

# 'I WANTED A LOOK THAT WOULD LAST'

A mix of hardwearing utilitarian materials in Alex Hayes' kitchen create a stylish, relaxed workspace – perfect for busy family life

Feature JANE CRITTENDEN Stylist MARISHA TAYLOR Photographer JAMES FRENCH



#### WHY DID YOU DISLIKE YOUR OLD KITCHEN?

My husband bought this Victorian terrace 22 years ago before I met him, and the kitchen was fairly new then. It was a galley layout – small, cramped and dark – and had become dated. When I moved in four years ago, we were ready to extend and start from scratch.

#### HOW DID YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE SPACE?

My job in the food industry has exposed me to many designers and makers, and I like a lot of different styles, looks and materials. The key was to create a practical working space with a strong design aesthetic combining long-lasting walnut, marble, steel and concrete that would still look good after years of use.

#### WHAT WERE YOUR MUST-HAVE FEATURES?

I knew I wanted a big island with a hob so I could face into the room when I cook. I collect kitchenware and decided to have a cabinet to display all the pieces



#### STYLE STEAL

'The lamps that hang from the ceiling have been ergonomically designed,' says Alex. 'It means that I can angle them in the right position to illuminate whichever task I'm doing – which is so much more useful than the usual spotlights or pendants.'

◀ **Contrasting surfaces** Smooth white marble works well with glossy handmade Mexican wall tiles

▲ **Solid timber** The large wooden island brings a large slab of warmth down the centre of the space, breaking up the expanse of grey tones

in and make them easy to reach and use every day. I had also worked with furniture designer Russell Pinch on a previous project and knew I wanted one of his beautiful sofas – plus I had my eye on a walnut dining table that I'd seen in The Conran Shop.

▶ **WAS THERE A PROJECT BUDGET THAT YOU HAD IN MIND?** We had a budget for the house renovations and split that up per room. Then we portioned off the extension building work, carried out by BTL Property, and that left us £35,000 for the kitchen itself, with a five per cent contingency fund. ▶





**WERE THERE ANY DISASTERS ALONG THE WAY?** The concrete floor had to be poured before we fitted the kitchen and this was delayed and held things up a bit, but otherwise everything went smoothly. The cupboards and island were built off-site in a workshop and arrived in parts that were assembled right here in the kitchen.

**WHAT WAS THE BEST BARGAIN YOU FOUND?** I collect découpage plates made by John Derian and found quite a few of them for a great price on eBay. Rather than hanging a picture above the sofa, I made a decorative feature wall by arranging the plates above it – using crockery as art ties in well with the cookery theme. ➤

◀ **Statement storage** A bank of glass-fronted cupboards is ideal for displaying Alex's collection of kitchenware amassed through work and bought on travels – and make them easily accessible, too

### Fact file...

#### Meet the renovators

Alex Hayes, a food innovation consultant and her husband, Ed, a design agency director, live here with baby son, Arnie

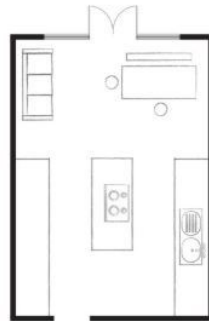
#### Makeover brief

To renovate the whole house with a focus on extending the kitchen at the rear and into the side return, creating an industrial aesthetic with architectural Crittall doors and a concrete floor

#### Project costs

**Cupboards & island** £25,000  
**Worktops & sink** £5,000  
**Appliances** £3,030 **Tap** £450  
**Tiles** £300

**Total spend** £33,780



**Dimensions** W7.5m x L4.9m

➤ **Entertaining options** The walnut table fits in with the material palette and is extendable so the couple can cater for up to 14 guests. A mix of chairs and a bench provides flexible seating arrangements



**DID ANYTHING COST MORE THAN EXPECTED?** The whole project was a shock at first! But once we'd done our research there were no major surprises. I carefully monitored the costs and it helps that our kitchen is sometimes hired for shoots through JJ Locations.

**WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST LESSON?** Patience, perseverance and perspective – the world won't stop if you can't afford the taps you want! Although the snagging went on forever, we got a great finish.

**WERE YOU ABLE TO STICK TO YOUR ORIGINAL BUDGET?** We spent our contingency because we really wanted the dining table and sofa, which are both by British designers and investment pieces. And now we have Arnie, I'm glad I chose a forgiving black sofa fabric!

**HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW IT'S ALL FINISHED?** When friends ask which interior designer we used, we're proud. The combination of materials gives an eclectic feel that's a true reflection of Ed and I. ☺

**Shopping basket** **Cabinetry** For similar stainless-steel cabinets, try the 60cm two-drawer pan set base units, £624 each, MPM Engineering. For similar grey cupboards, try the 69cm full-height double appliance cabinet, £1,775, Neptune **Handles** Pull Bar plates in brass, £38 each; Furniture Knob plates in brass, £50 each, all Buster + Punch **Worktops** For similar, try marble-effect laminate, £120 per 3m, Worktop Express, and stainless-steel worktop with moulded sink, from £270 per m, MPM Engineering **Tap** Abode Stalto professional in stainless steel, £450, Abode **Tiling** Azulejos Coloniales M089 Special Green brick W7xL21cm tiles, £1.12 each, Milagros **Appliances** Five-burner hob, £430, and 445l fridge-freezer, £1,679, both Fisher & Paykel. Fisher & Paykel built-in double oven, £919, AO.com **Flooring** Polished concrete floor, £13,000, Polished Concrete Co **Lighting** Lampe Gras ceiling lights, £346 each, Made in Design **Furniture** Claude large sofa, £2,550, Pinch; covered in Midnight Garden Velvet, £110 per m, House of Hackney. Walnut Together extending table, £4,494; 443 walnut bench, £1,146, both by Ilse Crawford at The Conran Shop. About a Chairs, £120 each, Hay **Paint** Glass cabinet in Lamp Black, £59 per 2.5lts, Little Greene