

METRO Property



SISTER ACT

The siblings who joined forces to buy their first home

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A SEASIDE sensation



Oliver Stallwood explores a modernist architectural gem tucked away on the West Sussex coast

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FANS of modernist architecture will immediately recognise Vista Point and know of its significance. Yet you don't have to be an expert to appreciate the clean lines and minimalist beauty of this unique West Sussex home. Built

in 1969, it was designed by celebrated modernist architect Patrick Gwynne for his quantity surveyor Ken Monk.

Gwynne is best known for The Homewood, which he created for his parents in 1938 and which was left to the National Trust when he died in

2003. Vista Point took a year to build and is a curiously curvy take on modernism, taking full advantage of its seafront location and demanding ingenious interior design solutions.

The hour-glass-shaped house has few side windows, acting as a telescope out to sea and focusing all

attention out over the garden. This may also be due to Gwynne's lack of interest in the surrounding houses. Yet despite his disinterest, Vista Point has some notable architectural neighbours, including Sea Lane House, the only house in Britain designed by Bauhaus stalwart Marcel

Breuer. Owner Jonathan Howell says he fell in love with house at first sight – no surprise, given the breathtaking architecture and unrivalled location. 'I wasn't looking to buy a house at the time, but I loved it so much,' he says.

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REDROW LONDON

My amazing modernist masterpiece

● Oliver Stallwood takes a look inside this beach-front home

THE modernist lines of Vista Point cannot fail to impress, but step inside and the property is a perfectly preserved slice

of modernist history.

Grade-II listed by English Heritage in 2006, and the least-altered of architect Patrick Gwynne's surviving work, this is not the house for a budding Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen:

Vista Point is arguably one of Great Britain's most important beach homes. An impulse buy for Jonathan Howell, he wasn't house hunting at the time, but snapped it up with a view to using it as a weekend bolthole and renting it out as a holiday home.

'It was the house that made me find

a way to make it happen. It looked amazing. If I find something I want to do, I make it possible.'

When Jonathan first opened the door, it had hardly changed since the 1970s. 'I feel a responsibility to look after a piece of architectural heritage – it's a privilege,' says Jonathan. 'I'm very keen to conserve it and look after it for future generations.'

Almost everything in the house was designed by Gwynne, including the kitchen and the built-in furniture. The living area is upstairs to take full advantage of the sea views, and has been untouched since its completion.

The couple who bought the house in 1972 lived in it for 30 years until



Minimalist: Sitting-room furniture includes an Arc floor light and Merida rug

PHOTOS: MADE.COM/UNBOXED

2003. Jonathan, who is chief technology officer at Made (made.com) believes it is thanks to them that the interior of the house is unchanged since it was finished. 'A new owner in the 1980s may have thought of ripping much of it out,' he says.

Gwynne was well known for his insistence on quality building materials and a robust structural design. Built to last, the house still looks fresh almost 50 years on. It is designed around an impressive central wood-panelled spiral staircase, complete with a glass-domed roof.

Jonathan's interior additions blend in seamlessly. The Arc floor light is a nod to the Arco version designed by Achille Castiglioni in 1962 and comes from Blue Suntime (bluesuntime.co.uk), as do the orange side tables. The Atollo table lamps float in mid air and can be snapped up at nest.co.uk. The Arne Jacobsen-style Swan chairs are reproductions, but work perfectly.

Naturally, the rest of the interior was treated to items from Made, and although they are contemporary, they have the right mid-century twist.



Space: The gardens, which lead straight on to the beach, also have a pool designed by Gwynne



Original: Gwynne's orange kitchen remains untouched

Eames DSW chairs slot under a Bramante extendable dining table. A Merida rug adds a 1960s feel to the sitting room, which also boasts a Florence Knoll sofa.

'I love the clean lines and unfussy design of modernism,' Jonathan explains. 'I think because this particular house is a little more curved than other modernist houses, it manages to be function first and a little less stark than other modernist buildings. It has space and quiet which is a complete contrast to living in London – a weekend spent here feels like a proper break and feels

much longer than that.' On the private Willowhayne seaside estate, the extensive garden leads directly on to the beach via an impressive pool, also designed by Gwynne.

So is there anything Jonathan would change about Vista Point? 'Boringly, no – it's perfectly designed. Even if we could I don't think there is anything at all. It is so carefully thought through and works really well. It was designed in 1969, but it was designed well enough that it still works today.'

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