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**Pictures** The structural frame is constructed of laminated timber beams, which are totally exposed, showing the quality of the joinery at every level. The interior has a crisp contemporary feel with the use of monochrome finishes which complement each other and the giant exposed glulam frame. Walnut, limestone and terrazzo are used throughout with the white plastered walls and soffits.



which she refers to as ‘playing with mud pies’, so it’s been wonderful to find a willing accomplice in John, who had the skill and experience to take charge of a really big project. This has been about two gentlemen in the tea-time of their lives having some fun.”

When Bob and John discovered the site at Lyneham Coombe in Devon’s Teign Valley, they were bowled over by the possibilities. “It was never a case of asking why we should build here,” says Bob. “Why would we even question buying such a fabulous site?”

Kicki’s brother, Bengt Warne – a Swedish architect, philosopher and life-time eco warrior – was an early inspiration for the project and had spent many years designing eco properties, specialising in timber and glass houses in wooded locations.

“He was very enthusiastic,” Bob explains. “He visited England and gave us plenty of good advice – including the siting and orientation of the house, and the concept of walking out at first floor level to the garden on the south elevation.”

Unfortunately ill health prevented Bengt’s further participation in the project, and it fell to the flair and

**Pictures** The property combines luxurious accommodation and finishes with the best in modern, low impact building technology. The ground floor is finished with slabs of natural travertine marble, also found in the upstairs kitchen and bathrooms, whilst the first floor living area and bedrooms on both floors have beautiful natural walnut strip flooring to complement the walnut doors and bespoke staircases;

dedication of a local architect, Richard Webster of the Webster Sheryn Partnership, to design the house itself and take care of the project from planning permission through to final completion.

### Interior finishes

His wife Anne, a BIDA-qualified interior designer, was also involved throughout, and was responsible for specifying and checking all the interior finishes such as floor and wall tiles, lighting, kitchen and bathroom fittings – a huge task which she undertook with energy and enthusiasm.

“Both Richard and Anne were working closely to a budget, so a great deal of thought went into every aspect of the design, function, cost, appearance and of course ‘buildability’,” says Bob (61).

“From our point of view it was great to follow a master plan, and the way Richard and Anne worked as a team, both together and with us, was absolutely key to the success of the whole project.”

Planning permission proved fairly straightforward due to the residential building which already existed on the site. The build itself was a major and time-consuming

undertaking, however, which involved moving massive amounts of earth and consulting numerous specialists on everything from the water supply to the resident bats.

The gardens have been attractively landscaped, and the main lawn now borders a small stream which runs down to the River Teign. Deer, foxes, rabbits and badgers are common, and a new architect-designed summerhouse was specially constructed for the existing bat colony, with solar powered heating elements to encourage breeding and hibernation.

Building costs for the main house were high – mainly due to the remote location – and simply bringing electricity to the site exceeded £50,000. The sloping ground required highly engineered and expensive retaining walls, and the whole project was totally bespoke, with everything drawn by the architect and engineered from scratch by John – whose gravity-defying walnut staircases literally fold upwards to meet the first floor.

The house has been designed to the highest specification, and was constructed to provide an environmentally-friendly and sustainable lifestyle. The totally exposed laminated timber frame locks in hundreds of tons of carbon, saving greenhouse gas emissions, and is infilled with glass and →