

# Beautiful KITCHENS

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FEBRUARY 2012 £3

## STYLE INSPIRATION COUNTRY CHARM

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**In focus**

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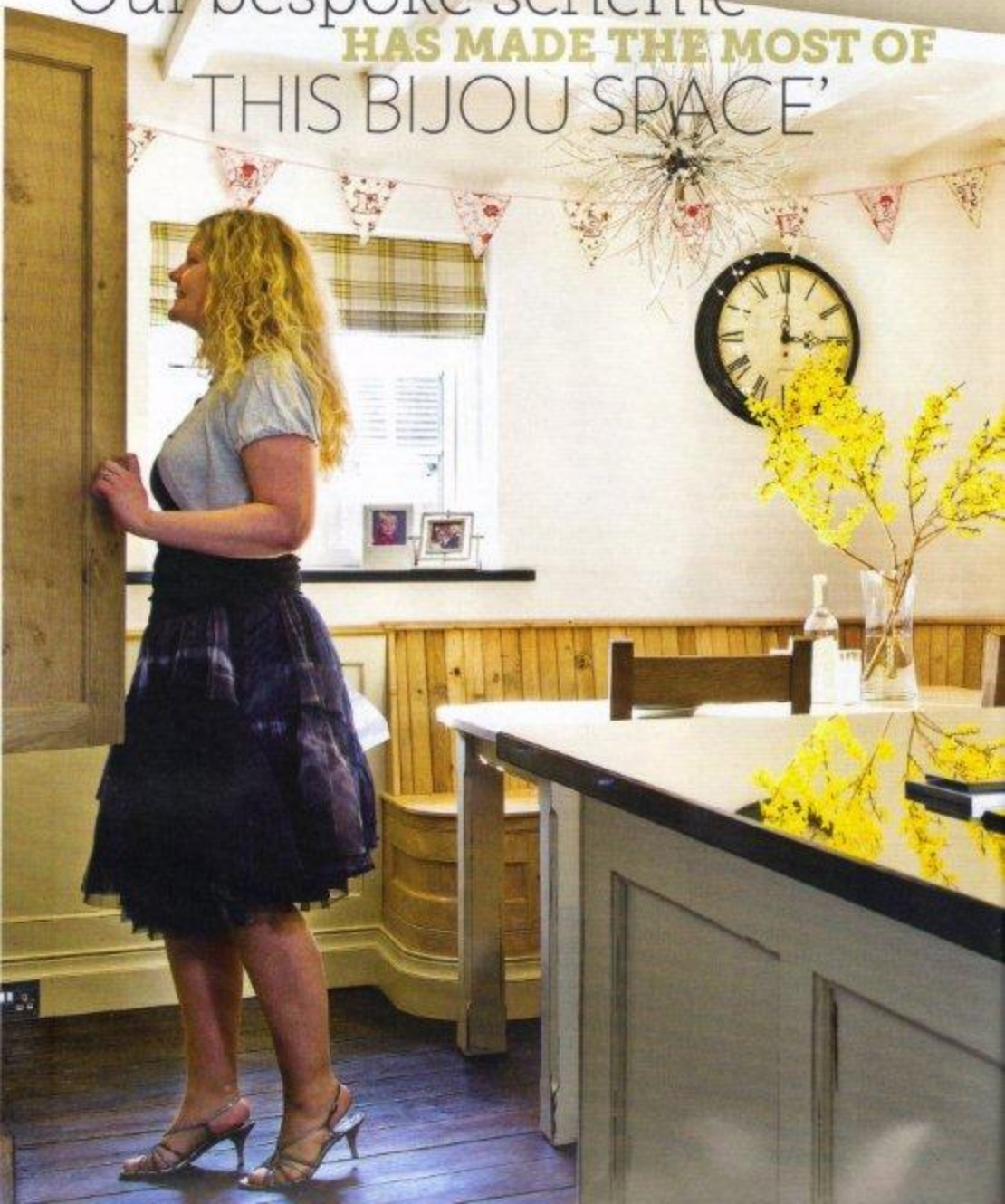
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'Our bespoke scheme  
**HAS MADE THE MOST OF**  
THIS BIJOU SPACE'



and Owen Collins took expert advice when attempting to transform their compact space into a warm and sociable room

