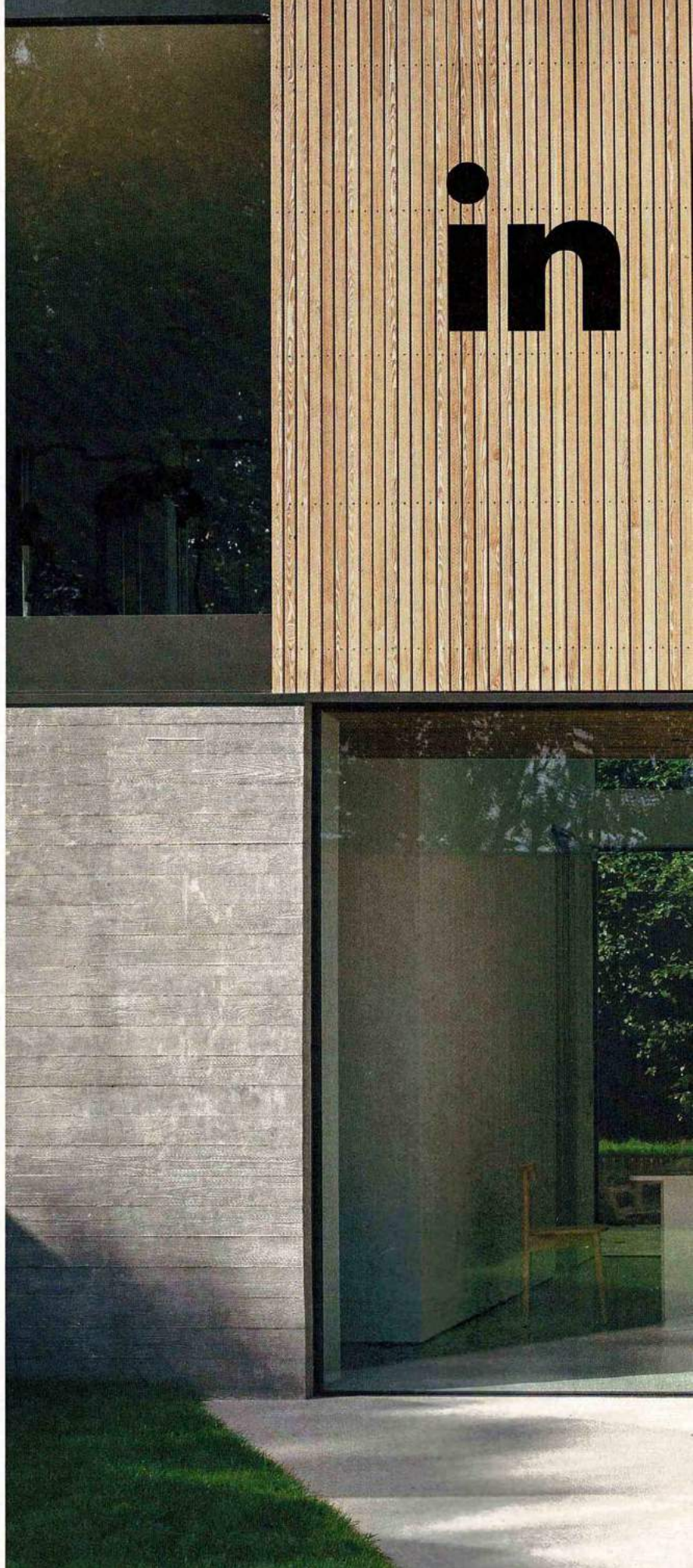


Hidden discreetly behind a traditional-style stone wall, this Aberdeenshire new-build is a quietly modern marvel

