

# 'Painted units keep it LIGHT & FRESH'

Clever storage ideas, bespoke cabinetry and an elegant colour palette helped Jane and Allen Best create a country look with a sophisticated edge

FEATURE SHARON SMITH • PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID GILES



#### SINK AREA

A Belfast design is hard-wearing as well as attractive. The bridge mixer tap is a great match for its classic looks



#### STORAGE

Blocking up the back door created valuable space for a larder and fridge freezer

When Jane and Allen Best moved into their converted Victorian schoolhouse, they had to redesign the kitchen to achieve their twin aims of country-chic style with plenty of storage space. Jane explains what they did...

#### What was the kitchen like when you first bought the property?

It was dated, with Formica worktops and old-fashioned, painted units. As it's fairly small with a dual-aspect, there was a lack of cupboard space. That wasn't helped by a wall of bare sandstone that was originally the back

of the house before an extension was added to the kitchen at some stage in the past.

#### So what did you want to replace it with?

Freeing up more space for storage and to have enough room for a table and chairs was a top priority. In terms of look, we wanted a country feel, in keeping with the property's style, but that also had clean lines and was sophisticated.

#### How did you find your kitchen designer?

I shopped around, visiting cabinetry makers and browsing online. We chose Pre-eminence

because the showroom and quotation were both very good. It was an excellent choice and the company offered good advice on how we could make the most of the limited space we had, as well as making bespoke units to cope with any awkward areas and corners.

#### Could you tell us how you maximised the space you had to work with?

As our sitting room had double doors leading out to the garden, we decided that we didn't need a back entrance in the kitchen. Once we'd had it removed, together with a radiator, ▶



#### CABINERY

The couple's bespoke hand-painted units by Pre-eminence can be easily revamped later on with a fresh colour. They chose a grey and white colour scheme to keep things airy and bright



### Kitchen FACT FILE



**THE OWNERS** Jane Best and her husband Allen, a retired builder  
**THE HOME** A three-bedroom converted Victorian schoolhouse in Derbyshire

**THE PROJECT** Reconfiguration of existing room to create extra space

#### PRICE GUIDE

**£8,000**

for a similar Pre-eminence kitchen, cabinetry only

**OWNER'S TIP** 'Be prepared to spend time and effort shopping around, on foot and online, if you want to save money. We found some real bargains that way'



**DINING AREA**  
‘I bought the old pine kitchen table off the previous owner for £50,’ says Jane. ‘She said it was knackered, but I like it like that.’ The elm chairs were found on eBay

**HOW TO... MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SPACE**

- Don't skimp on storage space but do ensure it works hard. Choose drawers over cupboards and use every inch with integral fittings, such as carousels and magic corners.
- Bespoke cabinetry can be made to fill your room perfectly, and also means you can choose reduced depth units, ensuring movement around the kitchen isn't impeded.
- Create the illusion of space by using pale colours on the cabinetry and walls. However, it doesn't have to be white.
- Try the trend for the new neutrals with shades of soft grey, muted cream and dusky pastels.
- Islands might be the in thing but, in a smaller kitchen, a table will give you plenty of extra workspace with the added bonus of being mobile and less visually obstructive. Extending versions are ideal.
- Blocking up a little-used door, fitting cupboards into alcoves and eschewing radiators for underfloor heating will gain you space with no extension required.



**SHOP THE LOOK**

**CABINETRY**  
■ Bespoke MDF units hand-painted in a colour specially mixed by Pre-eminence. A similar kitchen, cabinetry only, costs from **£8,000**

**WORKSURFACES**  
■ 30mm solid maple. Price per linear m **£265.20**

**SPLASHBACK**  
■ Existing tiles, for similar, try Victorian Retro Metro Gloss in White, Tons of Tiles. Price per sq m **£17**

**FLOORING**  
■ Kandla Grey sandstone, Stone Traders. Price per sq m **£15**

**APPLIANCES**  
■ Existing range cooker, for similar, try dual-fuel Cluny in Ivory, Lacanche, **£3,810**  
■ Fully integrated fridge freezer, Hotpoint **£357**  
■ Integrated washing machine, Indesit **£325**

**SINK AND TAP**  
■ Existing undermounted single-bowl Belfast sink, for similar, try BAK710 ceramic, Franke **£280**  
■ Existing monobloc mixer tap, for similar, try Rialto in chrome, Franke **£337**

**FINISHING TOUCHES**  
■ Dining table, for similar, try Plank Top 5ft with painted legs, Kelly's Attic **£454**  
■ Dining chairs, for similar, try Ercol Quaker Carver, Sterling Furniture, each **£319**  
■ Renoir pendant light, B&Q **£89**  
■ White ceramic cabinetry handles, Handle Emporium, each **£2.69**  
■ Metropolis kettle, De'Longhi **£75**  
■ Toaster, for similar, try De'Longhi **£80**  
■ Tu coastal stripe jug, Sainsbury's **£8**  
■ Pull-out worktop storage unit, for similar, try Moppe, Ikea **£17**  
■ Wall clock, for similar, try oak, Ticktockclocks.co.uk **£21.95**  
■ Cloth bunting, for similar, try Shades of Red, The Cotton Bunting Company. Price per 5m **£12**

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**CUPBOARD**  
Pre-eminence designed a plinth for the dresser to give it more of a freestanding feel

we freed up enough space to install a large larder and an integrated fridge freezer.

**How long did the project take?**

Six weeks. We started in November 2011 and as Allen used to be a builder, he did all the fitting, including the plastering and tiling. I was the head tea-maker, skip-filler and decorator. We had no major mishaps or problems. Whenever Allen said 'Oh no, I can't do that', I just told him I'd find a builder who could, so he always came up trumps – we work very well as

a team. While the work was ongoing, we saved two of the old kitchen units and put them in the sitting room with a microwave to create a temporary kitchen. Having said that, we also patronised the local chip shop a lot.

**Is there anything you would change?**

Not really – the kitchen is just as we wanted it and came in on budget. However, in an ideal world, it would be a bit larger with extra wall space for artwork and display cabinets. Just a few more little finishing touches would be nice. □

**3 GET THE LOOK**  
Natural flooring



**TOPPS TILES**  
Aegean Blue limestone tiles vary in size and cost **£98.99/sq m**



**FIRED EARTH**  
Measuring 55 x 82.5cm, the Campagne sandstone tiles are priced at **£129.89/sq m**



**MANDARIN STONE**  
Amazon Riven Slate tiles cost **£28.80** for a 60 x 60cm size



**COOKING AREA**  
The Lacanche range is a focal point of the room. Its Ivory hues sit well with the greys of the cabinetry