INTERIOR DESIGN AND STYLING ANNABELLE GRUNDY  
PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE



## Kitchen FACT FILE

**THE FAMILY** Alex Collins, who is a midwife, her husband Owen, who works in PR, and their children Mitchell, 16, Charlie, 11, and Eloise, nine

**THE HOME** A 220-year-old, four-bedroom cottage in Shropshire

**THE CABINETRY** Bespoke Shaker-style piggy oak furniture and painted maple units

### PRICE GUIDE

**£30,000**

for a similar Edwina Loxley kitchen, cabinetry only

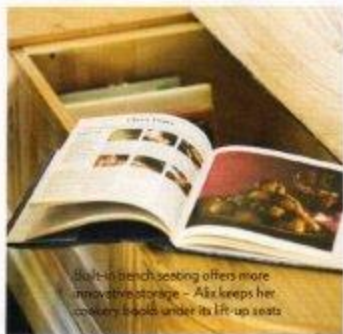
## STYLISH SOLUTIONS COMPACT DESIGN



Piggy oak and painted maple cabinetry, bought from Edwina Loxley, features in-frame Shaker-style doors and is topped with Star Galaxy granite from Cerrig. A bespoke patchwork glass wall art is by Steve Robinson. 'We really enjoy spending time in the kitchen,' says Alex. 'It's lovely being able to cook and hold a conversation with the family at the same time. We spend more time in here than anywhere else in the house.'



A wall unit, made from pippy oak, features a scalloped-edge wine rack and plenty of storage



Built-in bench seating offers more innovative storage – Alix keeps her cookery books under its lift-up seats



The downdraft extractor by De Dietrich, rises up from the worktop when in use

Although many might envy Alix and Owen Collins for living in a pretty, Regency-era country cottage, the couple had to cope with a kitchen that had long seen better days. Alix explains how they upgraded the scheme and made it fit for the 21st century.

#### What was the old kitchen like?

The space itself was tiny and dark, with low ceilings and small windows, while the existing cabinetry was shabby. A partition wall separated the kitchen from the dining room, which made it impractical, too. When we entertained, whoever was working in the kitchen was completely cut off from the conversation taking place around the table next door. A shortage of storage and workspace was another major issue. I had to keep most of the foodstuffs downstairs in the laundry room, so trying to cook and serve a meal was a bit of a nightmare.

#### What plans did you have in mind?

Owen and I had always envisaged knocking the wall down so we could use the whole area as a kitchen-diner. We had to be careful, though. The kitchen is located on the middle floor, with adjoining houses on either side. So when we demolished the wall, we couldn't

afford to take any risks. We needed a surveyor to ensure the work was done properly and the correct support joists were fitted.

#### Once the room was reconfigured, how did you go about choosing the cabinetry?

In terms of aesthetics, when it came to the furniture, we didn't think a modern design would suit this house, so we opted for something that looked as though it had been here a long time. We both love pippy oak and we also liked the idea of mixing in some painted pieces, as well. On the practical side, we wanted plenty of worktop and storage space.

