

Heart of glass

A curvy island with a light-reflecting worktop provides a striking centrepiece to the McKenzies' contemporary scheme

FEATURE HAYLEY GILBERT • PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID STILL



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Kitchen FACT FILE



THE FAMILY Yvonne and Neil McKenzie, co-directors of an IT PR and marketing agency, live with their daughters

Jazzy, 15, and Jade, 13, plus cats Minx and Teo

THE HOME A five-bedroom detached Arts and Crafts house in north London

THE PROJECT Open-plan extension that brings indoors and outdoors together

PRICE GUIDE
£16,500

for similar Systemat Art 5090 units in Antique White by Hacker at The Little Kitchen Store, cabinetry only, Island (including worktop) by UrbnRok at GlassEco, £30,000

OPEN-PLAN LAYOUT

This extension was completed in just four months and is ideal for indoor/outdoor living. Its size has allowed the couple to feature a large bespoke island from UrbnRok by GlassEco in the centre, with Antique White Systemat Art 5090 cabinetry by Hacker from The Little Kitchen Store against the walls

Yvonne and Neil McKenzie weren't short on ambition when they set about creating their dream kitchen. Having moved into their detached Arts and Crafts home in north London six years ago, with daughters Jazzy and Jade, the couple couldn't wait to start designing a new space. The project involved extending the ground floor into the garden, bringing the outdoors in with bi-fold doors.

'It's a good-sized house,' explains Yvonne, 'but I wanted our kitchen to be at its heart. The children do their homework in here while I'm preparing dinner and we thought it would be nice to have one huge space, where guests can drink and chat when we're entertaining, rather than be shut off from the hosts.'

Designed by architects Alan Cox and Associates, and built by local firm Cox Format, the extension was swiftly finished, which meant the next step was the kitchen itself. Yvonne had done her research and the simplicity of the handleless, hi-gloss cabinetry led her to The Little Kitchen Store, which ▶

Real inspiration Mosaic-topped gloss white

designed, supplied and installed most of the furniture. 'I liked the clean look of cabinetry's huge linear doors,' says Yvonne.

While the units were being fitted by kitchen designer Parag Keshani and his team, Yvonne commissioned another company to create a curvaceous island unit. However, after months of waiting, the cabinetry failed to arrive. As a result, the couple faced the challenge of entertaining at Christmas in half a kitchen, as they were unable to source worktops until the island was in place. 'We had to make do with hardboard surfaces,' recalls Yvonne. 'The girls painted the concrete floor pink, we covered the worktops with food and wine, dressed the room in fabrics and partied on. Little did we know that we wouldn't have a completed kitchen for another seven months.'

FINDING A WORKSURFACE

This delay did have an unexpected benefit – Yvonne tracked down a company able to make the worktops she'd dreamed of. 'I'd been inspired by a mosaic table,' explains Yvonne. 'However, everyone I approached said it would be impractical and unhygienic to have worksurfaces in this material, so I embarked on a mosaic course and found that they were probably right. Rather than be totally put off, I continued my hunt and, after searching on the internet, I stumbled upon UrbnRok by GlassEco, which reclaims mirrors and glass, and turns them into worktops. After months of research, I couldn't believe that I'd finally found the people who could realise my vision.'

Yvonne asked UrbnRok's Donald Crawley to create worktops for her units, and the as yet nonexistent island, and fortunately ▶



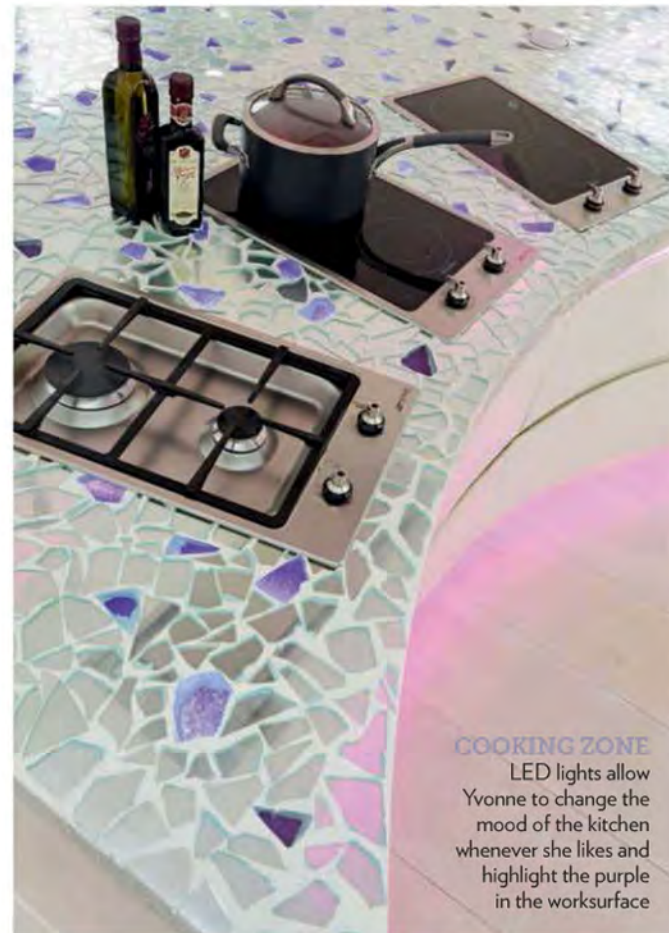
APPLIANCES

Yvonne chose a Fisher & Paykel multifunction double oven and a three-door fridge-freezer. 'It's very wide inside,' she says, 'so is superb for storing large dishes for barbecues and parties'



STORAGE

The Little Kitchen Store cabinetry included neat storage options, such as this pull-out cutlery tray that sits inside one of the drawers



COOKING ZONE

LED lights allow Yvonne to change the mood of the kitchen whenever she likes and highlight the purple in the worksurface

CEILING DETAIL

Above the central workstation, a curved design mirrors the sweeping island, while a ceiling-mounted extractor by WS Westin sits over the domino hobs



Advice from the OWNERS

DO your research and get to know the market thoroughly, so that you gain the confidence to buy the kitchen that you want. No one can know better than you what will work for your family.

