

MIX IT UP

The sophisticated black cabinetry with bookmatched worktops and splashback contrasts well with mid-oak engineered flooring



# Colour contrast

A vibrant space by day and a relaxing, intimate setting by night, this kitchen hosts an eye-catching mix of materials

PHOTOS *Lind & Cumings Design* | WORDS *Emily Peck*





reating a kitchen that was sympathetic to the style of their Grade-II listed home was a priority for MG and Tim Holmes, who live in a 19th-century converted warehouse in East London. 'We had the entire apartment refurbished,' says MG. 'Although the conversion in the 1990s was of reasonable quality at the time, our home was looking tired and there was a big opportunity to improve elements such as heating, insulation and lighting, and to update the fittings.'

The couple called upon Georgina Turvey at Peek Architecture to help reconfigure their entire two-bedroom home and, once work got underway, they began thinking about the kitchen design. 'The existing space was separated from the dining and living areas with a rather old-fashioned hatch in one wall,' says MG. 'The position of the kitchen door and the angle of the walls made it an awkward shape and it was difficult for us to cook in there together. I saw a couple of really great kitchens from Sola in some magazines, so we went to the showroom and loved the quality of kitchens and finishes we saw.' With a good idea of the layout they wanted, it was then a collaborative process with the designer, Rhiannon Phenix from Sola Kitchens, to realise the space they wanted.

In terms of style, the couple love the overall warehouse vibe of their apartment, but wanted a kitchen that channels modern design rather than a retro look. 'Taking down the walls of the kitchen opened the living space and the kitchen has become the hub,' says MG. 'We wanted a free-flowing design onto the living and dining areas, and also a kitchen that was a pleasure to cook in – with great equipment, plenty of worktop and lots of storage space.'

For the units, MG and Tim chose striking black stained-oak cabinets fronts with solid-maple internal drawers. This is teamed with a Neolith Nero Marquina splashback and worktop – a marble effect streaked with white. The pale treated oak floor provides a refreshing contrast. 'We had been looking for something with a grey or concrete style finish, but in the end we chose the black wood finish as we both really loved the look and feel of it,' explains MG.

The project was not without its design challenges, however. 'Part way through the strip out, our builder found a boxed-in space behind the kitchen and we had a delay while we obtained the necessary permissions and figured out how to work this into the design,' explains MG. 'It ended up being ideal for a utility space and pantry storage, so Rhiannon adjusted the kitchen design to incorporate doors in the tall run, which leads through to the hidden space. We also had a long run of worktop that was over three metres. This meant either hiring a crane and closing the street – costly when you are on two London bus routes – or accepting a join in the worktop. Sola's suggestion of bookmatching it with the splashback has really enhanced the design and we particularly love the worktop and waterfall on the end of the island. We're really happy with the end result.' **EKBB**

#### SECRET SPACE

Top left A previously undiscovered area, now hidden behind cabinetry, houses the pantry and utility room

#### INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Left An overhang on the island creates a simple seating space, with industrial-style Tom Dixon stools





BRIGHT LIGHTS

The apartment is on the top floor, meaning it benefits from Velux roof lights over the kitchen and dining area for plenty of natural light during the daytime



KITCHEN CRAFT

Sola managed to hide the large vent pipes in the cabinetry, which meant careful planning of the oven heights in order to make them fit.

KITCHEN PROFILE

Form 6 and Form 2 black stained oak cabinet fronts with solid maple internal drawers are paired with a striking Neolith Nero Marquina splashback and worktops for a dark and dramatic contrast to the oak floor.

**SOLA KITCHENS**  
121 MUNSTER ROAD,  
LONDON, SW6 6DH  
TEL: 020 3004 0898  
SOLAKITCHENS.COM

*Kitchen prices for a similar design cost from £35,000*



HIDDEN GEM

There's now plenty of clever storage space within the cabinetry, which features solid maple internal drawers







#### DINE IN STYLE

The dining 'zone' is neatly punctuated by a bookcase and olive green chairs which add a pop of classy colour

#### COMPACT SETTING

The kitchen features a Miele steam oven with vacuum drawer, which means Tim and MG can cook sous vide. A tall bank of units provide ample storage



**Q&A**  
**RHIANNON PHENIS**  
DESIGNER AT SOLA KITCHENS

**Why did you suggest the black cabinetry?** I think it gives the kitchen depth, detail and sophistication. The woodgrain softens the look and, coupled with the Nero Marquina splashback and worktop detailing, the kitchen is a beautifully elegant space.

**How did you ensure ergonomics in such a large room?** We thought about how the kitchen was to be used day-to-day and planned carefully. For example, we put the ovens within reach of the island top, so hot trays can be placed down easily. We made the sink a small step away from the hob, so pans can be easily carried and emptied. The dishwasher and bins are adjacent to the sink, so there is no dripping onto the beautiful floor when clearing away crockery and cutlery. We have included pull-out drawers and mechanisms in hard to reach corners and low cabinets, alongside ensuring shelves are at a reachable height for everyday use.

**What is the most successful design feature here?** I would say the splashback. MG didn't want to have any joins in the material, but there were too many compromises on the functionality of the kitchen to achieve this. To help the couple visualise the alternatives, we created renders of the kitchen with a bookmatched splashback, which formed an almost butterfly-like effect. To go from an absolute 'no' to a striking design feature that the client now loves is a very satisfying.

**What is your top tip for creating a stylish yet welcoming kitchen?** Make sure you maintain a balance by mixing strong colour schemes with warm materials as we've done here. We started with the finishes of the kitchen before moving on to the functional layout of the space. Once we all felt comfortable with the overall use, we then delved into the appliances, followed by the cabinetry's detailed functionality.

‘There were too many compromises on functionality for a splashback with no joins – instead, a bookmatched design formed an almost butterfly-like effect’





### OPEN SPACE

A crittall screen and bookcases frame the dining area, helping to give this space a more intimate feel

‘We wanted a free-flowing design onto the living and dining areas, and also a kitchen that was a pleasure to cook in’

## STOCKISTS

### STRUCTURAL DESIGN AND WORK

Peek Architecture

### APPLIANCES

K186SAF30G fridge freezer, £929, Siemens. H 6860 BPX Pureline Cooking oven, £3,949; ESW 6214 Pureline Cooking warming drawer, £1,124; DGC6860X Artline Pureline Cooking combination oven, £5,799; EVS 6214 Pureline Cooking Sous Vide drawer, £2,499; KM6381 induction hob, £2,217, all Miele. Cache 900 push button and remote control stainless steel cooker hood, £910, Westin. For similar wine fridge, RW466364 wine storage, £POA, Gaggenau.

### FIXTURES AND FURNISHINGS

Form 6 and Form 2 black stained-oak cabinetry, £POA, Sola Kitchens. BL467694 Claron 550-U stainless steel sink, £658; BL219649 Steelart colander, £178, both Blanco. Pro3 Flex boiling water tap in stainless steel, £1,300, Quooker. Evolution 200 food waste disposal, £525, InSinkErator. Nero Marquina worktop and splashback, £POA, Neolith. For similar flooring, try Manhattan Grey matt lacquered oak flooring, £POA per sq. m, Trunk Surfaces. Screw bar stool, £450 each; Mirror Ball pendant light system, from £225; both Tom Dixon. Purevision PV5V multi fuel stove, £POA, Stonewoods. Crossing Maxi bookcase, £POA, Kryptonite. Marx Sealand sideboard, £POA, Elemental. Crittall doors and screen, £POA, D&R Design. Black dining table, around £2,104; Beetle dining chairs in Olive Green velvet, around £892 each, both Gubi.

For stockists see page 158

