



# Sarah, Beeny's Somerset life

Property guru Sarah Beeny has moved to Somerset from the city and it's all being filmed for a Channel 4 programme

WORDS: Tim Saunders PHOTOGRAPHY: Nicky Johnston/ Outline Productions

Over the past 30 years my husband Graham and I have renovated lots of houses,' says seasoned broadcaster Sarah Beeny, who has presented numerous programmes on Channel 4 including *Property Ladder*, *Double Your House for Half the Money* and *Sarah Beeny's Selling Houses*. Her last project was Rise Hall, a Grade II listed 97-room mansion in Yorkshire that the couple transformed into

a wedding venue, selling it for £1.4million.

The self-confessed city girl had lived in London for 30 years but has now relocated with her family to the depths of Somerset – to Bruton, which is fast becoming a magnet for the rich and famous. Together with Graham she has ploughed a considerable sum into buying a 220-acre former dairy farm with no less than 1,000 sheep grazing in its 12 fields.

They have thrown themselves in at the deep end and quickly

# “ The country way of life has slowed me down ”

adapted to a new way of life. This is the location for the carbon neutral home of their dreams. Sarah and her husband have never built a home for their family from scratch, and the project is being filmed for new Channel 4 series *Sarah Beeny's New Life In The Country*.

'My husband and I have a development company with my brother,' she explains. 'I've been in and out of a lot of houses and we have always talked about the perfect house. The perfect house would have a kitchen that was south west facing. Throughout the year such a kitchen gives you more of the sun,' she enthuses. 'The perfect house would have doors out of the sitting room so that you could get into the garden... What I hadn't realised is that Graham had been really seriously thinking we were going to build this house whereas I was just thinking hypothetically.

'When he said 'I'm serious, let's go and build' my main concern was that I'm terribly impatient. I think you get more done if you are like that. My husband always says there is no such thing as multi-tasking; it's called doing everything badly. I rush through things really quickly and I haven't got time to be patient, otherwise I'll get less done so I think that'll do and let's move onto the next thing. So, I've had to learn patience; the countryside and the building process have both helped with this. The country way of life has slowed me down. It's made me look at nature more and it is slower although the years still go by as fast. I think I'm getting a bit more patient with age, too.'

It's worry about not achieving that fuels Sarah's impatience, she thinks. 'My fear is that I'll wake up one day and the kids will have grown up and left home and I'll ▶



**ABOVE:** Sarah Beeny with her family in Somerset, where she is building an eco home

**LEFT:** Family bike rides are now a regular thing






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## ALL ABOUT SARAH

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Sarah set up her first property development company aged 24 along with her brother Diccon and now husband, Graham.

In 2005, Sarah launched Mysinglefriend.com, the dating website.

In 2012, Sarah, Graham and their four sons opened the doors of Rise Hall to allow viewers of *Sarah Beeny's Restoration Nightmare* to follow their long-term restoration project.

In 2014 she launched the Tepilo estate agency platform.

The following year she collaborated with living solutions specialist, Hafele UK, to launch the Sarah Beeny Home Collection.

Her latest book is *Sarah Beeny's 100 DIY Jobs*, a guide to the most frequently tackled household DIY jobs.



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## WHY BRUTON IS BEING CALLED THE NEW NOTTING HILL

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Bruton and the surrounding area is home to increasing numbers of notable residents. Caroline Corr of the Irish band, The Corrs, lives in the town but its profile really seems to have been raised since billionaire South African internet mogul Koos Bekker and his wife bought the £12 million Grade II listed

Hadspen House. They have transformed it into an exclusive country house hotel and spa, The Newt, with beautiful grounds.

Musical theatre producer Sir Cameron Mackintosh, behind hits like *Cats*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Miserables*, lives on the outskirts in a Grade I listed 13th century former

priory. Fashion designers including Stella McCartney live nearby.

The latest well-known resident is the former Chancellor, George Osborne, who has bought a £1.6million five bedroom Grade II listed Georgian property.

Estate agents in Bruton say that wealthy Londoners

have built a microclimate in the town, causing a dramatic spike in prices leading to it being labelled the new Notting Hill. The town has two private secondary schools, a state boarding school and a restaurant run by Merlin Labron-Johnson, who, aged 24, became the youngest chef to win a Michelin star.

“  
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be old and I won’t have done some stuff that I meant to do. So I’m paranoid and fearful that if I don’t say ‘yes’ to everything, I might miss an opportunity. I had the fear of missing out before social media was invented.’

A building project is not for the faint hearted and two years down the line the house is just about watertight. ‘We just have a shell,’ she admits. ‘I’ve learnt a lot along the way and am fascinated with building practice. I think it’s a bit like jumping off a waterfall; the biggest decision is whether you’re going to jump and then when you do you’ve only got one way to go and that’s down but you’ve got to have faith that you’ll come back up. With a building project you’ve

got to decide to start and once you’ve started you just have to keep going and you will get to the end of it.’

Sarah’s brother is married to her husband’s sister and they now only live half an hour away. ‘Our four sons: Billy (16), Charlie (14), Raffy (12), and Laurie (11) get on really well with their kids. Living near their cousins was a really big draw for them as was the vast amount of space. If we hadn’t moved when we did we probably wouldn’t have done it because it was the last opportunity before our eldest son started his GCSEs.’ ♦  
*Sarah Beeny’s New Life In The Country is on Channel 4, 8pm on Thursday nights.*

**ABOVE:**  
The platform  
built by Sarah is  
put to good use

**RIGHT:**  
The family  
people mover.

