

“I love sinking into an armchair, with a hot cup of coffee

and every so often looking up to admire my kitchen”



Coffee house chic

Tracy and John Abbott chose luscious walnut and smooth Parapan cabinetry combined with a stylish coffee machine so staying in is their new going out

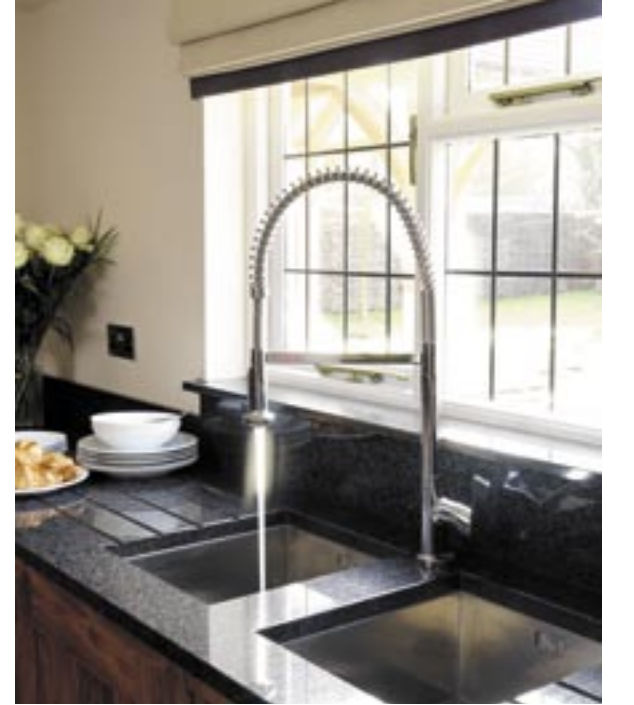
Inspired by the kitchen they'd had while living overseas, the Abbotts opted for beautiful American Black walnut furniture in an open-plan arrangement that's perfectly suited for entertaining. To balance the dark cabinetry, Tracy painted the walls in Cream by Dulux, while Sand porcelain floor tiles from Chelmsford Tile & Bath Showrooms reflect light around the spacious room

INNOVATIVE





To break up the expanse of walnut, Tracy chose a bank of floor-to-ceiling black Parapan cabinetry. In the centre, a large American fridge freezer is flanked by a single oven on the right and a coffee machine with a warming drawer on the other side. 'Choosing appliances was really easy as I just ordered the same models we'd had in Canada,' smiles Tracy



This tap's detachable spray comes in handy for rinsing large Aga trays, while a waste disposal unit attached to the sink proves an invaluable tool for mincing food scraps rather than just putting them in the bin

Tracy Abbott waited five years before renovating the kitchen in the home that she shares with her husband John and their sons, Steven, 22, Paul, 19, and Andrew, 17. 'When we moved in, I thought the room was a decent size, as the previous owners had extended it but the design was so far removed from how I imagined my kitchen to be, it had to go,' laughs Tracy.

The couple took inspiration from a six-year spell in Canada when John, who works in finance, took a job there. 'The house we lived in was very modern and open plan and it was this style of easy living that we wanted to achieve here,' recalls Tracy. The Abbotts spent hours looking in magazines, such as *Beautiful Kitchens*, for the design they wanted, before finally coming across an advert for WA Croker & Son's wooden kitchens. 'I'd decided years ago that a simple design with clean lines and walnut cabinetry would best suit the space we had so we went to visit its showroom,' says Tracy.

After listening to the couple's ideas, designer Billy Croker created a contemporary layout for them with all the homely comforts that would entice guests to linger in the kitchen. The new scheme contrasted solid walnut furniture with black acrylic cabinetry for a sophisticated look and a variety of luxury appliances including an Aga, an American fridge freezer and a must-have coffee machine. To finish the room, Billy added a walnut breakfast bar with a sweeping inset of granite that is as practical as it is eye-catching.

Having a comfortable and sumptuous new kitchen has meant that the local coffee shop is definitely off the menu for the Abbotts. 'We all prefer drinking cappuccinos at home courtesy of our machine,' smiles Tracy. 'I love sinking into an armchair with a lovely hot drink and a book, and every so often admiring my kitchen.'

