

A perfect mix

Conceived with timeless design, contemporary touches and multiple entrance points in mind, this kitchen clearly combines form and function

TEXT **EMMA J PAGE** PHOTOGRAPHS **JAKE FITZJONES**



It takes vision to create a harmonious blend of old and new styles, and for the owners of this Tyneside property, a series of bold design choices has resulted in an ideal marriage of the two.

This open-plan but thoughtfully zoned kitchen is housed in a new three-storey extension, attached to a nineteenth-century coach house, replacing the footprint of an outdated Sixties addition. To one side, the main front entrance provides formal access to the house, while on the other, double doors lead to an integrated boot room and have become an informal entry point for

the family to the hub of the house.

‘It’s an unusual renovation and we wanted to create a highly functional kitchen to reflect that,’ says one of the owners. The couple has a keen eye for combining aesthetics and practicality – he works in business development, while she works in the fashion industry. ‘We were keen on something that was timelessly classic,’ he says, ‘but with suitable contemporary touches, much like the old and new elements of our home.’

The pair turned to Julia Brown of Mowlem & Co, who focused her attention

not only on the kitchen's design, but also how it would link to other elements of the space, such as the informal snug at one end of the room. 'The challenge was to include all the key requirements, but we didn't want the space to look crowded,' explains Julia.

A solution was found in an ingenious floor plan that combines a striking L-shape central island with a built-in banquette and a curved breakfast bar. In addition, Julia designed an extensive sink wall, with plenty of space behind for a concealed utility cupboard. To create a sense of symmetry, frosted-glass doors flank the sink unit, one leading to a walk-in pantry, the other to the boot room, from which sliding pocket doors allow access to the utility area. Elements such as a chalkboard, an open-ended magazine rack built into the dining booth and the etched glass doors introduce contemporary flair, paired with classic Shaker-style cabinetry and limed-oak finishes.

'The boot room is a hugely practical and much-used addition,' says the owner. 'Initially, we weren't sure how to incorporate it elegantly but the opaque glass doors do the job brilliantly.'

The diversity that the layout offers is the most successful element of the scheme. 'We have everything that we need and everything has its place,' he says. 'We can either relax at the dining table for supper or perch on one of the stools with a coffee at breakfast.' As for Julia, the kitchen's ergonomic design is its real calling card. 'I love the overall view of the room through the folding glass doors as well as entering from the boot room or the main hallway,' she says. 'In fact, from all points of access, the first impressions are very pleasing.' And given its position at the very heart of this reworked coach house, it's clear that first impressions count □

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The walk-in pantry. Kitchen units come in the form of limed-oak, Shaker-style cabinetry, while a central island with a built-in banquette creates an eating area (also above left). The utility room is accessed via pocket doors in the boot room (bottom left)





Skylights above the Quartzite-topped island flood this central area with light. Open shelving at each side of the partition wall provide views of the dining area beyond

In the zone

Cleverly delineating the space within a modern extension allowed designer Andrew Hall to create a vibrant kitchen that effortlessly blends work and play

TEXT **EMMA J PAGE** PHOTOGRAPHS **NICHOLAS YARSLEY**

For over a decade, Andrew Hall could well identify with the oft-quoted saying that ‘the son of a shoemaker has no shoes’. A kitchen designer by trade, Andrew has been at the helm of Woodstock Furniture since 2004, designing imaginative, hand-crafted kitchens in both classic and contemporary styles, but his own kitchen had thus far eluded his expert gaze.

Andrew and his wife Melanie, along with their four sons, have lived in their Thirties semi-detached house near Richmond Park since 2000. A year ago, the couple undertook a substantial renovation that saw them channeling their ideas into a brand new scheme for the kitchen. ‘When we moved in, the kitchen was in a small corner of the ground floor and came complete with a serving hatch,’ says Andrew. ‘There was a rudimentary combination of conservatory and lean-to, which housed the dining area, and although the space served a purpose, we knew that a thorough overhaul was long overdue.’

Andrew drew up plans for a revised layout that broadly emulated the footprint of the original extension. The new kitchen includes generous roof lanterns, plus floor-to-ceiling doors leading onto the terrace and a striking picture window at the rear that draws the eye in an uninterrupted view from the front of the house to the back.

‘The biggest challenge was refining the layout,’ says Andrew. ‘We wanted to create an architectural, sculptural kitchen while providing an interesting journey for the user rather than a vast, clinical space.’ He settled on a zoned approach to create a series of living spaces, each with their own purpose.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT Andrew Hall in his kitchen. Painted pocket doors conceal a home office featuring a pull-out oak shelf, suspended file drawer and finger drawers with open storage. White-painted Ercol stools provide seating for informal eating; adjacent are a single oven, steam oven and warming drawer all by Miele. The pantry cupboard features useful oak finger-jointed drawers



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FROM TOP In the central zone, kitchen units painted in Farrow & Ball's 'Black Blue' contrast the natural oak cabinets. A tall cupboard houses bulky kitchen appliances. Contemporary metal handles by Ged Kennett add a modern twist to a traditional finish

ALL IN THE DETAIL

STORAGE In the dining area, modern oak wall panelling with contrasting grains conceals plenty of hidden storage. Eames dining chairs add colour to the neutral palette. Urban Concrete's 'Fog' porcelain floor tiles by Reed Harris are combined with underfloor heating.



'Placing the dining table near the windows by the garden was a tempting option, but we chose to place it in the spot that receives the least light, in what was once the rear of the original house,' he explains. 'We had retained the period chimneypiece there and for us it made sense to create a cosy, atmospheric dining area instead, emphasised with moody walls painted in 'Black Blue' by Farrow & Ball.'

Influenced by American kitchen design, a partial wall flanked by open shelving delineates the dining area from the kitchen. A Mercury range cooker is housed on the other side of the wall, while a Quartzite-topped French farmhouse table acts as a practical island. To one side is a series of painted cupboards that house the pantry, refrigerator and a concealed workstation, while units incorporating appliances, a sink, additional head-height ovens and a warming drawer are on the adjacent wall. Adjacent to this hub lies a new sitting room.

The right choice of materials was essential to create a cohesive look and, here, Andrew's expertise came into its own. 'The key to designing a great kitchen is to honestly assess your needs,' he says. 'We admire a minimal look, but we don't live that way as a family. We're collectors; we love displaying art and vintage treasures and so our kitchen had to reflect that.'

As a result, a warm, natural oak was the starting point for the scheme and recurs throughout, its contrasting grains used to striking effect in a floor-to-ceiling panelled wall which conceals additional storage, with accents appearing via display shelving and a horizontal wine rack. Dark-painted cupboards link the kitchen to the dining area, while large-scale porcelain concrete-effect floor tiles cover the kitchen floor and the terrace beyond.

'In bigger spaces, the traditional working 'triangle' can be hard to achieve,' says Andrew. 'So we opted for a cooking, prep and wet zone instead. Groceries are unpacked in the pantry area, prepped on the island and washed at the sink.' Small but important touches include taking the kitchen units to full height to counteract a relatively low ceiling, adding a steam oven, and fitting the dishwasher close to crockery storage.

'As a designer, I put together kitchens all the time,' says Andrew. 'But on this occasion, I could do exactly what I wanted, which was rather liberating' □

*Woodstock Furniture: 020-8876 0131;
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