

Cradle, the new fine-dining restaurant at Cromlix, featuring Geraldine Van Heemstra's artwork 'Where Two Rivers Meet' (2025) and a chandelier by Porta Romana. Opposite, from top: Andy and Kim Murray on the hotel's front lawn. The 'Peony' cottageroom



Doubles champions

Andy and Kim Murray have transformed a Victorian mansion in rural Scotland into a luxury hotel. Holding court at Cromlix, they tell us why the project has been a true labour of love

BY SHELLEY RUBENSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHS BY VERENA WOOD

ANDY MURRAY LOWERS HIMSELF ONTO THE STOOL OF THE grand piano in the entrance hall at Cromlix, the luxury hotel near Dunblane he co-owns with his wife Kim. Around him, the hall unfolds in Scottish grandeur: a handcrafted wooden staircase, velvet furnishings in rich jewel tones, theatrical red walls and playful contemporary art by David Shrigley, Damien Hirst and the Edinburgh-based artist Susie Leiper. He launches into the opening bars of Hoagy Carmichael's 'Heart and Soul', not entirely successfully; each time he hits a wrong note, he starts again, with the determination of an athlete unwilling to concede a point without a fight. Across the room, Kim laughs fondly. 'You've got no rhythm,' she says, before coming to sit on the stool beside him, taking over the melody while Andy accompanies.

Together since their late teens, the couple have spent most of their adult lives side by side – through Wimbledon victories, Olympic medals, injuries, four children and now the ambitious reinvention of Cromlix. They bought the 34-acre Victorian country estate in 2013 after the hotel's former incarnation had ceased trading, but long before that, it had occupied a cherished place in their family history. Andy grew up in Dunblane and went to school in the area before he moved to Barcelona at 15 to train professionally; his grandparents

celebrated their silver wedding anniversary at Cromlix in 1982 and his brother Jamie married in the chapel in 2010. 'It meant so much to Andy's grandfather,' Kim says. 'For his 90th, four years ago, everyone kept asking, "Where do you want to go?" And he just wanted to come here.'

It was at that birthday celebration that the couple began discussing the future of the property, whose management they had initially outsourced. 'We realised it needed refreshing,' Kim explains. 'That was the beginning of us thinking much more ambitiously about what Cromlix could become.' So, three years ago, Kim took on the task of overseeing the transformation, working closely with the interior designer Suzanne Garuda to modernise the hotel while preserving its historic character.

The strategy has paid off: in 2024, Cromlix was named Scotland's AA Hotel of the Year and awarded a Michelin Key.

Following a further temporary closure, it has reopened with three new bedrooms, a wellness cottage and a dramatic glass-walled extension. Inside is Cradle, a 16-seat fine-dining destination with moody midnight-blue interiors, and the Garden Room restaurant and bar, a high-ceilinged space featuring rust-hued banquettes and oversize green-petal chandeliers.

The interiors bear Kim's unmistakable





From far left: the piano lobby, with works by David Shrigley: 'I'm So Excited'; 'I Try to Be Friendly'; 'Enjoy Each Moment'; and 'Witness my Joy', all 2022. Kim in the kitchen garden

went well above their cut-off point. 'It was probably a good thing she was the one bidding – I'd definitely have gone higher.'

Andy's favourite spot in the hotel is a turreted window seat in the Hyssop suite overlooking the tennis court, which is painted in Wimbledon green and purple. 'Dunblane still feels like home,' he says. 'My mum and my closest family are all nearby.' Judy Murray is a regular presence at Cromlix, hosting tennis-themed afternoon teas and lessons.

The couple are creating those same attachments for their own children: Sophia, 10, Edie, eight, Teddy, six, and Lola, five. When they visit – which they do three or four times a year, Kim even more often – the family usually stay in the Tulip suite, although Andy has been known to apologise to guests for them being there. 'If I were staying in a lovely hotel, I probably wouldn't want the owner's children running around in pyjamas,' he says dryly. 'They wake up ridiculously early.' On other occasions, they choose to stay nearby – and then, says Kim, 'we come here and completely abuse the food. Our youngest refuses to eat breakfast anywhere else, but she adores the crème brûlée porridge.'

Retirement appears to suit Andy remarkably well. Since stepping away from professional tennis after the most recent Summer Olympics in Paris, he has been surprised by how little he misses competing. 'The only moment I really felt it was driving through Wimbledon before the tournament last year,' he says. 'I thought, it might be nice to play there. But honestly, that's it.'

Kim believes parenthood has softened the transition. 'By the end of Andy's career, life already looked different,' she says. 'We had the children, there were injuries, then Covid. We weren't the same people we were in our twenties.'

And where better to enjoy their new-found freedom than the serene surroundings of Cromlix? 'We didn't buy the hotel from a business perspective,' says Andy. 'The reason for buying it, rather than letting a developer take it on, was because it means something to our family and the community.' Thanks to their stewardship, it will mean something to the next generation of visitors as well. □

Left: the bar, featuring Ashley Cook's 'Living in the Magic Garden' (2019)



touch: layered textures, contemporary fabrics, statement wall-paper and floral motifs, with beloved British brands including Colefax and Fowler, Jane Churchill, Oka and Mulberry Home all represented in the furnishing choices. Each of the new bedrooms is named after a flower grown on the property: Rose, Peony and Zinnia. Kim is a keen gardener who is particularly obsessed with sweet peas. 'I love cut flowers – I'm constantly making bouquets,' she says.

As for Andy, his passion outside tennis lies in contemporary art, of which he is building a substantial collection. Several of his acquisitions can now be found in the hotel, complemented by loans from the Royal Scottish Academy. In the reimagined library, formerly the billiards-room, hangs one of his more recent purchases: a Banksy x Damien Hirst collaboration featuring the street artist's signature rat embedded into one of Hirst's spot works.

Yet one particular Banksy creation has eluded him. 'My favourite is *Girl with Balloon* – the shredded one,' Andy says, referring to a work that famously self-destructed at a Sotheby's auction in 2018 to create a new piece called *Love is in the Bin*. 'I was in Philadelphia in a swimming pool doing rehab and I asked Kim to bid on it remotely.' As it turned out, the price



Andy in the library next to the Banksy x Damien Hirst collaboration 'Banbituric Acid Ribose'

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