

Made-to-measure

Do you want a kitchen that no-one else in the world has? Something that is perfectly tailored to you and your family alone? Then step into the world of the truly original...

Don't be afraid to introduce personal elements into the kitchen space. In this design by Sculleries of Stockbridge for the Scottish owners of McEwan Fraser estate agency, not only has the company name been carved into the lintel above the fridges, but the firm's logo has been recreated in Venetian coloured plaster on another wall. Prices on request. **0131 226 6670**
www.sculleriesofstockbridge.com



The word 'bespoke' is in danger of over-use by the kitchen industry. Almost every company now promises that you can have whatever you want, tailored exactly to your needs. But is that really the case? Chris Thorpe, managing director at bespoke furniture company Cimitree, explains: "There's a lot of misinformation about the meaning of bespoke. Lots of companies say that they offer bespoke kitchens, but all it means is that the carcass can be sixty or eighty or one hundred and twenty millimetres wide and it comes with a selection of handles or finishes. There's plenty of choice, but you are still working within the constraints of a range."

"What the consumer needs to ask," adds Joe Cavani, founder of bespoke furniture company Edwin Loxley, "is the extent of the bespoke service on offer. For example is the brand offering bespoke tailoring to a pre-set furniture range or can it create a totally unique commission with cabinet sizes, door designs and finishes that suit your exact needs, tastes and the proportions of your property? There is a huge difference."

Brian Minns, owner of bespoke kitchen company Sculleries of Stockbridge, feels that it is only small businesses that can really offer uniqueness: "If I had 15 showrooms there's no way I could do what we do here. You can't make 10 kitchens a week completely differently, you have to have 90% of it run through a factory."



With a small firm, every kitchen can start from scratch: "People are constantly surprised at what we can do and we have to educate our clients and push them towards personalising everything. It's sad, but they just don't expect to be able to have what they want, and sometimes they are nervous of even asking."

CLEVER CABINETRY

With a bespoke kitchen company, awkward spaces and crooked corners are not a problem as furniture can be made to fit perfectly and complement other items. For example, Edwin Loxley recently created bespoke cabinetry to echo the distinctive design of a Sub-Zero fridge, while Sculleries of Stockbridge and Underwood have both created curvaceous pantries in tricky corners. For original freestanding furniture it's worth considering specialist furniture makers such as Welsh Kitchens by Mark Stone or Waywood, who transfer their skills at making high class living room and dining furniture into finely detailed kitchen pieces.

ANCIENT SKILLS

One way to end up with something completely unique is to commission wood, stone or plaster carving. "The vast majority of so-called handmade furniture is in fact machine produced," warns Gareth Jones of Carved Wood Designs, "and it shows." He steps back in time to create unique freestanding kitchen furniture completely without

power tools, while members of the Woodcarvers Guild here in the UK, can create almost anything from wood, from ornate cabinetry to carved door frames. If the budget is slightly more modest, Little Tree Furniture makes use of the traditional skills of Indian craftsmen to create beautifully detailed crests and plaques that can be displayed in a kitchen or even carved into specially commissioned furniture.

Decorative plasterwork can be used for ceiling roses, cornices and all kinds of artistic touches around a kitchen, from recreating period details to creating a completely new look. For example, Locker & Riley specialise in everything from large scale sculptures to intricate three-dimensional 'wallpaper' in plaster.

SPECIAL SURFACES

Every surface in a kitchen can be personalised. Floors can have parquet patterning, ancient reclaimed timber designs, modern resin with personalised patterning; splashbacks can have specially commissioned tiles or mosaics, photographic patterns, vividly coloured glass or even gold leaf; taps can be plated with gold or rhodium; worktops can be super thin or extra chunky in a wealth of materials and colours; walls can be in polished plaster or frescoed, painted with murals or wood panelled – your imagination is the only limiting factor.

Not everyone can afford the prices of a completely bespoke kitchen, but that doesn't mean that you have to settle for something bland and dull. Chris Thorpe at Cimitree suggests: "You could buy your cabinetry primed and add hand-painted elements, using colour wisely; and there is a huge range of handles out there, some which are really unique – they can add a bespoke element to any kitchen." ●●●

Left: Decorative plaster work can be used to recreate period details or to create something completely new and distinctive. Experts Locker & Riley have a team of skilled sculptors, modelmakers and master fabricators who can work with clients to create exactly the right piece to put the finishing touches on a kitchen. Price on request. **01245 322 022** www.lockerandriley.com



For a really grand look, how about including your own personal coat of arms in your kitchen? Little Tree Furniture uses the skills of Indian craftsmen to create a wide range of furniture and accessories. Shown here is the UK Royal coat of arms H92xW100xD8cm, £895, but family coats of arms and crests can be commissioned, price on request. **01424 734 191** www.littletreefurniture.co.uk



