

# SPENCE WILLARD

EDITION XI



PROPERTIES FOR SALE

LETTINGS

NEW HOMES & DEVELOPMENT

OUR COMMUNITY

THE LONDON OFFICE

ISLAND BUSINESSES


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INTERIOR DESIGN

PORTRAITS OF ISLAND LIFE

FINE COASTAL & COUNTRY PROPERTIES



An aerial photograph of a river system. A narrow, winding channel of water flows through a dense forest of dark green trees. To the left, a wide, sandy bank is visible, with some sparse, dry-looking vegetation. The water in the channel is a vibrant turquoise color, contrasting with the dark green of the surrounding forest. The overall scene is serene and natural.

*Hidden in plain sight, at least if you're sitting outside at the Folly Inn in Whippingham, the Pinkmead Estate just across the river is deceptive in its simplicity. Built originally in the 1960s by her grandfather, this unprepossessing bungalow has been turned into a luxury bolthole by Nicky O'Dell-Shearn and her wife Bex. With a vineyard, an abundance of wildlife, and fabulous river views, this unique spot is special in more ways than one.*



# The Hidden Gem

Queen's College once owned Pinkmead, which later became a brickworks facility during the 18th century. The clay soil in the area was rich and ideal for brick making, and the finished products were transported to the mainland via barge. Today, the abandoned quarry pits have turned into lakes and serve as habitats for some of the country's rarest wildlife, proving that nature can thrive in the most unexpected places. Nicky's grandfather stumbled on the unused brickworks while sailing on the Medina River and purchased it for a negligible sum, building a bungalow as a mainland getaway and family holiday home which Nicky inherited some years ago.

*'Bex and I lived here for three years and have a property portfolio in Hampshire and the South of England but realised that we needed to be based in Somerset, and so decided to make the estate work for us whilst protecting the wildlife and the biodiversity. We wanted something much better than an average holiday let, something far more bespoke and so that's how it all began.'*

Interiors have been decorated and designed to a very high standard and by the third year Nicky had started working with other high end quality Island businesses to elevate the standard even further. The couple try not to do everything at once but allow things to grow organically so that the offering is consistent. *'You have to have a passion for this business and not expect to take anything much for the first couple of years while you're establishing yourself. Treat everyone imagining that you are the guest, have high standards, have a team that you trust, and let that team be creative - you produce your best work that way. We offer something different and unique and it's about doing something that others don't do. Many of the team on the estate are freelancers and have their own schedules and, in some cases, other careers, the vineyard manager being a case in point as he's also a BA pilot.'*

*'The vineyard is organic and the maximum we'll produce when it's fully operational will be 10,000 bottles. At the moment we're not a winery so send the grapes to the mainland and are producing about 2500 bottles. We're looking at Pet Nat (short for Pétillant Naturel) which is a natural sparkling wine made with minimal intervention from the winemaker during production, leaving nature to do its job and develop the finished product. And then we're hoping to launch a range of skincare products using the grape skins as our next project. We've also just been licensed for weddings so we're very excited about that and have converted the boathouse into a bijoux wedding venue.'*

The house is rented out not as a holiday let but as a residency so that guests feel invested in the property. Dogs are more than welcome not just in the house but on the sofas and beds, there are beautiful soaps and lotions in the bathroom and fabulous flowers throughout. There are bikes to ride along the cycle path just outside the gates and a golf buggy to travel the estate, all in the distinctive Pinkmead pale green. Now entering its sixth year, the estate is booked for the summers ahead a year in advance, most of which are repeat guests which



speaks for itself.

*'This estate is a love letter to my late dad. I miss and see him everywhere; every day and he'd laugh if he knew that we're now into agriculture and had lived here at one point. The Island is romantic, we all find a way to live and grow here, and the less pressure that you put on it, the more beautiful it becomes. It's a perfect marriage of biodiversity meeting community and agriculture and collectively they make the Island and its microclimate such a special place to live in the world.'*

 @pinkmeadestate



# Island Businesses

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*“All our dreams can come true, if we have the  
courage to pursue them”*

Walt Disney



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