

BESPOKE CABINETS

Hand-painted Shaker-style units are finished in Dulux's Highland Falls 6 eggshell. The cupboard handles are made of satin nickel and come from SDS London



FRESH APPROACH

Moving to a new home meant Joanna and Simon Meredith Hardy had the perfect opportunity to create their dream kitchen

FEATURE LAURIE DAVIDSON • **PHOTOGRAPHY** MARCUS PEEL

Kitchen FACT FILE



THE OWNERS Joanna and Simon Meredith Hardy, who are both now retired

THE HOME A three-bedroom, late-Victorian house in south London

THE PROJECT Reconfiguration of an existing kitchen to create a more functional space

PRICE GUIDE

£22,600

for a similar Higham Furniture design, cabinetry only

When Joanna and Simon Meredith Hardy moved into their new London home, they knew it wouldn't be long before they would have to leave again. In fact, just six weeks later, they both moved out to stay with friends and invited builders into their period property for a top-to-bottom renovation.

'We were keen to get all the work done right from the start,' says Joanna. 'While the house certainly wasn't in dire condition, it was a little tired and out of date. We could have lived with the kitchen, but it really wasn't to our taste, and since we were doing the rest of the house, it seemed silly not to update the most important room. Plus Simon had promised me my dream kitchen.'

PLANNING THE LAYOUT

As a keen cook, Joanna longed for a kitchen where she could move around freely and access things easily, and that was kitted out with the latest appliances. The couple's grown-up children are frequent visitors, so it was important that this part of the house, which had already benefited from a side-return extension, was a family space, too, with room for entertaining.

'I wanted a design that wouldn't date,' says Joanna, 'so, while it was tempting to

go for something modern, we decided that a timeless look would be better. I was also eager to make the best possible use of the layout, with as much storage space as possible, as this house is smaller than our previous home.'

It was while looking on the internet that Simon came across kitchen company Higham Furniture. The couple liked what they saw and decided to pay the owner, Tim Higham, a visit.

'As soon as we met Tim, we felt sure we'd be able to work together,' recalls Joanna. 'I had a clear idea of how I wanted things and when Tim came to our home and had a look at the kitchen, he came up with lots of other suggestions, including running the cabinetry along two walls, with a large island in the centre. As well as providing plenty of storage, I also wanted the hob sited on the island, so that I could cook and socialise at the same time.'

CHOOSING A STYLE

When it came to deciding on cabinetry, Joanna and Simon went to visit Tim's workshop in Hampshire and browsed samples, before deciding on hand-painted Shaker-style units. 'I chose Highland Falls 6 by Dulux as the colour for most of the furniture – its freshness appealed to us,' says Joanna.

To match the cabinetry, Tim recommended the couple visit Sabre Stone, which specialises ▶



DINING AREA

Away from the working part of the kitchen, a dining table has been positioned so that the couple can look directly out onto the garden when they're eating



ISLAND

Lots of storage has been cleverly incorporated into the central unit, such as pull-out baskets set into ash-wood frames to keep them sturdy and two handy wine racks



SINK AREA

Grooves have been etched into the Angola Blue granite to provide a draining board. The splashback has been back-painted in Dulux's Venetian Crystal 2, which picks out the blue sparkles in the worktop



CUTLERY DRAWER

Compartments made from ash have been made especially to fit the couple's knives and forks and keep them in order





Advice from the OWNERS

DO try to stick to your budget, but don't think that will rule out a bespoke design. Ours actually cost less than if we'd gone for an off-the-peg kitchen elsewhere.

DON'T forget to include a working triangle. We have friends who didn't think about theirs carefully enough and they regret it.

DO plan as much as you can before going to a designer. If you're starting from scratch, think about how you use the space and what you want, before you get started.