Exclusively for you



A bespoke kitchen designer will always want to know what kind of utensils and ingredients need storing in your kitchen, and will design around them. Mark Wilkinson Kitchens, for example, will create a knife drawer especially to fit your best chef's knives, whether they are Global, Sabatier, Kyocera ceramic or granny's old antiques. Shown is the Pantry knife drawer, shaped to fit Global knives, £394. **01380 850 007**
www.mwf.com

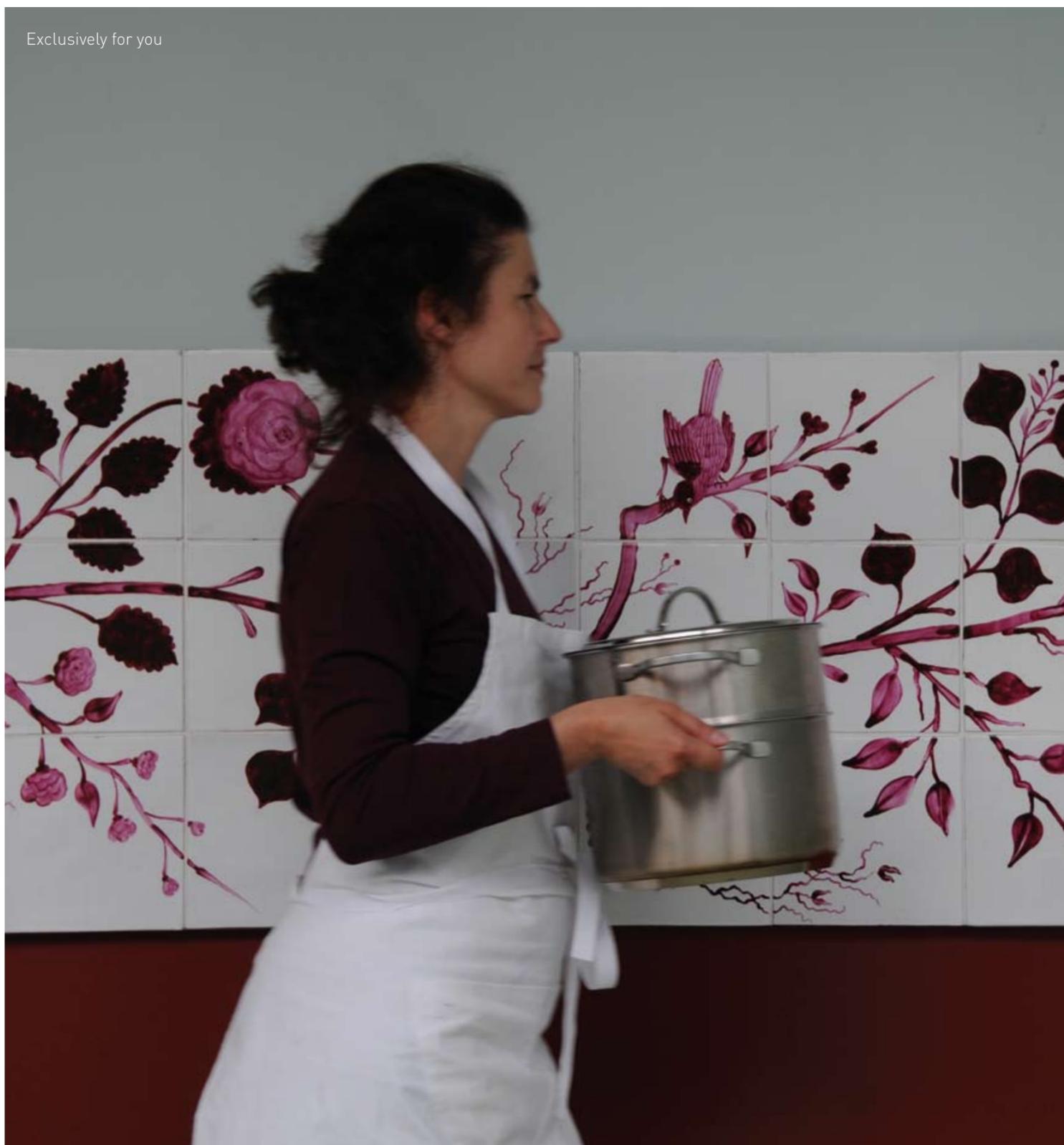
Exclusively for you



If you're looking for a crafts-person, then the Crown Guild of Master Woodcarvers is a good place to start. The kitchen in this manor house in Abergavenny dated back to Tudor times, but was given a new look thanks to a collaboration between experts from the Guild and bespoke kitchen company Welsh Kitchens. Price on request. **01278 424 246**
www.woodcarversguild.com,
01559 370 011
www.welsh-kitchens.com



