

# My sanctuary

## Lennox Cato

When the *Antiques Roadshow* specialist and furniture dealer has any downtime he heads to his kitchen in Edenbridge, Kent, to cook, unwind and chew the fat

FEATURE CAROLINE WHEATER PHOTOGRAPHS ALUN CALLENDER

**This is the first new-build house my wife Sue and I have lived in.** Our previous home was Georgian, and we loved it. We had the Aga and the big kitchen to make visiting dealers and friends feel welcome. We bought this house off-plan six years ago when we moved our antiques business to Edenbridge. **I like Colonial style, so we chose walnut wood for the kitchen floor and Venetian blinds, and maple for the units.** The dark walnut looks lovely against the cream paintwork and the traditional-style sash windows. To make more space we had the wall between the kitchen and the dining area knocked through and added on a conservatory to flop in. **Sue and I have been married for 22 years and the kitchen has always been the hub of our home.** We share the cooking, and when it's my turn I see what's in the fridge and rustle something up. I never follow a recipe, but my favourite ingredients are lemons, garlic and olive oil. Our children, Pia and Milton, both cook too. They are away at university now but when they were smaller we always had supper

in the kitchen. The family that eats together stays together. **This kitchen has seen lots of happy times.** We had Pia's 21st birthday party here and the celebrations for Sue's 'big birthday', as she likes to call it, last October. We're usually too busy to entertain in the evenings, so we'll have friends and family over for lunch instead. **Several favourite antique pieces live in the kitchen.** The camphor wood chest (opposite) has been with us since we first set up home in Brighton. It cost £45 then and is worth around £1,500 today. It's a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese packing case made to export silks in – the smell of the camphor wood would keep the insects and moths at bay. Ours is of the best quality: the brass handles are screwed down rather than nailed. It's been a coffee table and a children's toy box, and has been used and loved. **I'm not into glitzy stuff, I like the plain and simple look.** I love the station clock on the wall, which has also been in every kitchen we've had. The design is very restrained, and with an eight-inch dial it's also very collectable.

**I don't get too attached to things that come into the shop, but occasionally something moves in with us.** An Edwardian teak drinks trolley was a case in point. Sue bought it home one Christmas and it never left. I like it because it's made from salvaged ship's timbers; pieces like this were made when many of the big ships were broken up in Liverpool in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some even have labels on them saying which ship they're from. **My favourite piece of furniture has to be the glass dining table with walnut base.** It's a Zanotta reproduction of a gorgeous 1949 design called 'Reale' by Carlo Mollino. The original made \$3.8 million at auction in 2005! It seats six comfortably, but for the times when we have a big family gathering I made a special top for it that seats up to 16 people. We'll sometimes play table tennis on it, too.

\* Visit Lennox's shops, Lennox Cato Antiques and The Edenbridge Galleries (01732 865988, lennoxcato.com). Lennox will also be at the BADA Antiques & Fine Art Fair, Duke of York Square, Chelsea, London SW3 from 5th-11th March



Lennox has filled his kitchen with items that he holds dear, such as a painting depicting the south coast town of Worthing by Vera Down, an early 20th-century table made from wood from HMS Powerful, a mug decorated by his son Milton when he was nine years old, and a Native American grass basket c1880-90



‘The kitchen has always been the hub of our home’

Lennox enjoys a glass of wine at his treasured dining table, which occasionally doubles up as an impromptu table tennis court