BK

INNOVATIVE



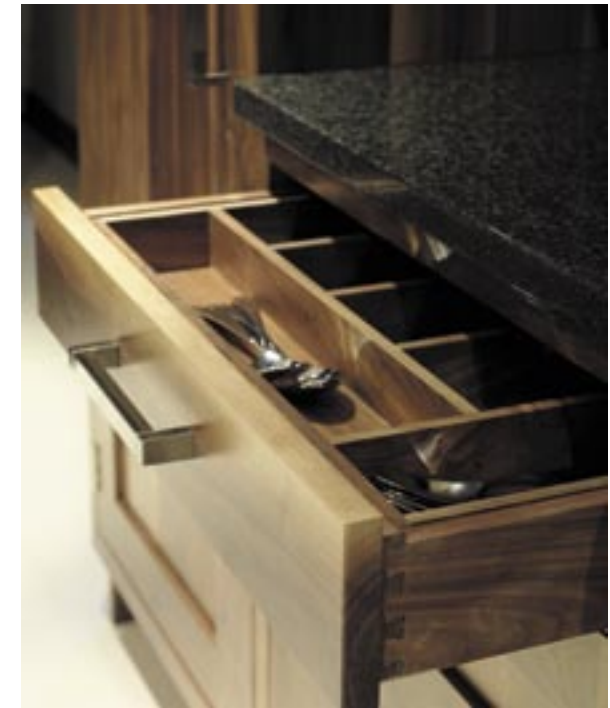
'I've found I get the most use out of my Aga. I've never owned one before and I didn't really know what to expect but our food tastes so much better than when we used to cook it in a conventional oven'

TRACY ABBOTT



Tracy wanted a breakfast bar with character so designer Billy suggested a curving expanse of walnut surrounding a central core of Nero Impala granite. 'It looks absolutely fabulous and the tiny flecks of grey and brown in it really sparkle,' she smiles

Integrated into the base cabinetry is a Miele wine chiller that boasts a dynamic cooling system and vibration-free compressor. The five pull-out shelves can hold up to 38 bottles and two independent temperature zones enable white and red wine to be stored here



Positioned next to the Aga is a cutlery drawer with handmade walnut compartments that can be lifted out and carried to the breakfast bar opposite. Underneath, two deep pan drawers store Tracy's roomy Aga trays while the sleek granite worksurface above provides ample space for hot food waiting to be served



The undulating walnut breakfast bar continues into the 'chill-out' area where Tracy and John gather with their children and guests after meals. The surrounding stools came from Dansk. For a minimalist finish, the Abbotts decided to install ceiling spotlights to avoid interrupting their sleek design



THE KITCHEN FILE

DESIGN & CABINETRY

- Billy Croker at **WA Croker & Son**, Unit 20, Waterhouse Business Centre, 2 Cromar Way, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2QE (01245 392211) www.wacrokerandson.com
- Bespoke solid American Black walnut furniture with Black Parapan cabinetry

WORKTOPS

- Nero Impala granite, Marbonyx. Price per sq m £205
- Solid walnut. Total cost £2,500

SINKS & TAP

- 2 x BlancoZerox 340-U undermounted single-bowl sinks in stainless steel, Blanco, each £307
- AXOR21 Axor Citterio Semi Pro single-lever monobloc mixer tap in chrome with pull-out rinse, Hansgrohe £451
- ISE65 waste disposal unit, In-Sink-Erator £250

APPLIANCES (shown)

- Four-oven gas Aga in black £8,495
- Built-in single oven, for similar try H5460, Miele £1,439
- M8261 built-in microwave oven, Miele £607
- CVA3660 built-in coffee machine, Miele £1,115
- Built-in warming drawer, for similar try EGW4060-14, Miele £500
- 320FNRS integrated Definition American fridge freezer, Amana £2,500
- KWT4154UG-1 undercounter wine cooler, Miele £1,018

APPLIANCES (not shown)

- Fully integrated dishwasher, Miele £1,223

☎ For stockists, see page 153

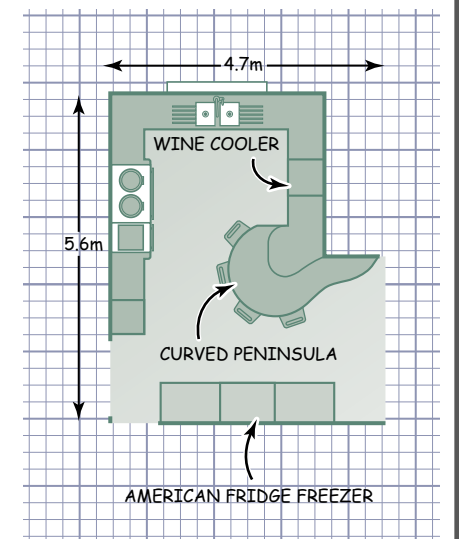
▲ A wash of dark acrylic cabinetry occupies an entire wall, making a bold but stylish statement in the couple's kitchen. 'I had the same unit in Canada but in cream,' explains Tracy. 'I decided to go with black this time for more impact.' Floor-to-ceiling, pull-out racks either side of the fridge freezer provide ample storage for the family's dry foodstuffs and keep all their cooking ingredients in one place

▶ Tracy's coffee machine takes pride of place next to the breakfast bar while a warming drawer below provides a handy place for stirring and resting cups



◀ The self-cleaning, built-in Miele oven offers an alternative cooking method to the Aga for the summer months or if the Abbotts are entertaining a large party. The 66-litre model comes with several automatic cooking programmes and five removable wire-rack shelves

▶ Tracy and John Abbott live in this detached, Grade II-listed house in a market town in Essex with their three sons. Parts of the couple's charming four-bedroom property were originally built in the 15th century



GUIDE PRICE

- Starting price for a WA Croker & Son kitchen £25,000