

A roof lantern and Crittall-style patio doors combine to let lots of light into this newly extended kitchen.



All good things

Taking a dated property from bland to grand is no mean feat. Here's how one couple successfully transformed their house into a bright and welcoming home ▶

Words: Ifeoluwa Adedeji Photography: Richard Gadsby

→ Bright chairs have been paired with the dark dining table to create a stylish contrast.

W

hat started out as a basement and kitchen project fairly quickly turned into a whole-house renovation for Nola Donachie and Nick Swinburne. They had already been living in the property for a couple of years before works started and knew what they were happy with and what definitely needed to go. Nola and Nick worked closely with Qualitas Construction to create a home that's low maintenance as well as modern, significantly changing the way their family use the rooms in the house. Major work included extending out into the side return to create a light and airy open-plan space for the new kitchen-diner. Here, Nola tells us more about the project...

Was it difficult to create a brief?

Having lived in the house for so long, I had quite a distinct idea of what I wanted. The interiors were very beige, and I wanted to change this with strong colours and wallpaper. We worked with interior designer Nicola Hicks to help us bring everything together. For example, she advised us which walls to choose if we wanted to use a certain type of wallpaper, and also let us know which type of paint would work with it. That was invaluable, because although we had a lot of ideas about what we wanted to do, bringing it together on our own would have been a huge task.

How did you choose your kitchen design?

Our kitchen came from a local company called Eclectic Interiors, and the team there were fabulous – particularly Jolanta Harradine, whose attention to detail was second to none. She pushed us to have approximately four fairly long sessions with her to get the design right. The space is similar to what we had before, but the old island was way too big and just dominated. Getting rid of that and replacing it with a smaller version has made a huge difference to how the room feels. We have a new induction hob, and because I've always used gas I was a bit reticent. However, I've found there are definitely no down sides – it's easier to clean, heats evenly across the pan and is very user friendly.

What were you looking to achieve in the master bedroom?

I wanted somewhere that was a happy, positive place to wake up in, as well as adding some colour to the space. The vibrant green wallpaper does both of those things for me. I also wanted to have shutters that would allow light into the room while still giving us privacy. The colour on the shutters is matched to the wardrobes, skirting, and window frames to bring the décor together. In general, we tried to keep furniture to a minimum so the room didn't feel cluttered.

How did you decide on the scheme for the bathroom?

Our brief was to create a space where we could relax, and which was a natural continuation of the bedroom. The finished room feels a bit like a luxury hotel, with the wall-hung vanity unit, large mirror, and two countertop basins. There is also a generous bath and spacious ▶





↖ Engineered timber floors have been laid in a herringbone pattern. Nola initially thought it would look too traditional, but now she loves the resulting modern finish.

↑ Despite the open-plan space's size, the cooking area is compact and easy to navigate. Nola is particularly pleased with her new induction hob.

✓ The previous décor was dull and overwhelmingly beige, so Nola and Nick were determined to include plenty of bold patterns and colour.

→ The new kitchen island replaced one the family felt was too big. With ample food prep space, it's the perfect area for guests to gather.

