



FORM & FUNCTION

Luxurious finishes and clever storage enable this family kitchen to transform easily into a glamorous space for entertaining

Words: **Jacky Parker** Photography: **Darren Chung**

Previous page (p135): Lighting specialist Nulty created recessed uplighters around the Bulle glass pendant. "We can have a number of variations of lighting in the kitchen, dining and living areas," says homeowner Katie Hill. "So now we can have lighting according to our mood or activity – such as a winter setting or a dinner party setting."

Below: Smoked mirrored glass makes a stylish splashback, while two practical double bins have been installed next to the sink: one for general rubbish and the other one for recycling.



Left: Interior designer Beverley suggested the yellow faux-leather upholstery on the bar stools. "We've used the same fabric for scatter cushions on the two grey sofas," says Katie. "It really lifts the room."

Below left: A pop-up socket is ideally placed at one end of the island to charge laptops and phones.

"T

he kitchen is definitely my space," says Katie Hill. "It's where I spend most of my time, so when we renovated I didn't want to compromise on the practicalities." Katie, a full-time mother and keen cook, shares her home with husband James, a city financier, and their three children, Rosie, 12, Isabelle, 10, and Sam, eight. The family moved into their six-bedroom Edwardian country house in Hertfordshire recently, having spent 18 months doing it up. "We'd been looking for a new property on and off for a while, but were only going to move if we found the right place," explains Katie. "Often this type of country house is in the middle of nowhere. So we loved this one, as it's within walking distance of the town and the children's schools, even though we knew it was an enormous project to take on."

Despite being tastefully decorated, the interior hadn't been updated for decades. The traditional style suited a more formal era and was in need of a refresh. "It's a period property so we didn't want to do anything too drastic," says Katie, "but we wanted to open it up, to link the kitchen at the front with the sitting room at the back and to add a dining area, so we could have one large, modern space that connects with the garden, where we could be together as a family and entertain friends."

Katie did some research and commissioned interior designer Beverley Barnett, but she was still looking for the right kitchen company. Beverley created a moodboard based on Katie's brief for a sophisticated, sociable living space with dark textures and contrasting colours, and introduced Katie to Eve Turner at Neil Lerner Designs. "I'd looked through magazines and knew I'd like a mix of high-gloss white and dark timber cabinetry, with an island, practical work surfaces and plenty of storage," says Katie. "The other kitchen companies I'd approached had taken my brief and made very similar proposals, but Eve really developed my spec. Where other designers had said I'd have to have less storage than I wanted, Eve came up with clever solutions."

Having made minor mistakes with her previous kitchen, Katie was particular about how she wanted the new one to work, so she and Eve planned the functionality and storage meticulously. "I knew I wanted easy-to-clean surfaces and an induction hob, but it's those little snags that are so annoying, like realising you need four drawers, not the three that have been installed," says Katie. "When we went through how I'd use the kitchen, Eve suggested ideas I'd never have thought of." ▶



Below: The toaster and breakfast crockery is stored on shelves behind an electric shutter, so they can be easily accessed when required or discreetly hidden away when not in use.

Right: A keen cook, Katie had two conventional ovens, a combi-steam oven, a combi-microwave and two warming drawers installed so that cooking for a crowd is stress-free. An extra-wide Gaggenau fridge and a larder unit are situated either side of the ovens.



The layout of the kitchen was dictated by the location of the windows and glass doors, which had been replaced with double-glazed versions of the originals. This meant there wasn't much space for wall units or floor-to-ceiling cupboards. Eve resolved this with a stunning display cabinet in the dining area, which features a glass-backed bar area and discreetly houses a freezer on the left-hand side. It is finished with the same lacquered Terra oak veneer used on the kitchen base units. "I use the freezer to store soups, cooked meals and ice cream for the children. They usually help themselves, so it wasn't necessary for the freezer to be within the working area," says Katie. Eve adds, "The design of the cabinet also subtly connects the kitchen with the dining and living area as it looks like a piece of furniture rather than kitchen cabinetry."

Eve placed the double sink between the two windows, and framed the white wall cabinets above with lacquered Terra oak mounted onto smoked mirrored glass to create a stunning feature and bring balance to the room. On the other wall she situated the ovens, warming drawers and generous fridge within framed tall white cabinets, and within the central island she located the hob, wine cabinet, storage for pans and utensils and additional sockets. She also topped one end of the island with a beautiful granite breakfast bar.

