



# The Ultimate Life More Wild

**Adventurers who went in search of a different way to live and found a deep connection to nature — three inspiring stories**

— by Canopy & Star's Chris Elmes

We've all daydreamed about stepping out of our lives and moving to the country. In our heads we quit our jobs, wave goodbye to the city, and live in harmony with nature. Very few of us ever actually do it, because even working out where to start can be a daunting prospect. Here are three inspiring stories about making the leap and coming to live the ultimate life in the wild — a carpentry apprenticeship that turned into a forest workshop, a wild estate saved by endless invention, and a house on wheels that became the ultimate symbol of freedom.

'Cities are designed to hide the passage of time. Sometimes your lights go on earlier or later, but nothing actually stops. Working outdoors, you stop when it gets dark and you start again when it's light.' This is one of the things that Penny Tasker and her partner, Will Kirby, owners of the treehouses and workshops at Brook House Woods, have rapidly adjusted to since their move to the countryside. They met whilst acting alongside each other in a Chekhov play in London,



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but Tasker always felt that wasn't where they were destined to be. 'Our flat was a jungle, and we spent every spare moment we could seeking out the city's green spaces,' she says. 'It was clear there was something in us that longed to be closer to nature.' A chance meeting with a green woodworker led to Kirby taking up an apprenticeship and helping out with carpentry courses at Brook House Woods. When the opportunity arose to move, they jumped at it. 'The moment you step out of your door in the city, there are a hundred things vying for your attention,' they say. 'Everything is trying to get you to go somewhere or buy something, or engage with a product. Whenever we were in wild spaces, we felt the beautiful absence of all that background noise. We wanted that to be our whole lives, not something we only experienced at the weekends.' In a dramatic leap, they moved from a London flat to a caravan in the countryside in under six months. In the few years since, they have built six incredible spaces for guests, welcomed scores of aspiring carpenters to their forest classroom, and completely settled into the rhythm of the countryside. 'Life is cyclical, not only in terms of light and dark, but with people. In summer the place is full of guests on woodworking courses, and we eat big