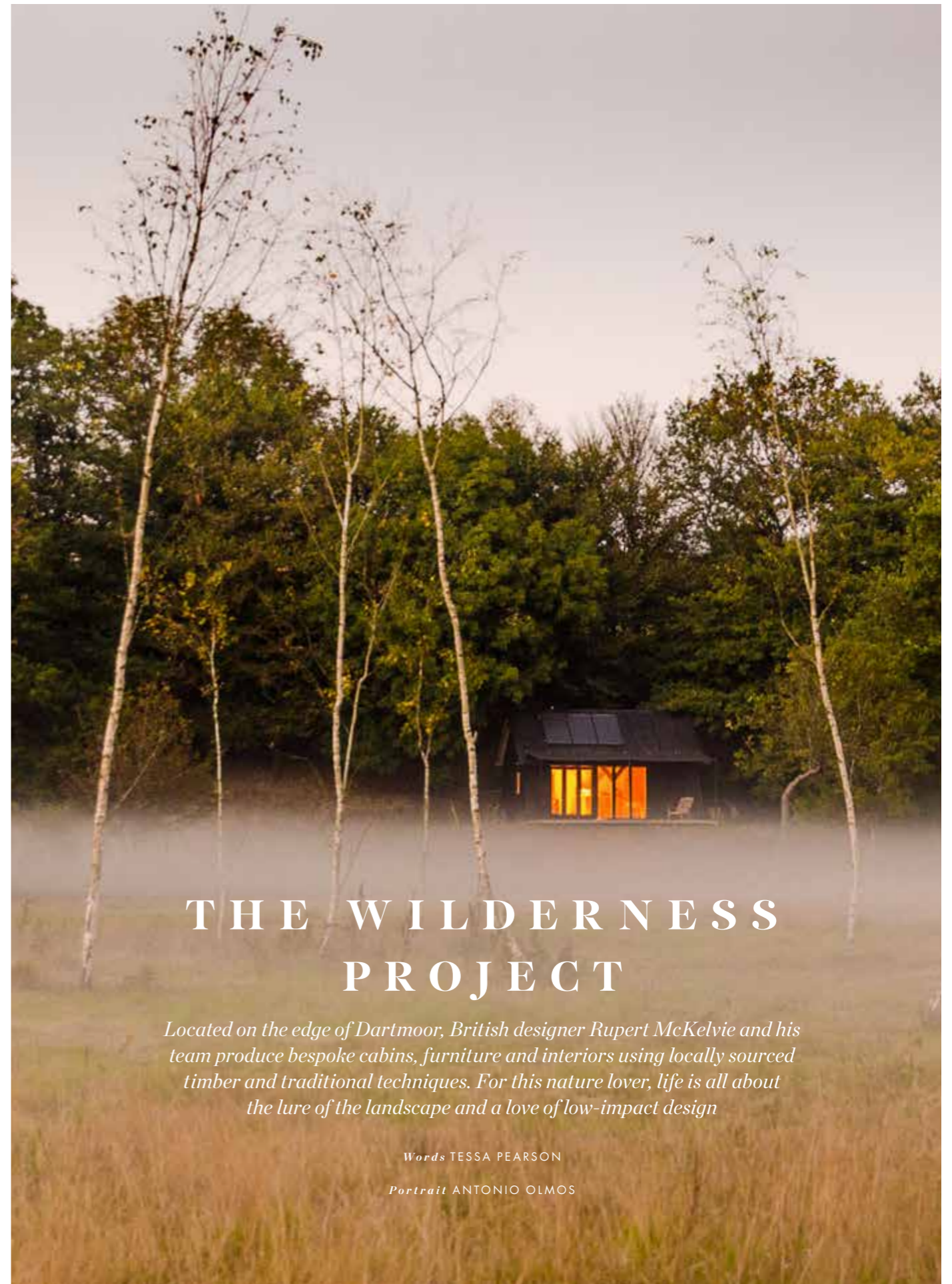


ELLE DECORATION COUNTRY

ELLE DECORATION COUNTRY

INSPIRING SPACES
STYLISH
HOMES TO
INVITE YOU
IN FROM
THE COLD



THE WILDERNESS PROJECT

Located on the edge of Dartmoor, British designer Rupert McKelvie and his team produce bespoke cabins, furniture and interiors using locally sourced timber and traditional techniques. For this nature lover, life is all about the lure of the landscape and a love of low-impact design

Words TESSA PEARSON

Portrait ANTONIO OLMOS

WILD ADVENTURES
SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
THE NEW GOOD LIFE

Volume 7
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BRITISH TREASURES
RURAL PROJECTS
WINTER GETAWAYS

