

New Balance

This house in Wimbledon proves that sometimes it's good to start from scratch

Words: Sophie Baylis Photography: Lind & Cuming Design Photography



New-build homes often get a bad rap: reports of cramped rooms, thin walls and a lack of storage suggest that they're all style and no substance. So it's a surprise to visit Anouska and Glenn Davies's new home in Wimbledon Village and find a generously proportioned and light-filled space full of practical and beautiful features.

It's the attention to detail in the design that makes all the difference. Instead of the identikit solutions favoured by some new-build developers, the Davies home was a labour of love for interior designer Sharon Scott of Indigo Scott. Working closely with specialist suppliers, she's created a home that's elegant yet easy to live in.

The nerve centre is the open-plan kitchen, found to the rear of the house and opening onto a split-level patio with steps leading down to a basement family room. To maximise natural light, Sharon slotted in a double-height glass window running from the ground-floor kitchen to the lower ground floor. The sculptural interior staircase also leading to the family room makes the most of the light too. The frameless glass balustrade allows light to flow through without obscuring the view of the garden.

Sharon spared no expense when selecting materials for the kitchen. The worktops are marble-effect Silestone and the finish on the ►



island is smoked oak, which Sharon reveals was tricky to achieve. "I had something in my head that I wanted to produce, but I couldn't find what I was looking for," she says. "In the end, Sola Kitchens actually hand-finished the oak for me so that I could get the exact shade I wanted."

Sharon's uncompromising attention to detail is on show throughout the open-plan space, and it's the small touches, like the inside of the larder cupboard, which features a mix of smoked oak and solid birch for the drawers, that really make the difference. "The contrast of woods was important because otherwise it could have looked quite dark and heavy," Sharon explains. There are more prominent features too. Sharon wanted the fireplace in the living area to be enjoyed from the kitchen, so the two-sided fire projects light and warmth in both directions.

Much thought was given to kitchen storage. Sharon worked with Pia Rosling of Sola Kitchens, flirting with ideas ranging from a run of wall cabinets to a separate composition of cabinets. She settled

on a combination of units and open shelving, which is painted the same colour as the wall to create a seamless look. Even longer was spent perfecting the symmetry of the kitchen. "Sharon wanted the hob centred with the island and the tap with the ovens," explains Pia. "Achieving symmetry often proves very difficult, as to move one element directly affects others around it. It can often feel a little like playing Tetris!" Another challenge was the unsightly air-conditioning unit, but it is now neatly concealed by a bulkhead above the island from which three pendants are suspended and that has integrated spotlights to illuminate the work surface.

Getting the right balance between the kitchen, the dining area and the living area was crucial to the success of this space. "I think it's important to look at the whole picture and think about how you will live in it, work in it and entertain in it," says Sharon. "At one point, we were struggling because the kitchen was getting too big and taking up too much of the space, so we had to draw it back, and then it got too small! It's really important to find a happy medium." KBB

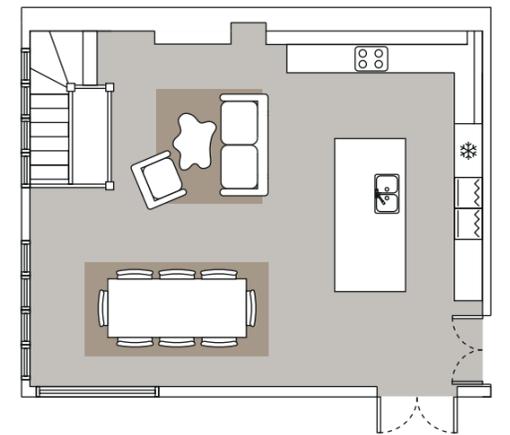


Opening pages (p144-145): A few well-chosen items, confidently placed, define the kitchen, dining and sitting areas. White is then used to tie them together, creating a light and fresh space that'll be easy to adapt in the future.

Left: The limed oak floor that greets guests in the spacious entrance hall is exchanged for large-format porcelain tiles on entry to the kitchen. These were chosen for their hard-wearing qualities and natural stone look.