WORDS CLARE SARTIN
PHOTOGRAPHY JIM STEPHENSON

Blessing

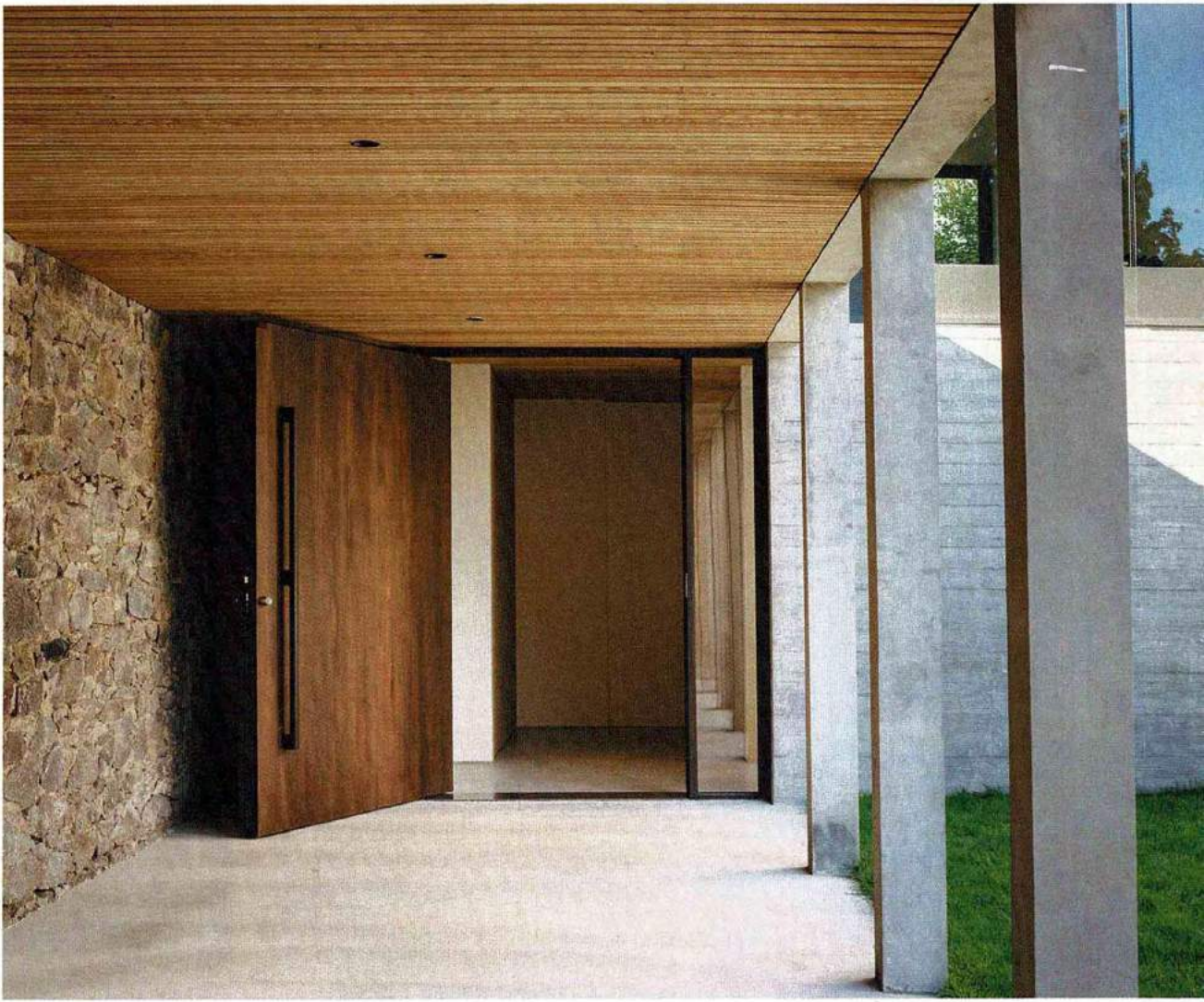
Exterior The design of this home was all about making the most of the natural beauty that surrounds the unique plot, with vast windows cleverly placed to provide views without being overlooked. The owners' dog Stanley is a fan of the results ►



in

disguise





Andrew Brown used to pass the dilapidated property, which once occupied this roadside spot in a village near Aberdeen, twice a day when driving to university, but never paid it a moment's notice.

Little did he know that, many years later, he and his wife Kate Brown, co-founders of Brown & Brown Architects, would create something magical here for clients Wendy and Russel Davies.

First, though, was the matter of the existing building, which dated back to the Victorian era, when it was the stable block for a mansion. The estate had been knocked down some time ago, but this structure remained, unloved and crumbling at the edges. It was far from Wendy and Russel's dream home, but they saw the value of this plot, with its garden that stretched all the way down to the Deeside Way (a decommissioned railway line that's now a tree-lined cycle path). The couple were moving from a remote spot on Scotland's east coast and craved community and amenities, but Andrew was keen that they should not lose their connection with nature.

