

ORGANISED TO *perfection*

When Yvonne and Warren Chester set out to renovate their kitchen, it was all in the detail – they even measured their crockery so it would fit the open shelving just right

Words and styling: **Anna Tobin** Photography: **Rachael Smith**



The property's architecture largely dictated the **kitchen design**, from Neptune. Yvonne and Warren got the idea for the open shelving from a magazine – their design is a contemporary take on a Victorian dresser.



The FACTS

Who? Yvonne and Warren Chester
What? Renovation of a four-bedroom Victorian terraced townhouse, including a new kitchen
Where? West Sussex
Cost? £46,500
Time? 18 months

With their children having flown the nest, Yvonne and Warren Chester decided it was time for a change of scenery. They lived in a Kent oast house, but decided to move into the heart of a town with restaurants and theatres close by.

“When we noticed this Victorian townhouse, it was already under offer – but we decided to look at it anyway,” Yvonne says. “The original buyers pulled out as soon as they saw the survey, so we went for it.” Once a doctor’s surgery and then a child guidance clinic, the front room has seen a lot of footfall over time and remains the heart of the home. “We had to take it back to its bare bones and uncovered years of history,” Yvonne says. Here, she reveals how they reconfigured the ground floor to create a classic-contemporary kitchen-diner that celebrates the home’s past, yet is a practical and stylish too...

How did you get the renovation going?

We employed architect Angus Eitel at Fiftyoneeight Architecture and Interiors, because he was working on the house next door and was familiar with the building’s construction. We asked him to maximise the flow of light into the kitchen and dining room, and bring daylight into a basement below. He designed a small fully-glazed extension over what was a coal hole and incorporated a light well into the floor.

What about the kitchen design?

I was very hands on. Until recently I worked full-time in the City – this was the first time I’d had the chance to be creative in years and I found it rejuvenating. Both Warren and I are manically organised and having designed and lived with a few kitchens, we knew exactly what we wanted. The space lent itself to units on either side of an island, but we focused on the detail. I listed every single item and allocated where it would go, even down to coffee cups. We also needed enough room to open the dishwasher, pivot on heel and put everything away. The whole plan was put together from the perspective of what we would do every day. We were also very specific for the appliances and chose a mix of Miele and Neff, because we’ve had them before, and made room for a Quooker tap because it’s so handy.

How did you decide on the style of cabinetry?

We saw the open shelving in a magazine. We used to have everything neatly behind doors, so loved the idea of having our kitchenware on display. We thought it would look effective to create a wall of shelves up to the ceiling – a contemporary take on a Victorian dresser. We even measured our glasses and crockery to ensure each shelf was perfect. We’re fans of a more classic look, so we chose Neptune in Hove for the kitchen design. They make everything to measure which was a bonus as the walls are not very straight – a quirk of the property’s age. When the designer did a site visit, we gave him our plans and left him to work. He positioned the plinths and wiring and showed us where we could fit wine racks in, so we added that to our design, too.

Tell us about the colour scheme...

Our previous house was very white, so we were keen to have lots of bold shades. We opted for navy blue because it punches out the skirting and architraves and sets off our art. The worktops are white granite featuring a slight pattern so as not to show up fingerprints.

Is there anything you would have done differently?

Our aim was to get it perfect, so we can enjoy living here for at least another 20 years. We went over budget and time, but with our attention to detail, got it right and are really pleased with the result. >



Placing the **sink**, from Neptune, at the top of the island leaves a bulk of the work surface free for preparing, serving and eating, while the Quooker **boiling-water tap** avoids the need for a kettle. Barstools, Neptune; **pendants**, Heal’s; **fridge-freezer**, Samsung; **porcelain floor tiles**, Tile Giant.

left from top The deep and wide drawers beneath the hob keep cooking utensils to hand; a wine rack has been created out of what would have been dead space alongside the **oven and warming drawer**, from Miele; the units beneath the **hob**, from Neff, have been built out to provide additional worktop space as well as open shelving either side of the hob.



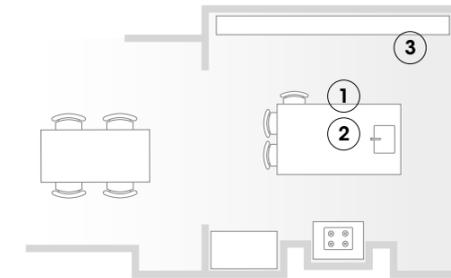
Yvonne itemised and measured everything to be stored on the open-shelving and then designed the width and height of each shelf so that there would be a place for everything. To break up and lighten the unit, the couple chose a mix of unpainted oak and painted shelving. **Cabinetry**, Neptune.



The PLANS

Yvonne and Warren reconfigured the ground floor to create a classic-contemporary kitchen.

- 1 Dishwasher** This has been placed to allow for easy rinsing and quick unloading.
- 2 Island** The worktop overhang creates a neat breakfast bar with room for stools on two sides.
- 3 Ladder** Integrated into the design of the open shelving, it make it easy for the couple to access items stored on the top shelves.



SOURCEBOOK

Architect Fiftypointeight Architecture and Interiors 01243 323 009 fiftypointeight.co.uk

Kitchen Neptune 01793 427450, neptune.com

Appliances Hob, Neff 0344 892 8989 neff-home.com; Oven, Miele 0330 160 6600 miele.co.uk; Fridge-freezer Samsung 0333 000 0333 samsung.com

Tap Quooker 0345 8333 555 quooker.co.uk

Flooring Tile Giant 0345 307 5000 tilegiant.co.uk

Worktops Neptune, as before

For full stockist information, see page 142

Yvonne and Warren **Painted** the walls in the dining area in Neptune's Navy matt emulsion and placed a thick pile rug beneath the table to turn the dining area into the cosiest part of the kitchen. **Dining table**, Scumble Goose; **chairs**, Heals; **chandelier**, Elstead Lighting.



EDITOR'S PICK

design edit

- 1** Golden Oak polished wood effect porcelain tiles, £20.37 per sq m, Walls and Floors. wallsandfloors.co.uk
- 2** Medium Cowbell pendant light, £95, Loaf.loaf.com
- 3** Oxford Navy chalk furniture paint, £21.95 for 1 litre, [Annie Sloan.anniesloan.com](http://AnnieSloan.anniesloan.com)
- 4** Bembridge barstool, £195, Garden Trading. gardentrading.co.uk