

RICH PICKINGS

Dark oak cabinetry and surfaces threaded with gold deliver a sophisticated warmth to a room that was once starkly modern

WORDS JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY DARREN CHUNG

PROJECT DETAILS

DESIGNER
Claire Totman
of Claire Totman
Designs (clairetotman
designs.co.uk)

PROPERTY
Detached 1920s

WORK
New kitchen-diner

LOCATION
London

A retired couple who'd lived in their home for decades, bringing up their family, wanted to stay put but were keen to transform their whole ground floor – including the kitchen. They found the perfect partner in architectural and interior designer Claire Totman

1 STARTING OUT

The house still had its original layout with a dark entrance hall leading through two rooms, before reaching a narrow kitchen with white gloss cupboards, separated from the dining room. The owners had invested in professional landscaping and a swimming pool, but there was no access from the kitchen. 'The project was about creating a connection and modernising the look, with a more functional layout and appropriate aesthetic for the age of the property,' says Claire.

2 BUILDING WORK

Knocking through smaller rooms created a large kitchen-dining space without needing to extend. The transition to the garden was made seamless and framed with the clients' Crittall doors. However, to create the wider door opening into the kitchen, the sitting room wall in the narrow hallway was moved back, which also made the entrance hall lighter and more welcoming.

3 THE LAYOUT

Opening up the space resulted in a nine-metre long room wide enough to take a centrepiece island measuring 3.7 x 1.3m. 'There was plenty of space for storage and for my client to retain all her high end appliances,' says Claire. 'We planned the layout around them, and made sure the joinery was strong enough to support them as they are heavier than standard brands.'

4 THE LOOK

The clients discussed classic, elegant cabinetry with minimal fuss, paired with an eye-catching splashback and worktop. 'The majority of our kitchen designs are Shaker,' says Claire. 'At our client's request for something simpler, we designed a micro-Shaker oak door with a very thin frame.' She showed them a range of mid-tone wood stains on sample oak to give the cupboards more of a traditional look. For contrast, herringbone oak flooring is lighter, while high-end porcelain surfaces look like marble but are tougher and more forgiving. 'The project was a delight to work on,' says Claire. 'My client couldn't wait to host a party.'

HARMONISED AESTHETIC
Bespoke oak cabinetry finished in a mid-tone wood stain is complemented by accents of gold in the surfaces and hardware. The symmetrical layout is balanced by the large island



LIGHT TOUCH

The glazed double doors flood the room with light, while coving adds period character. A trio of pendants with soft linen shades were made to a bespoke size to hang at exactly the right height above the island. **Architecture and interior design,** Claire Totman Designs. **Work surface** Calacatta Macchia Vecchia, Sapien Stone. **Walls** in Au Lait, Farrow & Ball. Clemente double arm **sconce**; Goodman medium **lights** in bronze, both Visual Comfort. For a similar **chandelier**, try the Black Cone Shade pendant, Barker and Stonehouse. Wardell leather counter **stools**, Soho Home. Antique Brass Fusion round **tap**, Quooker

