



'IT ALWAYS BRIGHTENS YOUR DAY WHEN YOU WALK IN'

Valentina and Ashley Gross have updated their existing kitchen with a practical, vibrant new look

Feature & styling **DILLY ORME** Photography **ANNA STATHAKI**

WHAT WAS WRONG WITH YOUR ORIGINAL SPACE?

The main dining room was separate from the kitchen, and because Ashley is a chef and loves to cook, it felt much more inclusive to combine the two spaces, so that we could be together as a family and interact with guests at the same time as cooking. We also wanted to include a breakfast bar so the kids could do their homework alongside us while we prepared food.

HOW DID YOU PLAN TO CHANGE THINGS UP?

We wanted it to be more open plan, to include a large dining table for entertaining, and be more 'us'

overall, so more colourful and vivid. The plan was to knock through to the dining room, keeping the existing kitchen where it was but to enhance it with our own decorating choices.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED ON THE DESIGN?

I knew that we wanted to tackle various design projects throughout the house, so I looked into finding a suitable interior designer. The companies I was coming across online were very traditional, but when I discovered Slightly Quirky, I loved the originality and vibrance of their designs. I met with Caroline and we clicked straight away - she →



SAVVY REVAMP
It made good economic sense for the couple to keep their existing contemporary white units, adding personality and colour with a bank of bespoke yellow cabinets in the same style built-in to the previously unused space. Bold blue-and-white floor tiles complete the look

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BEFORE

THE PROJECT DETAILS

MEET THE RENOVATORS

Valentina Gross lives here with her husband Ashley, a chef, children Astrid, 10 and Diego, 5, and dogs Orinoco and Shadow

MAKEOVER BRIEF

To update their existing kitchen with a small reconfiguration and new decorating scheme, knocking through to the dining room to create a larger open-plan family space

PROJECT COSTS:

Cabinetry **£6,000** Worktops **£4,000** Furniture **£3,000**
Floor tiles **£1,500** Lighting **£550** Wallpaper **£222**

TOTAL SPEND:

£15,272

RECONFIGURED SPACE

To create the breakfast bar, the original lower units were carefully kept when the far wall was knocked through then repurposed, with the existing Corian worktop extended and new gas hob positioned to allow for sociable interaction with guests in the dining area

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was excited to use the colour palette we had discussed, and then came up with some really inspiring mood boards, so we went from there.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS OF WORKING WITH AN INTERIOR DESIGNER LIKE?

I really appreciated Caroline's support as she listened to what I wanted and came up with great, practical solutions – whether it was finding the right person to do a certain job, like the upholstered bench, or the perfect shade of sunny yellow for the units.

DID YOU HAVE ANY MUST-HAVES FOR THE SCHEME?

As well as being light, bright and open.

I wanted the new space to be much more colourful, while reusing as much of the existing kitchen as possible, as it was pretty much brand new when we moved in.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE YOUR BUDGET?

We had an overall amount for all the renovations we wanted to do in the house, but opting for bespoke cabinetry ate into a lot of the budget. So we had to be resourceful to pull everything together at the end, which Caroline was really good at.

WERE THERE ANY DISASTERS ALONG THE WAY?

We had wanted to keep the original →

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↑ **FAMILY FAVE** Oval 6.2ltr cast iron
in Graduated Red £99 ProCook

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FEATURE WALL →

The floral wallpaper was removed at first then rehung as Valentina missed the joy it brought to the space. It creates a fabulous focal point in the dining area, where a vivid upholstered bench works well for entertaining and family gatherings

induction hob, but when we were using the burners, it blew up! The price to mend it was half the price of buying the same one new, so we opted for a new gas hob, which we both much prefer to cook on.

WHAT WERE YOUR BEST MONEY-SAVING IDEAS?

Being able to reutilise the original units was key, and we even spray-painted some to tie-in with the bespoke bank of cupboards. Aside from the new hob we also kept all the appliances, and worked them into the new design.

HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

To have more realistic time expectations! I thought the project would take around three months to complete, but it ended up taking at least six, although we did change a few things along the way.

HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW THAT IT'S ALL FINISHED?

I love it. Before, the room was difficult to entertain in, but now we have space not only for all the family but to host get-togethers, which is just brilliant. 🍷



SHOPPING LIST

Bespoke yellow **cabinets**, £6,000; Corian **worktop**, £4,000; bespoke **bench seat**, made and upholstered by John Miller Upholstery with Mantara Cobalt faux leather, £44 per m, Designers Guild, all supplied by Slightly Quirky. Helix Blue **floor tiles**, £45.60 per sqm, Mandarin Stone. Summer Garden **wallpaper**, £222 per two-roll set, Milton & King. Whitby **bar stools**, £129 for two, John Lewis & Partners. For a similar **dining table**, try the Waney-Stöng table with metal legs, £1,989, Konk Furniture. For similar **dining chairs**, try the Lara wishbone, £139 each, Dunelm. For similar **pendant lights**, try the Ted in blue, £12.50; Azur lemon **side plate** in yellow, £12.50; glazed **plant pots**, from a selection, all Oliver Bonas. Swan four-slice **toaster**, £64.80, Wayfair