'It was all about easing that transition from the rural to the urban,' explains Andrew, whose design for this home concerned creating a quiet atmosphere. 'We wanted to build a house that looked its back on the public realm a bit,' he adds. To that end, he moved the property away from the road and towards the garden, and hid it behind a new stone wall, built using granite from the original stables. The upper level, containing bedrooms and a bathroom, is cantilevered over the wall. 'We wanted to play with the boundary by just peeping over the top of it,' continues Andrew. Of course, the view isn't of passing cars, but the rolling hills with the grass roof of the colonnade directing your gaze.

It's this colonnade, formed using an original wall of stone that Andrew left standing (complete with holes where the



Colonnade Created using the original stable wall, with cement columns on the other side and a grass roof on top, this space creates a calm disconnect between this home and the nearby road. The large pivoting door was made by Scottish joinery firm Angus+Mack **Living room** Stanley peeks up from his spot on the 'Panis' sofa by Amura. The floor lamp is the 'Captain Flint' by Michael Anastassiades for Flos and the fireplace (set into this wraparound view) is by Stovax

used to be), that is another key to this home's de-stressing powers. 'It's like a mental airlock,' says Andrew of the covered courtyard, a space to pause before you get to the front door. 'I think it's quite therapeutic. Even though you are not physically that far from the street, it's about how it makes you feel.'

Step through the front door and the dedication to peacefulness continues. Punctuated by a selection of Scandinavian furniture classics, the open-plan interior is purposefully sparse. 'Both of us agree on the minimalist approach,' says Russel. 'I always used to tell the kids, "Don't buy me knick-knacks!"' adds Wendy, laughing. Freed from clutter, the focus here falls on two key elements: the kitchen, clad in distressed slate, and the custom-made staircase - its corkscrew-like spiral comprises 280 individually glued and

nailed pieces of plywood. 'We watched the woodworkers build it by hand, piece by piece,' recalls Russel. 'It's a sculpture, a work of art.'

For a home that boasts so many expansive views, this is a very private space. The placement of the windows means that, although Wendy and Russel are always looking out, nobody can see in. Keen to get a glimpse of the newest house in the village, locals have been known to pop their heads through the gaps in the colonnade and wave, but the interior itself remains a sanctuary. 'It's a peaceful place to be,' confirms Russel. 'We moved in at the end of July last year with the builders still in situ, so we didn't get to fully enjoy the summer here. This year, we will be out on the lawn, planting flowers, appreciating our own environment. It will be the moment to sit back and go "yes".' brownandbrown.studio >

'It was all about easing that transition
We wanted to build a house that turns its



Kitchen Aberdeen-based kitchen firm DK&I suggested this dark-slate finish on the cabinetry of its bespoke design, bringing a moment of darkness to a home that, thanks to its abundance of windows, is incredibly light. The pendant lights above the island are the 'Ambrosia' by Ciszak Dalmas for Marset. Dividing this space from the living area beyond is a custom-made shelving unit by Angus+Mack ►

