

## **Kbbreview Industry Awards 2007**

### **CATEGORY: Designer Award for Kitchens - project cost up to £25k**

#### **FINALIST: Katalin Balazs**

##### **What was the full brief from the client?**

The client had a property in Notting Hill, London. The kitchen was planned to be in a space reclaimed from a small courtyard and became part of the main living space. A glass roof was planned above the kitchen area, which serves as a terrace floor a level above.

The brief included the following aims:

- Plain, minimalist design, aesthetic beauty both from the living room and from above. This is a rather unusual design requirement.
- Large cooking surface, oven and microwave combination oven - but not to be seen!
- Large cold storage and reasonable freezer space.
- Make space for the boiler and disguise it completely
- Client is a serious cook; good surface for preparation and also for entertaining.
- The Cook should be able to face party guests
- Make space for washing machine and give good storage for spices and cooking utensils

##### **What was the overall budget, including installation, and how did you manage it?**

The Budget did change over time. When I met the client first time he planned to spend around £25k or more. There was a time lag in the design and sale process about a year. When the client returned his budget was under £20k. I took an approach to satisfy the design requirements and gave several options to meet his needs on the budget. The main area of potential compromise was the worktop and the worktop-wall units. (units between the all wall units and the worktop) I sold the project without worktops first, then the client came back to order the worktops - the very beautiful and expensive Quarella Bianco Luciente. Looking back; the client had a personal journey in decision making (he had started a new company and passed stages of major life change.) Eventually the final budget was £21,500 and we met all his requirements. The extractor was ordered by the client himself. His budget - including the extractor was under £25K

##### **Describe the final design and, in detail, the design process**

I worked very closely with the client who is a sporty and young looking single business man in his 40s. Main and unusual challenge of this design was the glass roof and the open plan setting. We had to create a view which is as pleasing from above then from the living room as well. It had to be obviously a well functioning kitchen which does not show all the technical details of a kitchen

(i.e. oven, microwave) from outside.

The client fell in love with the handles free furniture which itself brought design challenges. One of these is that we cannot use a combination fridge-freezer.

Our aim was to create a plain view with a wow effect, balanced and stimulating at the same time. We decided to use high gloss lacquered furniture with Quarella Bianco Luciente worktops. The drama and wow effect was created via the contrast between the white furniture and worktops and the bold red glass splash backs.

The shape of the space called for a main run and an island. Putting the cooking function on the island met the aim to allow the cook to face the guests while completing final touches of his cooking before serving.

The oven and the microwave combination oven are fitted under the worktop inside the island. The client was happy to make the compromise and have an under worktop oven rather than this being seen from the living room. So although these appliances are not seen from the living room they are positioned very handily for the cook.

The glass roof created a major issue for the extraction technology. We could not hang anything from above and could not duct through the ceiling. The only and the best solution was the Wolf down draft extractor. Fortunately the design process was much before the construction work so we could have planned the ducting to be placed between the joists and under the main run of the kitchen. The Wolf extractor efficiency depends on the ducting as all extractors, but its capacity and size is much larger. Due to great collaboration with the client and his builders we worked out a good solution. The extractor was fitted with an external motor fitted on the roof/terrace. There is a corner (side of the roof) which is solid where the motor and duct could be positioned.

From an aesthetic point of view the down draft extractor was the ideal solution as well, because we could create an open view without the destruction of a hanging extractor cutting into the space and the drama of the back wall.

I very much wanted to create symmetry on the back wall. So the boiler was positioned into the left hand corner. (We had space, so we could afford to pull the whole run forward by 150mm. We had enough space to cover the boiler and we also gained extra deep worktops to offer worktop-wall units for storage.) On the right hand end - we have an integrated fridge and some storage above. Wide fillers at both ends finish the view and support the impression of a 'recessed' kitchen wall. The glass roof's metal support is above this area, which later was built in with plasterboard. The final result is very impressive.

Between the tall units we also managed to create symmetry. The washing machine and dishwasher are at the two ends. A storage drawer pack is in the centre, with the sink and bin-unit on either side. This area is not only pleasing but very practical as well. It offers sufficient preparation area and space for the always needed kettle and toaster as well.

A final issue was the freezer which eventually found its place in the island. Due to the furniture's technical characteristic this challenged the fitter who was smart enough to work out the right solution. Thus the island hosts all the cooking appliances; oven, microwave combination oven, hob, extractor and the freezer. It still could offer sufficient storage under the hob in the 120cm wide drawers. Looking at from the living room the island is plain - based on four times 60 cm units with the continuous handle free channel running all around including the sides.

The result is simplicity, beauty with drama and a very practical cooking space created for a satisfied client.

