



John and Tricia Macdonald have used the design of their Portree house as the blueprint for their property firm, with an emphasis on a seamless blend of old and new

# John's doing it for himself

Self-build success has inspired a new collection, writes **Kirsty McLuckie**

IN THE tradition of those entrepreneurs who "liked it so much I bought the company," John Macdonald, MD of Skye Homes, feels that his own self-built house works so well as a family home that he has adapted and incorporated the features into an off-the-peg collection of properties to offer to his customers.

John and his wife Tricia built their home ten years ago after their perfect location was offered to them. He says: "A few years ago, an old family friend offered us the rare opportunity to buy a site in Portree overlooking the harbour. The site originally belonged to the Cuillin Hills Hotel, formerly a hunting lodge. Although the ground was quite steep and

covered in shrubs, we knew it was very special, and as we keen sailors the location was perfect as it had access to the shore."

As for the look of their new house, they worked closely with the designer Jim MacDonald Brown as they had firm requirements in mind. They both love the architecture and outside appearance of period property, but, as John says: "With a young family and a house full of pets we also wanted our new home to have a modern flexible interior. We wanted the house to blend seamlessly into the landscape, keeping the mature trees and taking inspiration from the Victorian architecture of the hunting lodge."

The site itself presented another chal-

lenge but Jim was able to accommodate the level changes necessary whilst keeping to the brief. Tricia had very clear ideas for the layout so worked closely with Jim on the design, which included four double-sized bedrooms, three bathrooms, several reception rooms and a large kitchen with double-height sun room.

As with all self-build, some decisions were made by the site itself. John says: "The orientation was determined by the path of the sun and the views. The main entrance to the north elevation leads to a dining hall and all the south-facing rooms have large windows overlooking the harbour."

They've managed to capture the best of old and new, just as they set out to do. The finish incorporates traditional elements such as sash windows, deep skirting, high ceilings, antique doors and the obligatory Aga, but the décor and layout is bright and modern – particularly the cathedral-style

glazed sunroom with its 180-degree views.

Skye Homes' Country Collection has taken this ethos and is designed around the same principles. Again, these houses have traditional Victorian Highland lodge features, such as overhanging eaves, but they also have great living spaces inside. Their split-level floors and large amount of glazing are designed specifically for a rural setting, while the timber frames are made to stand up to robust island weather. Ranging from a three-bedroom home at 194 square metres to a five-bedroom at 338 square metres, buyers can choose the features they'd like to incorporate, and the designs can also be adapted to be site specific, so John says it is more like a bespoke service. "Each customer has their own ideas about layout or adding features such as a studio over the garage, so whatever level of input they have had, they can feel that they had a hand in designing their own home."

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■ We've teamed up with the organisers to offer two tickets for the price of one for this unmissable event. Simply call 0871 945 4546 by 3pm tomorrow and quote SCOT to purchase two tickets for £8.

