

Emily Todhunter on retaining character & charm



Interior designer Emily Todhunter of Todhunter Earle Interiors has a global clientele. When redesigning her own kitchen (right), her chief aim was to ensure a sense of continuity for the family and maintain a powerful sense of home.

The brief

"There are no rules for designing a kitchen, every one is different. This kitchen is ours in the country. We have three children, dogs, cats, ponies...the lot, so for us what is important would be less important in a London kitchen. It really matters to me that mud doesn't show on the floor and it really mattered to our children that, when this kitchen was updated last year, it looked the same as it always had done. Probably the most important thing for everyone was that it felt cosy and warm; literally felt warm, which it does thanks to the Aga, but it also has a warm atmosphere."

Sensitive redesign

"The Aga and flooring are original but we replaced the old oak cabinets with new ones, beautifully made by Orwells, and with deep drawers for all the plates. I chose worktops in honed granite because it looks much more 'country' and I think it's more practical than the shiny alternative which shows smears and marks very quickly.

"There used to be more window seats in the room but I lost one in favour of a dishwasher. I do love a window seat. Ours has a view of dovecotes in the garden and the chickens, who like to perch on the windowsill outside. A lightweight fabric blind adds softness. The fabric is from the Eco textile range at MM Design Textiles.

"We live, and nearly always eat, in the kitchen. I can change the atmosphere with the lighting, but I can also achieve a completely new colour scheme and atmosphere by changing the tablecloth.

"We have two tables, which works really well as I never know how many we're going to be until the last minute. If they're pushed together, we can seat up to 14, which is a bit of a squash, but it makes it cosy! When you're trying to create an inviting kitchen, the key thing is not to try too hard. Be relaxed when designing it and the end result will be relaxed, too." ►



TOP New oak kitchen units by Orwells in Ipswich are teamed with honed granite worktops as part of a sensitive refit by interior designer Emily Todhunter in her own home.

ABOVE Careful choice of lighting, use of fabrics and the ability to use two tables together makes this kitchen a flexible family-focused heart of the home.