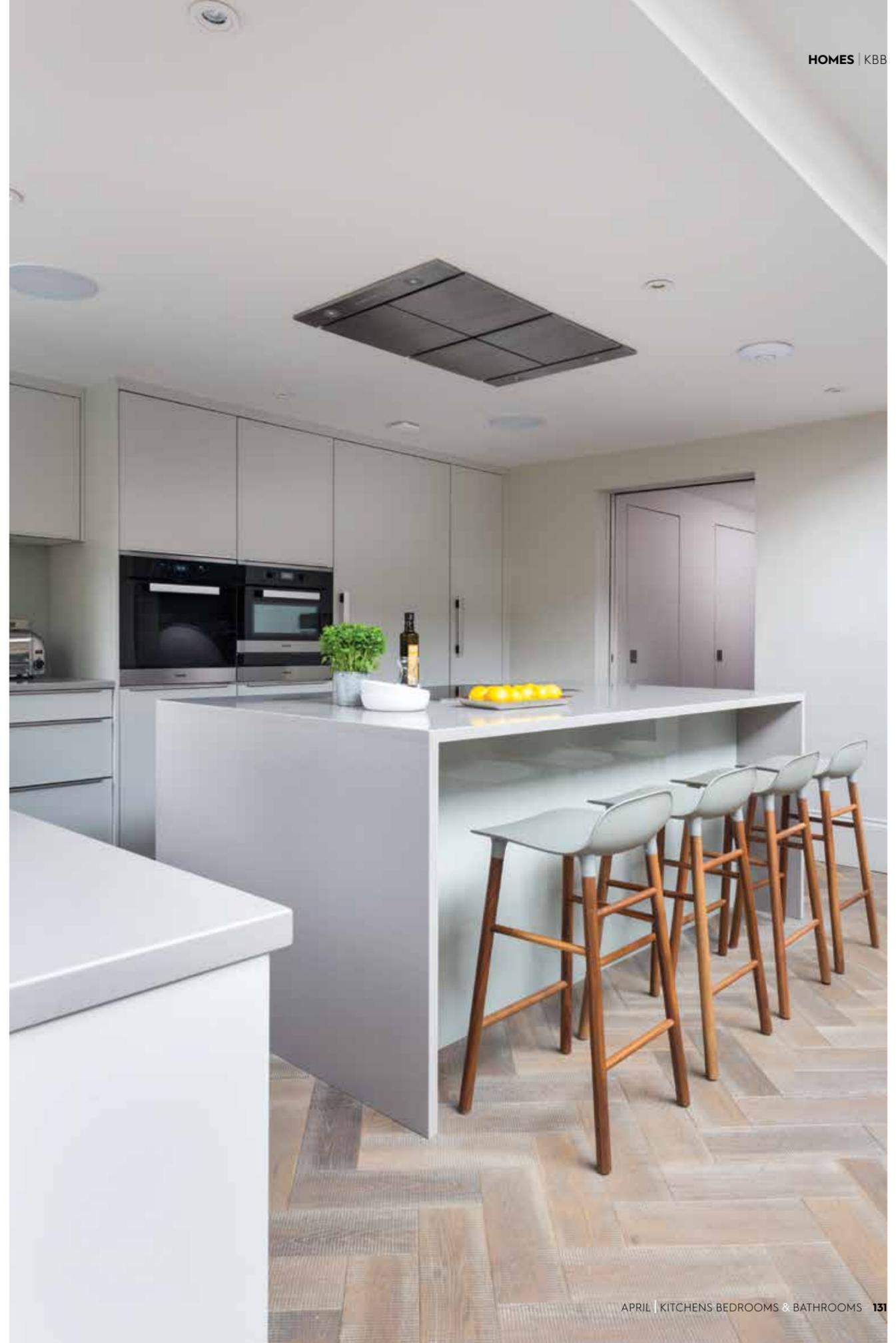
walk-in shower. To store all our bathroom essentials out of sight, shelves and a hanging space are cleverly tucked away behind sliding doors next to the vanity unit.

