



# BUILDING EUROPE

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Wood paints need to be able to imitate the small changes in the dimensions of timber components caused by swelling and shrinking. Consequently, modern wood coating paints are more frequently oil based, penetrating into the surface with oils and waxes and laying down their pigments on the surface without forming a "film". This is because a protective film, that could be formed by normal paints would, if too hard and inflexible, crack after a few years rather than imitating the natural movements of the wood.

If you want the perfect protection for wood only use paints or other quality preservative finishes specifically made for this material. Some are designed and manufactured so that they can be applied quickly without preliminary work when redoing paintwork or staining, meaning that designing wood colours on the exterior of buildings is not a problem!

Special rules also apply to interior wood paints and finishes. Anyone who values the climate regulating properties of wooden surfaces and components as small "air conditioning systems for a healthy interior climate" must also allow the wood to do its job. Consequently, the automatic regulation of humidity only works if the absorption capacity of the wood can be employed, i.e. only if interior wood surfaces have open pores and are not permanently sealed by the wrong type of

paint – only those finishes that allow the desired functions should be used.

How colours can define buildings or timber components and sometimes provide extraordinary visual effects is demonstrated by selected examples of the "colours of wood" on this page and elsewhere in the magazine. \*

#### FACTS & FIGURES

**Name:** Hillside Farm, Dorset, England

**Architect:** DUA Architecture LLP

**Completed:** 2003

**Website:** [www.channel4.com/life/microsites/0-9/4/homes/grand\\_designs/dorset.html](http://www.channel4.com/life/microsites/0-9/4/homes/grand_designs/dorset.html)



#### HILLSIDE FARM, DORSET

The New Forest – more about landscape than just trees – is the setting for this conversion from agricultural to residential building. A chicken shed until forty years ago, it is now a house divided into three elements, using wood extensively and providing a great opportunity to play with colour. Each of the three buildings reflects a colour predominant in the landscape at different times of the year: the main building is natural wood stained the colour of Autumn bracken, the bedroom wing the fresh pale green of Spring and the tower reflects the vibrant purple of heather in full bloom.

The property is located on a 55 acre (16 ha) organic farm and is in open countryside with a forest backdrop. Although on a hill with commanding views to the west, it is not actually visible from the road or even from other buildings, nevertheless the design attempts to celebrate the position of the house and its surroundings, first from afar by its colour, then externally by its use of wood, and finally inside. Douglas fir columns in the main living space support oak trusses above an ash floor. The dynamics of the design are such that one can catch glimpses of the inside from the outside and the exterior of the house from within. The choice of colours give the house a sense of belonging to the natural surroundings of the forest.

PHOTOS: NIGEL RIGDEN / [www.nigrig.com](http://www.nigrig.com)