

TIMBER LAND

THIS DUTCH COUPLE TURNED AN OLD-FASHIONED HOUSE INTO A CRAFTED, MODERN HOME BY FILLING IT WITH HANDMADE FURNITURE AND ALL MANNER OF WHIMSICAL ITEMS

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Dennis (opposite) with wife Valesca and children, Boaz and Indy, describes the style of their home as 'romantic industrial'. He made much of the furniture, including the kitchen table, himself





VALESCA AND DENNIS VAN LONDEN
 live with their children Boaz and Indy and dog Chip in Prinsenbeek, a village near Breda in the Netherlands. They run vanlonden.com a furniture company that uses largely recycled materials



Dennis made the kitchen cabinets from a recycled wooden church floor. The rough wood complements industrial elements in the house, such as the naked light bulbs and coffee table made from an old metal case

For pure home-making satisfaction, little beats making the furniture that you use each day. Every morning, Valesca and Dennis van Londen eat breakfast with their children Boaz and Indy at the table Dennis fashioned from wood reclaimed from the floor of a bowling alley. "It feels really good to build the things that surround you, and to see your family using it," says Dennis. "And it's even better when the material to make that furniture has been recycled. If you keep your eyes open, you can find reusable timber in all sorts of unlikely places. I made the cabinets in the kitchen from a wooden church floor and, in a previous life, the beds were scaffolding planks."

Dennis also uses scaffolding planks for the furniture business, Van Londen (vanlonden.com), that he runs with Valesca. They turn the pieces of timber into various things, including garden

furniture, bar stools and desks. "The planks are made of larch," says Dennis, "and are robust and durable. They are also weathered and dented. They can no longer be used as scaffolding but they are great for furniture. The fact that they have a past and a story makes them even more appealing."

PRELOVED IS BEST

This love of recycled materials and preloved objects with a history, is seen throughout their home in the village of Prinsenbeek in the Netherlands. Dennis also made the beds from scaffolding planks, and the rough wooden furniture sits alongside metal chests, an old factory trolley and recycled factory lights, which are suspended over the table.

Dennis's handiwork is seen throughout the house: whenever the family needs something, his first thought is "can I make it myself?" So far, the results include shutters, plant stands and a wooden deer »



Boaz (left) with Chip the dog. The industrial elements of the house have been softened by references to the natural world, pastel shades and vintage finds. Dennis made the wooden deer head (below) and created the forest mural from a photograph





VALESCA'S STYLE

- Tone down industrial-style furniture with houseplants. Use plant stands to vary their heights.
- We picked up the green of the plants throughout the house in cushions and decorative objects. Light green shades complement the pale raw materials such as plaster and timber.
- Children's rooms can look fun and funky without being too garish. We've banished primary colours and plastic but the kids both still love their rooms.



head hanging on a wall, papered with a forest scene (also Dennis's work).

His biggest project, however, was the house itself. When the family moved in two years ago, it was tired and old-fashioned. Varnished pine cabinets lined the kitchen, and the walls were covered with anaglypta. A total refurbishment was needed to turn it into a home that met the requirements of a young family.

"The hardest part was removing the old tiles on the ground floor, and replacing them with poured concrete," says Dennis. "But what made the biggest difference was extending the living room by an extra three metres. Now we have room to spread."

To increase the amount of light, a low ceiling was removed on the first floor and freshly exposed brick walls and wooden beams were painted white. Next,

the polystyrene ceiling tiles were pulled down and timber panelling installed, then fresh, smooth plaster replaced the anaglypta.

MODERN ROMANCE

The result is a modern home with deliberately rough edges: a style Dennis describes as 'romantic industrial'. He and Valesca have filled it with things that complement the setting: leather suitcases and glass vases found in flea markets sit beside concrete plant pots, a porcelain pineapple and a tin robot.

The house continues to evolve with new elements being introduced all the time. Many of these, of course, will be made by Dennis. Making furniture for his family is a simple pleasure he is unlikely to want to give up any time soon. 5

Bedrooms and study sit snugly beneath the eaves of the house. The ceilings are panelled with timber and the walls have been replastered. This mix of rough and smooth runs throughout the house