

Hand-painted ash cabinetry in Fawn enhances the feeling of space in the couple's oak-beamed kitchen, while most of the walls are painted in Ringwold Ground. A striking overmantel in Mouse's Back surrounds the Aga and creates a focal point in the room, as does a peninsula, as does a peninsula. All paint colours are by Farrow & Ball. The Anita brown leather bar chairs came from John Lewis

AS SEEN IN BEAUTIFUL KITCHENS MAGAZINE



‘We get the most use out of the circular oak unit. It is a homework table for the children, a great place to eat when there are just two or three of us and it really comes into its own as a buffet table or drinks bar’

SARAH EELS



# BRIGHT RETURN

Moving back into her childhood home allowed Sarah Eels to make her own mark on the barn conversion property



**ABOVE** The working area and living spaces are separated by this elegant, oak-topped peninsula. Pewter knobs and cup handles finish the cabinetry's look

**BELOW** Sarah wanted a sink that could accommodate all her pans, making it easier to soak them. This double-bowl model suits the scheme perfectly



Sarah and Rob Eels didn't have to search very far when they decided to move to a bigger house. As Sarah's parents were looking to downsize, the couple moved into her childhood home – a five-bedroom converted barn on the Essex/Suffolk border that had been transformed into a spacious home in the early 1960s. About 10 years ago, Sarah's parents removed the dividing wall separating the kitchen from a playroom, and now Sarah and Rob have done the same with a wall between it and the dining room. 'Making three rooms into one open-plan living area gave us a wonderful space for a kitchen,' explains Sarah, mum to Sophie, 17, and Will, 13.

After looking at several design companies, the couple chose Henderson & Redfean, a local firm that specialises in custom-built furniture made using quality hardwoods. 'All the beams in the room are original, so it was important to choose a company that could incorporate them into the design and build furniture round them,' says Sarah. 'My friend had worked with Simon Redfean before and recommended him,' she continues. 'Simon listened carefully to what we wanted, then drew every element for us; we loved what he came up with.'

The new design boasted specially made wall cupboards to curve around the beams, as well as several features for Sarah, including fridge drawers, a prep sink area with an integral oak chopping board, pegged drawers to stop china from moving around and a circular oak table that acted as a room divider between the work-space and sitting and dining areas beyond.

Sarah was also determined to install a more eco-friendly Aga by opting for one with an AIMS system, which runs the cooker at a low temperature or 'slumber' mode and has an automatic timer that increases the heat when needed. 'I set it to start heating up before I need to cook. It works really efficiently and will hopefully save on fuel bills,' she explains.

Another element is the triptych of handmade tiles featuring birds above the Aga. Sarah has a special reason for choosing these tiles by Alice Gibbons, who designs for Fired Earth and runs her own company, as she is an old school friend. 'Alice has a studio in Suffolk, not far from us,' says Sarah. 'I have always loved her work and was so thrilled when we began planning the kitchen as I knew this meant I could feature her tiles in our new room.'

The muted pigments of the splashback set the theme for the whole room, with cabinetry painted in a subtle stone colour and an over-mantel in a stronger shade. Striking crimson paint either side of the range and in the dining area adds bright colour to the scheme.

Together with Poppy their Cairn Terrier, the family now have a spectacular living area that suits their lifestyle perfectly. When entertaining, the peninsula becomes a buffet table, while leather sofas and a more formal dining area allow everyone to congregate. 'It has made such a difference to the way we live, and we are so pleased we chose Henderson & Redfean – it did exactly what it said on the tin!' beams Sarah. **BK**



An oak butcher's block sits next to a sink for convenient food preparation. On the floor, Amtico vinyl in Jura Yellow with a riven marble finish is easy to keep clean

**RIGHT** Small drawers of varying depths at one end of a run of cabinetry provide easy access to items, such as pastry cutters and balls of twine

**CENTRE RIGHT** Sarah's gleaming black granite surfaces provide a dramatic contrast to the rest of the room. A Perrin & Rowe nickel tap with porcelain levers enhances the kitchen's traditional feel

**FAR RIGHT** These fully integrated double refrigerator drawers from Hotpoint sit neatly at base level and allow Sarah and Rob to see the chilled contents at a glance



**RIGHT** Handmade tiles by Alice Gibbons at Fired Earth provide a stunning splashback behind the Aga. They were inspired by the drawings of Australian painter Thomas Watling in the Natural History Museum's collection of illustrations



A formal dining area is sited at the opposite end of the room and has been painted in Rose by Morris & Co to match the facing wall that surrounds the Aga. Its rich tone is perfect for entertaining and Sarah also chose contemporary furniture with leather seating and metallic accessories to add to the feeling of luxury. For a similar wooden dining table and chairs, try John Lewis



## DESIGN & CABINETRY

- Simon Redfearn at **Henderson & Redfearn**, Lower Barn Farm, Quay Lane, Beaumont-cum-Moze, Essex CO16 0BB (01255 861943) [www.hendersonandredfearn.co.uk](http://www.hendersonandredfearn.co.uk)
- Bespoke, hand-painted ash cabinetry

## WORKTOPS

- 30mm Zimbabwe Black polished granite. Price per linear m **£400**
- 55mm solid oak. Total cost **£1,550**

## SINKS & TAPS

- Normandy undermounted double-bowl ceramic sink, Villeroy & Boch **£413**
- Undermounted single-bowl ceramic prep sink, for similar try Luna, Villeroy & Boch **£249**
- Corinthian Triflow monobloc mixer filter tap in nickel with ceramic levers, Franke **£563**
- 4387NIWPC Minoan monobloc mixer tap in nickel with porcelain levers, Perrin & Rowe **£200**

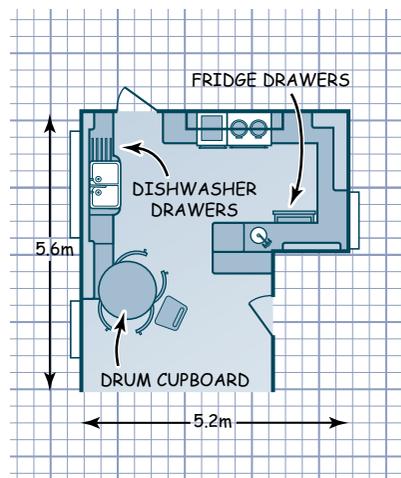
## APPLIANCES (shown)

- Four-oven AIMS electric Aga in Black **£9,020**
- BTM17.3SS built-in microwave, Baumatic **£92**
- 2 x HDR190I fridge drawers, Hotpoint, each **£783**

## APPLIANCES (not shown)

- Fully integrated fridge, Bosch **£400**
- Fully integrated double DishDrawer dishwasher, Fisher & Paykel **£595**

 For stockists, see page 144



## GUIDE PRICE

- Starting price for a Henderson & Redfearn kitchen **£15,000**

*My best buy...* was the Aga – I love it to bits! This kitchen is north facing, so it was always a bit cold. Now it's cosy and warm and a lovely room to be in'