

Melanie Lessels and James Wilkinson have utilised their favourite paintings to set a seaside tone for their kitchen

# NAUTICAL SMILES

The sandy yellow tones and coastal artwork in Melanie and James's classic kitchen give it a subtle beach feel. This is reinforced by panelling painted in bluey Parma Grey by Farrow & Ball and Character oak cabinetry. 'Both James and I love sailing,' says Melanie. 'Now there is the most wonderful, breezy feel to the room'

## Designer tip

Find inspiration for a colour scheme from personal accessories as James and Melanie have. Their love of boats has created a distinct seaside theme for their kitchen

WILLIAM FOX





Behind the island's painted doors lies plenty of storage. For similar plates, try Denby. The organic cotton napkins came from Ochre & Ocre



▲ Melanie came up with the idea of having a wide breakfast bar after chatting to a friend. 'We wanted enough space to have butter, jam and cereal bowls out so William showed us a number of worktop templates until we found the right one. As it was bespoke we could make it to suit our needs,' she explains

◀ The family's American fridge freezer by Maytag is a focal point in the room and has a finish that echoes the brushed nickel cabinetry handles from Crestwood. In order to soften the appliance's dimensions, designer William has created a floor-to-ceiling housing around it, which also provides useful cupboard space

**H**aving whetted their appetite for renovating houses with their previous home, Melanie Lessels and James Wilkinson, an IT consultant, were excited by their next project, a rustic barn set on the Welsh border. 'The previous owners hadn't touched it since the 1980s so it was the age-old story of dated wallpaper, dark interiors and a kitchen that was so awful I really can't describe it,' recalls Melanie, a management consultant. 'Our friends and family thought we were mad but we fell in love with its potential.'

In fact, the couple had considered buying the barn a few years before but were discouraged by the thought of taking on renovations with young



Tongue-and-groove panelling on the island is a nod to the heritage of the couple's home. However, modern touches, such as cream leather bar stools sourced on eBay and Silica worktops, keep the scheme from looking overly traditional. Walls painted in Farrow's Cream by Farrow & Ball add to the light feel of the room, while honed travertine flooring is easy for Melanie to keep pristine, even with their dog Eric around. The Hearts china is by Emma Bridgewater

children in tow. Now, however, they knew they were experienced enough to tackle it. 'Second time around there was no hesitation,' explains Melanie.

Opting for a sociable downstairs space as they love entertaining, Melanie and James already had a strong idea of how they could give the barn a contemporary feel. 'We wanted it to be flooded with light and feel bright and airy,' says Melanie.

William Fox at Cymru Kitchens was recommended to the couple by a friend and after deciding that he was the right person for the job, Melanie and James explained their ideas for the space. 'We came up with the basics, such as painting the original beams white and installing spotlights, but William was key when it came to

creating a practical island that would be central in the design. This meant the rest of the units could be spread around the room, leaving lots of space to entertain,' explains Melanie.

It was at this point that the couple proposed using some colour to evoke a seaside feel. 'The introduction of the bluey grey paint just evolved,' explains Melanie. 'Both James and I love sailing and we have lots of sea and boat-themed paintings so it was the natural colour choice. We wanted that relaxed, beach hut look and now there is the most wonderful, breezy feel to the room.'

As the brief focused on making everything lighter, William suggested keeping the rest of the scheme neutral with pale worktops and

MY FAVOURITE ELEMENT: 'The island unit has been designed so that the top is wide enough for us

to be able to sit and eat properly. We wanted space for more than just a cup of coffee and a small plate'



The chimneybreast was installed after initial plans to have a large beam above the cooker failed. 'It was simply too heavy,' says Melanie, who instead opted for a mantelpiece. Below, a modern touch is added by a Belling range

## DESIGN & CABINETS

- William Fox at **Cymru Kitchens**, Old Mineral Water Factory, Turner Street, Newport, Wales NP19 7BA (01633 676767) [www.cymrukitchens.com](http://www.cymrukitchens.com)
- Solid Character oak furniture with hand-painted oak cabinetry, both from the Woodleigh range

## WORKTOPS

- Arctic White Silica, Multi Surface Fabrications. Price per linear m, from **£210**
- Solid oak. Price per linear m **£200**

## SINK & TAP

- Double-bowl sink in Silica, as integral part of worktop
- Semi-Pro Vario Spray single-lever monobloc mixer tap in Silk Steel with pull-out spray, Franke **£390**

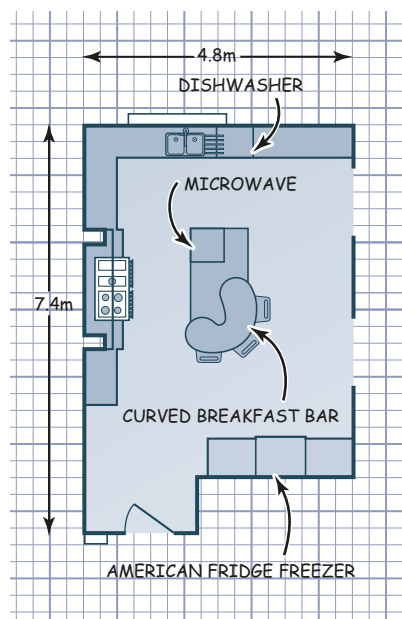
## APPLIANCES (shown)

- Kensington I10E electric range cooker, Belling **£1,310**
- Built-in microwave, for similar try NNST477, Panasonic **£199**
- Canopy extractor, for similar try Elibloc 9, Elica **£98**
- SOV228GB American fridge freezer, Maytag **£1,888**

## APPLIANCES (not shown)

- Fully integrated dishwasher, Bosch **£329**

📞 For stockists, see page 136



## GUIDE PRICE

- Starting price for a Cymru Kitchens design **£15,000**

◀ travertine flooring. The kitchen cabinetry, although crafted from solid oak, is classic in style with attractive door furniture and stainless-steel appliances displayed alongside them.

With the dark, dated scheme all but a distant memory, Melanie and James are enjoying the benefits of a kitchen and living space tailored to

their individual needs. 'Now there is so much space it allows us all to be together as a family without feeling cramped,' explains Melanie. 'The kitchen has completely changed the way we live and it goes without saying that our friends and family now agree with us that the barn had bags of potential.'

