



Show of skill

Imagine living in a show home every day of the year... Sharon Chilcott meets a couple who are doing just that!



Sharon Chilcott

Since Taryn Rayner decided to use the dream home she's created with her husband, James, as a blueprint for a property development business, it has become their shop window.

Unfazed by the idea of opening their own family home to the scrutiny of potential buyers, the couple are using it as the show home for Taryn's first project. Recently brought to the market are two new five-bedroom executive homes being constructed by Taryn's business, SG Rayner Homes. Situated in the idyllic countryside of Penallt, in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, they are modelled to the same high standards as her own home in its similarly lovely rural Monmouthshire location.

And what a clean-lined, sophisticated, high-tech home it is – in line with one the couple had clearly envisioned even before they had found the ideal location for it. And one which they set about planning down to the last detail whilst they waited three years to start work on it.

"Before we even bought this, in about 2011, Taryn saw a house in Newland and really liked it. So we decided we would copy it. We spoke to the owner and took a picture and we even had a plan drawn up for the house before we'd found the land. That way we could visualise the plot we needed," says James.

The couple sold their house and rented whilst they looked for the ever-elusive ideal site. That's when they

came across a dilapidated forestry lodge in The Narth and fell in love with the location.

Having bought the property, they originally intended to put a new timber frame on the existing building, but, says James: "The structure wasn't strong enough so we had to have a change of plan. In the end, in January 2016, we knocked it down."

"The house was 'higgledy-piggledy' and we had intended to make changes and extend it but if we had known we would end up knocking it down, we would have planned that in the first place," says Taryn. "But you live and learn! And living here for the first three years gave us time to plan exactly what we wanted.

"We had decided everything in advance and think that helped us avoid time-consuming and expensive mistakes once we started the build. It was like a three-year incubation period! It gave me time to decide exactly what I wanted in the bathrooms and I had organised the whole kitchen before the house was knocked down.

"To ease our sanity we also did what work we could around the property whilst we waited for planning permission to be agreed."

The builders finally started work on the couple's dream home in January 2016, whilst they found themselves somewhere to rent in nearby Penallt. Taryn managed the whole project and oversaw the different

craftspeople. By September the same year, they had moved back in and, having made a success of this project, Taryn was beginning to incubate another idea. James says: "Over the past 12 years we have bought and renovated houses on a smaller scale but this is our biggest project to date and it has set us on a journey. Now that we have done a few 'testers' Taryn has decided to make it her business."

Says Taryn: "We have now got a group of skilled people whom we know and trust and who essentially work for us as contractors. I am looking for plots within about a 15-mile radius – local to us, so that for potential buyers I can genuinely sing the praises of the area because we live here ourselves. I will be developing bespoke projects where no two houses are the same and depending on when a client joins the process, they can make changes to suit them. I bought the land in Penallt on August 10 and by 9am the ground-workers were already there. Already I have two houses built and

I am looking to find the next land so the contractors can move straight to the next job once these two houses are completely finished. I aspire to get to the point where I am developing eight to ten houses a year.

