

Jamie's dream kitchen comes true



by Nicola Hobbs

Sleek, stylish and effortlessly cool are words you might associate with TV's Top Gear. But it's not only cars that can combine the wow factor with ingenious gadgetry and outstanding performance.

It is difficult not to fall in love with Jamie Mitchell's kitchen in Hassocks the moment you walk in. Its glossy black cupboards, sparkling quartz worktops and glorious red splashbacks make it feel as if you're a professional chef. And the floating island, the sleek handleless design with touch sensitive feature cabinets, along with an amazing array of modern gadgets, could tempt even the most reluctant of cooks to try it out.

"I always wanted a kitchen like those you see in magazines. Now I have one that is stunning but still

contemporary design 'Sarah's anniversary kitchen', praising her for her creative talents. "You can train someone in kitchen design but you can't train a good eye or original ideas," Paul says.

Paul set up The Kitchen People seven years ago, and the design studio on Lindfield High Street has been proudly displaying kitchens for the past four years. From the sleek, glossy finish of Jamie's kitchen and clean contemporary styles, to traditional, wooden, hand finished designs and country classics, Paul wants to show that a kitchen can be as individual as

Sarah makes the process of choosing a kitchen pleasurable and exciting. "The journey has been thoroughly enjoyable thanks to Sarah's marvellous drawings and Paul's technical skills," Jamie agrees.

The journey starts with a survey of the clients' existing space or use of architect plans to produce a photograph-like design of the proposed kitchen.

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practical – the perfect place to party and for the family to enjoy," says Jamie as he stands proudly in his new kitchen, designed by The Kitchen People.

Jamie's contemporary, functional kitchen is the result of his own ideas coupled with the expertise and imagination of the team at The Kitchen People. Sarah Lee, who is celebrating her first year at the company, was the primary designer for Jamie's kitchen. "The prospect of designing an ultra-modern kitchen was very exciting and it really gave me the chance to take my design skills to the extreme," says Sarah. "I don't know who was more excited, the client or me!"

Paul Edwards, owner of The Kitchen People, has named this

the people who cook in it. "Kitchens are very personal spaces and we aim to bring people's dreams to reality," Paul says. "We provide a very personal service where our designers are involved from the moment a client enters our showroom to completion of the project."

Kitchens are the heart of the home. They are a place for creativity and are the hub of family life, so the thought of commissioning and creating a bespoke kitchen can be a daunting experience. How much worktop space will I need? Lots of kitchen storage or a separate larder? Should my utensils be on display or in cupboards? Floating island or breakfast bar? What style – traditional or modern? The personal service and experience of Paul and

Computer Aided Design allows Sarah and Paul to produce a 3D impression of the final product, giving the client the opportunity to play around with colours and styles to see what would suit the room best. "We were doubling the size of our kitchen with an extension so we wanted a way to bring the old and new rooms together. As soon as we saw the marvellous graphics and drawings we knew that this was what we were looking for," says Jamie.

Once the design stage is complete Sarah, Paul and a specialist local kitchen fitter (Keith Lewry in the case of Jamie's kitchen) visit the property to ensure it is achievable. "It is critical

Main picture: Kitchen designed, supplied and installed by The Kitchen People. Right: Kitchen designer Sarah Lee, with 'happy client' Jamie Mitchell of Hassocks.



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that designer and fitter work closely together – something often missing in larger design firms," says Paul. "Jamie wanted straight lines but the wall to the kitchen was at a funny angle so it was crucial we were all on site to overcome these technical obstacles."

Paul is clear that he only works with excellent manufacturers and trusted tradesmen. The Kitchen People have developed good relationships with kitchen creators including Mereway, Schroder, Omega and Second Nature – all names recognised in the

industry for their high quality. "We work with four key manufacturers and only local tradesmen who I know and trust. Having a good relationship with our suppliers means that we can step outside the box in our designs and create amazing kitchens with personalised products," says Paul.

And even after survey, design and pricing, Paul and Sarah remain involved in the project. "We are on site nearly every day to ensure the project is running smoothly and we don't ask for our final payment until the whole

job is complete to make sure the client is happy," adds Sarah.

Jamie is confirmation of Paul and Sarah's 'happy client' philosophy. "The kitchen has set the standard for the rest of the house," says Jamie. "What can I say? It has exceeded all my expectations!" ■

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