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# In with the Old

*For a family steeped in local history, a taste for bygone days revitalizes their pastoral home in the Netherlands.*

BY CAROLINE ROUX / PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC VAN PRAAG

A reproduction  
18th-century  
qinghua vase in the  
kitchen. Opposite:  
Anthonie van  
Everdingen in front  
of her 1898 home



# W

hen Antonie van Everdingen looks out her living room windows in the morning, she sees fruit trees and cattle, hawthorn hedges and the sparkle of the Linge, the longest river in Holland. "It's so beautiful," she says with a sigh. She also looks out to the moat that used to surround the Van Everdingen family's castle, Palmesteyn. "That was a long time ago," she says. "According to village myth here in Deil, the staff burned the castle down in 1653 to protest their terrible working conditions!

"We are not a noble family," she adds. "The story goes that the Van Everdingens were knights and that Napoléon took their title." The house that Antonie, 42, and her husband, Wouter van Everdingen, 47, now occupy with their four children (ages 10 to 15) is a much younger variant, built in 1898. It's called Noordenhoek, after the site it occupies in the northern corner of the family's 250-acre estate, less than an hour's drive from both Amsterdam and The Hague. And much of the property remains intact. Wouter farms the land and raises cattle, and among the other buildings is a coach house that his brother runs as a bed-and-breakfast.

Noordenhoek is a perfect example of the Dutch Revival school, with its stepped gable, alternating layers of brick and limestone blocks, pinnacles, and clock tower. "My mother-in-law lived here alone until 2012," Antonie says. "She kept one or two of the 21 rooms warm. The people in the village would refer to it as the ghost house because only a few small lights were on in the evening." Her mother-in-law has since moved to a cozier coach house on the estate. And Antonie has gradually brought all of Noordenhoek's rooms back to life, though the former servants' quarters on the basement level are now mostly storage. "The servant bells are still in place, but I can assure you



The original wood floors in the children's bedrooms, and throughout much of the house, were painted using Farrow & Ball.

***"The people in the village would refer to it as the ghost house," says Antonie van Everdingen.***

nothing happens when you ring one," she says, laughing. The overall feel is a delightful assimilation of several centuries of furniture into a no-nonsense interior where color and textiles play a major role. The assorted heirlooms of the Van Everdingen estate have been joined by traditional Dutch pieces from Antonie's own family, as well as items she has found at

auctions in France and the Netherlands.

There's the handsome oak table in the kitchen that was once in a French château. "I bought it 20 years ago and it was in the garage for ages, but I knew one day it would be my kitchen table," she says. "It's quite big, though, so it had to come in through the window."

Antonie has collecting in her blood. "My parents used to buy pieces from Axel Vervoordt," she says, referring to Belgium's esteemed art and antiques dealer. "They'd take us to France to tour churches and châteaux, but we'd always return home with an antique vase on the back seat, or me and my siblings being crushed by a piece of furniture all the way down the Autoroute du Soleil," she recalls. The family moved often because of her father's work in real estate, and always to old houses. "All beautiful but in need of being made into a home," Antonie says. "And I loved

In the kitchen, Anthony sourced most of the antiques from her extensive travels, but the chandelier is original to the house.



making them nice." She has even turned her mother's love of blue-and-white *qinghua* china into a business called *Philia Interior*, selling reproduction pieces that she sources from Beijing as well as beautifully reprised bronze Han dynasty horses and original Chinese silk boxes.

**A**nthonie and Wouter, who is an entrepreneur in addition to being a farmer, met in 1996, when Anthonie was living in Utrecht, the nearest city to Deil and where she attended university. "After a few weeks, he invited me to a very formal gala," she says, "and then to visit him in the countryside at the family home to go riding. I'll never pretend again that I can ride. We had to jump and everything. It was quite a day." Soon after, she moved into the converted horse stables on the estate, where Wouter resided. They married in 2001. "We came by boat, from the church to the house, along the river," she says.

When they moved from the stables to Noordenhoek in 2012, the first thing to demand attention was the upstairs bathroom. "It was too shabby," she says. "Then we restored the children's rooms. But it's good to live in a house before you make big decisions. You need to learn its soul, to see how the light falls into the corners." Gradually carpets were removed and wooden floors restored. The full-length painted shutters, which she believes had been brought over from an interim house built in 1700 and later taken down, were made good, and surviving curtains—some in heavy velvet, embroidered with satin threads—were repaired.

The attic turned out to contain everything from exquisite emerald-green oil lamps to old dresses. Anthonie slipped into one belonging to her mother-in-law for the photo shoot but says it needs lengthening if she's going to wear it for real: "I'm a lot taller, but it's the most amazing Indian silk fabric." By the same token, the large sink in the former staff kitchen needs to be raised. "People were smaller a hundred years ago," Anthonie says. "It's beautiful—black marble with copper taps—so we need to make it functional for today."

Her eldest daughter, 15-year-old Philine, has other ideas, of course. "She's in her Ikea phase," her mother says. "She wants new everything and to live in The Hague or Amsterdam." For the moment, though, there's plenty of life for her in Noordenhoek. And once the river swimming starts again in April or May, it's unlikely there's any place she'd rather be. ♦



Anthonie and Wouter, right, in the veranda with family visiting from Amsterdam. The master bedroom's curtains, below, were won at auction.





The former staff kitchen is filled with objects sold at *Anthony's* online shop, such as the traditional tulip vase at left.