

OUT of the ASHES

Peter and Maggie Moodie chose hand-painted, bespoke oak cabinetry and a plum-coloured island to breathe new life into their fire-damaged home

FEATURE CAROLINE FOSTER PHOTOGRAPHY DOUGLAS GIBB



BESPOKE FURNITURE
Peter and Maggie opted for custom-made oak cabinetry from Christopher Howard in a traditional design. The wall units are hand-painted in Farrow & Ball's Shaded White and the island in Tyrian Rose by Fired Earth. 'We wanted to be brave and went for the plum colour – we can simply repaint it if we fancy a change,' says Maggie



Kitchen FACT FILE

THE OWNERS Peter Moodie, a fishing skipper, and his wife Maggie, who is a lawyer, plus Dottie the Springer Spaniel

HOME A three-bedroom traditional Scottish steading in East Lothian

THE PROJECT Two rooms linked to create an open-plan space

PRICE GUIDE
£26,260
for a similar Christopher Howard kitchen, cabinetry only

Real inspiration Painted oak

Many things can prompt the desire for a new kitchen – for Peter and Maggie Moodie, a traumatic event provided the catalyst for change. ‘We’d been living in our traditional Scottish steading for seven years when one day I stoked up the woodburning stove in the dining room and left the house,’ recalls Peter. ‘Unbeknown to me, the back plate had become loose and when I returned there were flames everywhere – it was terrifying.’

Although the fire brigade managed to extinguish the flames, the house had been devastated. ‘The heat had melted the TV set and the smoke damage was so severe that afterwards you couldn’t walk through the building without choking,’ says Maggie. ‘Everything was in ruins so we had to move out immediately. Home became a static caravan in a nearby holiday park. We were really at our wits’ end.’

STARTING AGAIN

Having dealt with the shock of the fire, the couple took stock and began to plan a total refurbishment of the smoke-damaged house. ‘The old kitchen was quite small with an Aga that looked across into the original dining room, so it had a semi open-plan feel,’ explains Maggie. ‘We decided we’d take the opportunity to create a larger space, which would involve removing a wall from between the existing kitchen and dining room.’

The rest of the house was refurbished without any delays, though the Moodies

procrastinated over the new kitchen. ‘Peter and I took a long time to decide what to do because we both have strong views and couldn’t agree on how to deal with the space,’ says Maggie. ‘Peter wanted a utility and pantry area, but I was worried that it would limit the size of the room. Then he came up with the idea of building the main appliances into a recess that would back into a newly created utility room. It was a great idea, because it meant that they wouldn’t encroach on the kitchen itself.’

A BESPOKE SOLUTION

Determined to have a quality kitchen, Peter and Maggie shopped around and came across Christopher Howard, a husband and wife team who offered the handmade service they were looking for. ‘I immediately clicked with Alison Howard, who is an amazing designer, and appreciated her patience,’ says Maggie. ‘We wanted a multifunctional room in which we could cook, dine and live, and Alison presented her designs in 3D graphics that allowed us to visualise very accurately how our space would look.’

Alison took time to talk to the couple about how they would use the kitchen and what was important to them in terms of appliances. ‘We have a dog who’s often running in and out and Peter loves to cook, so it would be a hardworking kitchen, but it had to look good too,’ says Maggie. ‘A neighbour had also suggested that it would be lovely to have a large window that looked out onto our walled garden, so we decided to ▶



ISLAND

Orientated to take advantage of the views through the bi-fold doors, this capacious unit incorporates integrated fridge drawers, recycling bins and a sink with boiling-water tap

OUR FAVOURITE BUYS

BOILING-WATER TAP It does away with the need for a kettle, keeping surfaces free of clutter.

COFFEE MACHINE This was a luxury purchase, but we love the convenience of having café-quality drinks in our own kitchen.

UNDERFLOOR HEATING After removing the Aga we worried about losing the constant heat source, but this keeps us cosy, even on the harshest Scottish-winter’s day.



STORAGE

Recessed openings in the overmantel provide a neat space to hold oils and vinegars within reach of the range cooker



