

WORTH THE WAIT

IT MAY HAVE BEEN YEARS IN THE PLANNING, BUT A LITTLE PATIENCE HAS REWARDED SARAH RUSSELL WITH THE DREAMY COUNTRY KITCHEN SHE ALWAYS WANTED

PROJECT PROFILE

Owners Sarah and Gareth Russell live here with their daughters, Bella, six, Hollie, four, and Evie, two.

House A five-bed Edwardian property.

Project A rear extension was built to make space for a more sociable kitchen in a classic country design, with a generous island and multipurpose utility room.

Kitchen size 5.4x5.5m

Designer Alexander Mayes of Higham Furniture.

Cabinetry Bespoke Shaker-style solid wood kitchen, painted in Little Greene's Portland Stone Deep intelligent eggshell and Farrow & Ball's Green Smoke estate eggshell.

Hand-carved corbels provide a pretty decorative touch to the space. »

Everhot's 120i range cooker was chosen for its traditional cast-iron range look, combined with the efficiency of a modern induction hob.



CH&I LOVES
 Skylights over kitchen islands. Find a similar one, from £415, Roof Glaze.

The comfortable bar stools are upholstered in a durable fabric that wipes clean but is lovely and soft to touch.



A narrow window above the cabinets allows borrowed light into the utility room behind.

'We wanted a place where the whole family could be together, not just eating dinner, but doing different activities in the same space'

While practical points like location and size might lead the search for a new home, they often fly out the window when you find 'the one', as Sarah and Gareth Russell discovered when searching for their forever home, eight years ago. 'Admittedly, the house was falling down when we found it,' says Sarah. 'But the location, opposite lovely parkland and without being overlooked, was perfect and it had unmistakable charm.'

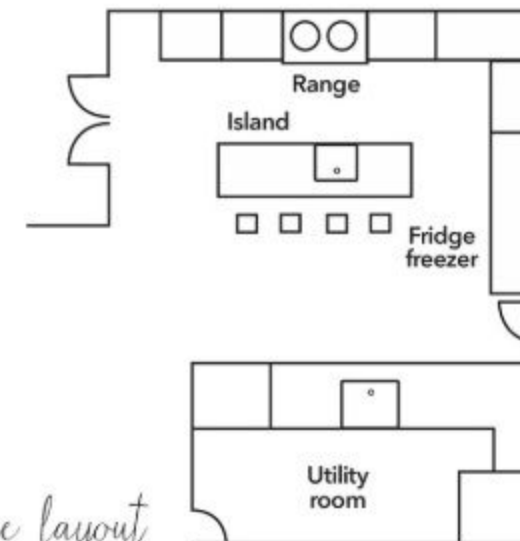
It was another six years before the couple had gathered the resources to renovate, but the time hadn't been wasted. Sarah and Gareth carefully plotted and planned how to utilise every millimetre of space. 'We spent a lot of time in our old kitchen with masking tape on the floor, desperately trying to work out how we could make our dream of a sociable, family-friendly kitchen come true,' says Sarah. In the end, it took a small extension to transform the L-shaped kitchen into a generous square room with garden access and utility.

With the help of Alexander Mayes of Higham Furniture, the couple established the perfect kitchen layout. 'We wanted a long island unit that was wide

enough so we could eat or work there without getting splashed by the tap. Its size and location then dictated the position of the Everhot range cooker,' says Sarah.

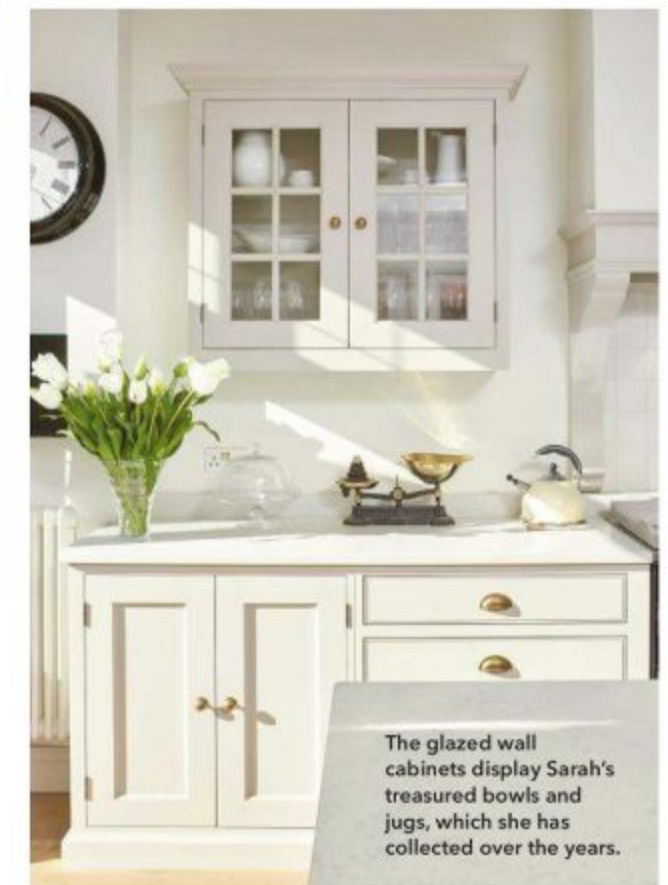
For the design, the couple wanted a classic, country look that would chime with their period home. 'We were after pale, painted tones throughout, but Tim Higham (of Higham Furniture) convinced us that a bolder colour would work much better on the island. He was right. We love the deep green and have since painted our front door the same shade,' she says.

