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RUSTIC RENOVATION
TURNING A MILL INTO
A DREAM HOME

**PLANT A
BEAUTIFUL
BUTTERFLY
BUSH**

STORAGE SORTED STYLISH WAYS TO RESTORE ORDER



THIS PAGE In the kitchen, a painting of pears by Katrin's artist mother serves as a striking backdrop for simple ceramics and fresh garden flowers

OPPOSITE The River Adda flows past the house, creating an idyllic setting for alfresco meals

Rustic reclamation



Creativity, a love of simplicity and a dedication to repurposing old, discarded materials has inspired Katrin Arens' distinctive range of furniture, showcased perfectly in her beautiful Italian home

WORDS BY SUE GILKES ● PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIULIO ORIANI/VEGA MG



Scaffolding boards seem unlikely items to shape the course of a life but in the case of designer Katrin Arens, these humble objects were the starting point for an unexpected career. Her spacious, rustic home, half an hour from Bergamo in northern Italy, is filled with a mix of stylish furniture, all made to her own design from a mix of old, salvaged woods. Now the basis of a thriving business, reclaimed timber first interested her as a graphic-design student in her native Germany, when she used it to build a couple of very basic items for her flat. It was when she won a year's sculpture scholarship to the 16th-century hilltop town of Bergamo that she decided to explore the commercial possibilities alongside her studies.

The arcane skills learnt on her course – mixing her own glue and paint to ancient recipes, and the intricacies of traditional furniture restoration – came in handy when making her own pieces. Katrin started experimenting with scaffolding planks, and, despite having no technical knowledge, managed to come up with prototypes for a table and bookshelf. “I wanted to show discarded material in a new context – to turn it into beautiful, useful objects of desire and prove

“I wanted to show that something beautiful can be made from unwanted material”

THIS PAGE, ABOVE In the kitchen, white Arne Jacobsen dining chairs provide a sleek contrast with Katrin's rough-hewn furniture, crafted from old scaffolding boards. Her simple white china proved so popular with clients that she now sells a range online **RIGHT AND OPPOSITE** Open shelving and an old wooden pallet rack by Katrin are used to display her collection of colourful ceramics



