

DOWN TO EARTH

Many reams have been written about the magical triangle of movement between appliances - more Bermuda triangle, in reality! Let the layout of the room guide you naturally: sinks are great under a window and the Aga fits perfectly into the now redundant fireplace, so what next?

The pristinely planned kitchen on paper sometimes doesn't quite hit the spot in reality, and it is here that the benefits of moveable units come to the fore. I'm not talking plumbing or gas, just the larder cupboard (or armoire), storage cupboards (confituriers) of various sizes, and other carefully selected pieces.

Forget about replacing each fitted unit by a similar cupboard when planning the unfitted kitchen - this is a mistake we all make at first. This style of kitchen demands informality and relaxation. If space allows, pop in a squishy sofa - you know friends and family love to share the creative warmth of the centre of your home.

When choosing units, look around for unusual pieces in antique shops, or even the magical brocante shops if holidaying in France - these add a special individuality to the finished room.

Whether to slot into an available space between cooker and sink, or as an island unit to park your glass of vino colapso, look upon these extras as padding to your basic skeleton of furniture.

My favourite by far in the unfitted stakes are the solid French oak units in Fired Earth Interiors' Bastide Kitchen range. They look as if they were lovingly created over a century ago and are larger than your average chipboard carcass, but not so much as to take away the functionality of each piece.

Ultimately choose the supporting actors with as much care as the centre stage performers and your kitchen will reflect who you are, rather than what a style guru thinks you should be.

Words: Eva Shephard at Fired Earth Interiors, Darts Farm, Topsham.



▲ Bastide freestanding furniture collection by Fired Earth, Darts Farm Shopping Village, Topsham. Tel: 01392 878252



▲ Rayburn Cookmaster, at the South West Woodburning Centre, The Old Airfield, Winkleigh. Tel: 01837 83333

▼ Olympe dresser, £2,195, Orange Tree Interiors at Darts Farm, Topsham. Tel: 01392 876688



▲ Two Oven Agas in the Signature colours of either Heather, Aubergine, Pistachio, Terracotta, Jade, Classic White & Wedgwood Blue start from £5,625. Stockists: 08457 125 207 www.aga-rayburn.co.uk.