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# Good Food

## 101 winter recipes

Home cooking you'll love

**Everyday**  
Hearty one-pots  
Quick suppers

**Seasonal dishes**

- Sausages
- Bonfire treats
- Warming soups & sides



Spiced toffee apple cake

**Make-ahead Christmas gifts**

CAKES  
BAKES  
COOKIES

**Relaxed weekend entertaining**  
Easy freeze-ahead menu • Family lunch • Veggie curry

Smart starter – so easy to make

Brownie fudge pie – irresistible!

Your Friday night supper



## MY KITCHEN

Sebastian loves the moveable island, which is used as a buffet station for parties. He likes changing its position from time to time

# Sebastian Conran

Designer and keen cook Sebastian Conran took full responsibility for the design of his well-organised family kitchen. He gives **Vanessa Berridge** a tour  
Photographs GEOFF WILKINSON

Sebastian Conran is son of Sir Terence Conran and Shirley Conran, and the elder brother of fashion designer Jasper Conran.

After studying industrial design at Central St Martin's College in London, he designed for the punk group The Clash, then headed product design at Mothercare, before establishing his own design studio, Sebastian Conran Associates.

He helped to create Nigella's Kitchen range and has also designed his own range of

cookware and dinnerware for John Lewis.

An enthusiastic cook and gardener, Sebastian has two sons, Sam, 22, and Max, 16, and lives with his second wife, Gertrude, in west London.

### How important is the kitchen to you?

I grew up with my stepmother, Caroline, writing cookbooks, so food has always been a part of my life. I take other people's recipes and evolve them – I like being inventive and make dishes using what I have in the house.

### Why a new kitchen?

The moment we walked through the door seven years ago, I knew what I wanted to do with the kitchen, but it was five years before we took the plunge. I spent a lot of time on the planning in

advance, and it was done fairly incrementally. We have kept the existing cooker and fridge, as I can't bring myself to throw away perfectly good equipment.

### How did you plan it?

I did all the drawings myself and worked with the builders on them. The shape is more or less the same, but I've changed the proportions of the doorways, removed chimney breasts and installed lots of beams and steelwork – for which we needed an engineer. I also replaced the curved window in the dining room with a sliding door, which opens onto the garden.

### How does the kitchen work for you?

I designed the kitchen to work ergonomically, with the dishwasher near the sink and

opposite the cutlery drawer, so it's easy to load and unload. I also have all my bins (including compost and recycling) in a pull-out section close by.

The granite work surfaces were already here, so I kept the granite for the central island and for hot pans near the cooker, and put in wood surfaces elsewhere. I like wood – too much stainless steel in a kitchen can make it look very industrial.

### What were your other considerations?

I don't like fake fronts – kitchens where everything is tidied away are terribly sterile. I want to have all my pots and pans and everyday stuff out on shelves, so I don't have to keep opening cupboards, which can be claustrophobic at eye-height. The cooker hood was reinforced and

GET THE LOOK

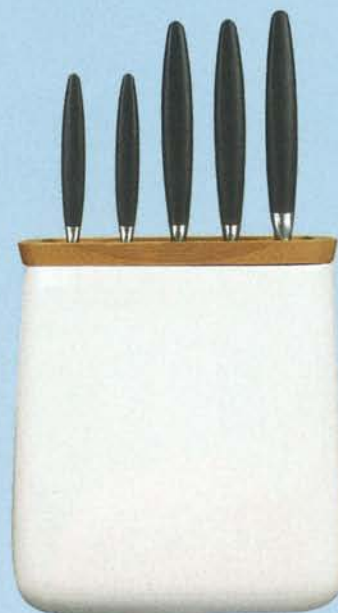


Give your kitchen a sleek, professional look with stainless steel kitchenware like Sebastian's. This smart fish kettle from Lakeland costs £22.59. Stores nationwide, 01539 488100, [lakeland.co.uk](http://lakeland.co.uk)

Milton stainless-steel bar handles are useful for keeping utensils and tea towels to hand, and come in four sizes. From £6.10, online at Furnitec. 0844 414 6082; [handle-emporium.co.uk](http://handle-emporium.co.uk)



Sebastian has designed a range for John Lewis, including the Sebastian Conran Knife Block, £128. Its ceramic base has a well for disinfectant to prevent bacteria build-up on the knives. 0845 604 9049, [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)



Sebastian prefers using tongs when serving food. These Joseph Joseph Elevate Tongs from Heal's cost £12.50. 0870 024 0780, [heals.co.uk](http://heals.co.uk)



This salad bowl was designed by Sebastian's sister, Sophie, for The Conran Shop and costs £32. 0844 848 4000, [conranshop.co.uk](http://conranshop.co.uk)



A spray nozzle on a tap makes cleaning the sink much easier. Franke Swing Spray in chrome, £257.33. 0161 436 6280, [frankeonline.co.uk](http://frankeonline.co.uk)



As the kitchen is in the centre of the house, Sebastian installed a window opening through to the dining room to give more light



LEFT Cloths and kitchen utensils can be hung on the long drawer handles  
RIGHT The self-shutting, two-way restaurant door to the kitchen leads to Sebastian's well-stocked and accessible larder cupboard



its shelf is carried on in the line of metal shelves. The 10cm-deep wooden shelves don't take light away, but declutter other surfaces.

How did you choose the other details?

There was a very uneven stone floor, which took a lot of commitment to remove. The oak flooring is in lovely 26cm-wide panels. The builder was horrified by the knots in the wood, but I think plain wood looks boring.

The splashbacks are glass, back-painted with white oil-based paint, and the translucent quality of the glass picks up the light. I have downlights over the work surface and an economic fluorescent light over the island. If we're eating next door, I'll turn everything off except for the LED lighting under the shelves.

Any regrets?

I regret not going for dimmable lights – it was a false economy. But otherwise, I like the fact that I can chat to people when cooking while still being alone in the kitchen.

SEBASTIAN'S TIPS

- Have big, wide drawers and shelves rather than cupboards.
- If space is at a premium, only keep the things you use every day in the kitchen.
- Install as big a sink as possible – if you entertain regularly, you'll need it for the largest pans.
- A moveable kitchen island is surprisingly useful, especially with power installed. Having two ovens is a bit of a luxury, but at Christmas, friends came to use the bigger one for their turkeys.