



'It has a CLEAN, SERENE FEEL'

Louise and Tom Allen felt at home in their country-style kitchen from the moment it was finished

FEATURE SARAH WARWICK
PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON WHITMORE

Louise and Tom Allen spent almost four years turning three cottages into a family home. The kitchen is on the ground floor of their new two-storey extension. Louise tells us how they tackled the project...

Why did you need to extend the house?
We knocked three cottages together to create our home, and worked on the rooms slowly as we couldn't afford to renovate everything at once. Eventually we arrived at the kitchen. The one we inherited was just a little scullery and is now a utility room and pantry. We added the extension to give us space for a new kitchen, with our bedroom and en suite above.

Did you employ an architect?
Tom looked after all the work as he has his own property business, PJ Allen Builders, ▶

Kitchen FACT FILE



THE FAMILY Louise Allen, a holistic lifestyle consultant, her husband Tom, a property developer, and their sons Hugo, nine, Theo, seven, and Rafferty, three, plus cats Dela and Zilli

THE HOME Detached five-bedroom period cottage in Derbyshire

THE PROJECT Two-storey extension and new kitchen

PRICE GUIDE
£15,000

for a similar Taylor Furniture Designers & Makers design, cabinetry only



CABINETRY
Designed by Taylor Furniture Designers & Makers, the kitchen is in an extension. The island unit has been hand-painted in Farrow & Ball's Lime White to match the range cooker and complement the cabinets, which are in Farrow & Ball's Bone

Real inspiration Cottage renovation



FRIDGE FREEZER
In a pale-cream finish, the French-door fridge freezer from Rangemaster ties in with the room's muted colour palette

3 GET THE LOOK Butterfly tiles



WELBECK TILES
This Butterfly 10 design from the Vintage Collection, £5, has a crackle-glazed finish

ORIGINAL STYLE
Add a touch of colour with this hand-painted Swallowtail butterfly tile, from £14.45



TOPPS TILES
The Provenza Craquele Butterfly Decor tile, £7.49, would work well in a neutral scheme

and we had no problems getting planning permission. We built the extension where there was previously a little outbuilding, garage and pathway. It's slightly lower than the original cottage, with steps down into the room. Once the structural work was finished, we started getting quotations from kitchen companies.

How did you find the right company?

We went to Taylor Furniture Designers & Makers because we like to support local businesses. I clicked with designer and owner Caroline Taylor, as I felt that she understood what we wanted. Sometimes it's hard to explain what's in your head, but Caroline got it. We wanted a practical family kitchen that would still work as the boys grew up, but with an elegant, feminine twist. With three sons, a husband and even tom cats, there's only me and our hens, so it needed a feminine touch!

Did you have a particular style in mind?

I had a very clear idea of how the kitchen would look. It had to be in keeping with the house – I don't do modern very well – so I was after a scullery-style design. We didn't want wall cupboards but fitted a shelf a little above the base cabinets to keep the plain and simple cottage look. The range cooker was an essential element but we have oil heating here, so I wanted an Everhot. You get the benefit of it being on all the time but it's electric and more economical. Granite worktops were also important as I make organic skincare and the surface has to be spotless for the oils. I chose a pale colour because we've had black granite before and I found it difficult to keep ▶



DESIGNER'S TIP 'We fitted steps down from the original cottage into the kitchen extension to create an open feel and link the two spaces seamlessly' CAROLINE TAYLOR

DRESSER-STYLE UNITS

This run of cabinets was built at a lower height with a narrow shelf above to give the effect of a dresser.

A heart-shaped opening above offers a view into the boys' playroom in the original part of the house

HOW TO... CHOOSE A RANGE COOKER

Decide what you want your model to do. Some just cook, while others provide heating and hot water, too.

Most standard ranges are either electric or dual fuel

and are returned on when you want to use them. A standard Aga is on all the time, while the Aga Total Control switches on when required.

Standard ranges don't

require a flue but those that use one big burner to heat the whole appliance (be it gas, LPG or oil), for example a Rayburn or Aga, do. Electric Agas don't need a flue.



WORKSURFACE

The sand-blasted oak worktop complements the wooden steps leading down from the playroom



DINING AREA

The table, from Sweetings Interiors, is in pine to continue the natural theme of the room

Real inspiration Cottage renovation



FITTINGS

The cabinets have simple cup handles and knobs in pewter for a traditional feel



COOKER

Louise chose an electric Everhot range as it is economical to run and its induction hob is quick to heat up and safer for the children

SHOP THE LOOK

CABINETRY

Bespoke tulipwood cabinetry, hand-painted by Russell Brown Interiors, by Taylor Furniture Designers & Makers. A similar kitchen, cabinetry only, costs £15,000

WORKSURFACES

Kashmir White granite. Price per sq m £620
Sandblasted European oak. Price per sq m £330

SPLASHBACKS

Antique White crackle-glaze brick ceramic tiles, Country Tiles. Price per sq m £149.74
Antique White crackle-glaze ceramic decor tiles, Country Tiles. Price per tile £14

FLOORING

Langdale Flag glazed porcelain tiles, Country Tiles. Price per sq m £65.90

APPLIANCES

Three-oven range cooker in Cream, Everhot £8,755
Canopy extractor hood, Neff, each £95
American-style fridge freezer in Cream, Rangemaster, from £2,075
Fully integrated dishwasher, Neff £410

SINK AND TAP

Cisterna 50 undermounted single-bowl Ceramicplus sink, Villeroy & Boch £450
Provence Country Bridge mixer tap in chrome, Perrin & Rowe £453.24

FINISHING TOUCHES

Refectory table, Sweetings Interiors, from £250
Dresser, Sweetings Interiors, from £699
Ava pendants, Jim Lawrence, each £119
Bone estate eggshell, Farrow & Ball. Price for 2.5 litres £50
Lime White estate eggshell, Farrow & Ball. Price for 2.5 litres £50
Brilliant White Eclipse emulsion, Macpherson Trade from Lester Lowe. Price for 10 litres £19.80
Chairs, for similar, try eBay

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 133



clean. I also thought a lighter granite would work with the country look and reflect the light.

How important was it to include an island?

I cook all our meals from scratch every day, and I wanted a large workstation where the boys could help prepare the food. It's a family affair, and the idea is that this is a space for everyone to enjoy. I also give nutritional workshops, and the island provides space for people to sit round and see me cooking. The curved end will be a breakfast bar in time – I'll get some stools to go there. I decided to put the sink and tap on the island, too, so I wouldn't have to wash up facing a wall. From there I can see outside to where the boys are playing.

Did the kitchen work out as you'd hoped?

Yes, it's given us another aspect to family life. We can entertain more, and love having people over. It's wonderful to see the boys enjoying the space: cooking, drawing and playing Lego. The kitchen has a lovely, serene feel and, because we planned it in our heads for so long, it feels like it's well-loved already.