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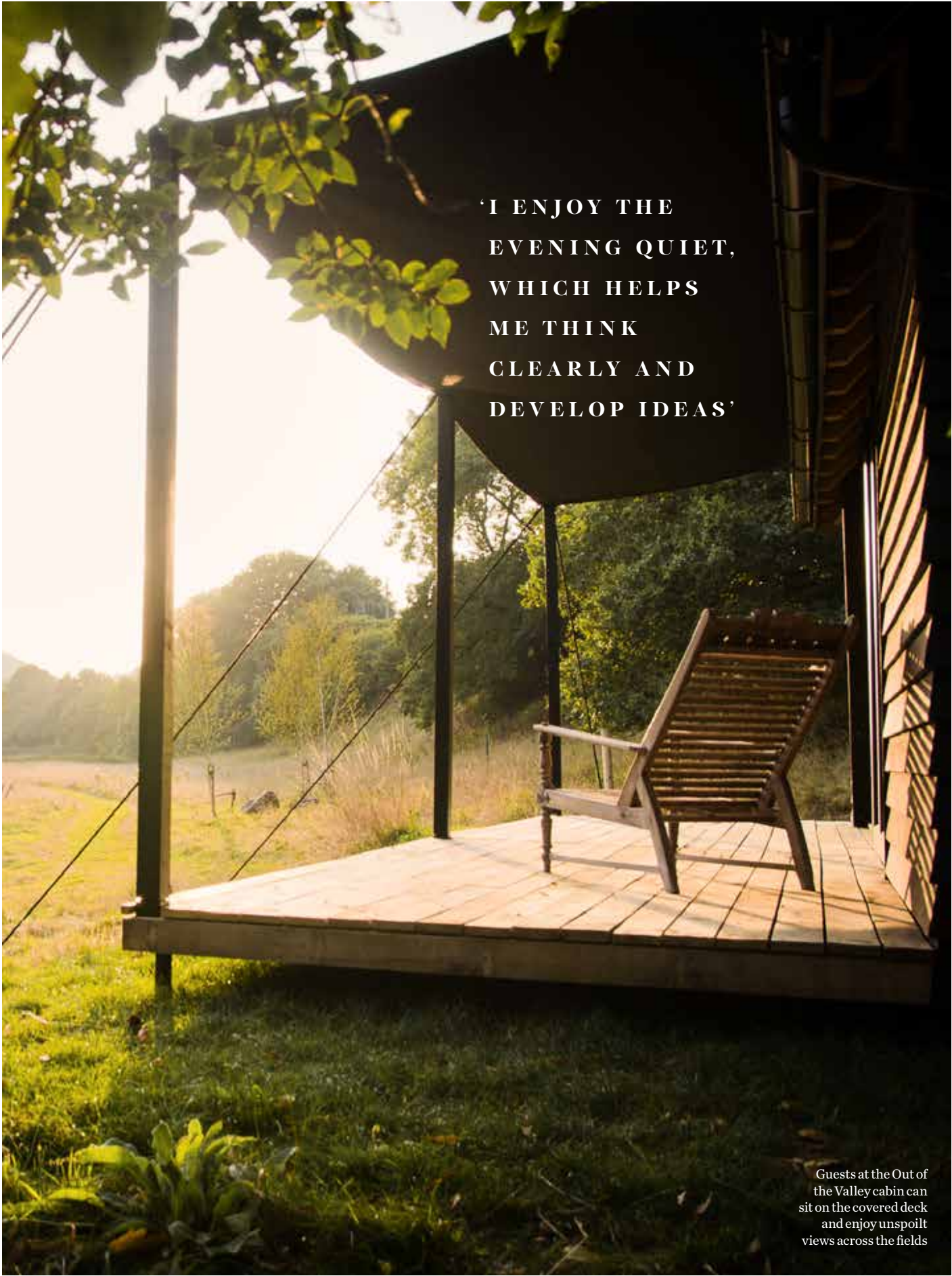
Rupert McKelvie likes to do things differently. Fusing traditional techniques with future-proof thinking, the Devon-raised designer specialises in making handcrafted products for sustainable living through his company Out of the Valley. As well as investing in one of his unique designs, you can book a stay at his self-catering retreat on the banks of the River Teign in Dartmoor (pictured; from £420 for three nights). Here, Rupert tells us about the inspiration behind his work, his love of boat-building and why his heart will always belong to the countryside.

Returning to my roots felt natural after exploring and developing my design skills in London. I spent four years there following university and moved back to Devon in 2012. Now I'm based on the northern edge of Dartmoor. **The landscape here is wild and beautiful.** My home is an old cob house that served the mill on the River Teign. It's not far from Exeter, so I can get to London in just over two hours. **Growing up, I spent a lot of time on the water.** In summer, I would sail on the River Dart in little toppers and lasers, although the vessels that always caught my eye were wooden. I would spend hours poring over classic boat magazines,

fascinated by the traditional processes used and the attention to detail involved in building them. **Initially, I trained as a boat-builder,** but I wanted to gain more knowledge about the process and discipline of design. Falmouth University was perfect – it's surrounded by water and the course emphasised sustainability. **After graduating I travelled through Kerala,** visiting backwater boat yards – I worked at one for a month. My Hindi was terrible, but it didn't matter because you learn by watching and doing. **My office feels like a bird's nest,** as it's at the top of a timber-framed barn. It's cosy when the fire is on – perhaps that's why it's so hard to leave. I enjoy the late evening quiet, which helps me think clearly and develop new ideas. **Trees are an excellent and renewable construction material,** if sourced responsibly. Their versatile properties and beautiful figuring make them a rewarding material to work with. **No two pieces of wood are ever the same:** you have to adjust to its characteristics, working with the grain and its tendency to change as it dries. **My work is inspired by living in the wilderness,** as well as my dream of building low-impact dwellings and furniture. I want to encourage people to live more lightly on Earth. outofthevalley.co.uk



Rupert's style is showcased in this self-catering, off-the-grid retreat, which features solar lighting, a wood-burning stove and gas hob, and exposed wooden beams



'I ENJOY THE
EVENING QUIET,
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DEVELOP IDEAS'

Guests at the Out of
the Valley cabin can
sit on the covered deck
and enjoy unspoilt
views across the fields