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# Black, white and red all over

Small and dark became light and airy when this Hampstead kitchen underwent a transformation

By [unreadable]

The trend for dark wood kitchens is now a well-established one but when Eva Pascoe was choosing her new Neil Lerner kitchen, she was ahead of the game. "I saw lots of zebrano furniture about and as I've always wanted a dark kitchen, I asked Neil whether it would be possible to use a similar timber," she says. The result was her kitchen of dramatic contrasts.

Eva wanted a kitchen that was not so much minimalist as discrete, with clean lines throughout. Neil's response to this was to use a Macassar ebony finish on the units and island alongside white composite stone worktops. In addition, he chose white glass instead of tiles for the splashback. "I have a lot of dark furniture elsewhere in the house," says Eva, "so the Macassar complemented this perfectly." At 100mm thick, the island's composite worktop is substantial but this gives it the look of a freestanding piece of furniture in its own right.

*"I wanted something that wasn't too 'kitchen-y'. A room that was part of the living space and open plan"*

What immediately draws the eye on entering the kitchen, though, is the bright red extractor hood. This Japanese-influenced touch is Eva's homage to the many years her husband lived in Tokyo. "It's not a deliberate Japanese theme but the house does have touches like this throughout," Eva explains. ▶

**Left:** Removing the original chimney breast made room for a range cooker and feature extractor hood

**Q&A: HOMEOWNER****What did you want from the kitchen design?**

"I wanted something that wasn't too 'kitchen-y'. A room that was part of the living space and open plan."

**What's your favourite design feature?**

"I love the dark colours and the way they contrast with the white glass and red extractor hood."

**Is there anything you'd change about the kitchen?**

"No, everything worked out really well. It's great."

**Left:** The large window floods the kitchen with natural light and the island unit is the focal point for informal family meals or pre-dinner drinks when friends come round



For day-to-day convenience, Eva's real winner in the kitchen is her dishwasher drawers, which take up the same space as a conventional dishwasher but can be used separately as needed. "They're brilliant, with a huge capacity," she enthuses. "I can put all the messy stuff in the top and leave the bottom just for my nice glasses."

As requested, Neil's design boasts extensive storage with tall shelf units above the worktops and drawers and cupboards below. As well as keeping all kitchen essentials out of sight, the cabinets embody another of Eva's favourite features. "The cabinets close themselves, which is great when you have two small and curious children running about."

Eva's kitchen units may be dark but the overall effect is one of spaciousness and light. The design ticks all the boxes for family-friendly practicality but at the same time loses nothing in the style stakes. **03**

