

Feature by Tracey Williams Photography by Nick Whitton

# a rural romance

Once an unused ruin ripe for conversion, the Gowin's now beautiful barn is a welcoming, cosy home full of natural charm.





**B**ought three years ago, Yan and Melody Gowin's property investment was desperately in need of some tender loving care. However, 18 months of building work has ensured that the once derelict barn is now a comfortable, much-loved home. The beauty of taking over the project themselves meant the whole property could be designed to suit them, and nowhere is this reflected more than in the lofty kitchen surrounded by views of tumbling hills and picturesque countryside.

Having had plans drawn up, the couple agreed that with the evolving design of the building the only way forward was to have a very traditional, handmade kitchen. Approaching Mike and Carolyn Ashwin at Hill Farm Furniture, specialists in bespoke pieces for period and character properties, Yan and Melody gave them carte blanche, adding just a little input and a few tweaks here and there. It was immediately obvious to Mike that the room deserved an island, so he devised a spacious design that accommodated an array of storage ideas from wicker vegetable baskets and discreet shelving to generously sized cupboards and an integrated bin.



**opposite page** With names of Cream and Cooking Apple Green, the paint shades chosen for the furniture sound as gorgeous and they look.

**left** Thanks to such beautiful and relaxed surroundings, well deserved, casual weekend breakfasts are even more of a popular past-time.

**top** Star Galaxy granite was a unanimous decision; its bronze speckles offering a twinkling star-like effect when catching the light.

**above** Clever planning and sympathetic design have guaranteed that the property's exterior is complementary to its 250-year-old structure.



The backdrop of the island on entering the room is the assortment of units that run along the wall, symmetrically framing the range oven. Mike was careful to break up the expanse of cabinetry with plate and wine racks and the neat glass fronted corner cabinet. Most prominent though is the canopy set forward from the rest of the wall-mounted units (as like the retro fridge freezer), enhanced with the intricate hand-cut pattern and panelled feature to match the adjacent doors, creating a focal point. "Our philosophy of making the kitchen to fit the architecture of the building actually makes design a lot easier," explains Mike. "Although the property was part new build, it's based on the original barn's concept so we used that as the starting point. The vaulted ceiling was the only problem, hence the castellated cupboards, but once the proportions are sorted out, the rest is inclined to flow quite easily," he adds.



## kitchen profile

Quebec Yellow pine cabinetry by Hill Farm Furniture has been given an added flourish with cheerful colours and carefully designed pilasters, corncing and edgings. The generous room proportions and vaulted ceiling allow for the main working space and the island while symmetrically arranged, patterned wall units offer a decorative touch coupled with that vital element of practicality.

**Hill Farm Furniture, Lodge Farm, Clensey Lane, Dry Doddington, Nr Newark, Notts NG23 7755. Tel: 01636 626063. [www.hillfarmfurniture.co.uk](http://www.hillfarmfurniture.co.uk)**  
Expect to pay from £27,000.

**opposite page** Highlighted by a halogen spots system, stonework has been left exposed as a constant reminder of the barn's past.

**top** Skilful craftsmanship of varying storage solutions ensures the likes of delicate accessories, crockery and wine bottles are safely displayed.

**above** Both sandstone and oak flooring feature in this split-level space that provides cooking and living areas within comfortable reach of each other.

Not everything was quite so straightforward and the couple spent weeks searching out the various cooker options that were available. The style of the kitchen dictated something slightly more traditional but they wanted something convenient to use. Dismissing the idea of an Aga, they searched around until they found the dual fuel range. "It fitted the bill perfectly," says Yan. "With our old oven we found we had to have a second cooker as back-up, especially in the summer months. This time we wanted to have just one but something that fitted with the farmhouse style that was evolving," he adds.

It was Carolyn who came up with the striking three colour combination after some uncertainty on Yan's part. "I believe that contrasting shades help to achieve the look of 'pieces of furniture' as opposed to a 'fitted kitchen'," she advises. "Yan liked the idea of cream but the room was naturally so light that he could afford to be more adventurous so we added the Cooking Apple Green and darker wood finish which creates such a unique result," she enthuses.

Topped with Star Galaxy granite, the kitchen exudes the warmth and character of any self respecting farmhouse – a sentiment summed up by Yan. "We use it as the main room as its friendly atmosphere just seems to suck you in." ■



“Our philosophy of making the kitchen to fit the architecture of the building actually makes design a lot easier.”

**above right** The honey tone of the dining furniture enhances the original beams and sandstone flooring, imported from India, for a timeless look.

**right** The Etruscan tap exudes a period feel but, with its rinse attachment and sparkling chrome finish, has everything expected for modern living.

**far right** Yan snapped up the ceramic Belfast sink from a local salvage yard knowing that it would work perfectly within the classic scheme.





**left** A chunky, black range oven pays homage to the desired farmhouse feel while offering the best in high tech cooking performance.

**above** From the retro fridge freezer to a zebra print sofa, funky accents bring a fresh and quirky twist to the otherwise traditional setting.

## useful information

### Appliances

1092 Traditions duel fuelled **range cooker**, around £2823, at Falcon. **Tel: 0870 240 2003.** [www.falconappliances.co.uk](http://www.falconappliances.co.uk)

FAB32P6 **fridge freezer**, around £1149, at Smeg. **Tel: 0870 990 9908.** [www.smeguk.com](http://www.smeguk.com)

SGV59T03 fully integrated **dishwasher**, around £624, at Bosch. **Tel: 0870 727 0446.** [www.boschappliances.co.uk](http://www.boschappliances.co.uk)

D5855 **extractor hood**, around £202, at Neff. **Tel: 0870 513 3090.** [www.neff.co.uk](http://www.neff.co.uk)

### Fixtures & furnishings

Similar **sink**, Standard Belfast, £203, Brass & Traditional Sinks. **Tel: 01291 650738.** [www.sinks.co.uk](http://www.sinks.co.uk)

4350 Etruscan lever **taps**, from around £308 each, at Perrin & Rowe. **Tel: 01708 526361.** [www.perrinandrowe.co.uk](http://www.perrinandrowe.co.uk)

Egeum **wall tiles**, around £20 per sq. m., at Jackson Building Centre. **Tel: 01636 677631.** [www.jacksonbc.co.uk](http://www.jacksonbc.co.uk)

Bradstone Natural sandstone **flooring**, around £40 per sq. m., at Simmons Builders Merchants. **Tel: 01623 659955.** [www.bradstone.com](http://www.bradstone.com)

Star Galaxy granite **worktops**, from £350 per m., at Hill Farm Furniture. **See kitchen profile for details.**

Cream oil based **paint**, and Cooking Apple Green **paint**, both £35 per 2.5l., at Farrow & Ball. **Tel: 01202 876141.** [www.farrow-ball.com](http://www.farrow-ball.com)