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# 25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

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COVER STORY 'We get up at 4am just to watch the wildlife' See p6

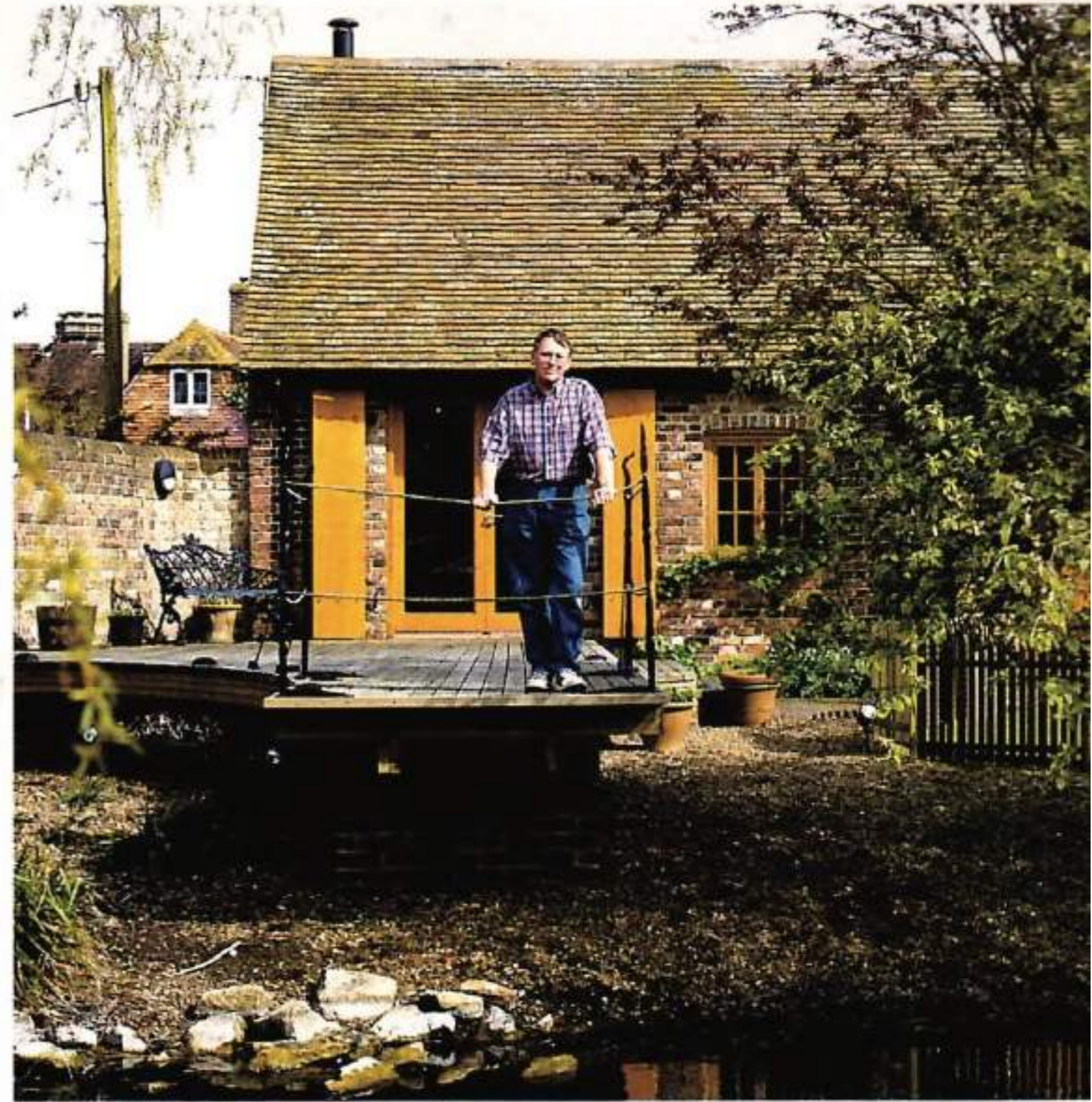
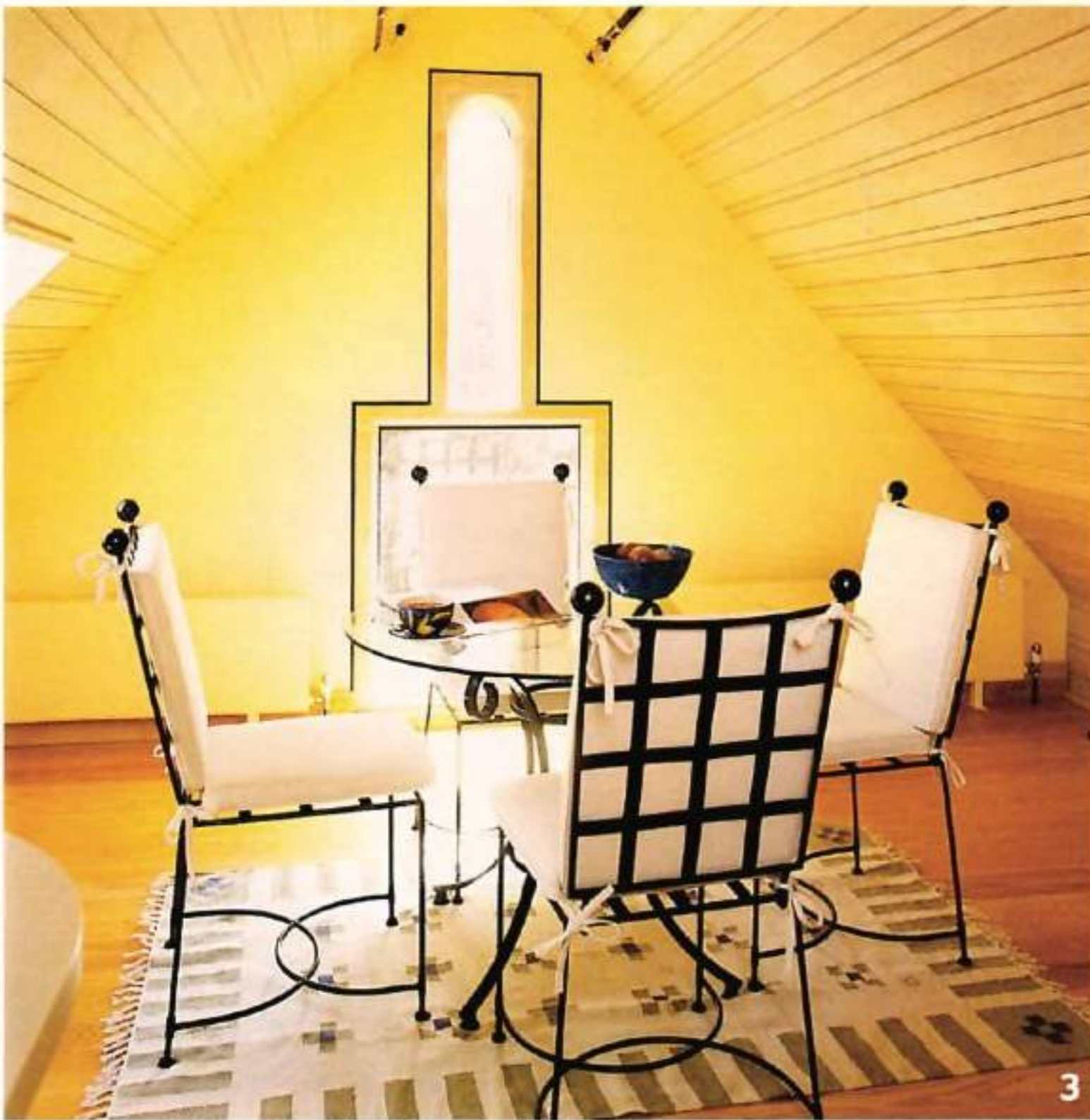


