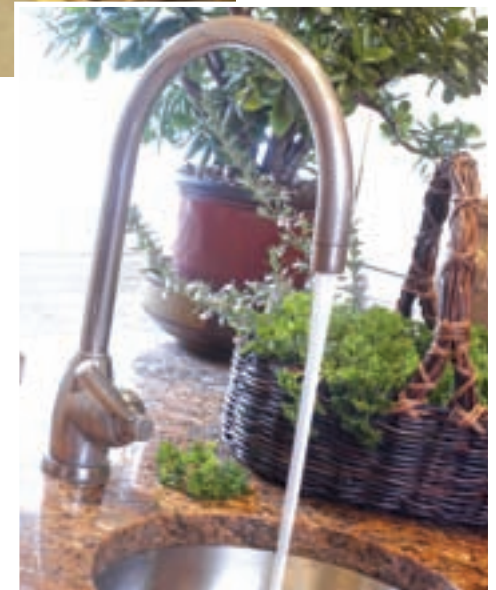




Left Farrow and Ball's eggshell paint in Dutch Pink complements the brown flecking in the granite worktops.

Below The swan neck pewter taps emphasise the curves of the half bowl rinsing sink with built-in waste disposal unit which adjoins the built-in dishwasher.

Main Gothic arch glass eye level cupboard doors and dentil mouldings along the top of the units were found in the original Victorian conservatory.



If music be the food of love...

Julie Anne's bespoke kitchen was designed with practicality in mind, making entertaining her guests an absolute pleasure.

Feature Simon Trump Photography Robin Price

It called for a clever blend of history and tradition with practicality and flexibility to meet the demands of catering for anything from a hand full of cream teas in the conservatory after the village fete, to a grand dinner in the entrance hall for the cream of European string quartets. "I absolutely adore cooking no matter how big or small the meal which I am preparing," says Julie Anne whose dulcet tones, shaped by her roots in Oregon in the Pacific North West of the United States, have softened with 27 years of English living.

The Manor was the dream home for her husband Stanley, a distinguished

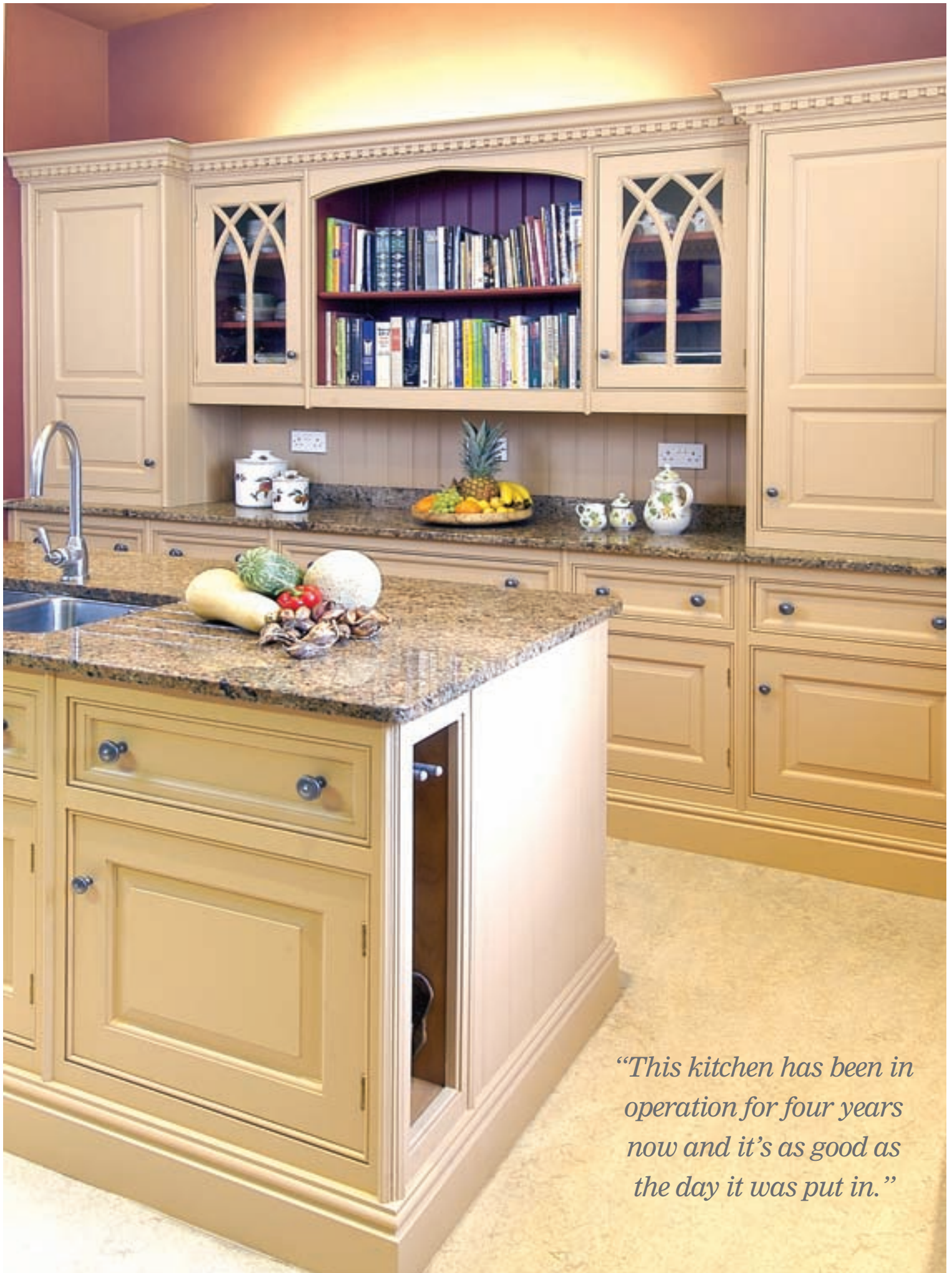
lexicographer and musical historian. It is set in the heart of the village of Cossington perched on top of the Polden Hills which skirt the ancient Somerset Levels. Emerging through the chill mist as the first shafts of golden early morning sunlight dapple the tree-lined approach, nature itself seems to be composing its own accompaniment to this most musical of marriages.

