



The kitchen forms part of a large open-plan living and dining space. Bespoke cladding of the Westin extractor (www.westin.co.uk) is painted in a rich berry shade, which is repeated on the glass splashback and the storage unit that separates the dining and seating areas.



Key facts



THE OWNERS Natalya Nesterova, owner of Nesterova Interior Design, and her partner Alessandro, an architect, live here with their son Dante.
THE PROPERTY A three-bedroom, three-storey house in south-east London, built in 1880. **PURCHASED** 2009.
IMPROVEMENTS MADE The couple gutted the house, then spent the next three years renovating it from top to bottom, adding a loft extension and building on to the rear elevation to create a large kitchen.

Waiting GAME

It took Natalya and Alessandro three years to create their dream home, but the results speak for themselves

FEATURE RUBY ROGERS / AMBIENCE IMAGES **PHOTOGRAPHER** JAMES BALSTON / AMBIENCE IMAGES



‘Our tastes complement each other – I can go wild with colour so Alex calms me down, but I brighten him up’

Above left Natalya has created a cosy, welcoming space by placing banquet seating and an accent chair around an antique Moroccan table. **Above right** The KitchenAid mixer in Boysenberry inspired the colour scheme for the house. **Opposite page, above** The kitchen works an industrial vibe with grey cabinets from Farnham Furnishers (www.farnhamfurnishers.co.uk) and stainless steel worktops from Barazza (www.barazzasrl.it). **Far right** Natalya has created a flexible space by dividing the ground-floor extension into zones. To unify the area, she has laid limestone floor tiles throughout and introduced jolts of accent colour.

Inspiration can be triggered by just about anything. Sometimes it is rooted in a passion; often it is found in art, nature, a piece of fabric or a family heirloom. But for interior designer Natalya Nesterova it was something more practical: the colour of a KitchenAid stand mixer. ‘My partner is a really good cook, so I bought him a KitchenAid mixer in Boysenberry,’ Natalya explains. ‘As an architect, Alex doesn’t like colour; he veers towards plain white, black and all tones of grey. However, he liked this shade, so we colour-matched it to a paint in the Dulux Trade range.’

The front door of the couple’s three-storey terrace hints at what lies beyond, smartly painted in a bold but warm berry shade. This is taken through into the open-plan kitchen and applied to the joinery and the glass splashback. The rest of the house is given over to a palette of Farrow & Ball greys, creating a simple

backdrop to their furniture. ‘I think our tastes complement each other,’ Natalya continues. ‘I can go wild with colour, so Alex calms me down, but, in turn, I brighten him up.’

TAKING THEIR TIME

The house was in a terrible state when the couple first saw it. ‘We basically gutted it and started again. We changed the windows, the floors and the walls. We also added a loft and a kitchen extension, but because we were on a tight budget, we hired builders to do the shell and then we did the rest.’

Natalya describes the process as slow and painful, particularly as they were living in just one room while the renovations were taking place. ‘Although we bought the property in 2009 and started the renovations and refurbishments straight away, it took about three years to complete, purely because we

>>

Lending a retro vibe to the dining area is a teak G Plan dining table and chairs, sourced from eBay and given a new lease of life with a rich dark finish. An antique chandelier transforms this simply furnished space into something more ornate. The large panelled unit that separates the dining area from the seating area is dual function: it houses the boiler and water tank, and also provides storage. It was made by Q Joinery (info@qjoinery.co.uk), who was responsible for all of the joinery throughout the house.



DESIGN ADVICE
‘Be patient and try not to rush into making decisions. Invest time and effort into finding exactly what you want for the space.’





‘If you do a loft extension and a kitchen extension it’s better to start from the top and work down’

didn’t have the money straight away,’ explains Natalya. ‘We worked from the top down, so we did the loft extension first, then six months later we started on the kitchen extension.’

Although Natalya and Alessandro didn’t set a budget, they were keen to keep costs down by sourcing as many pieces as possible through eBay. ‘It takes time and patience,’ explains Natalya. ‘I spent every day trawling the internet.’ However, it was time well spent. Highlights range from the teak G Plan dining table and chairs, bought for £60 and given a new lease of life with a rich dark finish, to a pair of Knoll chairs, snapped up for £30 and reupholstered in leftover Abbott & Boyd fabric.

AN ECLECTIC MIX

Keen to retain the character and sense of history of their Victorian home, the couple preserved the original fireplaces and the

decorative cornices that accentuate the high ceilings. Their style, however, is anything but stuck in the past, and traditional features rub shoulders with an eclectic mix of designs: elegant Italian furniture, high-street heroes and custom-made pieces. A surprising twist is provided by the vibrant soft furnishings and accent pieces scattered throughout the house. ‘I’m originally from Uzbekistan in central Asia, where there are lots of ikats and traditional fabrics. My parents still live there, so when I go and see them I visit the bazaars where I can buy all these beautiful silks and velvets,’ explains Natalya. ‘My style is very influenced by my roots. I wanted to add a little bit of my country into my every day life, because I miss it.’

Well practiced at managing products, Natalya says that although the renovation process was long, it ran smoothly. The secret, she says, is proper management. ‘Work out what comes >>

Opposite page, from top Natalya’s reception room contains a rich mix pulled together from many sources. She snapped up the Armani Casa rug on eBay, while the mirror above the mantelpiece came from a trade supplier. An L-shaped sofa forms an intimate seating area around a smoked glass Minotti coffee table lit by Normann Copenhagen’s Norm 03 pendant, available from www.redcandy.co.uk; a small seating area has been created beneath statement pieces of art by combining a side table with a pair of Knoll chairs. **Above left** Cushions made from traditional fabrics from Uzbekistan live up the sofa. **Above right** There is a cohesive theme to Natalya’s well-considered display of personal mementos on the mantelpiece, with glass and silver acting as the unifying elements.



Above Purple is a powerful colour, and when limited to a few accent pieces it brings warmth and decadence to the main bedroom. Here, purple bedlinen is co-ordinated with the bedside lamps and the French-style armoire painted in Farrow & Ball Pelt (www.farrow-ball.com). The antique gilt mirror that hangs over the original fireplace adds a further shot of glamour. **Right** The clash of old meets new works particularly well in the guest bedroom. A decorative ceiling rose has been paired with John Lewis's Harmony Ribbon pendant (www.johnlewis.com). Framed prints above the glass console make the perfect finishing touch.

'My style is unflinched by my roots. I wanted to add a little bit of my country into my every day life'

first and what comes last. Getting this right is extremely important. To source the materials is one thing but then to make sure everything arrives on time, so that you don't waste the builders' time, is really key.'

Natalya also strongly recommends working from the top of the house to the bottom. 'If you do a loft extension and a kitchen extension, but you have a tight budget, it's better to start from the top and work down,' she advises. 'This means the dirty work is done before you complete the bottom half of the project and then you can live upstairs while you renovate the kitchen. Some people do the loft after and it creates lots of mess.'

The couple are thrilled with their completed home. 'We have friends who are architects and they all comment on the quality of the work,' she says. 'Some of them have even said they want a house exactly like this, which is the biggest complement I could receive.' **PH**

