

Style and simplicity

Discover the pared-down practical style of the latest country kitchens, then use our directory and gadget guide to track down the best designers and makers to help you plan your space

PRODUCED BY BEN KENDRICK



THIS PICTURE Natural materials such as maple worksurfaces and the limestone tile floor soften the open-plan design OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP A long dining table and row of pendant lights separate the kitchen and living area BOTTOM RIGHT Merry chose a black Smeg range in an anthracite finish BOTTOM LEFT Old and new sit comfortably together

New horizons

What strikes you as you walk into Merry and Ben Albright's Herefordshire home is how well-organised it is. Nothing is out of place and there isn't a hint of clutter, despite the fact that they moved into newly built Black Fox Cottage just six months ago. The couple are clearly disciplined about limiting possessions to the essentials, but it is no surprise to learn that the kitchen (which shares the largest space in the house with a living and dining area) was designed when the house was still on the drawing board.

Merry's father, John Greene, is an architect whose company Border Oak produces green-oak-framed buildings inspired by vernacular styles and the Arts and Crafts movement. He designed the house and worked closely with the couple. "We decided to make the kitchen symmetrical but not be too rigid about the details and finishes," Merry says. "I felt that if the design was too uniform it would exaggerate the house's newness." The sense of balance achieved gives the room an almost Shaker 'quietness'. The contemporary layout makes for pleasing sightlines, but the variety of finishes – oiled maple or granite worksurfaces and the mixture of glazed and solid-wood doors – all have a softening effect.

Merry chose kitchen company DeVol, which produces bespoke painted wooden styles that are freestanding. The palette of cream, blue and mushroom appears delicate against the solidity of the natural materials – the green oak beams and black limestone tile floor. The result is a successful combination of traditional and modern design and a compact kitchen that is both practical and stylish.

ALUN CALLENDER



SOURCEBOOK
 Architecture and design
 Border Oak (01568 708752;
www.borderoak.com)
 Kitchen DeVol (01509 261000;
www.devolkitchens.co.uk)
 Range cooker Smeg (0870
 990 9907; www.smeg.com)
 Accessories: Stacking chairs,
 John Lewis (020 7629 7711; www.johnlewis.co.uk); porcelain wall and
 pendant lights, BTC; handmade
 wooden chairs, Robin Clarke: all
 to order, Border Oak (as before)
 Paints Slate IV, Spur and Ivory II;
 all Paint Library (020 7823 7755;
www.paintlibrary.co.uk)
 Fridge/freezer Fisher & Paykel
 at John Lewis (as before)