TAILOR-MADE STORAGE

This bespoke integral dresser has plug sockets inside, so that Joanna can keep and run small appliances, such as her food mixer and toaster. They can be hidden away by closing the doors for an uncluttered look. A keen cook, Joanna also asked Higham Kitchens to make a set of shelves, painted in Farrow & Ball's Pointing estate eggshell, for storing her collection of recipe books



in granite worktops. 'There are flashes of blue set in the black granite we chose that sit really well with the colour of the units,' says Joanna. 'Then we had a glass splashback painted in deep blue to tie it all together.'

SOURCING APPLIANCES

Keen to ensure she had the correct cooking equipment, Joanna decided to cover all bases by opting for a steam oven, two single ovens and a combination microwave, all by Siemens.

'Tim designed a bank to house the ovens in one place for ease of use,' says Joanna, 'and I asked for them to be slightly offset for a quirky touch, with a larder cupboard either side. Although I hadn't had one before, I went for an induction hob. It may have taken a little bit of getting used to, but I wouldn't be without it now. Plus it was a great excuse to get a new Le Creuset set, as the hob requires ferrous metal-based saucepans, such as copper, steel or cast-iron, to operate.'

The Hardys sourced all of the appliances themselves. 'Simon is really good at these

things and has a great eye for detail,' says Joanna. 'He obtained quotes from various companies and we bought everything online through Bemco, rather than having to traipse around endless showrooms. We saved quite a bit of time and money that way.'

Simon was also adamant that they have a high-quality extractor fan this time. 'He's always thought the standard models are pretty feeble,' says Joanna. 'So he put our builders in touch with WS Westin and together they came up with a really effective design.'

ENJOYING THE RESULTS

The kitchen installation took around two weeks, with everything arriving on time and Tim ensuring that the process went smoothly. 'We're really happy with our new kitchen,' says Joanna. 'Although it's smaller than the one in our previous home, it's surprising how much we've incorporated into it, without making it feel cluttered. We spend most of our time in here – it's perfect for cooking in and is a sociable space that's simply a joy to be in.' □

BANK OF APPLIANCES

Two ovens, a microwave and a steam oven, all by Siemens, are set into a full-height run of cabinetry and staggered to add interest. In the background, a fridge freezer by Fisher & Paykel was chosen for its generous capacity

SHOP THE LOOK

CABINETRY

■ Bespoke hand-painted Shaker-style tulipwood in-frame units. A similar Higham Furniture design, cabinetry only, costs £22,600

WORKSURFACES

■ Angola Blue granite, Sabre Stone. Total cost £3,300

SPLASHBACK

■ Back-painted glass, Putney Glass. Total cost £2,200

FLOORING

■ Porcelain tiles, for similar, try Neo California Snow, Topps Tiles. Price per sq m £32

APPLIANCES

- 2 x built-in single ovens, Siemens, each £1,044
- Built-in steam oven, Siemens £973
- Built-in combination microwave, Siemens £964
- Four-zone induction hob, Siemens £860
- Custom-made island extractor hood in stainless steel and glass, WS Westin £1,525
- Integrated fridge freezer, Fisher & Paykel £1,249
- Fully integrated dishwasher, Siemens £810
- Semi-integrated washer dryer, AEG £683

SINKS AND TAPS

- Modultop single-bowl Fireclay sink, Kohler £325
- Modultop half-bowl Fireclay sink, Kohler £245
- Conetto single-lever monobloc mixer tap in chrome, Grohe £147
- Hot- and cold-water tap in chrome, In-Sink-Erator £409

FINISHING TOUCHES

- Existing dining table, for similar, try Lambert, Harveys £499
- Existing dining chairs, for similar, try Amish Oak, Dooley's Furniture, each £115
- Toaster, Dualit £150
- Satin nickel cupboard knobs, SDS London, each £3.34
- Pointing estate eggshell, Farrow & Ball. Price per 2.5 litres £48.50
- Highland Falls 6 eggshell, Dulux. Price per 2.5 litres £24.29
- Venetian Crystal 2 matt emulsion, Dulux. Price per 2.5 litres £24.29

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 142