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COVER HOME

Rooms with a VIEW

A subtle use of pink complements the natural tones of wood and stone to create a calm and stylish atmosphere in this family home

Words **Ben Webb** Photography **Darren Chung**

Rachel and Nick were searching for a house with the potential to be transformed into a family home when they found the perfect property, just a "stone's throw" from where they lived in East Anglia. Today, the detached house with several outbuildings has been turned into one spacious and characterful home, designed for multi-generational living. "As I've always been interested in interiors, I relished the thought of planning something and putting our stamp on it," explains Rachel.

Although eager to press ahead with the project, the couple, who both work in healthcare, decided to live in the house to get a feel for its unique personality before finalising their plans. Nick and Rachel had to ensure their ideas conformed to those of the local planning office – which had a surprising result. "I feel we got the best outcome," Rachel says. "Something that works for a growing family but also respects the integrity of the building and the surrounding vernacular."

The entire build took three years. "Our wonderful builders were always happy to try and accommodate my ideas, although I got short shrift when I approached with Pinterest open!" jokes Rachel.

The couple fell in love with a Davonport kitchen after visiting Ray Munn Kitchens and hired design director Bob Malston to design it. "Bob has a fine-art background and so he brought both functionality to the kitchen but a consideration of proportion and attention to detail," adds Rachel.

Today, the house has been sympathetically modernised with the old and the new parts of the house fitting together naturally. It has also been cleverly adapted to make the most of open plan living. "We use all the spaces beside the kitchen and my children don't lock themselves away in their bedrooms any more, so I can irritate them much more effectively," laughs Rachel. "I love the way the house works for us as a family."

What was the key aim with the kitchen and living areas?

We wanted to create a central space that our family of five would want to spend time in and also to make the most of the setting. I wanted a contemporary kitchen that was sympathetic to the old part of the house, which is why we opted for a Shaker style.

How does the design match your lifestyle?

We like entertaining and I have a very large extended family, who love getting together, so we wanted to be able to accommodate them. Two ovens make sure entertaining is easy. We have a full house at Christmas and knowing I don't have to worry about oven space is great. We also have two dishwashers – a real luxury!

How did the age of the house shape your decisions?

I wanted to avoid wall cupboards, to make the most of the vaulted ceilings, so we have under-counter fridge drawers and storage under the window seat. Our main fridge-freezer is in the pantry. >



An old house and assorted outbuildings were turned into one dwelling and now include the beautiful open-plan kitchen, dining and living areas



The pale pink Shaker style kitchen works in harmony with the older parts of the house, which date back to the 16th Century.

The FACTS

Who? Rachel, Nick, and their three children: Sebastian, 15, Theo, 12, and Imogen, 8
What? Conversion of outbuildings and a new link to the existing house
Where? East Anglia
Time? Three years for the entire project
Cost? £50,000 for the kitchen

Where did the idea for the picture window come from? It was always an important idea and dictated the layout of the kitchen. We wanted views from every room. Even when the weather is bleak, a coffee in here is lovely. Tall cabinets on either side face away from the window rather than into room, which helps frame the view.

What shaped the colour palette and use of materials? For the kitchen colour I wanted something warm and inviting that didn't jar with the outside, and I settled on pink. I didn't want anything saccharine, so this shade, with peach undertones, fitted the bill. I went for brass fittings and fixtures, because I like its warmth and it goes well with the pink. Having said that, I've mixed things up and used chrome and bronze in the kitchen area, too.

How did you choose the materials? I love natural materials and feel wood works well in all kinds of settings. I wanted the floor to be hardworking and robust, so we opted for porcelain tiles. In the breakfast area we used terracotta tiles, which sit well with the pink and suit the old part of the house.

How did you balance the use of open shelves and cabinetry? We have enough storage space not to need wall cabinets, so we are able to have open shelves. I love the airiness and versatility that they bring, and really like the inset shelf, which allows me to change the look of the kitchen easily. And I'm never happier than when faffing with a shelf! Having a walk-in pantry was a dream, but it has enabled me to be a bit more organised, and the utility room keeps all the mess of family life contained.

Which area works the best? As a family, we spend a lot of time in the coffee area. The kids collapse there after school – while I'm cooking – and tell me about their day. We have bites here at the weekend before dinner, which is my favourite part of the week. It's lovely to enjoy the whole space. >



The two tall kitchen cabinets face into the room, flanking the vast picture window.



