

Home Maker



ODILE KIPLING WORKS WITH SUSTAINABLE WOOD TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL BESPOKE KITCHENS

Interview by Jessica Cunningham

How did you get into kitchen making?

I developed an interest in woodwork through my father. With a business studies degree I had a variety of office-based roles, but when I moved to Cornwall 10 years ago, I took a new direction and joined a small furniture company as a sander. Within two years I moved from sanding to making kitchens and furniture and I realised that to design my own range of kitchens and furniture, I would need to set up on my own. I don't only make kitchens; I make everything from dressers to mantlepieces, beds and wardrobes – as long as it's real wood, I'll do it. I'm in control of every stage, from the design, to making and fitting the kitchen.

Why specialise in kitchens?

I love cooking – I am French after all – and the kitchen is somewhere that I like to spend time. Having travelled extensively for 15 years, I was disheartened that each new kitchen I came across was a nightmare, often badly organised and lacking in space, and I found it frustrating. I was confident that I could come up with a better solution.

Describe your kitchens.

They are completely bespoke and made from scratch. Each of the kitchens I design is unique, but they share the same concept and combine practicality with aesthetic appeal. I like to create clever storage solutions to maximise the potential of the space, eliminate clutter and enhance the chosen style. Making the kitchens as user-friendly as possible means that everything – from the height of the cupboards to the number of shelves – needs to be taken into consideration.

How does a kitchen evolve?

Everyone has a different way of life and their own taste. A kitchen has to fit this lifestyle and reflect your personality. Sometimes people have a very clear view of what they want, whilst others really don't have any idea, so I've devised a step-by-step guide to help them reach some decisions. I take details that exist within each home and incorporate them into the designs.

How long does it take from designing to fitting?

The time it takes to make a kitchen can range from a month to two months. Making the doors, the drawers and the finishing is time consuming. They are what the clients see first and will look at every day, so they must be perfect in every detail and the finish must be impeccable.

What type of wood do you use?

I use solid wood throughout and only from renewable sources. I try to get the wood I use from Cornwall and if I can't, I source it from elsewhere in the United Kingdom. There's no waste involved in the making process: pieces of wood under five inches and the sawdust are burnt in my wood burner, whilst my children's school friends collect the wood shavings for their pets' bedding.

What is your favourite part of your job?

Having my own business involves hard graft and long hours, but after a day spent here my productivity is very evident and I find that rewarding. The demand for my kitchens has significantly increased in the last few years and it's satisfying to know that people have seen my work and are willing to wait. It's fantastic when the customer says that the finished kitchen is a million times better than they had anticipated.

Why is Cornwall a good base for you?

There are some fantastic properties in Cornwall, from very small cottages where it's challenging to design a kitchen that utilises every inch of the room and still feels spacious, to huge properties where the challenge is to create luxurious sophisticated but warm and inviting kitchens.

What would you like to do in the future?

I would love a customer to commission me to create a completely wild kitchen in really unusual woods and materials. I can't resist a challenge.

To see a range of Odile's kitchen designs visit www.sokipling.co.uk or call 01872 862059. 