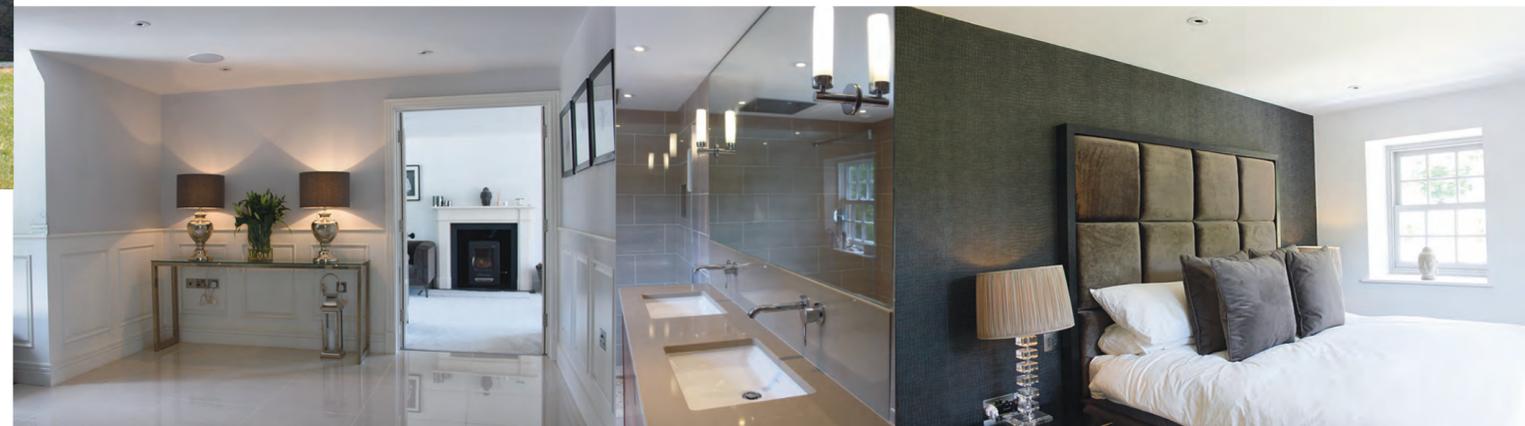
"I lived and breathed our own property but, with the business, when I come home in the evening there is no more talk about building. It is a nicer feeling knowing you are making something for someone else but can come home to a house that is finished. Before, it was question of coming back to a building site!"

The couple's elegant and stylish new home is an example of the quality and approach that Taryn's clients can expect. She says: "For me the details are really key. For James it is the technology. So our house has a high-tech security and lighting system, a Sonos sound system throughout the house, even with speakers in the garden and integrated Wi-Fi boosters to give a solid signal everywhere in the property. It will be the same in the houses we build."

The distinctive new properties will also have high quality, hand-made, bespoke kitchens, similar to the one Taryn chose for herself. She opted for grey, hand-painted Shaker-style units with quartz worktops and quality, built-in appliances. In the utility room she has used the same, sleek units with an oak work surface.

When it came to furnishing their new, four-bedroom home, James insisted it should be 'out with the old and in with the new'. The furniture and décor has been carefully chosen to create a contemporary, clutter-free environment. Taryn has adopted the fashionable colour palette of greys and charcoals and has introduced stunning Andrew Martin wallpaper for feature walls.

Whilst she does not intend to furnish the properties she is developing, buyers can expect Taryn to bring to each new project the same sense of style and attention to the finishing touches which make her own home so impressive.



Get the Look

The couple used Thomas Brown Electrical, Monmouth for installation of all the high tech CCTV; lighting; fire alarms and home sound system. Thomas Brown Electrical Ltd, Southfield, Rockfield Road, Monmouth, 01600 712737 www.thomasbrownelectrical.co.uk

The Chesney wood burner and Chesney Alpine fireplace surround in the living room are from Topstak, Mayhill Industrial Estate, Staunton Road, Monmouth 01600 711710 www.topstak.co.uk

James and Taryn chose the classic black riven slabs for their patio from Mandarin Stone, Unit 1, Wonastow Industrial Estate East, Monmouth 01600 715444. www.mandarinstone.com

Photos courtesy SG Rayner Homes

Get the Lifestyle

Situated in the idyllic Monmouthshire village of Penallt, with one ready now and the other ready for Spring 2019, will be two smart, executive-style houses developed by SG Rayner Homes. Constructed with a high level of care, each will have a detached double garage, a bespoke, hand-built kitchen with high-spec appliances, a Sonos surround system and five bedrooms, two with en-suites. For more details visit: www.sgraynerhomes.com

You can also view the properties on Rightmove: www.rightmove.co.uk/property-for-sale/property-75978107.html

