



Carving a unique niche

FINE FEATURES: Furniture maker Sam Anderson has created the ultimate handmade home in one of Wensleydale's prettiest villages. **Sharon Dale** reports. Pictures by **Gary Longbottom**.

THEY say that great leaders are born not made and the same could be said of furniture makers. The best just have natural ability with brains hard-wired for woodwork. Sam Anderson is a good example. An art school graduate, he is completely self-taught and yet he has produced some of the finest pieces of furniture, all featuring the cabinet maker's trademark dovetail joints, inlays and veneers, along with original techniques that he has invented himself.

"It's just something I have always had an aptitude for and what I didn't know I picked up from books, the internet and from trial and error. Not having the formal

training has been an advantage in a way because it means I have developed my own style," says Sam, a former set and lighting designer, who worked in the theatre before going it alone. His work features in every room of his home, which borders the village green in East Witton, one of the prettiest places in Wensleydale.

The sitting room is home to a display table decorated with hieroglyphics and was built to house his collection of prehistoric artefacts. The dining room features a long-limbed curiosity cabinet, created for an exhibition. It tells the story of Orpheus and the underworld through colourful inlaid pictures, exquisite veneers and hidden compartments. It overlooks the biggest piece of furniture in the property,

an enormous burr elm table edged with sycamore and with a silver inlay. While this is an antique of the future, it is robust enough to survive day-to-day use by Sam, his wife, Georgina and their two daughters, Megan, 15, and Ellie, 11.

"It works well in this space and it's great for get-togethers and parties," says

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Sam, who also designed and made all the kitchen units.

The cabinets and the island in the centre confirm his love of curves, which he says add fluidity and softness, and the bold blue colour brings a modern twist to what was an old farm building.

The conversion from agricultural to residential use was hard won and the Andersons had to fight for four years before finally winning permission from the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The park authority finally conceded that their existing house, which is double-fronted but narrow, could be extended into the barns and sheds at the back. They also agreed that a green oak and glass

