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SECOND NATURE

In this issue, we step through the doors of some stunning homes and see how the architects, designers and owners have successfully blended natural materials with man-made products. Here, sharp bespoke steel and glass doors and painted shelving and cupboards have been carefully designed to mirror one another, but are softened by a beautiful wide-plank oak floor, warm brick wall and wood furniture. Their neutral, natural tones make a perfect backdrop for the dramatic slab of marble – a classic kitchen element used to full advantage in this modern setting within a period house. Turn the page for further information, inspiration and gorgeous interiors...



HERITAGE *hero*

Bespoke cabinetry, stylish finishes and a classic, centrepiece island put the heart back into this Victorian gem of a home in south London, creating an integrated kitchen and conservatory space

Words: Louise O'Bryan Photography: Nick Smith

Moments from leafy Clapham Common in south London, this majestic Victorian property is a triumph in original heritage features and period architecture. Yet, despite its magnificent façade and ornate internal detailing, the kitchen felt rather lacklustre in relation to the rest of the house; it had a small, dark cooking space visually separated from a stunning conservatory by a cumbersome breakfast peninsula. Keen to make the kitchen the centre of their family's life, the owners embarked on a large overhaul of the area, adding handmade cabinetry, a fluted, curved island, timeless appliances and a better integration with the adjoining conservatory, where bespoke dining furniture offers a magnificent place to entertain. Here, we speak to Richard McGarry, head of design at The Wood Works, about how his company worked with the owners and interior designer Lorena Uribe to achieve a kitchen and dining space that genuinely celebrates this historic home's classic elegance and grandeur.

What prompted the kitchen overhaul?

Prior to the renovation, the space consisted of three different areas that felt disconnected: a small kitchen, a separate utility and a dining conservatory, which was sectioned off by a peninsula unit.

The rest of the house retained many of its original features, but the kitchen featured lowered modern ceilings, which did nothing to improve the space and light into the dark cooking area. When we came on board, the space had been prepared by removing the internal wall between the kitchen and utility, creating a longer room, the ceiling had been raised to add a sense of space and the entire floor was rebuilt to create a level surface leading to the conservatory. A big arch was also put in to unify the two spaces and inject light into the kitchen area.

What was the vision for the new kitchen?

The aim was to create a central hub for the home, which would be sympathetic to the traditional aesthetics of the property, yet also ideal for modern-day life. For me, the key areas of the design were for the kitchen to flow better, while making sure the natural light and ventilation provided by the conservatory was fully utilised, creating a bright and airy space. >



below The depth of this striking glass-fronted dresser with oak interior and shelves was reduced to hide the sliding door to the adjacent living room.



How did the property's architecture inspire the design?

The heritage aesthetics were hugely important to the look and feel of the kitchen. We took direct inspiration from the period features, leading the design in a more traditional direction, with the use of front-frame construction, butt hinges, antique brass hardware and subtle ornate detailing. However, we ensured the kitchen remained relevant to today's contemporary family life by adding contemporary reeded curves on the island. When it came to tackling the high ceiling, we needed to find a natural and consistent line to finish the height of the kitchen, without it feeling imposing or closed in. Ultimately, we came to the decision to make the kitchen finish in line with an existing doorway because this gave the correct proportions.

How did the kitchen's long, narrow shape dictate the layout?

As with every project, planning the layout involves working within the confines of the space, including location of the doorways, the width of the room and, in this case, the preference for a Lacanche range cooker. We also had to consider the natural light provided by the adjacent conservatory; this meant we needed to locate the tall units to one end. This not only maximises the storage but allows natural light to saturate the space.

Why a curved island?

Faced with the long, narrow layout, the curved island design provided the best circulation and integration with the conservatory. A lot of the initial design concepts came from the clients' interior designer, Lorena Uribe, and working alongside her concept, we combined elements from our Lexington Range and customised the curved units to fit within the space. At each end of the island, curved storage cupboards provide useful shelves for everyday items. We then repeated the curved detail on the edge profile of the worktop, the fretwork within the glass dresser and the bespoke Westin curved extractor to tie the whole kitchen together.

Is the Westin extractor hood a compact design?

Although the cooker hood is modest in comparison to some specialist range-cooker hoods, it still has all the necessary requirements to match the power of the cooker. We worked closely with Westin to design the perfect size and shape of the extractor hood so that it would work in harmony with the powerful Lacanche range, as well as the furniture and architecture of the space. The curves introduced into the hood design, coupled with the white paint finish, ensure that what would normally be a large, bulky and intrusive appliance, blends naturally into the kitchen without imposing on the space.

What was the thinking behind dark coloured cabinetry?

Due to the height of the room we felt we could be dramatic with the colour of the cabinets, alongside the use of bronze handles to contrast with the bright Arabescato Corchia marble. We eventually decided on Farrow & Ball Railings for the cabinetry and teamed it with oak veneer interiors to add additional warmth and depth to the space.

The bold, tiled floor adds a surprisingly playful element...

