

Pieces of me Clodagh McKenna Chef, restaurateur

My chilled-out room is the perfect pantry

The cookbook author and broadcaster lives in an old coach house with a country feel. Its centrepiece is a kitchen with a walk-in pantry

Orna Mulcahy

Clodagh McKenna is a chef, restaurateur, cookbook author and broadcaster who runs Clodagh's Kitchen at Arnotts in Dublin and recently did a pop-up at London's Cheyne Walk Brasserie to coincide with the Chelsea Flower Show. She recently launched a YouTube series called *Clodagh's Summer Suppers*. She lives in London.

Describe your style

It's a mix of country and contemporary. The house that I live in in London is an old coach house and it has a country feel to it, with lovely old brick walls and wooden floors and all its original windows and doors.

Which is your favourite room?

Definitely the kitchen. I spend a minimum of one day a week developing recipes here, and then it's a place where I cook for friends and family too. I converted a room next to it, that had been a bedroom, into a walk-in pantry so the whole floor is really given over to kitchen and storage.

I have a big long French farmhouse table – that was my big investment – and I love to sit at it and just hang around it. In the pantry I have all different shelving – modern steel and wood. I store spices, chocolate, big jars full of my preserves, flours, anything that goes in big kilner jars. I have veg in big baskets. It's a chilled room, quite dark with no heat in there so it's the perfect pantry.

What are your favourite items?

I have these really big Irish wicker baskets that sit beside the fireplace and are full of wood, kindling and the turf that I smuggle back. I keep dried herbs in them too and put them on the fire.

I have some second-hand orange bistro chairs, they're cast iron and they look really nice around the old table.

Who are your favourite designers and do you have any of their work?

I genuinely don't go for designer looks. I always go to secondhand stores. I have never bought a designer piece of furniture.

When it comes to cookware I love the designs from Crane Cookware. They make the most beautiful cast iron things that are designed to distribute the heat really well.

I do a lot of one-pot cooking and they are perfect.

What would you save from a fire?

Photographs because I have them everywhere. Old cookery books that I collect. My notebooks, because I use one every day. I keep my ideas for menus in there and when I have people over I always write a little note about who came and what we had to eat. I hang them on a string.

Do you have a favourite gadget?

My K Mixer. I use it for everything. And my microplane, which I love. I bring it with me everywhere. Then I have a meat mincer which is clamped to a surface which I use all the time.

You can make a really good bolognese sauce with the minced meat and I make sausages from it too.

I love my pans – the cast iron and the copper ones; my paella pan and my preserving jars which I get in America. And lovely bell jars. And tea towels. I love the French linen ones and I use them a lot when I am photographing for my Instagram account. I iron them. Am I really admitting that? I am.

Maybe outside the kitchen, my Sonos speakers.

And now that I think of it my number one gadget is my Dyson hand held. This is an old house and there are a lot of leaves blowing in from the outside, and cobwebs. It zooms the stuff up.

Which artist do you admire?

An artist I am loving at the moment is Suzy Murphy. She works a lot in charcoal and her work is incredible. Her name sounds Irish but she is a Londoner. She reminds me of Edward Hopper with the feel that she creates. Her work is dark. I don't have any of her work, but I will definitely get something of hers when I get some money together.

Your biggest interiors turn-off?

Sheepskin rugs. I don't like the feel of them. And I don't like too much floral. Mirrored coffee tables – the list goes on. And I don't like clutter.

I like things in their place.

What's your favourite travel destination?

The Amalfi Coast although it has been about 10 years since I have been there, but if I could choose anywhere to go, it would be there. The scenery is massive; the



water is gorgeous to swim in; the food is wonderful – the lemons, the mozzarella cheese, the pasta; it really has it all.

What does home mean to you?

It's a place for rest, inspiration and to share. I like to have people over all the time. It is easy for me to be relaxed, I don't have that stress thing.

If you had €100,000, what would you spend it on?

Art. Those drawings of Suzy Murphy. Hughie O'Donoghue would be another artist I would invest in.

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■ Clockwise from main: Clodagh McKenna at home in London; she converted a bedroom into a pantry, which provides perfect chilled storage; her French farmhouse table adds to the country feel; a minimum of one day a week is spent developing recipes in the kitchen.

PHOTOGRAPHS: DORA KAZMIERAK AND CLAIRE MENARY

Home Front: design, interiors, events

Arminta Wallace

A crafts trail at Brown Thomas, home discounts at Arnotts and a Big House visit



■ The Nordic look of the Content by Conran collection at Arnotts; a Ciaran Cooper Stool at Brown Thomas

New looks, discounted

Arnotts are going all "Grand Designs" this summer with new homeware collections as well as new collections from existing brands.

Give your indoor or outdoor dining spaces the sleek Nordic look with Adelaide chairs from BoConcept (€259) or Content by Conran's collection of tables and sofas.

The Conran Fera collection of occasional tables is especially attractive, with the round table duo on sale at €389, the console table with shelf at €659 and the nest of square tables at €469.

In the kitchenware department, the Mini Moderns range brings colour and pattern to fabrics and accessories, while Rig Tig, from Denmark, marries smart design with sustainable manufacturing practice.

And for a comfy night's sleep check out the crisp bed linen from Swedish company Grand Designs. arnotts.ie

Get crafty at BT

If you fancy a crafts voyage around Ireland you could begin at Brown Thomas on Dublin's Grafton Street, where a pop-up shop features the work of 13 Irish designers and makers.

In collaboration with Design Ireland, the dedicated space on level three will be open this Tuesday until August 19th, a showcase for work from all over the country.

John Ryan's decorative stoneware takes its inspiration from the Wild Atlantic Way. From the banks of the Moy in Co Mayo come warmly-coloured blankets and throws by Foxford Woollen Mills. The spectacular landscape of the Burren is mirrored in The Burren Perfumery's handmade organic cosmetics. Animals and birds of the countryside animate the glass paintings of Roscommon's Black Hen Designs; and Field Apothecary's candles celebrate scents of rain, peat, lichen and ivy.

Our traditional crafts skills are central to the handcrafted furniture by Ciaran Cooper from Monaghan, whose great-grandfather actually was a cooper, and Rathgar-based metalsmith Siobhan Sacker, whose Gilded Hound range of handmade solid copper and brass pieces utilise materials from small Irish producers.

Craft traditions from further afield feature in the framed porcelain landscapes of Stephen Farnan, from Belfast as well as the Eastern-influenced scribble pots and stacking vessels of Adam Frew from Portstewart, Co Derry.

Farnan and Frew will be in Brown Thomas next Saturday from 2pm to 4pm, along with Andrew and Vida Pain of Black Hen Designs. This kicks off a series of "Meet the Maker" events and live demonstrations; the following weekend, it's the turn of Gilded Hound, Caulfield Country Boards, me&him&you and The Burren Perfumery – which will continue until the weekend of August 5th and 6th. brownthomas.com

A day out at Lisnavanagh

Total relaxation is always the order of the day at Lisnavanagh House near Hackettstown, Co Carlow, and next Saturday's Garden Open Day (July 8th) offers visitors a chance for some serious chillout.

There'll be walk-in meditation sessions and tours of the historic house, where the Bunbury family has lived since 1702.

Bring a picnic and relax on the lawns, or explore the 14 acres of Victorian gardens. There will be cookery demos from Joanne Hepburn, the Ballymaloe-trained chef and founder of confectioners Hepburn & Co, as well as the chance to try out her yummy marshmallows in such flavours as Sicilian Lemon and Poppy Seed, or Black Cherry with Toasted Almonds.

Entry is free of charge but booking is essential for cookery classes. lisnavagh.com



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