level to create extra floorspace – that way we could have a much grander kitchen and dining area.'

Once detailed plans had been drawn up, work got underway. Although the main house hadn't required much in the way of structural work, it was a different matter for the duck-barn. 'The building was completely derelict save for a family of nesting mallard ducks,'

remembers Leonard, an investment banker. 'The roof leaked in several places and there was ivy growing through the windows – hardly an inspiring sight.'

A new roof was erected, walls rebuilt, damp-proofing installed and floors put in. Because the house is in a conservation area, the couple weren't allowed to change the barn's exterior, but inside they had carte



*'We didn't want anything we'd have to paint too often'*

**1 & 2** The sage green kitchen units came from Poggenpohl (01908 247600) and are topped with off-white Corian. The sisal rug came from Crucial Trading, and the splashback tiles were handpainted with pictures of the couple's mallards

**3** Instead of bulky dining furniture, the Alexanders chose a garden set from The Heveningham Collection (01962 761777)

**4** Spiral Staircase Systems (01273 858341) built the cantilevered oak and steel staircase

Venetian plaster is a mix of lime, gypsum, marble dust and natural stone aggregate polished with wax. For more information call Armourcoat on 01732 460668.

blanche. Their first decision was to cover the vaulted roof, designed in an inverted ship shape, with tongue-and-groove beech boarding. 'A low-maintenance finish was important to us. We didn't want anything we'd have to paint too often,' says Carol.

The couple wanted to keep the space as open as possible; in fact, the ground-floor bathroom and bedroom are the only ►