Like most renovation projects, there were a few glitches along the way, as well as a couple of mad moments. 'At one point I found myself researching the cost of hiring a crane and closing the road to get a new Aga in through the back door, before I got a grip on reality!' says Sarah. The couple are confident they now have the best kitchen possible for them. 'It has been years in the planning but we have achieved what we set out to do. Every time we walk through our front door we experience that same wonderful feeling we felt the very first time we stepped inside.' >>



The layout

Arranged in an L-shape with a 2.6m-wide island in the middle, the layout focuses on maximising the available wall space for storage by going full height on one wall. Behind this wall, a narrow utility room provides additional storage, laundry and cloakroom provisions. Choosing an island rather than a third run of units allowed for the installation of French doors leading out to the garden.



The glazed wall cabinets display Sarah's treasured bowls and jugs, which she has collected over the years.

2 design solutions TO INSPIRE YOU

1 HARD-WORKING UTILITY ROOM

'For a small room it is such a luxurious space and I actually enjoy spending time in here,' says Sarah. 'It has loads of storage and hides our old washing machine and tumble dryer, which are stacked on top of each other. The open shelves prevent the heavy feel of too many cabinets.' A Sheila rack, which hoists out of the way on pulleys, provides a laundry-drying solution and a custom-fit cubby houses Sarah's large wicker laundry basket.

Determined to find a home for everything, they were even able to work in a coat cupboard and an ironing board slot.

2 STATEMENT TAP

Sarah wanted her sink in the middle of the island, so that she could enjoy the garden views while working there. With this in mind, she took extra care to choose a tap that would make a stylish design feature. 'The antique brass colour is just beautiful. It has such a soft, sophisticated look. Being in the middle of the island, it makes a great statement, which I felt was needed to add contrast amid the soft tones of the bar stools and marble worktops,' she explains. All the property's hardware, from door handles to light switches, is also in aged brass, which helps achieve a cohesive look from room to room.

The aged brass finish of Perrin & Rowe's classic Ionian deck-mounted taps makes a striking statement on the island.



3 SECRET DRAWER

No storage opportunity has been overlooked in the Russell's kitchen – even the built-in bin unit has a dedicated drawer for bin bags. 'I love that I no longer have to fight to find them under the sink and, because the drawer pulls right out, it's easy to keep an eye on supplies,' says Sarah. While the bins are made from practical, easy-clean plastic, the bin bag drawer has been beautifully made in oak with dovetail joints – an extra design touch that provides a small, but much appreciated, delight whenever anyone opens the drawer.



The pull-out bins allow for easy separation of waste and recyclables.

The details

CABINETRY

Bespoke Shaker-style solid wood **kitchen**, painted in Little Greene's Portland Stone Deep intelligent eggshell and Farrow & Ball's Green Smoke estate eggshell, around £32,000, Higham Furniture.

SURFACES

3cm-thick **quartz composite** in SG Carrara, around £6,000, including utility room and installation, Higham Furniture. **Walls**, painted in Wimborne White estate emulsion, £46.50 for 2.5L; **woodwork**, painted in Shaded White estate eggshell, £62 for 2.5L, both Farrow & Ball. For similar **flooring**, try oak natural unsealed engineered flooring, £51sq m, The Natural Wood Floor Co.

APPLIANCES

Everhot 120l cast-iron **range cooker**, £9,025, Everhot. RF540ADUSX4 **fridge freezer**, around £1,999, Fisher & Paykel. HM676G0568 combi **microwave oven**, £1,549, Siemens. Cache 110 **integrated extractor**, £958, Westin. G6660 SCVi **integrated dishwasher**, £1,299, Miele.

SINKS & TAPS

4192 Ionian deck mounted **taps** with crossstop handles in aged brass, £626.64 each, Perrin & Rowe. Farmhouse 60 **ceramic sinks**, £268 each, Villeroy & Boch.

ACCESSORIES

Aga stainless steel **whistling kettle**, col cream, £64, Aga Cookshop. King's Cross Station **clock**, col dark wood, £175, Newgate. William **bar stools**, £645 each, The Dining Chair Company; upholstered in Rough Copy, col Quartz with NanoSeal finish, £172.80m, Sutherland Perennials Studio.