

KITCHENS BEDROOMS BATHROOMS

APRIL 2011

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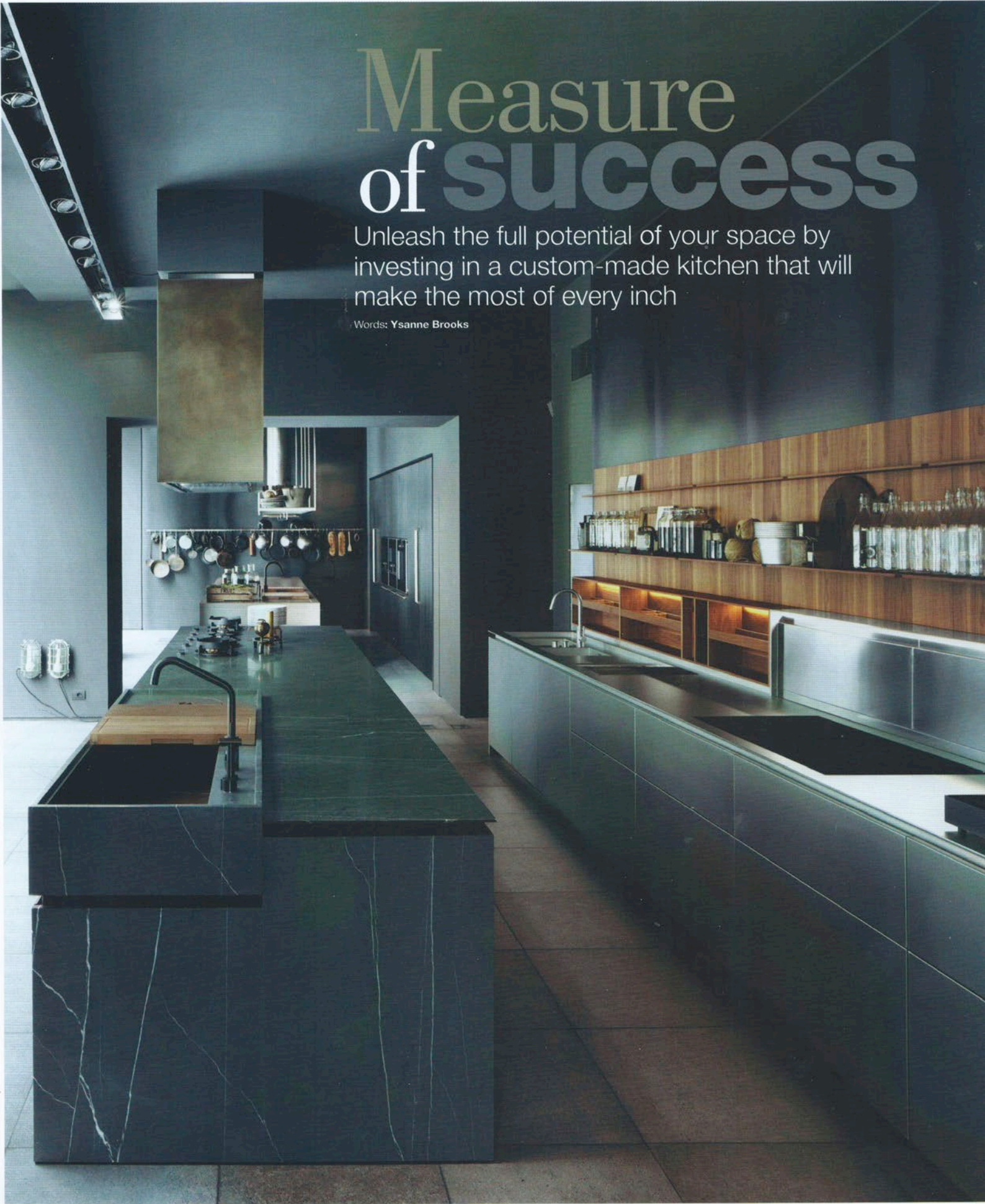
Also inside: 16-page guide to planning the perfect bathroom



Measure of success

Unleash the full potential of your space by investing in a custom-made kitchen that will make the most of every inch

Words: Ysanne Brooks





family are ideal, or ask to look at some of a company's previous projects to get a feeling for what it produces. If a kitchen is truly bespoke, it's unlikely your designer will say no to any specific requirements – within reason of course. Most importantly of all, don't rush the process. Take time to visit at least two or three showrooms, talking to designers and getting a feel for how the company operates.

High-end glossy magazines and the internet are also good sources of information and inspiration. "If buying a pure bespoke kitchen, find a company local to you, as it is usual to have a number of design meetings before the project is finalised, and close contact between the designer and the customer is a must," advises Darren Taylor of Searle & Taylor. "Look at a company's website and view its designs to see if anything fits with your own ideas, and also take a look at its client testimonials, as these are a very good way of gauging the company's reputation."

Many bespoke furniture makers will have workshops you can visit to see their operation in action. "It is a real treat for clients to walk into our workshop and see our craftsmen at their benches, smell the wood and see their

own unique design being made by people who take great pride in their work," agrees Martin Holliday of Chiselwood.

Talk it over

A good bespoke maker will talk to potential customers at length about the look they want for their kitchen and how they plan to use it. Some will ask customers to complete a questionnaire before they start designing. This way they get to fully understand their individual needs.

Getting the brief right is key. Before you visit a company to get a quote (see Money matters, p49), make a list of things you like and dislike and gather together images of schemes and materials you'd like to include. Magazines are a useful source of information and websites such as Pinterest are a great place to keep all the things you love or want in one place to show prospective designers. A good designer will always arrange to visit you at home to get a feel for the space and measure up before they start on a design, but it's a good idea to take rough dimensions and even architects' plans along to your first meeting and let them know about any issues, such as windows or boilers that can't be moved. **KBB**

Above: This contemporary grey stained oak bespoke kitchen from Edmondson Interiors features floor-to-ceiling cabinets that make the most of every inch of space. Draped in stunning mottled granite worktops, the eye-catching island features light-reflecting bronze tinted mirror doors on one side. Prices start at £35,000.