

# Guildhall Cottage- the kitchen project.

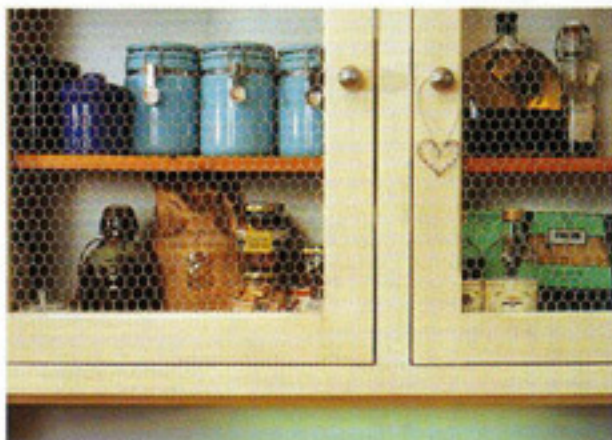
Paint expert, Vanessa Webb, explains how she transformed Melanie's kitchen in to one of her favourite rooms.



## The Brief

Using the existing pine units as a starting point, the objective was to create a welcoming family environment which maximised light and space. As lovers of the urban country look, my clients wished to create an environment that would age with style.

The Nash's kitchen space had been cleverly developed from an old plum store by previous owners and looked very much part of the original house. The cooking arrangement was a brown 1980's style hob, with a double oven and integrated microwave. Dark shelving, which was later removed, further impinged on the feeling of light and space. The pine units and wooden worktop were approximately 10 years old, and had been stained to look like oak. The overall appearance was dingy and dark.



## The Solution

It was decided that, as the units were well made in a simple style, I would put a subtle paint effect on them and re-varnish the wooden worktop.

In preparation, it is most important to make sure the surfaces are clean and free from kitchen grease. I used sugar soap diluted in warm water to thoroughly wash down all the wood. This takes several goes, especially in areas where dishwashers and bin cupboards reside. This doesn't mean you have to make the wood really wet!

When the units were dry, I used methylated spirits on clean rags to clean the areas again. This is a great neutraliser prior to painting. All areas were then sanded to form a key for the undercoat. I used a mechanical sander for the worktops and several coats of clear water-based varnish were later applied. Once a surface has been stained, any amount of hand sanding will never completely eliminate all the old colour. As the units were unpainted, I needed to apply an oil-based undercoat and we used Farrow and Ball's. When dry, this was then lightly sanded to form a key for the next coat. The colour chosen as a base for the units was Farrow and Ball's *New White*. I applied two coats, sanding lightly in between.

The dry *New White* was then lightly aged or broken up with a colour I made up with artists raw umber, linseed oil glaze and white spirit. This was then dry brushed over the surface with just a small amount being applied. With a addition of new handles, and fabrics lining the cupboards, the room was transformed.

## The Finishing Touches

An MDF chimney-breast was added to frame the royal blue Rayburn and finished with tiles from Fired Earth. A cupboard was hung with Victorian stained glass from Wells Reclamation; this is cunningly lit from within, further maximising the feeling of light. The walls are painted with Farrow and Ball *Parma Grey*, and Melanie used French antique linen behind the wire-fronted cupboards and vintage linen sheets to make the blinds. The family were delighted with the outcome and find it difficult to move visitors into the rest of the house!

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Vanessa Webb (paint effects specialist).  
Tel: 07974 761173 or visit [stunningfx@hotmail.com](mailto:stunningfx@hotmail.com)  
Fired Earth. Tel: 01295 814300.  
Farrow & Ball Tel: 01202 876141.  
Wells Reclamation. Tel: 01749 677087.