"I was unsure whether or not to have a breakfast bar, but I'm so glad I did," says Katie. "It's great when we have people over, as I can chat with them while I'm cooking and James can pour drinks, but it's also where I sit with the laptop to do all the family admin. I even have an empty drawer in the island, so if six children turn up after school or friends drop in for coffee, I can put my things away and have space to seat them all."

KBB

Q&A

Kitchen designer Eve Turner says...



Which elements took up the majority of the budget?

The appliances and the lacquering process to obtain the gloss veneer cabinetry took up most of the budget.

What was the biggest challenge with the project?

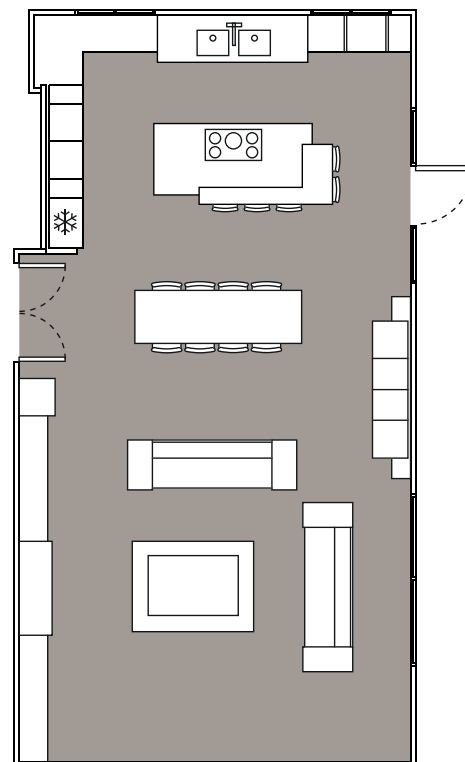
There weren't many walls for full-height cupboards so I had to plan carefully to make sure there was enough storage.

Any tips for people embarking on a similar project?

Make a wishlist of everything you require; think about how you and your family would like to use the space. Research the appliances and go to showrooms where you can see them working so that you make the right choices.

Below: Katie wanted to create a striking contrast between light and dark, so the cabinetry is a mix of high-gloss lacquered Terra oak veneer and back-painted glass, with a Caesarstone Bianco Drift quartz worktop and an antique brown granite breakfast bar.





Left: To keep the look clean and linear, the deep drawers have smaller shallow drawers hidden inside.

SourceBook

DESIGN

Kitchen design Eve Turner, Neil Lerner Designs (020 7433 0705 or www.neillerner.com)

Interior design Beverley Barnett Interior Designer (01923 857029 or www.beverleybarnett.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Back-painted white glass and high-gloss lacquered Terra oak wood veneer, Neil Lerner Designs, as before

Splashback Smoked mirrored glass, Neil Lerner Designs, as before

Worktops Bianco Drift quartz, Caesarstone (www.caesarstone.co.uk), Neil Lerner Designs, as before

Breakfast bar Antique brown granite, Neil Lerner Designs, as before

Sinks, tap, and food waste disposal Blanco (www.blanco.co.uk), Neil Lerner Designs, as before

Boiling-water tap Quooker (www.quooker.co.uk), Neil Lerner Designs, as before

Appliances Ovens, induction hob, dishwasher and wine storage unit, Miele (www.miele.co.uk); Extractor, Blanco by Gutmann (www.blanco.co.uk);

Fridge, Gaggenau (www.gaggenau.com/gb); Freezer, Liebherr (www.myliebherr.co.uk), all from Neil Lerner Designs, as before

Wall paint Slipper Satin, Farrow & Ball (01202 876141 or www.farrow-ball.com)

Flooring For similar try Epoque at Ceramiche Refin (+39 0522 990499 or www.refin-ceramic-tiles.com)

Lighting Nulty Lighting (020 7401 3635 or www.nultylighting.co.uk)

Pendant light Bulles by Reflex Angelo at Chaplins (020 8421 1779 or www.chaplins.co.uk)

Barstools Moritz, John Lewis (0345 604 9049 or www.johnlewis.com) with faux-leather yellow upholstery fabric, Studiotex (020 7352 8558 or www.studiotex.co.uk)

Dining table Fontana by Draenert, Chaplins, as before

Dining chairs Puccini, John Lewis, as before

Blind and curtain fabrics Dedar (020 7351 9939 or www.dedar.com)

Glass doors and windows Clement Windows (01428 643 393 or www.clementwindows.co.uk)

COST

Bespoke kitchens from Neil Lerner Designs from £30,000