

# Marlene would have found herself falling in love again had she visited South Hams



Greg Taylor  
Daughter Maria

*Says her 82-year-old daughter: 'My mother would have loved this...it would have made a great movie set'*

THE rural idyll of Ringmore and its 12th century pub would be the perfect setting for a Hollywood film, according to the daughter and grandson of film legend Marlene Dietrich.

The late German-born icon could have starred in such a classic and would have adored the picturesque South

Hams countryside had she still been alive, claimed John-Paul and Maria Riva this week.

Mr Riva recently became landlord of the Journey's End pub with London-born fiancée Juliet and the couple are entertaining Mrs Riva for a month.

They feel completely at home in their new and tranquil surround-

ings, admitting they are touched by the warmth and friendliness of the locals.

Their famous relative would have been in her element in the South Hams too, declared Mrs Riva, who exudes a charming, down-to-earth sincerity and appears more like an archetypal American grandmother than a film star's daughter.

The elegant 82-year-old, who has the same striking features as her mother who died in 1992 and starred in classic films such as Morocco, said: 'My mother would have loved this (the pub and the South Hams). This is just like the backlot of MGM - all you need is Lassie here.'

'It would have made a great movie set and,

sure, my mother could have starred in it! There is so much history here, which she would have enjoyed.'

'Would my mother have liked real ale? I think she would have liked Wild Blonde, just for the name. I remember her telling me she drank gin and champagne with Noel Coward in a basement in London while bombs were falling during the war.'

Mrs Riva added that she and her family are fervent Anglophiles, having spent significant portions of their lives living in and visiting England.

She said: 'England is truly part of our marrow. It's a wonderful contrast to Palm Springs where I come from. Palm Springs is just an elephant's graveyard with all the golf there. People just go there to die.'

Her son, a former

associate producer of films such as Lethal Weapon and Charlie's Angels, added: 'If she (his late grandmother) were here now, she'd be cleaning, cooking, schmoozing and drinking with the rest of us. She would be scrubbing every floor and every piece of wood and then she would get her apron on and tell everyone how to get it done.'

Mr Riva also feels his grandmother would have, after initially expressing reservations, supported his decision to turn his back on the glitz and glamour of films in favour of 'reinventing my life' in the South Hams.

He and Juliet, a trained chef who learnt her trade from celebrity gourmet Alastair Little, had been travelling in South East Asia and Australia, before deciding to fulfil a lifelong ambition of owning a



Greg Taylor  
Grandson John-Paul

pub or restaurant.

They spent 10 months scouring the country for a suitable watering hole, before finally plumping for the Journey's End, an olde worlde pub in the depths of rural England.

It was, says Mr Riva, the third pub they visited on a list of 200 and the pair immediately fell in love with what is thought to be one of Devon's oldest buildings.

They are now enjoy-

They are now enjoying being a focal point for the Ringmore community, paying particular tribute to locals Byron and Bobbi Hammond for helping them settle in.

Meanwhile, Mrs Riva is looking forward to the next three weeks of her South Hams sojourn and the forthcoming release of a Steven Spielberg biopic about Dietrich, based on her biography of her mother Maternal Fame, which is set to star Gwyneth Paltrow.

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