

A modern classic

Using clever craftsmanship and quirky touches, Sara and Jonny Fricker created a traditional scheme with a contemporary twist

Feature **AMELIA THORPE** Photography **DARREN CHUNG**



Grand central

The bespoke island unit is big enough for the whole family to join in the cooking duties

Project profile

THE OWNERS Sara and Jonny Fricker and their children, Freddie, 12, and Rosie, 10, plus Willow the Labrador

THEIR HOME A brick-and-flint new-build cottage in Buckinghamshire

THE PROJECT Creating a new open-plan kitchen scheme

ROOM SIZE 7.3 x 5m

DESIGNER Matt Podesta at Podesta

CABINETRY Bespoke traditional framed furniture in oak and painted finishes by Podesta. Kitchens start from £35,000

BUDGET Undisclosed

‘WE WANTED
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Sara and Jonny Fricker's philosophy is 'if you can't find a property you want to buy, then build it yourself.' This four-bedroom, brick-and-flint house in Buckinghamshire is their third self-built home; but then Jonny is director of luxury new homes development company, Germain Homes. 'Each project is exciting,' says Sara, a full-time mum to Freddie, 12, and Rosie, 10. 'We had built our previous house on three levels and found we didn't use the top floor at all. This time, we wanted to devote more budget and space to the ground floor and create a great entertaining space, with a kitchen, dining area and living room all-in-one.'

The couple chose kitchen designer Matt Podesta, director of bespoke furniture company Podesta, as Jonny had worked with him before on previous building projects. 'Matt has an ability to create smart kitchens that are also very practical for family life,' says Jonny. Top of their wish list was a large Carrara marble-topped island to form the main preparation space and focal point of the room. Plenty of storage and integrated appliances were also important for a clutter-free finish. But it's the indigo-blue larder cupboard with its oversized knocker-style chrome handles that Sara likes the most. 'It's traditional with a modern edge, which adds personality to the room,' she says.

Cool character

Painted and natural wood units
lend a relaxed, unfitted feel



Let it shine

Designed to tie-in with the cottage's brick-and-flint exterior, the pearlescent splashback catches the eye



Subtle style

Understated finishing touches help maintain an uncluttered feel

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Designer Matt Podesta explains...

How did you come up with the floor plan?

There were so many design possibilities in such a large room, so I produced three or four initial layouts, moving strong blocks of shape around to see how they would work best. Eventually we settled on one with base units along one wall with an extra-wide pantry cupboard adjacent. The generous island with sink is in proportion with the room's size and provides the main worksurface. And a faux-chimney breast, which houses built-in ovens and an extractor, was added to inject traditional character to the space.

Talk us through the cabinetry

It's all traditionally made bespoke furniture, in a classic framed design. But there are subtle variations in the different sections – for example, the island features elegant wooden moulding to echo the bull-nose edge of the worktop. The drawers either side of the ovens are flat-panelled with a rebate moulding for a slightly more contemporary touch, while the pantry has classic panelling to create the look of a traditional linen press. It's an intricate and crafted design, but the detailing is restrained, not fussy.

How did you choose the finishes?

You can't beat the natural beauty of marble. Some people worry about it marking and scratching, but I think it's better to see that as part of its lovely aged patina. Along with the chalky-white wall cabinets, it helps to accentuate the light, spacious feel in this room. The timber island prevents the kitchen from looking clinical.