COFFEE MACHINE

A pull-out shelf below this appliance provides a serving area for hot drinks



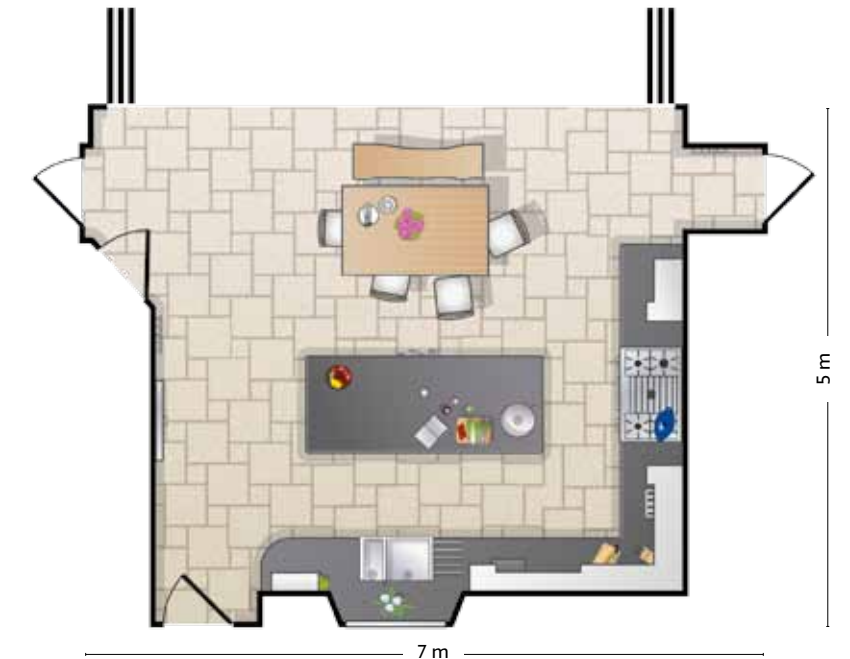
SHELVING

As well as creating a practical design, Alison also made sure the cabinetry featured space for displaying decorative items



LIGHTING

Distinctive Occhio Divo pendant lights provide the dining space with definition and personality without dominating the rest of the room





SINK AREA

A roomy and elegant ceramic sink is perfect for this busy kitchen. Black Pearl granite has been continued into the window recess to create a sense of flow and protect it from splashes

go the whole hog and install a bi-folding glass-door system. That presented Alison with a challenge as it meant we removed a full length of wall space for units. Cleverly, she positioned an island opposite the door to take advantage of the new views and to provide much-needed storage space.'

PROBLEM SOLVING

Work to create the kitchen space commenced in 2011, with the new units scheduled to be installed at the end of November. 'Unfortunately, there were numerous delays with the bi-fold doors, which left us with a huge hole in the wall and held up all the other tradespeople,' explains Peter. 'With Christmas looming,

we had to race around and find people to tile the floor over the weekend, which allowed Christopher Howard to install a cooker and a couple of base units – that was a godsend! After covering the gaping hole in plastic sheeting, and with a basic kitchen, we were able to cook for the family on Christmas Day.'

Despite setbacks, the room was finally completed in February 2012 and was the last of the refurbishments since the blaze. 'It took over a year to make the house our own again and I shall never forget how I felt when I saw my beautiful new kitchen,' says Maggie. 'Having a house fire leaves you shocked and bereft, so to me this wasn't just an ordinary kitchen refurbishment, it was part of our healing process.' 📷

DESIGNER TIP 'In a particularly large room, consider adding a stud wall to create a separate utility area. This allows the appliances to be neatly recessed'

ALISON HOWARD

SHOP THE LOOK

CABINETRY

■ Bespoke hand-painted oak units by Christopher Howard. A similar kitchen, cabinetry only, costs **£26,260**

WORKSURFACES

■ Black Pearl granite. Price per linear m **£270**

SPLASHBACK

■ Incense Fusion glass tiles, Fired Earth. Price per sq m **£450**

FLOORING

■ Edimax Materia Forte Oxida ceramic tiles, Collinson Ceramics. Price per sq m, from **£39.95**

APPLIANCES

■ Dual-fuel range cooker, Falcon **£3,025**

■ Canopy extractor hood, Caple **£440**

■ Built-in microwave, Neff **£310**

■ Built-in coffee machine, Neff **£1,198**

■ Integrated American-style fridge freezer, Samsung **£1,000**

■ Fully integrated fridge drawers, Hotpoint **£650**

■ Fully integrated dishwasher, Neff **£465**

SINKS AND TAPS

■ Edgworth undermounted one-and-a-half-bowl ceramic sink, Shaws of Darwen **£898**

■ Form 370 undermounted round-bowl sink in stainless steel, Caple **£80**

■ Oberon monobloc mixer tap in chrome, Perrin & Rowe **£250**

■ Mimas single-lever monobloc mixer tap in chrome, Perrin & Rowe **£220**

■ Basic boiling-water tap in chrome, Quooker **£850**

FINISHING TOUCHES

■ Wavy Edge oak dining table, bench and four chairs by Richard Stamp, Martin & Frost. Total cost **£2,000**

■ Divo pendant lights by Occhio, Ottimo Lighting, each **£482**

■ Salmon dish, Highland Stoneware **£112**

■ Majolica lobster plate, for similar, try eBay **POA**

■ Shaded White eggshell, Farrow & Ball. Price per 2.5 litres **£50**

■ Tyrian Rose eggshell, Fired Earth. Price per 2.5 litres **£47.50**

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