

'Bespoke units gave our kitchen a unique look'

Shaker-style cupboards and striking marble surfaces have created a timeless feel

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OAK DRAWERS

Hand-carved dovetailed oak and the furniture-maker's inscription add a personal touch



Rebecca Smith lives with her husband Adam and sons Harry and Jack in a detached four-bedroom 1930s house in Surrey



Before

'When we moved in, I loved the amount of space downstairs but not the configuration of the rooms. I particularly disliked the kitchen, which was enclosed and dark with one window at the end, so it felt like a tunnel with small rooms off it'



AGA

This modern electric model cooks like an Aga but can be used all year-round like a regular oven

OPEN-PLAN SPACE

Redesigning the ground floor has created a room perfect for cooking, dining and entertaining



Tell us about your initial ideas...

To begin with we changed the bathrooms and redecorated throughout, then six years later we had the funds to reconfigure and extend the ground floor. We wanted to keep the dining room, so we got some plans drawn up but felt the layout still didn't work and the project wasn't cost-effective. Once we let go of the idea of keeping a dining room, it all fell into place and we decided to square off the back of the house with a 3m x 1m extension and knock through walls to create a big open-plan room.

What were your must-haves?

To have a scheme that wouldn't date – I fell in love with Devol's Trinity Blue paint for the cupboards, while Adam loves heritage design and authentic materials. He was adamant about having real marble worktops, a herringbone floor and an Aga.

Who did the kitchen design?

I was inspired by the work I'd seen by Claire Totman Designs on Instagram, so we got her on board to

redesign the ground floor, and plan the layout and the kitchen cupboards. Claire got comparable quotes from high-end kitchen brands and luxury furniture-maker Nathan Christopher, who was happy to build exactly to Claire's design, creating any cupboard sizes that were needed. We met Nathan at his workshop and thought the quality of his kitchens and workmanship were fantastic.

The marble makes quite a statement...

We went to Cullifords' stone yard and discovered this beautiful deep grey vein, which looks absolutely stunning.

Were there any surprises?

Using a furniture-maker has given us a much better quality kitchen than we thought we could afford. I especially love that it's unique to us and our home. Since we extended to the side of the kitchen, the overall area isn't much bigger than before, but because of how the layout has been opened up and reconfigured it feels much more spacious. It has ticked all the boxes for us.

OUR SOURCEBOOK

Extension, kitchen design and interior fit out, clairetotmandesigns.co.uk. Handmade oak Shaker kitchen, nathanchristopher.uk. Cupboards in Trinity Blue paint, devolkitchens.co.uk. Island in Sinner paint, mylands.com. Marble worktop and splashback, geraldculliford.co.uk. Ironmongery, armacmartin.co.uk. Sink, villeroy-boch.co.uk. Flex tap, quooker.co.uk. Aga ER7 150, agaliving.com. Appliances, all rdo.co.uk. Woodpecker Feather Oak flooring, countrycarpets.co.uk. Shaftesbury pendants, neptune.com. Oak counter stools, coxandcox.co.uk

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

'Having your kitchen made by a carpenter isn't necessarily more expensive than opting for a high-end brand, and you can have exactly the door designs and cupboard sizes you want'

EXTRACTOR FAN

A discreet chimney, with a decorative cornice to match the cupboards, hides the extractor fan



ISLAND

The deep charcoal grey ties in with the colour of the marble vein and the external door frames



FLOORING

A new engineered oak herringbone floor in a light, warm tone is a nod to the property's 1930s origins

WHAT WE SPENT

BESPOKE CUPBOARDS (INCLUDING SPRAY PAINTING) £23,600
WORKTOP AND SPLASHBACK £6,000
IRONMONGERY £1,500
SINK £602
TAP £1,839
AGA £15,000
DISHWASHERS (TWO) £1,263
WINE FRIDGE £978
FRIDGE-FREEZER £2,529
FLOORING £14,500
PENDANTS £585
STOOLS £1,180
TOTAL £69,576