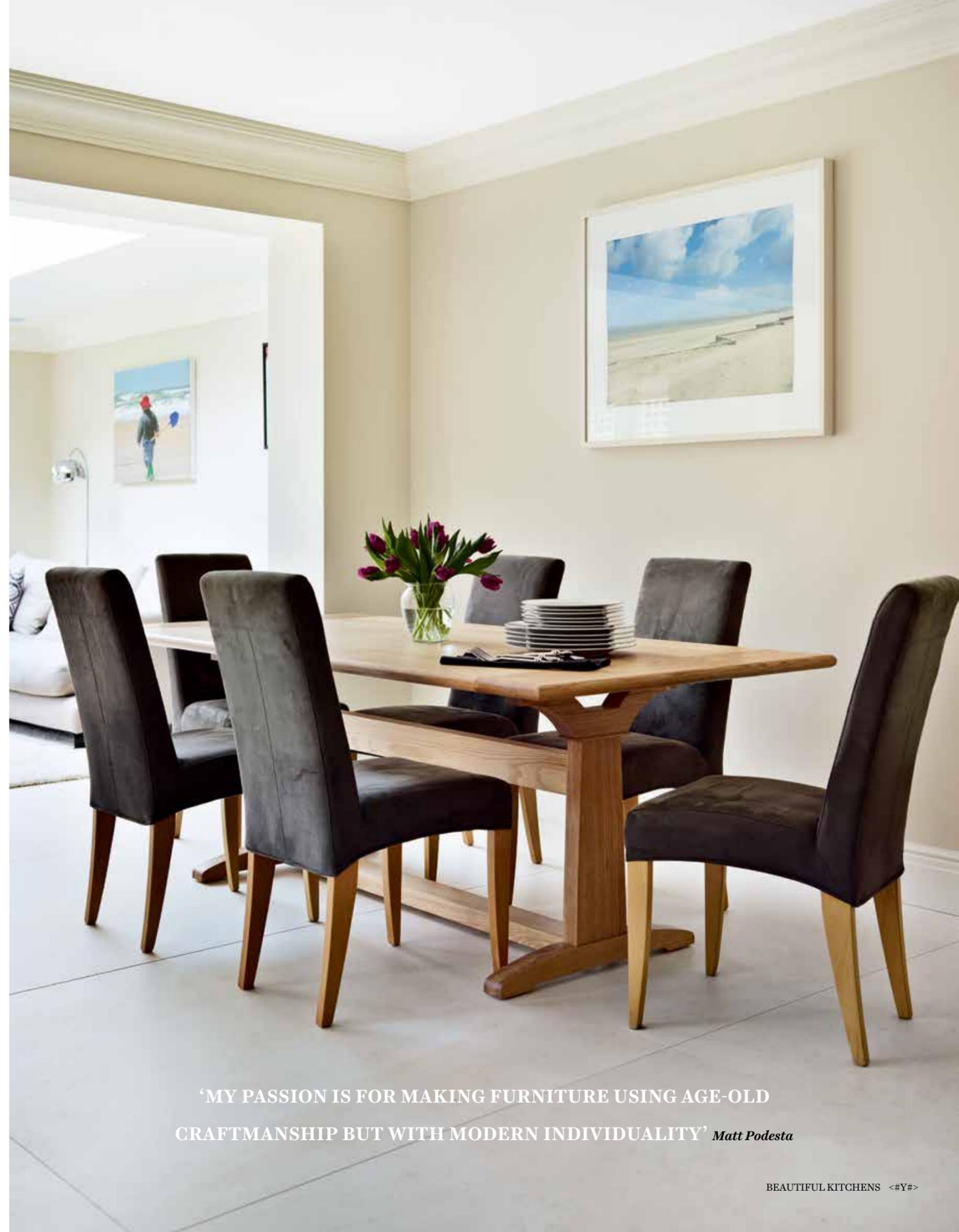
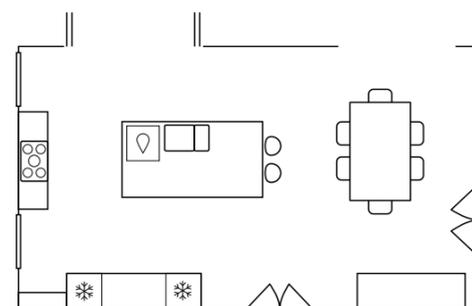
And the pantry cupboard?

I love to add something quirky, fun and a little bit different to my kitchen designs, and a bold, painted pantry cupboard fitted in perfectly with Sara and Jonny's brief. It contrasts with the lighter colours in the room, and the oak trim links it to the island and similar detailing on the overmantel. The oversize chrome 'knockers' are visually striking and add an individual touch.

Did you design the dining area, too?

My colleague Carl Turner and I created a large, traditionally made refectory table in solid oak. It sits comfortably in the space, and is the link between the kitchen and sitting area, creating a sense of free-flowing movement around the room. The table top features bull-nose edging to match that of the marble worktops.

