

KITCHEN HEAVEN

By Mari Williams

You would imagine that if your job were a food stylist and writer, when looking for a new house, a big functional kitchen would be top of the wish list. Well, that was my intention, but my heart overruled my head when I fell in love with this delightful double fronted house on a leafy Berkhamsted street. With the tiniest sweetest kitchen ever, with only a cooker in the corner, but lots of quaint little store cupboards and shelves and the best larder – it was like museum. Lovely as it was, drastic changes had to be made to convert it to the kitchen of my dreams; one functional for all my cooking and styling needs and also suitable to accommodate food shoots.

The best solution to get the space I needed was to knock two rooms into one thus creating this wonderful space. The kitchen had to be designed to give optimum working space, optimum storage space, accommodate two separate ovens plus again to have the aesthetics appeal to use as background for shoots. We came up with the basic design, but Colin the owner and kitchen designer at Cloisters of Hemel Hempstead definitely gave us many useful hints and ideas to maximum the usability of the kitchen.

As soon as we saw this Neptune kitchen we decided that that would be the suitable design to complement our Arts and Craft home. Understated, and not too contemporary. Due to the nature of the room many of the cabinets needed to be altered and modified and some even made to order, and that was the joy of working with Cloisters, since they are also cabinets makers, this could all be done under one roof, thus giving us a bespoke look to the kitchen at a fraction of the price.

I had decided that I would need two separate ovens. My work as a food stylist and writer calls for me to test recipes and to batch bake. Neff appliances are reliable and functions like slide away door and a telescopic rack just make cooking enjoyable.

The dining area had to work around the sideboard I bought at Tring auction. I diligently striped 7 layers on paint and then painted it in a contrasting colour to the rest of the kitchen. It gives me a perfect showcase to show some of my unusual or pretty props I have collected over the year. A bookshelf was a must to accommodate my vast selection of cookery books. Cloisters also built the bookshelves for us using the same design as the kitchen cabinets thus giving the whole room a sense of continuity.

Best things about my kitchen:

Since I had to forgo my larder, we transferred the space under the stairs to a mini larder and a storage space for some of my work ingredients. The doors were made especially and since I do have a particular fondness for hearts I was allowed one in the door.

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Top: The cluttered kitchen before the transformation

Middle Et bottom: Neptune Kitchen supplied and fitted by Cloisters of Hemel Hempstead

