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**GOODBYE
DARLING
ALICE
A MOTHER'S
STORY
OF
LOSS**

PLUS CARL BARAT BETH CHATTO ON HOW TO GARDEN IN A DROUGHT MARATHON RUNNING

SPACE

Mother's day

She wanted a display shelf and room for her Welsh dresser. Her son had a vision of cool modernity. Could one kitchen house both?
By Charlotte Abrahams

Anne King waited a long time for her dream kitchen. She and her family moved into their timber-framed cottage in 1987, but there was other work to be done on it, and her dream was more ambitious than a simple coat of paint. So for years Anne struggled along in what she describes as a "poky, isolating, utterly horrendous kitchen", sustained only by a picture from a glossy magazine.

Now her son, architect Jeremy King, has turned her dream into reality, creating a large, double-height living-eating space on the site of the former garage. From the outside, the new space resembles a barn, clad in western red cedar and iroko timber. "We wanted to echo a rural barn structure because they're common in this part of Hertfordshire," Jeremy says, "but we wanted to do it a bit differently. It's a slight reaction against those barn conversions with their huge, shouting windows."

A sliding glass wall opens on to a wooden veranda. Inside, the look is contemporary classic rather than thrustingly modern. It's bright and white, and there's lots of glass, but the worktops are oak, there's antique furniture and the concrete floor could be made from traditional flagstones. "It's a very old house with low ceilings and it's furnished quite traditionally," Jeremy says. "We wanted to create the opposite of that, making something light and airy in this new space, but we didn't want it to jar visually."

Would his mother have preferred something more traditional? "Absolutely not," he says. "Her immediate vision was of a conventional space, and I'm sure a different architect would have pandered more to that, but because I'm her son I was able to propose something much bolder. She was a very good client. She trusted me, so we didn't disagree on much, and working with her proved to be a really nice emotional journey."

Jeremy King Architects, 020-8896 1195.

CHARLOTTE WOOD

LIGHTING

Large, multi-functional spaces demand layers of light. Jeremy used simple wall-mounted up-lights, with discreet task lighting – a fluorescent rope light, for example, is hidden behind a shelf at the back of the worktop. Drama is created with translucent pendants over the dining table (FI/y Pendant, £116, from Purves & Purves, 020-7580 8223, purves.co.uk).

FLOOR

"The floor was the builder's stroke of inspiration," Jeremy says. "It's actually concrete slabs from Marshall's domestic garden range (0870 120 7474, marshall.co.uk) but it looks like flagstones. Everyone is suckered into believing it's stone."



DISPLAY SHELF ABOVE UNITS

The magazine image of a kitchen that Anne fell in love with had a large display shelf and she was determined to have one, too, for her pottery collection and general memorabilia – the six ceramic plates are mementoes of Spanish holidays in the 1960s and 1970s.

Filial duty: Architect Jeremy King (below, left) took on the task of designing the kitchen his mother, Anne, had dreamed of for years



JOBE LAWRENSEN

COLOUR

Anne's kitchen is wall-to-wall Ice Storm by Dulux (0870 444 1111, dulux.co.uk), a white-with-a-hint-of-greyish-brown that reflects the brown tones of the floor. To make it more interesting, however, the colour has been used in several different shades – the walls, for example, are in the palest tone, Ice Storm 6, while the units have been painted in the slightly darker Ice Storm 5. 'We wanted to keep the space calm and played down,' Jeremy says. 'It was about creating a backdrop and showing up the details. I always go for paler colours because they bounce the light back and show off the space so well.'

UNITS

Anne originally wanted tongue-and-groove units but they were too expensive and Jeremy felt something more contemporary would be better. Mother and son compromised on a set of custom-made, hand-painted MDF cases with a V-groove routed in every 100mm, which subtly echoes traditional tongue-and-groove. The worktops are made of blocked oak. 'They will weather,' Jeremy says, 'especially around the sink, but I don't mind that – the marks are part of it. They'll just need re-oiling every six months.'

TABLE

'This table has been around all my life,' Jeremy says. 'It came from Heal's in the 1970s and was resurrected after the kitchen extension was built. It had been a bit neglected, so we sanded it down and gave it a couple of coats of white satin eggshell.' The effect is glossily contemporary – a look underlined by the white Eames chairs (£172, by Vitra, from Couch Potato Company; 020-8894 1333, couchpotatocompany.com) – but tempered by the old pine dresser. 'It had been consigned to the garage for years because it was too tall for the low-ceilinged rooms of the original house,' Anne says, 'but I was determined to have it in here.'



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