plenty of insider tips, from the TV front man himself, plus architects and designers. With the focus on creating a home rather than a showpiece, this is a good starting point for anyone tackling a first project.

Builders' reward

Got a good builder? The 10th Master Builder of the Year Awards wants nominations not just for top-notch craftsmanship, but that other vital skill: keeping the client happy. All entries, across categories such as new homes and renovations, must be from satisfied customers, like the owners of this octagonal tree house, who put up past winner Spey Building and Joinery. The 2010 overall winner gets a Nissan van, worth up to £20,000, while the client enjoys a £3,000 holiday. Entries by 31 August 2010. (020 7092 3870; fmb.org.uk/awards)



Staycation inspiration

The Butterfly House, a country home in Dorset whose mid-sixteenth-century style has been given a contemporary lift, is one of a fascinating collection of historic and/or unusual private houses available for holiday rent. The recent two-year refurbishment is an inspiring example of how the interior architecture has been allowed to speak for itself, with minimal furnishings and definitely no clutter. This house has seven bedrooms, so could work for an extended family stay or holiday with friends, but there are other much smaller properties, as well as larger ones at Unique Home Stays (01637 881 942; uniquehomestays.com). It also plans to add unique homes for sale as well as rent to its portfolio.



WEB WATCH

A new website that could assist grand designers during the planning stage has been launched by Oasis Urban Design & Architecture. Planning Comment allows self-builders and renovators to show project information and plans to neighbours, councils and planning officers online. (01246 432 481; planningcomment.co.uk)