

Industrial edge

REBECCA WYLES
AND NIGEL DAVIES'
STYLISH KITCHEN
SUCCESSFULLY
COMBINES A LOVE
OF UTILITARIAN
STYLE WITH
A SOOTHING
COLOUR SCHEME

Feature SHARON SMITH
Photography TONY TIMMINGTON

Project profile

THE OWNERS Rebecca Wyles, milliner, and partner, Nigel Davies, restaurant consultant

THEIR HOME 5-bedroom Victorian semi-detached house in London

THE PROJECT To convert three dated flats into a modernised family home. The kitchen was part of the project, created out of an existing kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor, plus an extension to the rear and the side

ROOM SIZE 7.5 x 5m

DESIGNER Rebecca Wyles

CABINETRY The Suffolk range by Neptune, painted in Dove grey, £7,500 at Surrey Furniture & Kitchens

BUDGET £95,000

Form & function

Rebecca's love of industrial, minimalist style is reflected in her choice of cool greys and stainless steel. The distressed dining table was made from reclaimed scaffold boards.



Bright idea
Designer factory bulbs create a focal point over the island



A practical choice

'Initially, we wanted a marble worktop, however we changed our minds when we spotted basalt,' says Rebecca. 'We preferred the matt finish for its look, plus it doesn't mark as easily as a shiny surface.'

'DON'T OVERLOOK LIGHTING, BOTH NATURAL AND ELECTRIC, AND THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THE STYLE AND LOCATION OF TASK AND AMBIENT LIGHTS'



Wash and go

The elevated design of this tap makes it perfect for filling large pans



When Rebecca Wyles and Nigel Davies bought their Victorian semi, it had been divided into three separate flats some years before. 'They were all very dated,' says Rebecca. 'In order to turn the property into a single family home we knew we'd have to rip the place apart.'

For the kitchen, the couple envisaged a large open-plan space, incorporating cooking and dining zones, and a sitting area that opened out onto the back garden. 'We wanted to create a bright, spacious and modern living space where

friends and family could gather to eat, chat, relax and watch TV together,' explains Rebecca, 'and we planned to have a more formal sitting room for the front of the house.' With an architect on board and plans agreed, the builders set about knocking through the existing ground floor's kitchen and bathroom, as well as extending to the rear and side of the house.

Rebecca and Nigel wanted a modern but classic scheme that wouldn't date too quickly and one that reflected their love of industrial style. They trawled through kitchen magazines and websites and visited showrooms until they

stumbled upon Neptune's range of kitchens. 'We chose its cabinetry because it's well-designed and excellent quality,' says Rebecca.

The busy working couple were keen to invest in furniture that would require minimal care and maintenance, and the Suffolk kitchen – the company's simplest and most classic design – fitted the bill perfectly. 'We also chose porcelain floor tiles that just need a quick mop over and a matt-basalt worktop,' says Rebecca. 'Both are durable and easy to clean, and don't show sticky marks that tend to appear on shinier surfaces. It's great as they don't need constant wiping.' **DK**



Professional touch

A pot filler above the hob is ideal for filling up large pans and saves carrying the weight from the sink



DESIGN SOLUTION

Rebecca explains...

What did you envisage for the space?

We wanted a large open-plan room with cooking, dining and sitting areas that are clearly zoned through furniture and layout. The kitchen takes centre stage with the dining area to the side and the seating area at the back with bifold doors opening onto the garden. It's a family house so we needed to create a large, informal and relaxed area for us to gather and entertain, which was also smart and comfortable.

Did you have clear ideas about style and colours?

We were after a classic look that wouldn't date easily and had already chosen a dark grey basalt worktop, which we thought was smart but practical, and had decided on white walls, so we selected plain dove grey cabinets to blend with both. We wanted a colour scheme that was chic and quietly stylish white walls give it a contemporary twist but can easily be changed at any time in the future. My fascination with anything industrial is seen in the factory-style light fittings, the chunky stainless steel range cooker and wall-mounted pot filler above it. I designed and made the dining table from scaffold boards the builders used on this project.

Take us through the kitchen layout

We wanted drawers rather than cupboards wherever possible because things are so much easier to locate in a drawer. I also wanted a symmetrical, balanced look, with the hob and cooker as the anchor and the same number of cabinets on either side. We opted for an island because it reflects a modern way of living, providing extra worktop space, storage and a housing for the sink and the dishwasher. The alternative was to have a narrow galley kitchen layout, which neither of us were particularly keen on.

Were there any challenges to overcome?

We originally submitted plans for a four-metre rear extension and a wrap-around side extension, but the council refused us permission so we just extended at the side instead. The stream and large trees we have in the back garden also proved problematic during the building works. We had to dig foundations two metres down, and the water from the stream caused the walls of the trenches to collapse. Eventually we reinforced them with timber boxing, which thankfully did the trick.

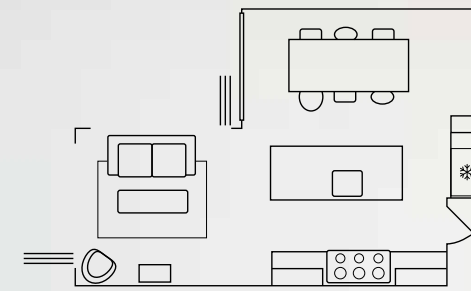
What design features have you used and why?

Lighting is important, and a skylight, two sets of bifold doors and a ceiling-to-floor window let in maximum light. We've also installed ceiling lights and direct lighting over the island and the dining table, plus LED lights under the wall cabinets. We wanted our ceiling to be flush so the steels were made on site and hidden behind the plasterboard for a streamlined look. It cost us about £7,000 but it was worth it. Our aim was to have a high ceiling and door frames a bit higher than normal at 2.6m instead of the usual 2.4m. This way, when we're relaxing in the sitting room at the front we can see right through the house to the garden.

What do you like best about your kitchen?

I love it all but if I have to pick a favourite part, I enjoy looking up from the sofa and seeing the sky and the trees directly above me. Just as if we are simultaneously in the city and the countryside, it's the best of both worlds.

The layout



Light touch

Two sets of bifold doors allow plenty of natural light to stream into this bright sitting area, and provide uplifting views of the garden, too.

The details

CABINETRY Neptune cabinetry in birch, from £7,500, Surrey Furniture & Kitchens

APPLIANCES Stainless steel range cooker with 6-burner gas cooktop and two ovens, £1,800, Fisher & Paykel. For a similar cooker hood try Spot 120cm cooker hood, £525, Elica. Built-in stainless steel fridge freezer, £850, LG; integrated dishwasher, £300, AEG

SURFACES Italian basalt worktop and splashback; price on application; MGLW.

Concept porcelain floor tiles, from £54/sq m, Surface Tiles. Walls painted in Strong White emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

SINK AND TAPS Stainless steel 1.5-bowl sink, £250, Rangemaster. Gessi oxygene monobloc stainless steel tap, from £152, Sinks & Ball com. For a similar pot filler tap, try the Franke pot filler tap, £194,

FINISHING TOUCHES Bespoke dining table designed by Rebecca Wyles, with four dining

chairs in varying styles. Felix rise and fall ceiling light, £150, John Lewis. Pendant globe light bulbs, £43 each, Historic Lighting. Sofa, £499; peacock chair, £299; footstool, £250; all Made.com. Neptune glass and chrome Manhattan console table, £650; Neptune Tolsey white plaid rug, £295; all Surrey Furniture & Kitchens. Aluminium bifold doors, Cedar Bifold Company and skylight, DG Glass; both price on application