Rachel loves the inset shelf because it allows her to alter the look and feel of the kitchen by changing the selection of plants, accessories, and pictures.



WORDS OF WISDOM

Bob Malston,

DESIGN DIRECTOR, RAY MUNN KITCHENS

- Visit the site early in the construction to mark out the plan on the floor. This helps to get a feel for the space, with the furniture and island.
- I often use push-to-open drawers and cupboards as this helps to avoid any encumbrance from knobs or handles.
- The large picture window was flanked by a counter-top cupboard on the left and a tall larder on the right to create a balanced elevation.

The window seat, which is a lovely place to sit and gaze out at the garden and countryside has plenty of handy built-in storage.



Right Davonport's kitchen design includes plenty of below-counter storage, so there was no need for wall cabinets.



above Installing two ovens in the island means entertaining is easy – even when there is a full house at Christmas.



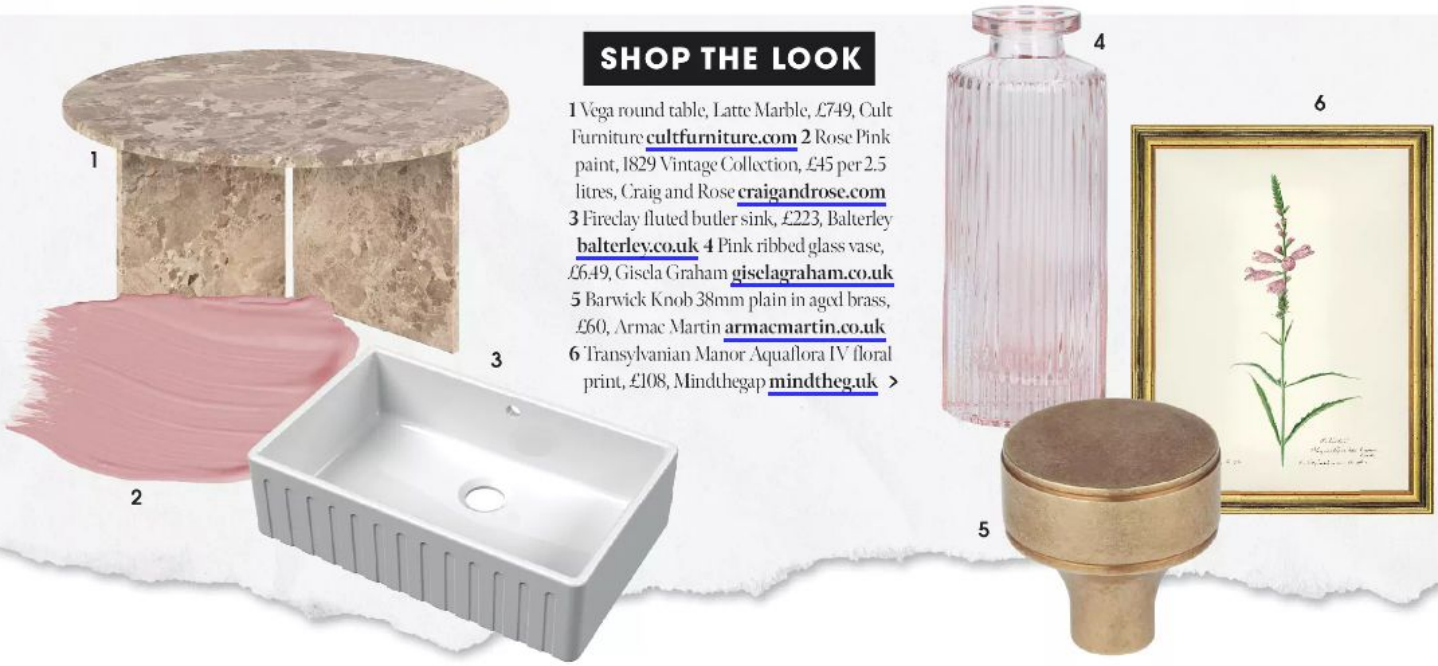


left The coffee area is a favourite spot for the family to sit and relax. The children like to chill out here after school and talk to Rachel about their day.

The couple wanted the floor to be hardworking and robust, so they chose porcelain tiles in a warm grey, which complements the colour scheme of pinks and organic tones.