Below: The dining table is deliberately positioned to draw the eye out into the garden, while a large rug demarcates the dining area.

Opposite page: The grey walls add colour to the all-white scheme and create a wrap-around effect that visually separates the kitchen from the rest of the room.





Above: The family room is in the basement and is accessed via a small flight of stairs in the corner of the room. A glass balustrade makes sure that the view of the garden remains unobstructed.

Below: The beauty of this larder cupboard is that everything is easy to access. Small spotlights illuminate the contents so it can be used as prep space as well as storage.



“In the end, Sola Kitchens actually hand-finished the oak for me so that I could get the exact shade I wanted.”

Above: The double doors out to the hall are painted in the same colour as the walls so that they blend into the background and become part of the space.



Below: Sola Kitchens solved the problem of accessing this corner cabinet with a pull-out kidney-shaped shelving system.

Below: Handleless cupboards under the breakfast bar make good use of what would otherwise be wasted space.

Q&A

Kitchen designer Pia Rosling of Sola Kitchens says...

Which element took up the majority of the budget?

Our client wanted her kitchen splashback to make a statement and, with it covering the entirety of one wall, it consumed a sizeable amount of the total budget. We considered a wide variety of materials ranging from glass to sintered surfaces before settling on a beautiful composite called Ariel Nebula by Caesarstone. This composite surface not only complements the tones in the grey veneers used elsewhere in the kitchen but is also available in jumbo-sized slabs, which allowed us to cover the whole wall.



What tips do you have for people embarking on a similar project?

When working on a project where symmetry is crucial, begin the process by considering the elements that are less flexible in where they can be located. For instance, fireplaces, doorways and windows are usually permanent fixtures, so think about them first. Next, think about where appliances can be positioned and finally cabinetry can be designed to bring it all together neatly.

Were there any major U-turns during the project?

Initially, there was a skylight where the extractor housing is located, and the cooking area and sink were both on the island. We had also planned a TV and shelving unit to bridge the gap between the kitchen and living area. The skylight was then removed, which changed the design to the one seen here.

Above: Patio doors let in daylight all year round and, on warmer days, blur the line between inside and out.

Opposite page, top: The curves of the velvet sofa are echoed in the polished stainless-steel coffee table (both by Eichholtz). The rug is used to anchor the living area in the large space.





Handleless units lend a streamlined flow to the space, broken by a bank of perfectly aligned appliances.

SourceBook

DESIGN

Kitchen Pia Rosling of Sola Kitchens (020 3405 6799 or www.solakitchens.com)

Interior designer Sharon Scott of Indigo Scott (020 8772 0747 or www.indigoscott.com)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Form 2 range, Sola Kitchens, as before

Appliances Single ovens, steam oven and built-in coffee machine, Miele (0330 160 6600 or www.miele.co.uk)

Tap Boiling-water and mixer tap, Quooker (0345 833 3555 or www.quooker.co.uk)

Sink Andano, Blanco (01923 635200 or www.blanco-germany.com/uk)

Worktop Ariel Nebula, Silestone (01256 761229 or www.silestone.co.uk)

Flooring Large-format stone-effect porcelain tiles, Geologica collection at

Porcelain Tiles (020 8731 6787 or www.porcelain-tiles.co.uk)

Pendant lights For similar try Holloways of Ludlow (020 7602 5757 or www.hollowaysofludlow.com)

Dining table Kensington Oval dining table, Hugo Ridge (01737 832118 or www.hugoridge.co.uk)

Dining chairs Eichholtz Bermuda dining chair, Hugo Ridge, as before

Barstools For similar try Eichholtz Lancaster barstool, Hugo Ridge, as before

Sofa Eichholtz La Perla sofa, Hugo Ridge, as before

Occasional chair Beige pinstripe easy chair, Hugo Ridge, as before

Coffee table Eichholtz Sceptre coffee table, Hugo Ridge, as before

Wall paint Strong White and Downpipe Grey, both Farrow & Ball (01202 876141 or www.farrow-ball.com)

COST

Kitchens from Sola Kitchens cost from £35,000