#### Did the room's size restrict your options?

We recognised we'd have to be clever to achieve our aims. Because the kitchen is fairly small, we felt that a bespoke design would make the most of the proportions. One of Owen's clients in his PR business is Edwin Loxley, and we knew the company's products and its MD Joe Cavari really well. So we spent an evening with Joe, running through the possibilities. Then we fine-tuned everything with his designers on the computer. The layout evolved a little further during the actual installation. When the granite was being templated, we decided to add an overlap to

# 3 GET THE LOOK

Statement clocks



**DUNELM MILL**  
With its metal frame and glass face, this Clifton wall clock is well suited to any style of room. Priced at £14.99



**DEBENHAMS**  
This elegant frameless Larkfield wall clock by Acorn is a real bargain and is priced at just £18



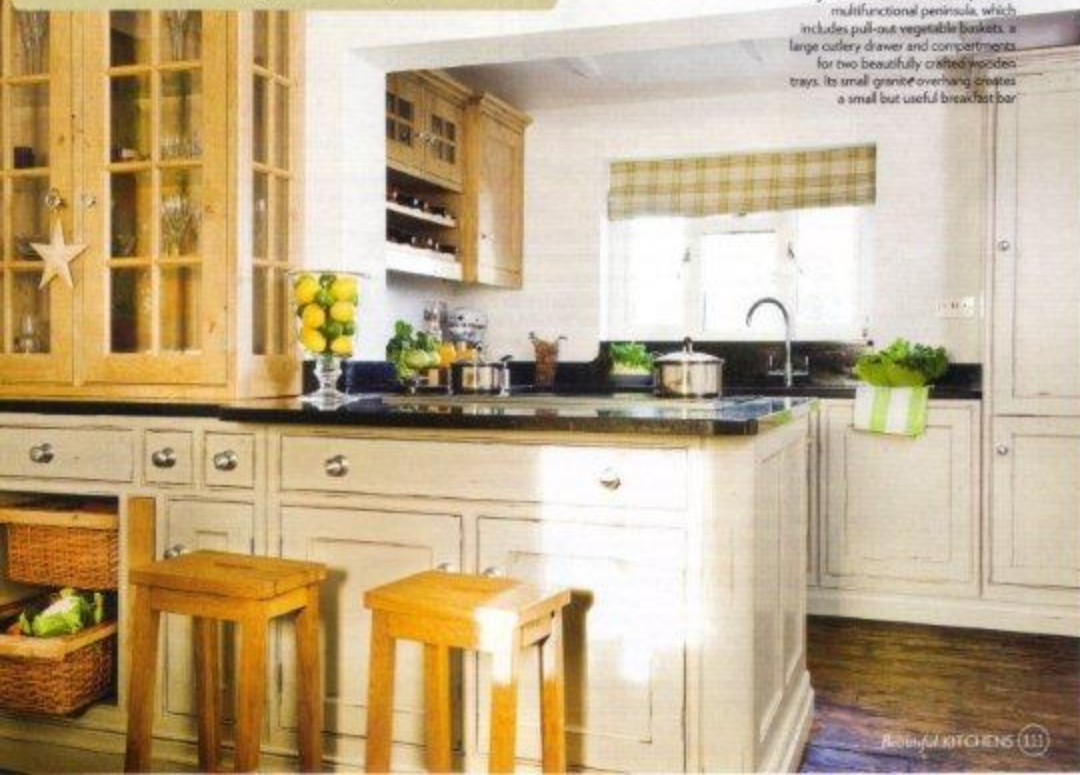
**LITTLEWOODS**  
Charming details make this Chateau clock a perfect addition to traditional-style kitchens. It costs £45

## Where we SPENT... where we SAVED...

*'We didn't really compromise on anything and managed to include everything we wanted. However, uncovering the original floorboards was definitely a bonus - they have a distressed look, but that's in keeping with the rest of the scheme'*



Edwin Lowley also supplied the Burke corner bench and the dining table, which is painted in Farrow & Ball's Storey Ground, to match the adjacent cabinetry



A glassware cabinet sits on top of the multifunctional peninsula, which includes pull-out vegetable baskets, a large cutlery drawer and compartments for two beautifully crafted wooden trays. Its small granite overhang creates a small but useful breakfast bar



## DESIGNER'S TIP

*The bespoke larder was made extra deep by knocking into a disused cupboard in the adjoining room, thereby maximising the kitchen's floor space'*

