

# top drawer

FULLY BESPOKE KITCHENS, BY TURNS  
TRADITIONAL, VIBRANT AND GLOSSY,  
THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK? DARREN  
HARVEY FINDS OUT MORE...



here's one that Loxley's skilled craftsmen made earlier



**A**h, the fun to be had with oxymora. 'Pretty ugly', for example. 'Firm estimate.' How about 'sensibly priced bespoke kitchens'? Because as we all know, having a shiny new kitchen built to your own personal specifications is going to cost you a pretty penny, right? Not necessarily - have a word with Nottingham-based Edwin Loxley, and they'll be able to deliver whatever in-frame, fitted, kitchen furniture you require, finished to a standard of workmanship seemingly at odds with the eminently reasonable amount that you'll be charged for one of their tailor-made commissions.

### You wood if you could

"Trees of all types come in, and beautiful commissions - each one entirely different and produced to the customer's individual requirements - go out." So speaks Joe Cavani, Loxley's Founder and Managing Director. Take a stroll around their impressive 30,000 square foot workshop facility, and you can see what he means. As well as the walnut, oak, maple and cherry timbers you'd expect to see being worked on, there are also some pretty unusual and rare timbers to be found. Zebrawood, anyone? Burr poplar wood? Nope, us neither.

Spend some time watching Loxley's craftsmen do their thing, and you start to notice the meticulous attention that gets lavished on even the smallest detail - like the 'leather on willow' door catches, which allow doors to close with a firm, yet gentle 'thud' rather than a 'bang' and a 'twang'. Or the painstakingly sculpted, solid timber edge profiles found on their cabinet shelves, instead of the more common plastic, angular and sharp profile employed by others.

Adding to the premium feel of the finished product are substantial, 33mm-thick doors, dovetail-jointed drawer boxes and high quality, birch veneered plywood cabinets. If you want to add a dash of flash, Loxley's optional add-ons include remote central locking and single-touch, self opening and closing drawer boxes.



the Conzaspole-Covani in green



a particularly vibrant example of the Pure range

## Never standing still

It all sounds fairly impressive, but how does the company square all of the above with being relentless when it comes to keeping prices down compared to their market rivals? Cavani, the man behind the brand, states that, "I always wanted to produce my own kitchen furniture and having worked for several, high end, in-frame kitchen brands, I did not want to be just another 'good' kitchen manufacturer. Lots of companies do 'good'. I wanted to push the in-frame furniture market on to a whole new level and produce the very best furniture with an un-rivalled specification, but at a justifiable price."

"That is and will always be Loxley's main aim and objective. It's important to us that we build our brand on a reputation for credibility and substance rather than mere perceptions in order to try and justify an unfeasibly high price." It's an approach that seems to be working pretty well so far, but Cavani also recognises that they can't afford to rest on their laurels. "Naturally, we are continually developing and adding to our specification, thus keeping our furniture well ahead of the game and more importantly, our competitors. This is vital and has enabled us to grow when many other, covered in-frame brands are struggling for survival or disappearing."

One illustration of this is the introduction of Loxley's 'Pure' range, the idea of which is, according to Cavani, "To enable our nationwide showroom network to offer our high quality, in-frame, fitted kitchen furniture to a broader audience. We have lowered the price by reducing the specification to match that of Loxley's perceived market rivals."

Don't just write it off as Loxley's budget offering, though – prices may start from £15k, but it's still fitted with a choice of five natural woods and painted 'Shaker' door styles, plus Loxley's bespoke hallmarks when it comes to cabinet and drawer box construction. An instructive comparison might be to perhaps see the Pure range as a 3 Series BMW rather than a 7 series.

## Taking on the continent

So they've got the traditional look covered – but what about the modern high-gloss style that features so often in our regular interiors section? Think of all frequent appearances of those by German and Italian kitchen furniture brands in particular, with their streamlined approach to kitchen design. The broad consensus among those 'in the know' is that the Germans tend to shine when it comes to engineering (big surprise there), while many of the very latest cutting edge designs often emerge from Italy.

Cavani strongly disagrees, however. "I understand that [modern high gloss is a popular look, but no one seems to be doing anything unique - there just seems to be a plethora of very similar kitchens with no real distinguishing features. Many of the brands behind these designs are charging 'top dollar' for what, in my opinion, is essentially crude, 'off the peg' furniture. I maintain that if you are charging premium prices, your product has to be credible in terms of build quality and service."

With that in mind, Loxley recently unleashed 'Concezionale – Cavani' (trans. Cavani Conceptual), a range of contemporary, ultra-modern kitchen furniture with a distinctly English take - think Aston Martin, Dunhill, et al - at this year's Grand Designs Live Show. Cavani's belief is that, "if that's what people want, let's do it properly and with a real sense of style."

In place of the melamine and chip board cabinets and metal drawer boxes frequently supplied by many German and Italian brands, you'll instead find birch veneered, solid plywood cabinets and solid sycamore dovetail jointed drawer boxes behind the glossy modern exteriors. No standard 'off the peg' cabinet sizes or finishes here.

Other notable details of the Concezionale – Cavani range include mirror-like painted finishes in a shade of your choice that contrast with the tactile, sand-blasted oak that runs across the front of the furniture. Elsewhere, one particular design combines sleek, angular furniture finished in a textured, sage green matt-painted finish with sculptural curved walnut accent pieces that makes for an arresting look.

The ultra-modern Concastronale-Corona range aims to take on Germany and Italy's finest

## Suits you

For those discerning property owners out there who want to put their own unique thumb print on their property by doing to be different, what Edwin Loxley has to offer may be right up their street. Want to create a completely unique kitchen (or even a family room, bedroom, bathroom or study) to suit your own personal tastes and the architectural proportions of your property? Well, now you can and for less than you might think. Ozymon, be damned.

**Price:** Price ranges from £15,000 for fixtures only; others from £20,000 for fixtures only

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