

'It's worth PAYING EXTRA for bespoke'

Custom-made cabinetry and reflective surfaces have made Christine Robertson's basement kitchen a bright, practical space

FEATURE TRACEY WILLIAMS/DEBORAH OSBORNE-WALKER • PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX JAMES



Kitchen FACT FILE

THE OWNERS Christine Robertson and her husband James Mills, both lawyers

THE HOME A two-bedroom basement flat in a Victorian villa in north London

THE PROJECT Room extended and complete kitchen refit

PRICE GUIDE
£7,600

for a similar Kitchens Kitchens design, cabinetry only

CABINERY

The tailor-made American Black walnut-veneer base units and worktops by Kitchens Kitchens are shallow in depth to create more room in the small galley space. Burnt-orange accents complement the timber's rich tones and look striking against the Latte Parapan acrylic wall cupboards

AS SEEN IN
Beautiful
KITCHENS



DINING AREA

Tri-fold doors help increase the amount of light entering the room and when they're pulled back the kitchen and garden become one large area ideal for entertaining. These Ghost chairs also enhance the sense of space



When Christine Robertson and husband James Mills bought their north London basement flat, they knew immediately that the kitchen needed some work. Christine explains what they did...

What didn't you like about the kitchen?

Everything! It was dark, small and needed modernising. As we didn't have a dining room, we wanted to create a space where we could put a table. We had to make alterations to the rest of the flat, so the kitchen was part of the whole refurbishment.

Did you have a vision for the room?

James is Australian and I'm a New Zealander so we're both more used to open-plan and outdoor living. We wanted to try and recreate that sort of vibe within the confines of a basement flat in north London. Extending the kitchen was the obvious solution and, since the property was sold with planning permission for a large extension, we contacted architect Jenny Harborne of Imago Architects. However, she told us that the existing plans would mean sacrificing the entire garden. So we applied for planning permission for ▶

STORAGE

Beneath chunky Ocean Foam Caesarstone worktops, long, shallow drawers feature wooden pegs that help keep the couple's crockery chip-free and pristine



**HOW TO...
MAKE THE MOST OF A COMPACT KITCHEN**

- Keep everyday items close to hand in the kitchen and stow rarely used crockery in another area of your home, just as Christine and James have.
- Maximising storage is key in a small room. Although internal storage solutions such as magic corners and carousels will push your budget up, they are great for making sure that every conceivable space is utilised.
- Add a splash of colour to help lift a neutral scheme without making the room look closed in.
- Embrace the working triangle, as it will instantly simplify your design, then the rest of the room should just fall into place.

a smaller structure, which still fulfilled our needs and also left us with some garden, but it took an entire year to be granted.

Where did you find a designer?

We looked at various companies and not only was Kitchens Kitchens the most local to us, but its designer Peter Huberman came up with a layout that made the best use of our small space. We also liked that he was willing to work around our busy schedules. We're both city lawyers, so having someone happy to meet up outside office hours made things much easier for us.

What did you have in mind for the interiors?

We'd seen a walnut finish that we liked but knew we had to be careful if we wanted to

make the room brighter. So we paired bespoke walnut cabinetry with pale worktops, wall units and off-white walls, which are great for displaying pieces we've collected on our travels. Our home is very much about places we've visited, so it has a modern-eclectic look.

How have you maximised the space?

Instead of hanging cupboards on the wall opposite the window, Peter left it cabinetry free to make the room look less closed in. However, this meant that he had to come up with clever storage solutions, such as corner units and pull-out cupboards, in order to accommodate all our day-to-day items. Luckily, we have three storage vaults at the front of the flat – which used to be coal cellars – where we keep the

things that only come out a few times a year, such as large serving platters.

Now that it's finished, have the changes improved the way you live?

Yes, everything has turned out much better than we imagined and functions brilliantly. We're also delighted with the general feeling of light and space, and now have a more flexible kitchen that we use all the time. It really was worth paying extra for bespoke cabinetry, because it makes the most of the compact area and also gave us something that was unique and personal. Best of all, we love the fact that we now have a dining area that leads seamlessly onto the patio, which means we can entertain like true Antipodeans! 🍷

APPLIANCES

With wall space at a premium, an undercounter fridge and freezer were the best options



STORAGE

Not an inch of space is wasted, and this fold-back door makes access to pots and pans quick and easy



EXTENSION

A small structure was built in order to create space for an informal dining area. 'The planning was unbelievably long but once we got started, it took about three months to complete,' says Christine



SHOP THE LOOK

CABINETRY

- Bespoke American Black walnut-veneer slab furniture and Latte Parapan acrylic hi-gloss units by Kitchens Kitchens. A similar kitchen, cabinetry only, costs **£7,600**

WORKSURFACES

- 60mm Ocean Foam Caesarstone. Price per sq m **£560**

SPLASHBACK

- Burnt orange back-painted glass, Abbas Glass & Mirror. Price per sq m **£336**

FLOORING

- Porcelain tiles, for similar, try Vision 30 x 60cm, Homebase. Price for a pack of five **£27.99**

APPLIANCES

- Built-under single oven, Neff **£576**
- Built-in microwave, Neff **£456**
- Canopy extractor hood, Neff **£312**
- Fully integrated undercounter fridge, Neff, **£324**
- Fully integrated undercounter freezer, Neff **£360**
- Fully integrated dishwasher, Neff **£519**

SINK AND TAP

- Kubus KBX 110 34 undermounted single-bowl sink in stainless steel, Franke **£190**
- URSA single-lever monobloc mixer tap in chrome, Abode **£76**

FINISHING TOUCHES

- Dining table, for similar, try Arlington extending, Multiyork **£1,199**
- Kartell Louis Ghost chairs by Philippe Starck, Heal's, each **£190**
- Round mirror, for similar, try Decorative Mirrors Online, from around **£200**
- Morning Light emulsion, Dulux. Price per 2.5 litres **£24.99**

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 127

**3 GET THE LOOK
Orange accessories**



HABITAT
Add colour to your table with the Cymbal placemat, **£3.50**

BHS
Start your day with a brew in an Essentials teapot, **£15**



VERY
You won't want to hide this stylish Swan bin away, **£32**

PULL-OUT UNIT

Containing oils, spices and condiments, this slender food store is perfectly positioned next to the Neff induction hob and built-under oven