The layout



'MY PASSION IS FOR MAKING FURNITURE USING AGE-OLD CRAFTSMANSHIP BUT WITH MODERN INDIVIDUALITY' *Matt Podesta*



Hidden delight

The inside of the pantry is in natural oak, which echoes the trim detail on the outside, and the marble surface matches the worktops for a unified look

The details

CABINETRY Bespoke traditional framed furniture in oak and painted finishes by Podesta, from £35,000

SURFACES Carrara marble **worktop** with bull-nose edging, price on application, The Marble Workshop. Moonlight mosaics **splashback tiles**, £168sq m; Maximo White limestone porcelain **floor tiles**, £96sq m, both Stone & Ceramic Warehouse

APPLIANCES Built-in electric **single oven**, £1,150; built-in **combination microwave**, £686; **induction hob**, £750; built-in **warming drawer**, £380; fully integrated **fridge**, £932; fully integrated **freezer**, £1,245; fully integrated **dishwasher**, £647, all Siemens. Gruppo Incasso built-in **cooker hood**, from £720, Falmec

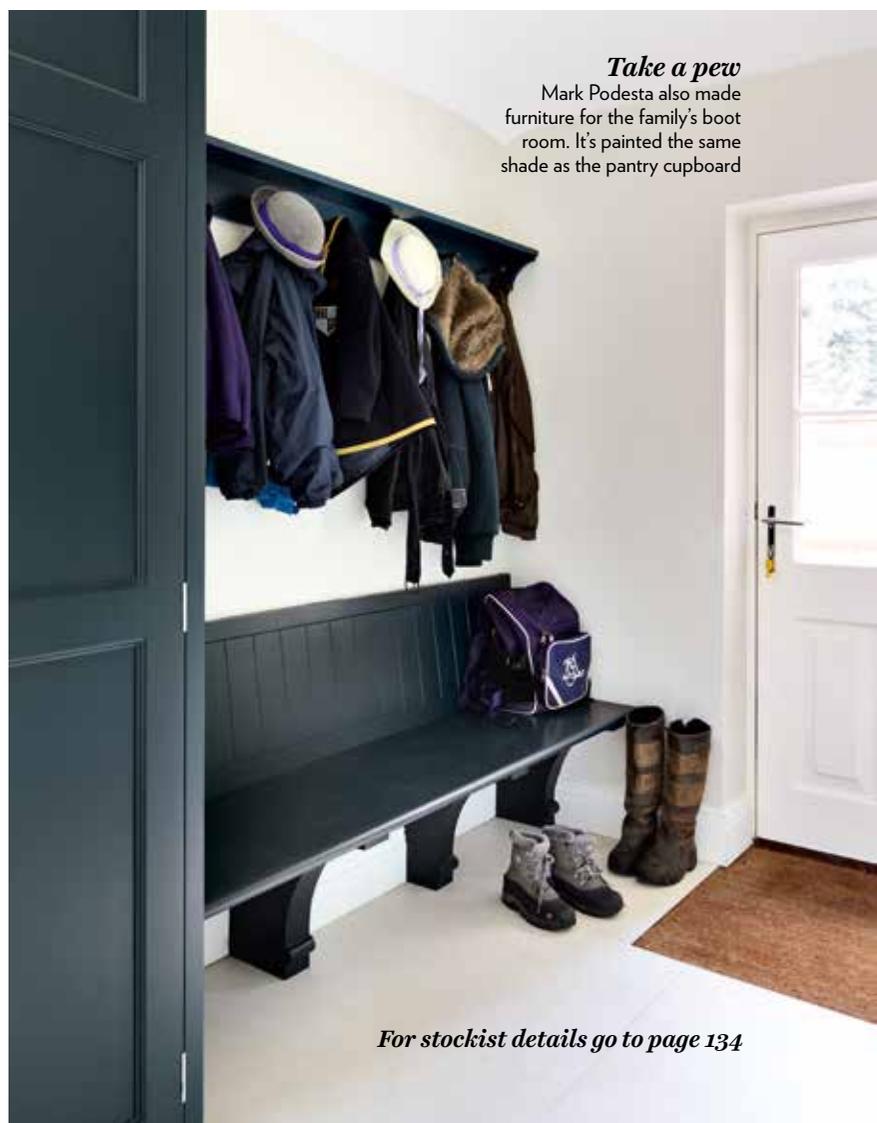
SINK AND TAPS Kubus KBX 160-45/20 **one-and-a-half-bowl sink** in stainless steel, £464, Franke. BlancoEye 5300 **mixer tap**, £211, Blanco. Design **boiling-water tap**, £890, Quooker

FINISHING TOUCHES Bespoke solid-oak **refectory table**, from £2,500, Podesta. Lydia **dining chair** in Steel, £99, John Lewis, is similar. CH56 oak **bar stool** by Hans J Wegner, £735, The Conran Shop, would suit this scheme. Duo Globe **pendant lights**, from £130 each, Holloways of Ludlow



Tapped up

The island houses the main sink, which has a Quooker boiling-water tap that's great for making quick cuppas



Take a pew

Mark Podesta also made furniture for the family's boot room. It's painted the same shade as the pantry cupboard

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