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VERY WELL CONNECTED

Each zone flows seamlessly into the other in Sarah and Bill's new open-plan space

The multifunctional room is loosely divided into three zones for cooking, dining and relaxing. In the kitchen area, a bank of floor-to-ceiling, white lacquered units occupies an entire wall to enhance the feeling of light, while a curved island softens the linear scheme and echoes furniture in the living space



DESIGN & CABINETRY

- Stuart Manger at **Increation**, 16 Pixley Street, London E14 7DF (020 7987 8328) www.increation.net
- Bespoke Zebrano veneer furniture with Off White 9010 lacquered MDF cabinetry

WORKTOPS

- 30mm Mahogany Brown Zodiaq. Total cost **£5,000**

SINK & TAP

- BlancoClaron 500-U undermounted single-bowl sink in stainless steel, Blanco **£444**
- Axor Citterio single-lever monobloc mixer tap in stainless steel, Hansgrohe **£429**
- ISE65 waste disposal unit, In-Sink-Erator **£316**

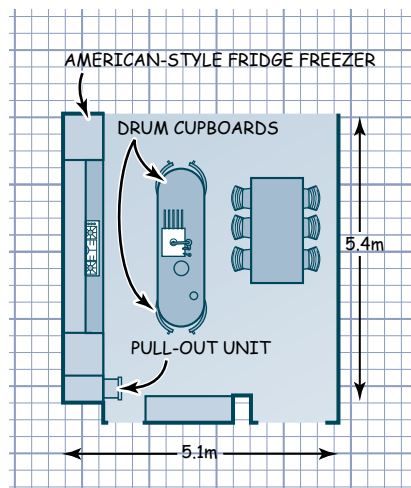
APPLIANCES (shown)

- BX280 built-in double oven, Gaggenau **£6,138**
- KG49 I five-burner gas hob, Gaggenau **£2,700**
- ELIBLOCHT 80 canopy extractor hood in stainless steel, Elica **£209**
- E522B freestanding American-style fridge freezer, Fisher & Paykel **£1,116**

APPLIANCES (not shown)

- Fully integrated dishwasher, Bosch **£525**

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GUIDE PRICE

- Starting price for an Increation design **£20,000**

A growing family is what prompted Sarah and Bill Hutchings to move from a small, three-bedroom house to their current two-storey Edwardian home in north London. ‘We needed more space with an all-important garden for our two boys, Oliver, eight, and Alex, seven, and we were lucky enough to find the perfect property very quickly,’ explains Sarah. ‘As soon as we viewed this house, we knew it ticked all the boxes; it was what I would call a classic London property. It had been modernised by a developer but the interior was very basic, with a boring flatpack kitchen in a dingy, average-sized room.’

Four years later, and with their third child, Benjamin, now 11 months, on the way, Sarah and Bill decided to add a large extension downstairs to create an open-plan space that would accommodate a new kitchen, dining and living area. ‘We naively went into the project believing that we could continue living in the house while the decorating and building work went on. We did, and I can categorically state that we’d never do it again,’ laughs Sarah.

With the roomy extension completed, the couple were able to turn their thoughts to the kitchen layout. ‘We wanted an attractive and functional design that connected with the rest of the space,’ explains Sarah. Following a recommendation by their architect, Andrew Ross at Area Designs, Sarah and Bill visited Increation to talk through their ideas. ‘We clicked with the company’s way of thinking straight away and we liked its portfolio,’ recalls Sarah. ‘Designer Stuart Manger was a good listener and never imposed his own views on us, so we felt that he was on our wavelength.’

One of the main problems they faced was the fact that, even with the extension, the rooms in their house weren’t particularly wide. ‘It was a case of including a kitchen that felt generous, without compromising the restricted space we were working with,’ remembers Sarah. Inspired by the newly landscaped garden, visible through large bi-folding glass doors, Sarah and Bill opted for a clean, minimalist design, including white floor-to-ceiling units running along one wall and a large, timber-veneered island. ‘We agonised over the island, contemplating how long, high and wide we should make it so that it maximised the space and I think we’ve got it just right,’ says Sarah. ‘We initially came up with a crescent-shaped design but we dispensed with that idea as it would have felt too crowded and we were counting every millimetre.’

Sarah and Bill then asked John Cullen Lighting to design an energy efficient system for the space. ‘With just the press of a button you can completely transform the mood in any of the three zones,’ enthuses Sarah. ‘When we had it installed, it felt like an unnecessary luxury but we absolutely love it now and think it was worth every penny.’

The Hutchings family can all fit comfortably into the new, open-plan space and they enjoy chilling out together. ‘I love the way the kitchen integrates with the rest of the room,’ adds Sarah. ‘It really makes cooking a pleasure.’ **BK**



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LEFT Hard-wearing Zodiaq composite stone in Mahogany Brown complements the Zebrano veneer island. ‘It looks great but you have to wipe water away immediately as it marks – so it was probably not the best choice for a busy family,’ admits Sarah. The BlancoClaron sink, used for food preparation, is furnished with a Hansgrohe single-lever, stainless-steel mixer tap and a handy Franke soap dispenser. A waste disposal system has also been thoughtfully incorporated into the unit, along with a discreet Evoline Power Port bank of sockets that rises out of the worktop and can be pushed back down after use. ‘It’s great for gadgets and small appliances,’ says Sarah

CENTRE LEFT Beside the hob, a bespoke compartmentalised knife drawer neatly arranges the couple’s utensils. ‘They gave me their kitchen knives and I went away and designed a solid maple interior specific to the size of each one,’ explains Increation’s Stuart Manger

BELOW LEFT Sarah stores her glassware at one end of the island. She didn’t want handles spoiling the clean lines, so she opted for push-open doors instead. The base of the workstation is recessed to appear as though it is floating

The cabinetry’s geometric detailing mirrors the extra-large Buxy Noisete ceramic flooring from Surface Tiles. ‘Smaller tiles just wouldn’t have worked visually,’ explains Sarah. A deep-red glass splashback injects a rich burst of colour into an otherwise calm, neutral scheme