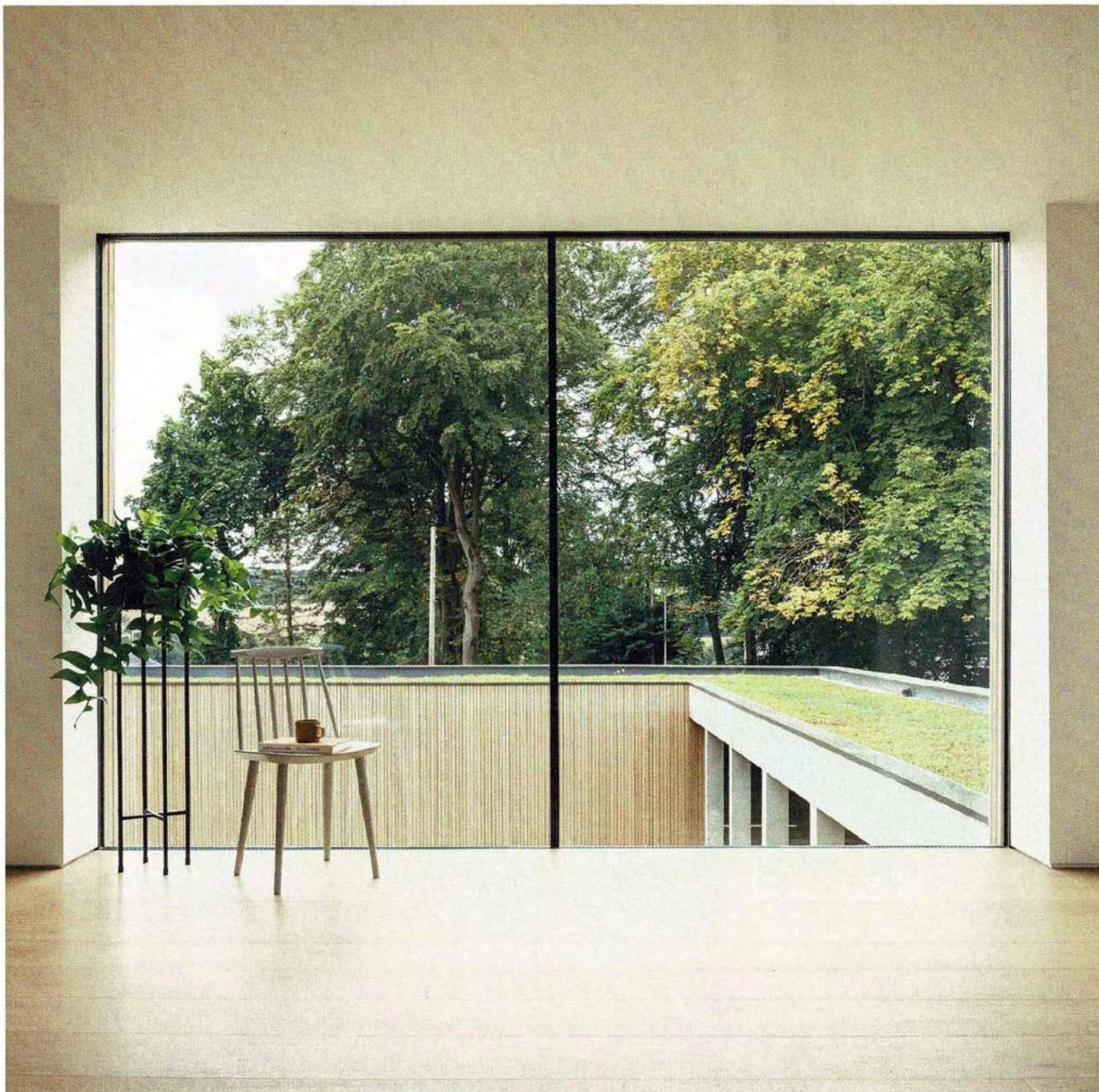
from the rural to the urban.
back on the public realm a bit'







Dining area Light floods in through the double-height window, with the sheer scale of the interior emphasised by the spiral staircase (designed by Brown & Brown Architects and crafted by the woodworkers at Scottish firm Angus+Mack). The pendant light is the 'Vertigo' by Constance Guisset for Petite Friture. 'Bok' chairs by Alain Van Havre for Ethnicraft and a 'J77' chair by Hay are placed around the dining table – a bespoke Corian piece created by Bedfordshire-based furnituremakers Cutting Edge. An 'N2' wooden lounge chair by Nathan Yong for Ethnicraft is placed to take in the view ►



Detail This window in the guest bedroom shows how the view is framed to direct the gaze over the green roof of the colonnade and on towards the surrounding fields. The chair is a 'J77' from Hay
Bathroom This bath tub (the perfect place to admire the view across the treetops) was bought at Glasgow-based interiors store Noma Living – for similar, try the 'Shui Comfort LivingTec' by Cielo. The pendant light above is the 'IC S' by Michael Anastassiades for Flos ▶







**For a home
that boasts
so many
expansive
views, this
is a very
private and
peaceful place**

Bedroom Another 'Vertigo' pendant light by Petite Friture is suspended above the 'Mioletto' bed (with built-in bedside tables) from Hulsta. On each side hang 'Nordic Light' pendants from Haus of Interiors. In the corner of the room, beside the curtains (chosen from Aberdeen-based interiors store Ambiance), there's another 'Bok' chair from Ethnicraft. See Stockists page for details [ED](#)