Eye-catching handles really help to set-off kitchen cabinetry. This kitchen by Original Country Woodwork sports handles by Turnstyle Designs, which has a massive selection. Turnstyle can also create bespoke handles to commission. Shown here are large Bow Handles in Chocolate stitched bridle leather, with satin chrome caps, A1180 handle, L19xD2.6xW2.9cm, £44. **01271 325 325**
www.turnstyledesigns.com, **01482 871 949**
www.theoriginalcountrywoodwork.co.uk



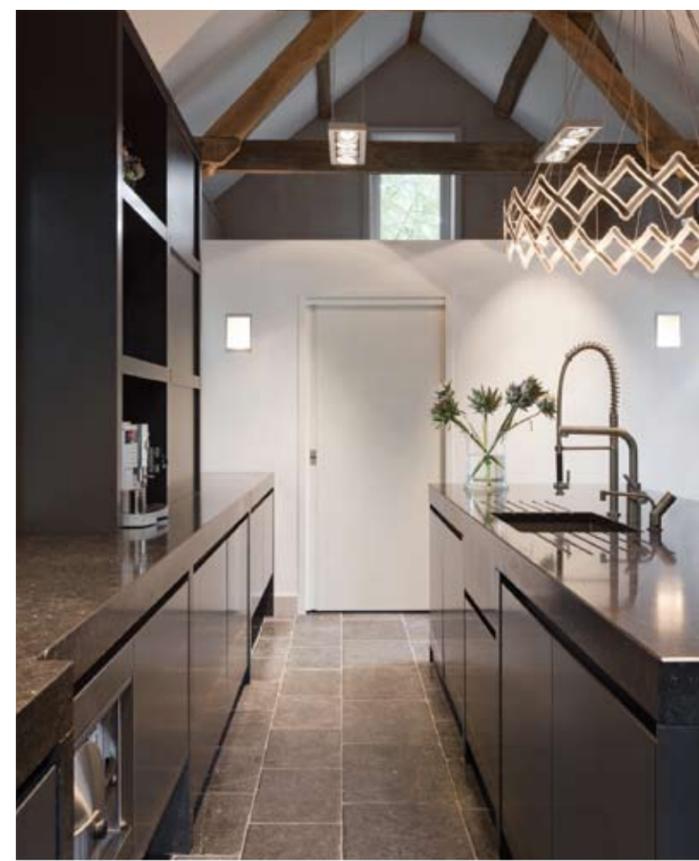
Above: Unusual tiles give an instant individuality to a room, but these have the added attraction of being hand-painted. The Rinceau Manganese panel from French company Emery & Cie is made from glazed terracotta tiles with 51 different motifs, painted by hand on a white background. From £26 for a 20cm² tile. **020 8969 0222 www.emeryetcie.com**

'Every surface in a kitchen can be personalised...'



Above: If you want to make sure that everyone keeps their things shipshape and orderly, then Charles Yorke will even name the drawers for you, putting the home address or individuals' names along the side of the drawers, or the proposed contents of the drawers on the front to make tidying up quicker. Complete kitchens from £20,000. **01623 756 080 www.charlesyorke.com**

Below: It's the little details like handles that can set a kitchen apart. These elegant handles are part of the fine detailing of a kitchen created by bespoke cabinetmaker Cimitree, which produces one-off pieces of fitted and freestanding furniture from its workshop in Hampshire. Here the main cabinetry is made from elm, while the handles are in walnut. Price on application. **01730 826 809 www.cimitree.co.uk**



Above: Stone finishes to floors and worktops allow for a great deal of personalisation in terms of colour, thickness and polish. Here, Paris Ceramics has used Fossile Nois Limestone to create an extra thick countertop, honed for a sophisticated look, while the same stone is given an antiqued finish for the floor. Fossile Nois Limestone, £198 sq m. **020 7371 7778 www.parisceramics.com**

Below: Finding the right tap to complete a bespoke kitchen can be tricky, but the Montmartre, from Bathrooms International, comes in an amazing 19 finishes, from matt nickel to silver rhodium, satin gold to antique silver. And if you still can't find what you like, the company can also arrange to have your choice of tap gold plated. Montmartre tap from £765, gold plating, price on request. **020 7838 7788 www.bathroomsint.com**





Above: Awkward corners are an opportunity, not a problem, when you approach a bespoke kitchen company. In this kitchen, Underwood Furniture has filled in the tricky area with a purpose-built, curved larder, internally illuminated and mirrored, featuring bread drawers with black walnut fronts, storage for ingredients and space for glasses. Complete kitchens from £30,000. **01296 771 800 www.underwoodfurniture.com**

Below: If you want something different from your kitchen, choose bespoke. Waywood Furniture created this L200xW100cm island for a client who wanted to dispense with wall cupboards and have his working area at the heart of the space. The walnut and ash unit included 10 storage drawers, double sink and cupboard, integrated dishwasher and gas hob with extraction, with the practical elements hidden behind a walnut skin resembling a stack of timber. From £19,200. **01608 676 433 www.waywood.co.uk**