Next year, The Manor will host a Mozart festival to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the composer's birthday. Again, the event will keep Julie Anne busy in her kitchen, although she will have help from members of the concert trust she and

Stanley have founded in the village.

"Stanley always wanted his rural idyll. I was from a rustic background and knew some of the possible downsides in terms of the isolation and relative lack of facilities, but I knew this place was right the moment we turned in through the stone pillars either side of the entrance gateway," she says.

Within two months of their viewing in August 2000 the couple were moving in and practically the first visitor was kitchen designer Richard Benton, one of two brothers who run the eponymously titled traditional interiors firm based in Highbridge, Somerset, barely six miles



“This kitchen has been in operation for four years now and it’s as good as the day it was put in.”



Left One of the four workstations in the kitchen is at the end of the island adjoining a double sink, within arm's reach of the impressive Smeg ceramic hob range cooker.

Below Shadows created by the meticulous raised and fielded edges to the unit and cupboard doors are highlighted by the soft light falling through the sash window.

away as the crow flies.

"I was determined we would use local craftsmen and local materials to put something back into the rural economy. Without it these communities struggle for survival. Benton provided workmen of a quality we couldn't have hoped to have found having just moved into a new community. This kitchen has been in operation for four years now and it's as good as the day it was put in. I can't speak highly enough of Benton," says Julie Anne.

The design has since become known as the Lydford and takes its name from Lydford Hall, in nearby Butleigh, where the first one was installed. Julie Anne was the second customer swayed by its raised and fielded edges on its door panels which are planed on the angle to a point, tall skirtings and ovolo beading on the edges of the door frame.

"Another distinctive feature is the dentil moulding on the tops of the wall units and cupboards. It is a period Victorian woodcarving and we noticed it in the original conservatory at Cossington. The frames in the glass doors are Gothic arches which have an ecclesiastical feel to them. With a church next door it seemed rather appropriate," says Richard Benton.

Julie Anne had one idea which the designer thought a bit unusual. "Julie Anne was adamant the dishwasher should be on the end of the island opposite a small sink with a built in waste disposal. I wasn't so sure but now I realise it works perfectly for her," adds Richard.

"It was so the kitchen could flow in a circular fashion," explained Julie Anne. Food, prepared using ingredients from their own kitchen garden, is served from the south door to the hall, conservatory or terrace while leftovers and dirty dishes return via the east. There they are stacked before rinsing, being transferred to the dishwasher merely by turning on your heel and emptied again into the crockery cupboards and cutlery draws behind and above.

Julie Anne says: "It was a kitchen which had to function. It was not just a twee design statement because that was what you should expect to find as a matter of





course in an English country home. There was no need for an Aga because there is no gas in the village, but this house is lovely and warm in the winter yet stays cool in summer.”

As well as the clearing up area it provides three further workstations or places where friends can stand and chat. One is at the side of the central island, another at its end and the last at the cooker itself.

“Everything is in tight little triangles. For example, when I’m cooking the fridge is to my right, I have my spices and other ingredients within arm’s reach and just below is a cupboard for my pans or I can step across to the specially designed rack where I hang my coppers.”

All the appliances are in stainless steel from the electric Smeg ceramic range to the large overhead canopy which is ducted outside, through to the matching single oven and Whirlpool fridge freezer with built in ice maker and

chilled water dispenser.

The walls are painted in a combination of Dulux Buff and Farrow and Ball’s Picture Gallery Red which is used extensively in the entrance hall and has a lovely warm, cosy feel to it. All the units and cupboards are Dutch Pink, again Farrow and Ball, which picks out the warmth of the lighter, almost sandstone flecking that contrasts with the darker tones in the South African granite worktops.

On the floor appear to be limestone tiles which are in fact linoleum. Julie Anne says: “People recoil in horror when you tell them, but if you’ve been on your feet all day it doesn’t make your feet and shins ache. It’s easier to clean and is more forgiving when you drop a heavy iron pan – I told you I was practical!” PH

Address book

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www.bentonfurniture.com

Above The built-in cupboard at the far end of the kitchen was a unique feature which kitchen designer Richard Benton used to hide the uneven and irregular triangular space behind.

Below Linoelium tile flooring was chosen because it is so easy to clean and could easily be mistaken for genuine limestone slabs.