DON'T give up on your dream. Everyone we approached said it would be impractical to have mirrored mosaic worktops. We persisted and eventually found exactly what we were after.

DO buy good-quality appliances. We hunted ours down on the internet for the best price after looking around.



SINK AREA

An Oxygen Hi-Tech Pro tap by Gessi and In-Sink-Erator hot-water tap are teamed with a round-bowl sink by Smeg beside the hob for convenience

he agreed. 'Yvonne and I worked out the design and made the moulds,' Donald says. 'Then she came to the factory to decide on the ratio between glass and mirror, down to the precise size of the shards. She knew just what she wanted.'

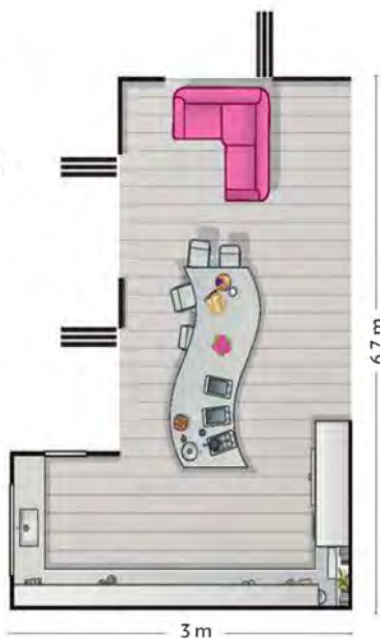
As the pair worked together to create the perfect worktop, Yvonne told Donald about the problems she'd had with her island. 'I explained that I wanted a unit that would be a bit like a stage,' she says. 'Somewhere I could cook behind and pretend to be on *MasterChef* while looking out at my garden, which is south-facing and sunny.'

EVERYTHING INTO PLACE

Donald suggested he make the island to Yvonne's specifications – not the sort of project he'd usually take on. 'We played around with various ideas and nothing was too much for him. I've never dealt with anyone as accommodating or helpful,' says Yvonne.

Eventually they found a solution and with the hi-gloss island in place, LED lighting was added throughout the room to allow Yvonne to change the colour of the space, depending on her mood or the time of year. The simple good looks of the cabinetry have given Yvonne scope to reflect her and her family's personalities through features such as the worktops, art and chandeliers.

'I wanted the space to be ultra-modern, slick and sophisticated with a strong element of fun,' concludes Yvonne, 'which captures the mood of our house and everyone in it. The process has been a real roller coaster of emotions, but we're all in love with the kitchen and very proud of it. Just as we planned, it's becoming a bit of a party room and is definitely right at the heart of the home.'



SHOP THE LOOK

CABINETRY

■ **Handleless Antique White glass-fronted Systemat Art 5090 cabinetry** by Hacker from The Little Kitchen Store. Price for a similar kitchen, cabinetry only **£16,500**. Bespoke **hi-gloss island** (including worktop), UrbnRok by GlassEco **£30,000**

WORKSURFACES

■ **Bespoke recycled-glass worktops**, UrbnRok by GlassEco. Price per linear m **£800**

FLOORING

■ **Engineered unfinished oak boards** in Ice White, ESB Wood Flooring. Price per sq m **£72**

APPLIANCES

- Built-in **double oven**, Fisher & Paykel **£1,299**
- **Freestanding microwave and grill**, Panasonic **£160**
- 2 x **Classic domino induction hobs**, Smeg, each **£530**
- **Classic domino gas hob**, Smeg **£258**
- **Stratus Compact ceiling extractor** in stainless steel, WS Westin **£1,489**
- **Integrated three-door fridge freezer**, Fisher & Paykel **£1,900**
- **Integrated wine cooler**, Samsung **£259**
- **Fully integrated dishwasher**, Bosch **£620**

SINKS AND TAPS

- **Undermounted round-bowl sink** in stainless steel, Smeg **£345**
- **Rotondo undermounted single-bowl sink** in stainless steel, Franke **£230**
- 2 x **Oxygen Hi-Tech Pro taps** with pull-out spray in chrome, Gessi, each **£475**
- **Hot- and cold-filtered water tap** in chrome, In-Sink-Erator **£409**
- **Waste disposal unit**, In-Sink-Erator **£231**
- **Waste disposal unit**, In-Sink-Erator **£150**

FINISHING TOUCHES

- **Bar stools**, for similar, try Devalo, Atlantic Shopping, each **£139.50**
- **Pink sofa**, for similar, try Dream Velvet in raspberry, Graham and Green, from **£1,895**
- **Chandeliers**, Decorex, each **£495**
- **Graffi-tea nine-cups square wall art** by George Iannou, Art2Art **£369**
- **Nouvelles Marilyn wall sticker**, John Lewis **£22**
- **X-Fire 1000 electric fire** with mirror frame, Acquisitions of London **£1,499**
- **Eat Drink Party signs**, HomeSense, each **£12**
- **Clock**, HomeSense **£90**
- **Fruit bowl**, for similar, try Alessi Mediterraneo, John Lewis **£72**
- **Decorative hooks**, for similar, try Flower Design Glass, Graham and Green, each **£4.25**
- **Walls** in Pure Brilliant White **matte emulsion**, Dulux. Price per 2.5 litres **£14**

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