

I GAVE MY PLAIN KITCHEN personality on a budget

Putting in a breakfast bar and accessorising with high-street buys in pastel colours added character into **Rosie Dickens'** once-dull kitchen



'I had an image in mind of a comfy curved chair with an arched floor lamp where I could sit and read,' Rosie says. 'The neon sign from Neon Beach is fun and expresses my character'



Rosie made her multi-purpose, open-plan room work hard with spaces to relax, cook and enjoy meals. 'I decided against an extra cupboard on the breakfast bar so I could have somewhere to sit and eat,' she says.



About me

I'm Rosie Dickens, 30, and I'm a social analytics director. My one-bedroom flat is in an old converted office block in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. I bought it in March 2018. You can see more of my home on Instagram @the_flat_that_rosie_built.

BEFORE



My problem kitchen

The living area lacked personality with its off-white walls and beige carpet, while the faux wood kitchen wasn't to my taste and had very little storage and worktop space. Over time, my cupboards became cluttered, and I'd be hunched in the corner preparing food because there was nowhere to spread out.

How I made it work

Adding the breakfast bar gave me room to install a dishwasher, an extra cupboard, loads of worktop

space and a place to sit and eat. Changing the door fronts to a green has brought the space to life and was a bargain compared to starting from scratch. I added art and furnishings in the living area to pick out the green-blue tone and tie the whole look together.

My favourite part

The breakfast bar has been a game-changer, and I just love the shade of green I chose for the cupboard doors.

I settled in this area after university and rented a house for a few years until I'd saved up enough to buy my own place. With friends here, I wanted to stay local and it's an easy commute into London for work. When I found this new-build block of flats, I chose the one-bedroom over the studio because I really liked the open-plan kitchen-living space and separate bedroom. The living room décor was inoffensive but bland and in the kitchen, grey-brown faux wood doors and wood-effect laminate flooring just wasn't me!

Starting with the living room, I brought in colour and pattern with soft furnishings, like my mustard yellow pouffe and colourful chairs. Over time, I added more pastel pinks, greens and blues with cushions, art prints and a rug. Before I made big changes to the kitchen last summer, I wrapped the grey fridge-freezer in a floral vinyl and tiled a splashback as there wasn't one. They were both challenging projects – and big accomplishments for me!

Later, I felt like I was outgrowing the small kitchen and considered moving. Then I figured if I kept the worktop and cupboard carcasses but updated the doors and added a breakfast bar it could work. I fell for Lick's Green 04, a green-blue tone that looks great with pink and found a local company who could supply wood doors in any bespoke colour.

I'm really happy with the finished result. In fact, I'm so pleased with it that I've put my plans to move on hold. I really love how the new space has come together.



The dual-purpose ladder shelf desk from the Futon Company takes up very little space and can be easily moved to another spot. 'My first buy was the chair and it encouraged me to go for more pink,' says Rosie



Colourful jars and gold utensils pop against the contrasting industrial-style shelves and reflect the colours in the room

My shopping list

Cambridge solid wood **cupboard doors**, £900, Hot Doors. **Doors** painted in Green 04, £42 per 2.5L, Lick. Idora **cabinet handles**, £10.99 for 5, Wayfair. Duropal Quartz stone **worktop**, £289, Worktop City. Siena **bar stool**, £89 each, Gold Pebble wall **clock**, £40, both Dunelm. Sleek Edison **cluster lights**, £159, Industville. **Wall** painted in Plush Blush, £33 per 2.5L, Lust Home. Rose Matt subway **tiles**, £1.60 per tile, Topps Tiles. Wildflower About You Retro fridge-freezer **vinyl**, £25 per 1m x 60cm, Get Kooky. For a similar shelf, try the Fetal cage industrial **shelf**, £67.95, The Worm that Turned. For a similar sofa, try the Evie two-seater **sofa**, £270, Habitat. For a similar cocktail chair, try the Pettine **chair** in Blush Pink, £149, Bed Kings. Angel Duck Egg Blue **chair**, £249, Sloane & Sons. Oak **ladder desk**, £299, Futon Company. Abstract Moroccan Traveller shaggy **rug**, £169.95, Kukoon Rugs. Linen Stripe & Squiggle **cushions**, £58 each, Lanny x Studio. Blue round velvet **cushion**, £9.99; Mustard cotton knitted **pouffe footstool**, £29.99, both Homescapes.