The tile is a modern twist on a traditional style, tying in the period features throughout the property, which complements the unique design elements within the kitchen.

Any challenges you had to overcome?

When working with any period property, there needs to be a level of understanding of potential complications that might lie ahead. Specific challenges within this particular design centred around the detailing of the dresser, with the pocket door running behind, the secret door into the hallway and the floating marble shelf – all of which needed to be explained coherently with our team and other contractors. The end result was everything coming together seamlessly and the initial vision for this kitchen really came to life. >

JAMES RAYNER, Brand manager at Westin cooker hoods WORDS OF WISDOM

- The design and choice of a hood will impact the whole kitchen design. There is a straight choice between a hidden or bold hood: do you want something that will blend into the design and put the focus on the rest of the kitchen, or do you want to create a statement centrepiece?
- For minimalist kitchens with a hob on an island, a ceiling hood will provide the best results as an environmental solution and allow for clear lines of sight across the kitchen. To take this to the next level, choose a model that fits flush to the ceiling and have this colour-matched to the exact shade and finish as the ceiling.
- On the flipside, Westin's bespoke service allows you to create a truly unique showpiece, made to your exact requirements: any style, size, finish and power level. In fact, the possibilities are endless.





The 3cm-thick slabs of Arabescato Corchia marble were given bull-nosed edges, and round corners soften the look. The matching splashback and shelf highlight the veins in the marble and tie in with the island.



To maximise storage, the curved, fluted ends of the island open to reveal hidden shelving for books and small appliances.





GET THE LOOK

1 Nostalgia anti-slip triangle tile, £4.88 each, Baked Tile Company bakedtiles.co.uk 2 Madrisana acacia and rattan bar stool, £350, Nkuku nkuku.com 3 Themis marble bowl, £175, Oka oka.com 4 Bombazine opal glass and brass light, £399, Pagazzi pagazzi.com 5 Vintage bamboo trolley, £495, Grace Sisters gracesisters.com 6 Yellow York Stripe cushion, £135, Fermoie fermoie.com





left A large arch was created to unify the kitchen and conservatory, and to bring more natural light to the food preparation area. Art Deco-style ceiling lights add charm and link the two spaces.

A bespoke L-shaped, upholstered banquette provides a sociable dining space, as well as a place to relax with a coffee and book.

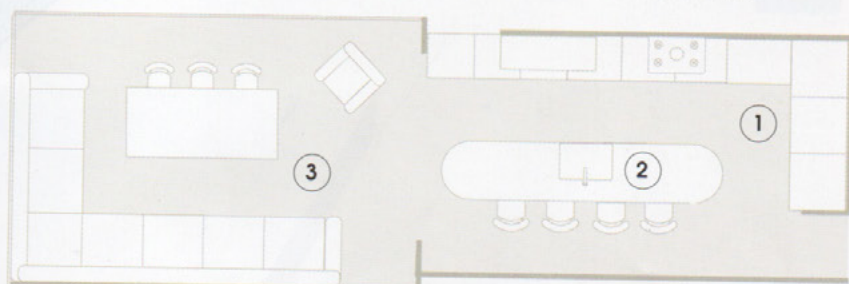
right A vintage bar cart adds a playful touch beside the sophisticated dining setting, serving as a bar or dessert trolley.



The PLANS

Previously three small rooms, the redesign has resulted in a grand kitchen-diner, which introduces fresh, modern elements but is in keeping with the architecture.

- 1 Layout** Having the conservatory at one end and a wall at the other dictated the position of the tall cupboards, which flank the entire end of the kitchen.
- 2 Island** The curved design echoes the shape of the arch between the kitchen and conservatory, while the vertical, fluted finish adds textural interest.
- 3 Seating** Perfect for entertaining, the design offers a range of seating, including the beautiful L-shaped banquette, bar stools at the island and armchairs.



Sourcebook

- Kitchen** The Wood Works
thewoodworks.com
 - Interior designer** Lorena Uribe
lorenauribe.com
 - Extractor hood** Westin westin.co.uk
 - Worktop** Levantina levantina.com
 - Range cooker** Lacanche
lacanche.co.uk
 - Sink** Shaws shawsfordarwen.com
 - Appliances** Siemens siemens.com
- For full stockists, see page 126.
Search for more suppliers at thesethreerooms.com/directory **KBB**



above The smart Lacanche range cooker, in Prussian Blue, sits underneath the powerful, bespoke Westin extractor. Below that is a floating marble shelf, which is under-lit by LED strip lighting, illuminating the cooking area.

right An over-the-counter cabinet maintains a clean wall-to-wall line of units. The cabinetry is all painted in Farrow & Ball's Railings.



The FACTS

Who? A family of four
What? Renovation of the existing kitchen and conservatory in a detached Victorian period property.

Where? Clapham Common, south west London

Cost? £63,114 (kitchen furniture £37,773; worktop £19,548; fitting £5,793)

Time? Part of a larger renovation, which took 11 months in total