



A CONTEMPORARY RETREAT BEHIND A HISTORIC FACADE

Crofters Cottage · Jan Henrik Jansen and Marshall Blecher · Nieby, Germany

From the street, this rafter's cottage looks much as it has since the late 1800s, with time-worn brick walls beneath a tidy thatched roof. Step inside, however, and a radical conversion at the hands of architects Jan Henrik Jansen and Marshall Blecher tells a different story. The cottage overlooks a nature reserve in northern Germany and was in an advanced state of disrepair when its current owners bought it. They wanted to preserve the historical appearance of the building but also wanted it to be a stylish, contemporary retreat for weekends. At the heart of the house were 14 small rooms with low ceilings that the architects opened up to create a large kitchen/dining area with a soaring ceiling. A long concrete island stands in the center of the room, morphing into a dining table at the far end. Juxtaposed with this ultra-modern intervention are historic elements that include the cottage's small mullioned windows and exposed oak rafters overhead. Joinery, doors, and furniture are custom made from German oak to match the floorboards.

