

Feature by Tanshi Ahmed

Photography by Helen Galloway

# grand opening

Spacious doesn't have to mean soulless, as the Clayton's inviting kitchen proves. Find out how to recreate their eloquent classic style.



Some houses are more than just a place to live, taking on a major renovation can become almost a vocation. This is certainly the case with Gini and Dave Clayton's detached property in a sleepy Kent cul-de-sac. With admirable dedication, they have managed to extend it, gut the interior and create an enormous kitchen, all in the space of a year. "The previous owners had done little to the house in the 28 years they had lived here; wood chip covered every wall, magnolia paint came as standard and the kitchen itself was small and unexciting," says Gini. "So, to accommodate our girls, Charlotte, eleven, and Natalie, seven, not to mention Tara the dog and Lucky the cat, it was top priority to complete the new kitchen, although it was sometimes hard to keep positive, especially when things went wrong," she adds.

**above** Old and new styles sit seamlessly side-by-side - Maytag's ZigZag fridge freezer is flanked by beautiful cat's paw pippy oak units.

**right** Contemporary bar stools offer Dave and Gini a comfortable place to relax while enjoying a glass of wine.



## kitchen profile

Painted white Loxley units and pale travertine flooring are beautifully contrasted with warm tones of cat's paw pippy oak, matching turned pillars and sleek Volga blue granite worksurfaces in this vast, bespoke kitchen by New Leaf Interiors. Combining classic and contemporary influences, and a blend of textures and materials to meet all its owners' aesthetic and practical requirements, the resulting design offers a supremely desirable and welcoming space for all the family to enjoy.

New Leaf Interiors, 140 High Street, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0LZ. Tel: 020 8776 1712. Kitchens cost from around £15,000.



Gini, Charlotte and Natalie love the new hub of their home, where they now spend most of their together.

Lat ted oak blinds and matching plinths bring warmth to the pale Loxley units and travertine flooring.

Durable Volga blue granite was chosen for its subtle iridescent flecks which twinkle in the light.



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“The island is the most successful element; it’s practical, versatile and very social.”

To create the necessary space for busy family life, the kitchen was extended by two thirds and a utility room added at the far end. The couple spent a long time deciding on the actual look they wanted, trawling through many magazines. After much deliberation, they opted for help from New Leaf Interiors’ designer Jonathan Reynolds. “We wanted a mixture of old and new,” explains Dave. “As the kitchen is so big, we were afraid that one shade would look too uniform and bland, so

we chose various materials and wood treatments, which bring a warm, homely feel.”

Jonathan’s scheme fuses white-painted Loxley units with sections of rich, cat’s paw pippy oak. The Britannia range oven is framed with an impressive mantle. Either side, handy spice cupboards are positioned at eye-level, along with adjoining glass-panelled wall cabinets. A run of base units spans the wall underneath two windows overlooking the garden, while, opposite, floor-to-ceiling oak

cupboards surround the large Maytag Zigzag fridge freezer. In-between the windows is a flat-fronted LCD TV. “We needed a room where the whole family could spend time together, so we put the television in to allow the girls to watch their favourite programmes while dining at the island,” says Gini. There’s also an integrated sound system; the cause of many arguments between Dave and his daughters about the choice of music.

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A mix of hammered-iron knobs and iron bow handles complete the classic scheme.

The sizeable island dominates the centre of the room. Rejecting a totally solid option, it has cupboards and a wine rack at one end, and, at the other, a table complete with turned oak legs and four contemporary bar stools. "I think the island is the most successful element of the kitchen; it's practical for food preparation but it's also a social area – very versatile," says Jonathan.

To contrast with the white units and pale travertine floor tiles, the couple opted for an eye-catching Volga blue granite for the worktops; so called because the black of the stone is punctuated by what looks like butterflies' wings of iridescent blue. Dave, in particular, loves it and even had blue halogen lights installed to pick out the colour.

Now that the kitchen has been ticked off their 'to do' list, Dave and Gini can sit back and enjoy at least one part of their house. "The wait has certainly been worth it," she smiles.

**below** Comprising preparation, storage and dining space, the multi-functional island suits the Claytons' lifestyle, perfectly.

**below left** Franke's Triflo Corinthian mixer tap elegantly arches over the ceramic Belfast sink.

**below far left** A slim-line, sectioned utensils drawer ensures all cutlery is kept organised and easily accessible.

