

# HOME

WINTER

FROM JEAN  
QUEEN TO  
LADY OF  
THE MANOR

Langdon Court Manor is  
revived, Donna Ida style

SHORELINES  
& BYLINES

Talking coasts with  
Andy Cooper



MARCHAND PETIT

COASTAL, TOWN & COUNTRY





# From Jean Queen to LADY OF THE MANOR

Wembury nestles into the rugged south Devon coastline, a place known more for attracting coast path explorers and the odd surfer than fashion royalty. But Donna Ida is about to change that. Dressed in her signature denim jumpsuit and a pair of fur lined Gucci Horsebit loafers, the impossibly stylish and effervescent Aussie isn't your typical Lady of the Manor. Langdon Court isn't your typical manor.

Left to ruin for years, its centuries-old features trashed and pillaged, the 'old girl' sought new custodians in 2020. Enter Donna and her husband, distinguished restaurateur and President of the Restaurant Association, Robert Walton MBE. Together with designer Geraldine Apponyi and an army of local tradespeople, the couple have spent almost two years reviving the Grade II\* listed Jacobean manor.

Buried treasures have been unearthed, from moulded ceilings to intricate archways, hidden cupboards to whole rooms. Period features have been given a new chance at a more vivacious way of life, rubbing shoulders with some of modern art's most notable names in a collection of Donna's that has been 25 years in the making. While she may be a long-known name in the fashion world, her eye for design extends well into art and interiors too. Langdon Court's countless trinkets sourced almost entirely by the couple on buying trips to Ashburton's antiques shops and through hours spent trawling eBay for hidden gems.

This grand house has stature, its regal frontage looking out across acres of Devon countryside. Come spring, the hillsides will burst into shades of purple as the lavender fields Donna has planted begin to bloom. It is a view that greets those who wake up in some of the manor's 15 bedrooms, while others pull back their curtains to reveal English Renaissance gardens bristling with hundreds of David Austin roses. In time, a Victorian greenhouse and kitchen gardens will grow provisions for meals rustled up by Robert in a kitchen



designed and built by Cornwall-based Williams and Son. Donna's revival of Langdon Manor has leaned heavily on British companies, from Corson Architectural Detail hardware, Perrin and Rowe taps and Shaws of Darwen sinks, to cushions and curtains made just a few miles away by Niki's Soft Furnishings in Plymstock. However, when it comes to kitchen appliances – Robert's area of expertise – only Italian will do; it is Bertazzoni all the way.

Spending the night at Langdon Court is akin to disappearing down a rabbit hole clad in cosy English country charm yet accented with chic, contemporary touches that could only have been thought up by someone with a finger firmly on the fashion pulse. Coffee table books nod to Bella Freud and Jonathan Adler, while fashion and rock royalty like Bianca Jagger and Kate Moss bring attitude to walls licked by Edward Bulmer paints in heritage shades. Brigitte Bardot casts her gaze across one of the manor's largest bedroom suites, Terry O'Neill's iconic black and white photograph of the French beauty standing almost six feet tall.





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Renovating this country house by the sea has had its challenges, but for Donna it is a dream come true. Langdon Court's trajectory towards becoming one of Devon's most notable new addresses in 2024 began with a soft launch that was as stylish as it was successful, its events including a beauty retreat hosted by beauty and skincare gurus Trish McEvoy and Dr Anita Sturnham, and breakfasts catered by Jamie Rogers, the epicurean enigma behind the renowned Restaurant Twenty-Seven in Kingsbridge.

Once it launches proper, Langdon Court Manor will become one of the most sought-after private use hotels and event venues in the country. One thing is for sure, this old girl has got her groove back and she's looking better than ever.

*Langdon Court Manor is available for exclusive hire for events and experiences. Contact the team at [hello@langdoncourtmanor.com](mailto:hello@langdoncourtmanor.com) to enquire.*