



play STATION

Top-notch technology and glamorous accessories make this kitchen the ultimate entertaining space

Report: **Felicity Borthwick** Photography: **Lindy Cumings and Mia Lind**



Previous pages (p116-117): A wooden staircase adds warmth to the kitchen, leading up to a drawing room on the first floor. At the far end of the room, a large fridge-freezer and two wine storage units have been built into the cabinetry.

Above: "The front door of our house leads straight from the mews into the kitchen so it was critical for us to get the kitchen right," says Ben. "It wasn't necessarily about what other people thought; rather it was about the kitchen welcoming us when we get in from work and feeling homely."

Above right: Walls were knocked through to create one large, sociable kitchen-dining space, hence the structural pillar in the middle of the room, which has been painted white to match the furniture.



Tucked away in a charming, cobbled mews in northwest London, this elegant home appealed to Ben Nicholls and James Brooksbank immediately. The location was perfect and the interior was mostly in good shape – the only thing they felt really needed changing was the ground floor.

On entering the property, you walk straight into the kitchen, but the existing layout was quite small and didn't quite make the grand first impression the pair would have liked. Thus, they knocked through some walls to combine the kitchen, study and cloakroom into a large kitchen-dining area. They then approached Sofia Bune Strandh of Sola Kitchens about creating the perfect kitchen for them and recruited interior designer Alexandra Dixon to assist with the dining area and various finishing touches. Between them all, they have created a stunning, contemporary space with plenty of personality, making it feel more like home. We spoke to Ben about the project.

What was your design brief to Sofia?

We wanted something light and airy – hence the whiter, lighter colours – and also something very clean. So, as you can see,

the surfaces, which are Caesarstone, are all very crisp and clean and the bank of ovens and fridge all sit flush with the cabinetry. But we also wanted to add a bit of fun to the scheme, which the splashback brings.

Yes, where did you get the inspiration for a colour-changing splashback?

This was Sofia's suggestion and we loved it – it's just something a bit different. When our nieces and nephews come over they love playing with it. In fact I'm a big kid with the remote control too! We had quite a debate about what to do for the splashback. We thought about having cracked glass there, which James was really keen to do, but then I felt it might look a bit violent – especially if we were looking straight at it all the time. So in the end we went for this colour-changing glass and used the smashed glass on the back of the island instead – beneath the breakfast bar – and that works really well.

Was there anything you specifically wanted in terms of functionality?

We wanted the island designed in such a way that we would be facing out towards the room, rather than the wall, when we're cooking as it's much more sociable when we have family and friends over. We also wanted these modular hobs so we have two induction hobs, a griddle and a teppan yaki, plus two wine storage units.

Are you both keen cooks then?

We do enjoy cooking, but we both work such long hours so we don't tend to cook much during the week unfortunately. However, on the weekends we really enjoy cooking – it's so nice just spending half a day in here, pottering around the kitchen.

What do you think of the finished design?

We love it. Sofia did such a wonderful job of conceptualising our brief and putting all our ideas onto paper. Everything just works so harmoniously – both aesthetically and functionally. It's modern and sleek, but at the same time it feels fun and homely. It brings a smile to my face every time I walk through the door.

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Above: Cemento Manhattan porcelain tiles from Porcelanosa flow throughout the newly opened up space, tying the various zones together and bringing some warmth to the room's sleek lines and crisp white finishes.

Above right: An exquisite drinks cabinet with internal lighting was custom made for the couple by Alexandra Dixon Interiors. Teamed with a vivid red artwork illuminated by downlights, it helps bring a more decorative feel to the dining area.

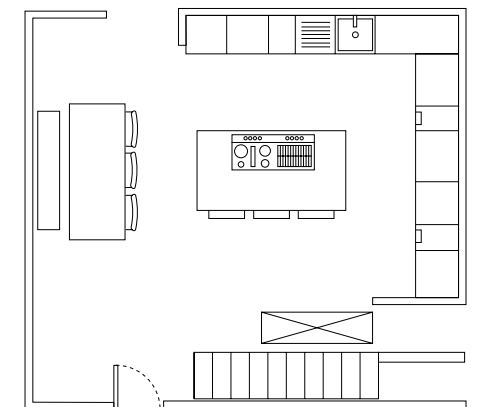
Top right: "Ben and James wanted a griddle hob, which sits quite far down in the cabinetry, so I created a large utensil drawer with a hollowed-out centre to accommodate this," explains Sofia. The drawer also features knife slots and cutlery dividers for quick, easy access.



Above: The large dining table was custom made in France from stone, perfectly complementing the lengthy Caesarstone island while also enhancing the clean, contemporary feel the couple wanted.

Left: Whilst working at the island, Ben and James can engage with guests at the breakfast bar or those sitting at the dining table. The stylish dining area has been created where a separate study and small cloakroom once stood, hence the slim structural column that delineates the two areas.

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Above: Operated by a remote control, the 2m-wide glass splashback can change between a variety of colours including pink, green, purple, blue or yellow. It can also be dimmed down to alter the intensity of the light. The Quatreau tap provides boiling, chilled and sparkling water.

Opposite page, top: Ben and James's kitchen boasts an impressive

array of appliances including four domino hobs by Miele.

Bottom: Interior designer Alexandra Dixon helped the couple source some glamorous pieces for the dining area. "We absolutely love the light and also the upholstered bench – the fabric is the same as they use to line the inside of horse boxes," explains Ben.

SourceBook

DESIGN

Kitchen Sofia Bune Strandh of Sola Kitchens (020 3004 0898 or www.solakitchens.com)

Interior design Alexandra Dixon Interiors (01494 680222 or www.alexandradixoninteriors.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Oak framed doors with white-gloss laminate, Sola Kitchens, as before

Worktops Caesarstone, made by Sola Kitchens, as before

Splashback Glass with colour-changing lightbox, Sola Kitchens, as before

Island back panel Cracked smoked mirror glass, Sola Kitchens, as before

Flooring Cemento Manhattan porcelain tiles, Porcelanosa (0800 915 4000 or www.porcelanosa.com/uk)

Barstools For similar try Atlantic Shopping (0121 230 1644 or www.atlanticshopping.co.uk)

Appliances Fridge-freezer and wine storage units, Gaggenau (0844 892 8988 or www.gaggenau.com); Oven, steam oven, microwave combination

oven, coffee machine, warming drawer, two induction hobs, teppan yaki, griddle and dishwasher, all Miele (0845 365 6600 or www.miele.co.uk); Ceiling extractor, Extract Air (01256 688572 or www.cookerhoodsforyou.co.uk)

Sink Blanco (0844 912 0100 or www.blanco.co.uk)

Tap Hydrocell 500 in stainless steel, by Quatreau (01784 221188 or www.pureh20.co.uk)

Dining table For similar try a bespoke design from Marblestone Fixing (01621 874339 or www.marblestonefixing.co.uk)

Chairs For similar try the Magi chair from Danetti (020 3588 1380 or www.danetti.com)

Upholstered bench and drinks cabinet Bespoke designs by Alexandra Dixon Interiors, as before

Pendant light For similar try Moooi (020 8962 5691 or www.moooi.com)

Mirror For similar try The Chandelier & Mirror Company (01322 437112 or www.chandeliersandmirrors.co.uk)

COST

Sola kitchens start from around £30,000