## SHOP THE LOOK

### CABINETRY

■ Bespoke Shaker-style oak furniture and painted maple units, with in-frame doors. A similar Edwin Loxley kitchen, cabinetry only, costs £30,000

### WORKSURFACES

■ Star Galaxy granite. Cerrig. Price per linear m £200

### FLOORING

■ Original oak flooring. For similar, try antique dark-stained engineered oak. Real Oak Floors. Price per sq m £60

### APPLIANCES

- 2 x built-in single ovens. De Dietrich, each £900
- Four-zone induction hob. De Dietrich £1,300
- Downdraft extractor in stainless steel. De Dietrich £1,400
- Fully integrated fridge freezer. De Dietrich £850
- Fully integrated dishwasher. De Dietrich £650

### SINK AND TAP

- Aviane undermounted one-and-a-half-bowl sink in stainless steel. Franks £379
- Olympus monobloc mixer tap in chrome. Franks £209

### FINISHING TOUCHES

- Bespoke dining table and bench seating. Edwin Loxley. For similar chairs, try Refectory Oak. Laura Ashley, each £200
- KitchenAid Artisan Stand mixer, available at John Lewis £419
- Chopping board, for similar try the Beach Chef's. Divertment £40
- Zion Crystal pendant light. Next £100
- Bunting, for similar try the Deborah Sparks range at Notonthehighstreet.com £18
- Bespoke patchwork glass wall panel. Steve Robinson Glass, approx £1,450
- Bar stools, for similar try the Refectory, Oak Dining Sets, each £70
- Blind fabric, for similar try Avon Check in Saga. Ian Manion. Price per m £25
- Stony Ground estate eggshell. Farrow & Ball. Price per 2.5 litres £42.50
- Pure Brilliant White matt emulsion. Crown. Price per 2.5 litres £11.50

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 156



Improving storage in the kitchen was a top priority for Alex. Her elegant larder is flanked by a pair of painted, floor-to-ceiling cupboards. Together, these three units are large enough to store all the foodstuffs, as well as crockery, pots, pans and serving platters

make a breakfast bar opposite the hob, for example. It was an afterthought, but we're really pleased with how it worked out.

#### Where did you buy your new appliances?

As De Dietrich has such a good reputation for quality, we selected many of its products, including two ovens – one for day-to-day use and the other for baking. We keep chickens and grow our own vegetables, so I always cook fresh meals from scratch. I also make cakes, bread and biscuits for the family several times a week. The ovens have many different functions and I use them all. It was actually Joe who recommended the induction hob, because it's very controllable and easy to use. There's little residual heat once the pan is taken off, so it's safe, especially as there's a low support beam in the ceiling directly above it.

#### Did the cottage's architecture affect any of your other choices?

It did, because installing a standard extractor would have meant changing the entire layout of the kitchen. The hob would have had to be positioned above the ovens, with a wall-hung extractor overhead, for instance, which would

have resulted in us losing a run of cabinets and worktops. Instead, our state-of-the-art extractor rises out of the peninsula – the children thought it was a TV at first! It's really effective at removing steam and cooking smells, which is important in an open-plan scheme.

#### Are you pleased with the new kitchen?

Absolutely. When my friends saw it the first time, they were amazed by the difference. Although the dividing wall was demolished, the peninsula partially separates the kitchen from the dining area. It contains lots of storage underneath and makes the entire room far more sociable, too. I've got plenty of drawer and cupboard space now, and a lovely cabinet for glassware, which is great. After three years of living here, we've finally been able to take our wedding presents out of their boxes and use them. One of my favourite features is the larder cupboard. It's very deep and can comfortably store a month's worth of shopping. With its built-in spice jars and pull-out storage bins that take a whole bag of rice or pasta, there are no large boxes or packets cluttering the shelves. It's a beautiful piece of furniture and a real talking point. ☑