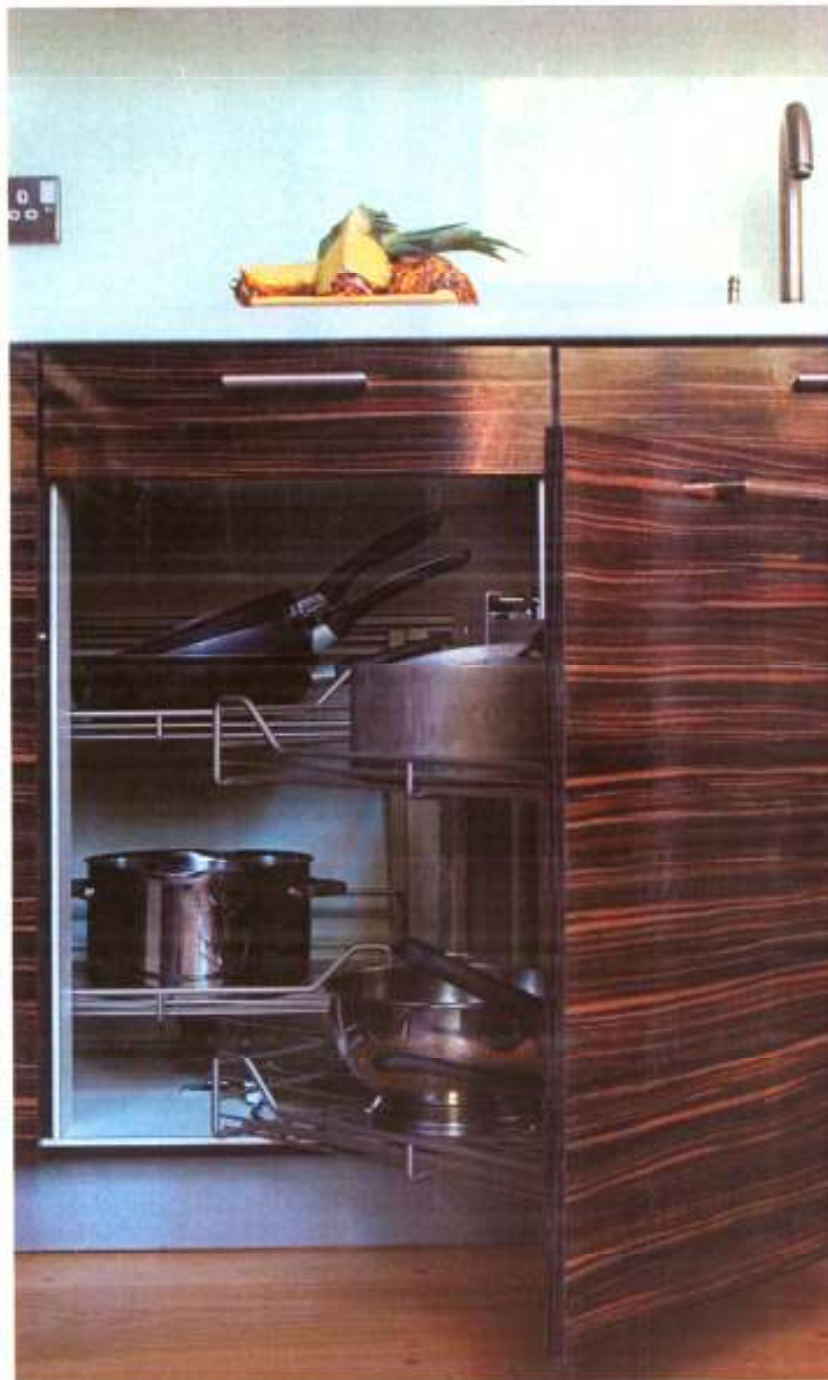
While the look achieved is undeniably stylish, it was also conceived as very much a family space. Eva shares her Victorian Hampstead home with her husband and two young children so it was important for the kitchen to be practical. "My brief was to create a warm looking kitchen that gave a good working area, and eating zone for two to four people plus extensive storage systems," explains Neil.

The original kitchen was too small and dark for a house of this size, and there was also no direct access to the dining room and as such part of the structural work was removing the divide between the two rooms. It was a load-bearing wall so steel beams were inserted to provide the required support. This achieves Eva's aim for an open-plan space while increasing the amount of light in both dining room and kitchen.

It was the large window in the kitchen area that actually influenced Neil's design and the subsequent layout of the kitchen units. "The window is nice and big and I didn't want to lose any of it," explains Eva. "However, because it's so low, it would have been tricky putting cabinets next to it so we put the island up against it. The rest of the design was an outcome of the fact that we could have things only in certain places."

These restrictions also caused another major structural change. The chimney breast was right in the middle of the back wall and the decision was taken to remove it because it took up a lot of much needed room. "It was a big job as it had to be taken out all the way up," recalls Eva. "But by putting in the red extractor hood, we have retained the visual impact of the chimney." ▶

**Right:** Greater storage ensures there is a place for everything and the worktops are left clutter-free



**COST**

Neil Lerner kitchens start at £15,000. This kitchen cost around £25,000

**CONTACTS****DESIGN**

Neil Lerner Kitchen Design  
0120 7034 4920 or  
[www.neillerner.com](http://www.neillerner.com)

**KITCHEN**

**Units and worktops** Neil Lerner Kitchen Design, as before

**Extractor hood** Neff (0870

511 3090 or [www.neff.co.uk](http://www.neff.co.uk))

**Range cooker** Mercury

(01522 881717 or

[www.mercury-appliances.co.uk](http://www.mercury-appliances.co.uk))

**Tap and sink** Blanco

(020 8450 9100 or

[www.blanco.co.uk](http://www.blanco.co.uk))

**Dishwasher drawers** Fisher &

Paykel (0845 600 1934 or

[www.fisherpaykel.co.uk](http://www.fisherpaykel.co.uk))

**Lights** The Lighting Store

(020 8201 0620 or

[www.thelightingstore.co.uk](http://www.thelightingstore.co.uk))

**Table, chairs and bar stools**

Geoffrey Drayton

(020 7387 5640 or

[www.geoffrey-drayton.co.uk](http://www.geoffrey-drayton.co.uk))

**Flooring** The Natural Wood

Floor Company

(020 8671 9771 or

[www.naturalwoodfloor.co.uk](http://www.naturalwoodfloor.co.uk))

**Left:** Eva married the kitchen to island with the exciting dining room furniture, helping bring together the open-plan look.