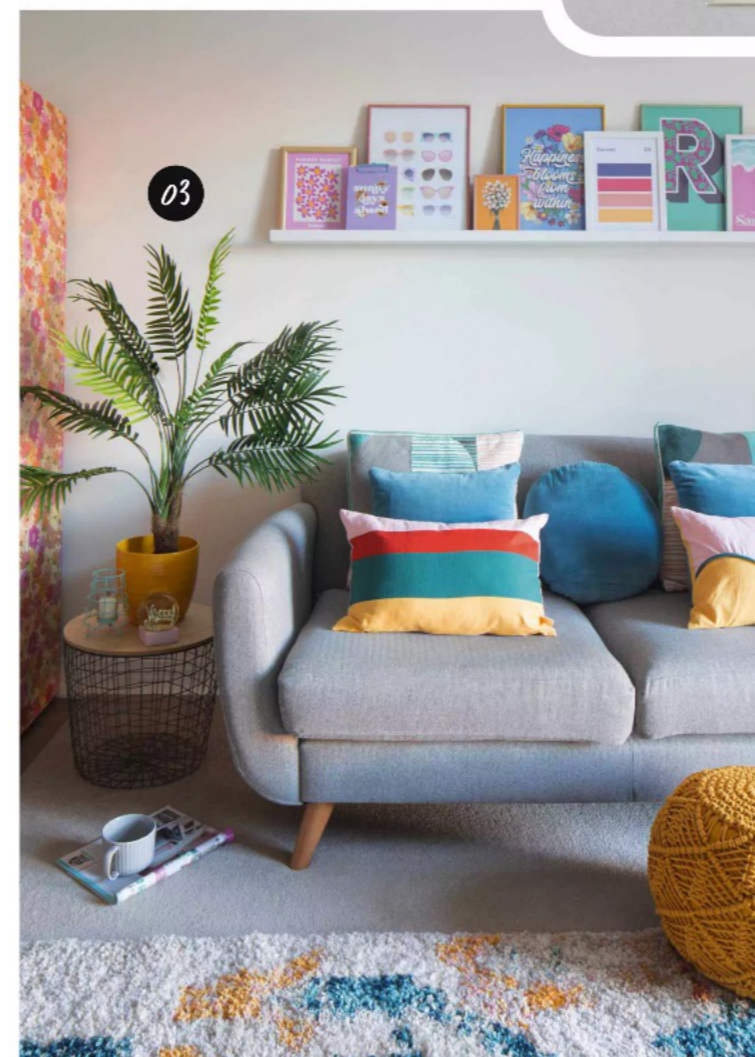
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02



03

Style advice

Three simple tricks to try in your own home

01 Flexible entertaining

Key to turning Rosie's room into a social space is the vintage drinks trolley she picked up in a charity shop for £10 after being inspired by Instagram. She added marble-effect vinyl to improve the worn surface and styled the shelves with a variety of drink accessories, such as gold shot measures, a glass pineapple from John Lewis & Partners and flamingo bottle openers. 'I love that the trolley is pretty to look at as well as being a practical piece,' she says. 'It's easy to pull into the room to become the focal point of the evening and it can be tucked away when it's not needed.'

02 Style a breakfast bar

Matching the new worktop with the existing one gives the kitchen a unified finish – it looks as though the breakfast bar has always been there. A trio of lights from Industville zones the area with gold lamp holders to tie in with the cupboard handles and clock. 'I love the shape of the Pebble wall clock from Dunelm and the mirrored surface adds depth,' says Rosie. 'On a practical note, the dishwasher below was easy to plumb in because the washing machine is in a cupboard on the other side of the wall.'

03 Blend an open-plan room

Rosie settled on a scheme of pale pinks, blue-green and touches of yellow and introduced elements from the palette to both zones. The DFS grey sofa provides a neutral base that Rosie likes to update with colourful cushions and artwork above. 'I look out for unique prints at affordable prices, like these ones from OhSoDaisy,' she says. Soft furnishings have also helped tie the look together. 'Cushions are a quick, affordable way to bring in instant colour.'