

L'Autre Pied opened in November as the sister restaurant to London's two-Michelin-starred Pied à Terre with head chef Marcus Eaves at the helm. Designers Contract Catering Equipment had to make creative use of some awkward space in the new basement kitchen, as *Diane Lane* reports

# My new kitchen



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIAN FRANKLIN

When Shane Osborn and David Moore found the perfect site for their second London restaurant, in Blandford Street, not too far from their two-Michelin-starred Charlotte Street restaurant, Pied à Terre, the original plan to open a brasserie operation changed direction and they decided to install Marcus Eaves in the kitchen to run his own operation.

The site – formerly that of Stephen Bull's iconic 1990s restaurant – together with the talent of Osborn's former sous chef at Pied à Terre demanded nothing less than a fine-dining restaurant, and so L'Autre Pied was born.

With the deal for the site sealed in September 2007 and an opening in early November planned, there were just six weeks to gut the kitchen and revamp the 51-seat dining room, where customers would be offered a casual fine-dining experience of modern European cuisine.

"We're doing the best food we can cook, served in a relaxed, informal atmosphere," says Eaves of the restaurant's offering, currently averaging 80 covers a day. "There are some interesting combinations, but the foundations are simple."

The young brigade numbers seven in total and includes

**Marcus Eaves, who worked as sous chef under Shane Osborn at Pied à Terre, is head chef at L'Autre Pied**

Eaves's brother Jason in the role of sous chef. It's the first time they've worked together, apart from a brief period at Simpson's in Kenilworth.

Tasked with designing and fitting out the basement kitchen – which Osborn estimates is 40% bigger than the one at Charlotte Street – in the short turnaround time was Contract Catering Equipment, which brought some clever ideas to the table to make the most of a rather awkward space.

The starting point was the cooking suite, the position of which was dictated by an existing extraction canopy. ▶



**1** The Bonnet Optimum 900 modular suite is made up of two four-burner ranges and two solid-top ranges with ovens underneath, arranged alternately to provide a section for meat and fish and another for garnish. The 8.8kW and 5.5kW burners feature electronic ignition, and welded tops mean there are no seams to trap debris. A cold-water flush that runs into the drains helps to keep the temperature down and the stovetops clean.

**2** Three Adande VariCool refrigerated cabinets were chosen to provide several functions in one unit. Each cabinet has two drawers with variable temperature controls, which means they can be used for refrigeration, freezer space and for blast chilling, whichever function is required.

**3** The coldroom is sited in one of four vaulted cellars to the rear of the kitchen. Rather than erect a standard square room and lose valuable space, a bespoke shape has been created by cladding the curved ceiling in insulated slats. A sliding door provides another element of space-saving.

**4** A dedicated fish-prep station has been set up around the corner from the cooking suite complete with its own sink and Adande VariCool unit. Having it in a cooler part of the kitchen means a more favourable environment for the produce.

**5** Instead of a gantry with cupboard under at the end of the cooking suite, Contract Catering Equipment suggested an L-shaped pass to make the most of the space to the front right of the kitchen, which houses the larder area.



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◀ Having a bespoke Bonnet Maestro Classic suite at Pied à Terre, the decision was made to go with Bonnet again, but this time a modular suite suited the budget better. The cooking line is made up of a mixture of solid-top and open burner ranges from the Bonnet Optimum 900 series to give room for plenty of pans and provide rapid heat when needed.

Flexible refrigeration which maximises storage capacity is in the form of three Adande VariCool units – one in larder, one in fish prep and one in pastry – each with two variable temperature drawers to provide a fridge, freezer and blast chiller in one. “The blast chilling facility means we can make ice-cream at 7am and it’s ready for lunch service,” says Eaves.

Williams refrigerated cabinets provide additional refrigeration in the meat and garnish prep areas. A designated fish-prep station sits in an area previously occupied by a veg sink in the old kitchen and provides an ideal facility for filleting whole fish. The nearby wash-up area is furnished with a Meiko machine.

The walk-in coldroom, cleverly built into one of four vaulted cellars off a narrow corridor to the rear of the kitchen, houses the chilled deliveries and provides enough space to hang meat, such as a whole Pyrenean lamb Eaves bought in. The other three cellars act as wine storage and chef’s office.

An L-shaped pass has been



**Above: Chefs can prep all the ingredients for cold starters in the larder area**

**Left: TopPrep induction hobs in the pastry area; and (below) the water bath from Clifton Food Range**

**Bottom: The Bonnet suite has a mix of solid-top and open burners**

positioned to make use of dead space at the front of the kitchen and provides the larder section with its own pass for cold starters, which means that Eaves can see everything as it leaves the kitchen. “It makes a huge difference everything coming from the same point,” he says.

Eaves is also keen to sing the praises of a six-grid Rational SelfCooking Center sited in the pastry area but used by the whole kitchen. “It’s brilliant,” he says, “although I’ve not had time to experiment with it yet.” One of its uses is to confit pork belly overnight at 90°C to accompany pan-fried sea bass.

Induction hobs by TopPrep provide localised cooking facilities in the pastry and larder sections, enabling the larder chef to cook all his own

ingredients for the cold starters – such as the leeks for a terrine – without having to leave section.

A Clifton Food Range water bath gets lots of use for items, such as eggs cooked in their shells for 1½ hours at 63°C for a dish of soft-poached hen’s egg with a salad of Ratte potatoes and celery emulsion; and mackerel wrapped up with tarragon and parsley in clingfilm and cooked for 8-14 minutes at 68°C for the ballotine of mackerel with avocado purée and confit lemon. Eaves was introduced to water-bath cooking during his time as sous chef under Claude Bosi at Hibiscus in Ludlow, and says: “It’s an even heat all the way through the bath and enables us to do better food with fewer staff.”

In total, about £100,000 – 70% of the budget – was spent on the kitchen. The floors and walls have yet to be updated, as having them done at the time of the refurbishment would have delayed the opening until too close to Christmas, but they are the next things on the agenda.

