

Jonathan was so busy designing kitchens for others that he never had time to do ours

# Lady in waiting

Even with a kitchen designer for a husband, Rebecca Bilson had to wait her turn for the superb creation that stands in her period property



When Rebecca and Jonathan Bilson moved into their Victorian home, its tiny kitchen on the first floor consisted of just a sink, a cooker and an old water heater. Luckily for Rebecca, her husband is a kitchen designer, so she didn't think coming up with a fantastic new space would be a problem. That was until the rest of the house was taken into consideration. 'We had to refurbish every room,' she says. 'It was a big job and we were in such dire need of proper kitchen facilities that we didn't have the time to plan our ideal scheme. Our temporary solution was to put in new off-the-shelf units.'

Six years down the line and the stop-gap kitchen was in danger of becoming permanent. 'Part of the problem was that Jonathan was so busy designing kitchens for other people that he never had time to do ours,' says Rebecca. 'The breaking point came when we invited our extended families for Christmas dinner. Squeezing 14 people around a makeshift table wasn't easy, so we set ourselves the goal of installing a new kitchen by the following Christmas.'

The first step was to find a new location for the kitchen, and the obvious choice was a large parlour-style room at the back of the house. 'It had previously been a bedroom but its large bay windows with great views of the garden made it ideal,' says Rebecca.

With Jonathan in the kitchen trade, the couple had no shortage of ideas. 'We rejected black granite in favour of something lighter,' recalls Rebecca. 'We decided on Giallo Dakar, which is a striking mass of greys, rusts and blues, and designed the rest of the scheme around it. Even the shade of the cabinets picks up on the blue flecks in the worktop. The furniture itself has a Shaker-style design that doesn't look out of place in a period property, but is timeless, too.'

Now that the kitchen has been relocated to the ground floor it's become the focal point of the house. 'We finished the project just in time for Christmas, so the whole family was able to fit comfortably around the table at last,' smiles Rebecca. 'We had so much space, I didn't even need to usher people out immediately after we'd finished, so everyone could stay and chat.'

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CLASSIC

One of the few problems Rebecca and Jonathan had to overcome was disguising a large venting pipe. 'Our solution was to create a bespoke corner cupboard to hide it in, which we use to store our crockery,' Rebecca explains. The pretty Giallo Dakar granite worktops remind the couple of a sandy beach. 'Jonathan's knowledge of the kitchens market meant we had no shortage of different materials to consider, but this made the choice harder,' says Rebecca. The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's White Tie



My favourite appliance has to be the range cooker. It's got two ovens – a large one that we use for entertaining and a small one that's a better size when it's just the two of us



Rebecca and Jonathan Bilson chose cabinetry painted in Pale Powder by Farrow & Ball, interspersed with oak details. Rebecca finds the simple, Shaker-style finish very easy to keep free of dust. The Mercury range cooker in Storm adds a deep splash of colour



Slate tiles form a chic splashback that coordinates with the steel blue of the cooker



## THE KITCHEN FILE

### DESIGN & CABINERY

- Jonathan Bilson at **Thyme for Kitchens**, The Old Post Office, Middle Street, Shere, Guildford, Surrey GU5 9HF (01483 203737) [www.thymeforkitchens.co.uk](http://www.thymeforkitchens.co.uk)
- Bespoke painted and oak furniture

### WORKTOPS

- Giallo Dakar granite. Price per sq m **£558**

### SINKS & TAPS

- Icerock 3352 one-and-a-half-bowl undermounted sink in stainless steel, Kohler **£591**
- Icerock 3339 single-bowl undermounted sink in stainless steel, Kohler **£192**
- Doric Trispray mixer tap in chrome, Franke **£518**
- Tec Cruciform kitchen mixer tap in chrome, Hudson Reed **£146**

### APPLIANCES (shown)

- RC1090SM dual-fuel range cooker in Storm, Mercury **£3,650**
- Aurora chimney hood, Elica **£1,067**
- PCG23GF American-style fridge freezer, GE **£2,250**

### APPLIANCES (not shown)

- Fully integrated dishwasher, Miele **£748**

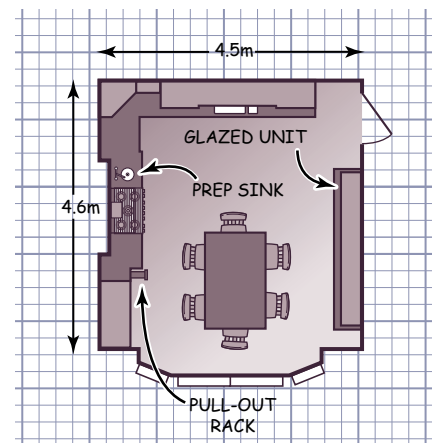
A narrow pull-out spice drawer is conveniently positioned close to the range. The rust-coloured door knobs were supplied by Clayton Munroe

Rebecca and Jonathan Bilson's home in Surrey dates back to the mid 1800s

The main reason why the kitchen was relocated to this room was its bay window offering fine views of the garden. Frosted glass gives the dresser an up-to-date look. For a similar dining suite try Furniture Today



**Where to buy** Clayton Munroe 01803 865700 Elica 01252 351111 Farrow & Ball 01202 876141 Franke 0161 436 628 Furniture Today 01252 793670 GE 01908 366363 Hudson Reed 01282 418000 Kohler 0870 850 5561 Mercury 01522 881717 Miele 0845 330 3666



### GUIDE PRICE

- Starting price for a modular kitchen from Thyme for Kitchens **£13,000**