

LAST WORD

Putting the kitsch in kitchen

There's a worktop for everyone, discovers Caitlin Moran. But it may be named after baby Beckham...

ILLUSTRATION HANNAH GEORGE

I FOUND A WORKMAN! As detailed in last month's column, despite 800,000 Poles coming to the UK, and supposedly building whole houses for £52, neither I nor any of my friends have been able to find a decent carpenter, electrician or plumber for love nor money. They're so in demand, they don't even bother returning answer phone messages.

Anyway, that period of mourning is over now. I found a man willing to build me a new kitchen from scratch – a man called Rowen, who built a friend's beautiful kitchen, and says thrilling things like, 'I've got a great reclaimed timber source – let me bring you over some samples,' and 'Have you considered up-lighters in your floor?' Men, for the first time in my life, aren't a problem any more. Do you know what is the problem? Worktops.

Now in my jejeune innocence, I thought cupboards might be the problem. I have complex recycling urges and a great many cast-iron pots – I thought that accommodating all of this within some manner of cupboard system would be vexatious, and possibly harrowing. But not a bit of it! The world of cupboards is a flexible and forgiving one.

Worktops, on the other hand, are a matter of considerable stress and bewilderment. Obviously no one in their right mind would have wooden, stainless steel or laminated worktops – you have to clean them every day! Clearly, far too high maintenance for a slattern such as myself. So, some manner of hard-wearing, new-fangled composite it must be – all of which seem to have the names of footballers' babies: Corian, Quarella, Minerelle, Zodiaq.

But have you ever tried to buy a composite worktop? You might just as well try to join the Masons with a few casual phone calls in your lunch break. There appears to be only one place in Britain you can get samples of the stuff from – and, even then, they never seem to have the colour you want. Or, indeed, any colour you want. We were rather hoping for a rich, bluey-red, possibly glittery one that walked the fine line between 'jolly' and 'slattern'. However, despite composites theoretically coming in any colour, they all seem to be in a range that spans from liverish brown to John Major grey. Have you ever seen the cover of the DVD for *Platoon*, where an American

GI – aghast at the horrors of Vietnam – has fallen to his knees, and is screaming out to a Godless sky? I was like that, but in Magnet. I have never felt such despair.

Anyway, thank God for the internet. At 2am one

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weeping morning, I came across a feature on *The Independent* website, about ecologically sensitive kitchens. And there was the worktop of my fantasies – made of 80% recycled glass, and as tough as any composite. Obviously it has the kind of name Victoria Beckham might invent – Resilica – but the killer factor is: you can make it any colour. Indeed, you can make it any colours you want – red with blue flecks, or even inlaid with lights. The 'recipe', as Eight Inch who make it would say, is all up to you. Soon I will have a kitchen that looks like Dorothy's shoes and there really will be no place like my home.

Caitlin Moran has been a columnist on The Times since she was 17 and would probably have retired by now had she not taken on a five-bedroom Victorian house in London.



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