SHOP THE LOOK

1 Vega round table, Latte Marble, £749, Cult Furniture **cultfurniture.com** **2** Rose Pink paint, 1829 Vintage Collection, £45 per 2.5 litres, Craig and Rose **craigandrose.com** **3** Fireclay fluted butler sink, £223, Balterley **balterley.co.uk** **4** Pink ribbed glass vase, £649, Gisela Graham **giselagraham.co.uk** **5** Barwick Knob 38mm plain in aged brass, £60, Armac Martin **armacmartin.co.uk** **6** Transylvanian Manor Aquaflora IV floral print, £108, Mindthegap **mindthegap.uk** >



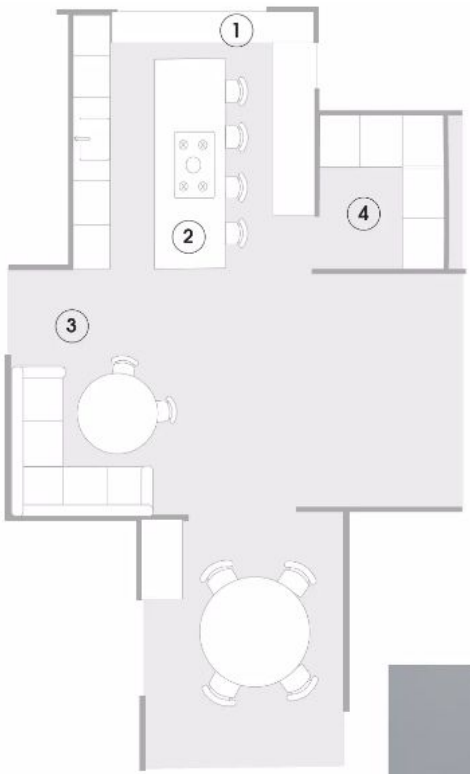
left The breakfast area is a step up from the kitchen, tucked away but still with lovely views.

right Wooden wall panelling, which has been used throughout the house, has a more contemporary, pared-back design in the breakfast area, which features traditional terracotta floor tiles.

Sourcebook

Kitchen Davonport davonport.com
Designer Bob Malston, Ray Munn Kitchens raymunn.com
Paint Farrow & Ball farrow-ball.com
Sink Shaws of Darwen shawsofdarwen.com
Tap Quooker quooker.co.uk
Work surfaces M&R Stoneworks mandrstoneworks.co.uk
Bar stools Devol devolkitchens.co.uk
Appliances Wine fridge caple caple.co.uk; hob Caple as before; ovens Neff neff-home.com; fridges Liebherr Liebherr.com
Flooring Just Tiles justtileswoodbridge.co.uk
Dining room table and chairs Neptune Furniture, neptune.com
Table and chairs in coffee area Joseph Berry josephberryinteriors.co.uk

For full stockist information, see page 128. Search for more suppliers at theselfreerooms.com/directory



The PLANS

1 The picture window is a stunning lookout on to the garden and includes storage.
2 The island incorporates a hob and double oven, making entertaining guests a dream.
3 Coffee area The kids love to flop here after school to chat about their day, plus it's a perfect spot for pre-dinner drinks and nibbles.
4 The pantry helps conceal clutter and houses some of the family's appliances. KBB

below As part of the open plan design, a variety of rooms connect to the central kitchen space: a utility, coffee area, breakfast room and the hall.



right The couple love entertaining, so installed a roomy drinks fridge in the walk-in pantry.





Photography Darren Chung

above Here, while the stone does the talking, the neutral cabinets provide a soothing backdrop. Black accents add a contemporary touch. Richmond kitchen painted in *Farrow & Ball's* Skimming Stone with Arabescato worktop. *Davonport* kitchens start from £40,000.

PERHAPS UNSURPRISINGLY, THE BIG HITTERS OF THE KITCHEN INDUSTRY REVEALED ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY THAT THEIR BEST-SELLING COLOURS WERE IN FACT GREENS, BLUES, GREYS AND NEUTRALS

opposite page This Shaker kitchen was based on writer Charlotte Luxford's own design, and made bespoke by *Canterwood Joinery* with Carrara marble worktops sourced from *Vitruvius*. The kitchen is painted in a calming blue-green shade. Museum eggshell paint, £89 for 2.5 litres, *Mylands*.