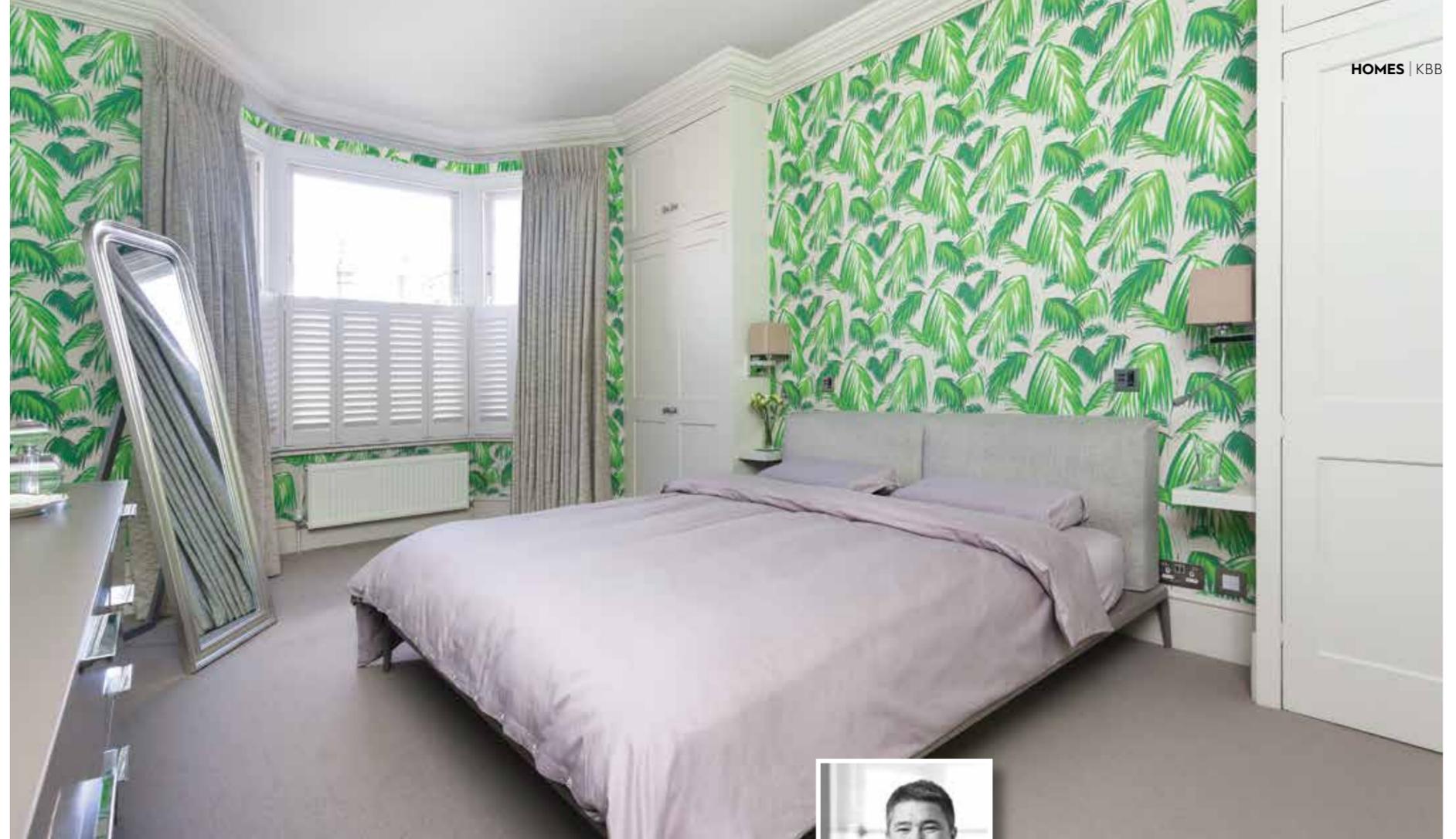
Did you make any U-turns during the project?

We went into this thinking it would be a basement and kitchen project – but then, as time went on, we would be walking around the rooms spotting other things that needed to be done. We ended up refurbishing the whole house. One aspect Nicola and my husband changed my mind about was parquet flooring in the kitchen. I originally thought it would look too old fashioned. But Nicola told us about a place in Fulham called Cheville, which offers engineered wood planks that are quite contemporary, and that's what we chose.

Any advice to share?

We were fortunate to work with Qualitas, and while our project manager was very busy running multiple projects, he always got back to us. We never had that feeling of being at the back of the queue. I'd also advise people to be open to employing an interior designer. Nicola really ended up paying for herself, as she helped us choose furniture and got us discounts, too. Overall, the whole project has been a really positive experience. ▶





Q&A

Architect Jonathan Woodcock of Qualitas says...

What was your brief?

To create a light, airy and open space – so we opened up the ground floor out into the side return using structural steels.

What elements took up the majority of the budget?

One large expense on this project was the glazing. Crittall external doors were fitted on the ground floor and the basement to the garden and rear lightwell respectively.

Biggest challenge with the project?

This property was located next to a block of post-war flats, the foundations of which were adjacent to our new underpins. It was imperative that works were carried out in a particular sequence to avoid any disaster.

What advice do you give clients on finding contractors?

It is always important to seek recommendations from neighbours and friends who have recently undertaken work. And don't always go on price – at the end of the day, expertise and a high-quality finish are more important.

↑ The master bedroom is a bright, creative, and bold space. A contemporary wallpaper brings a feeling of freshness into the sleeping area.

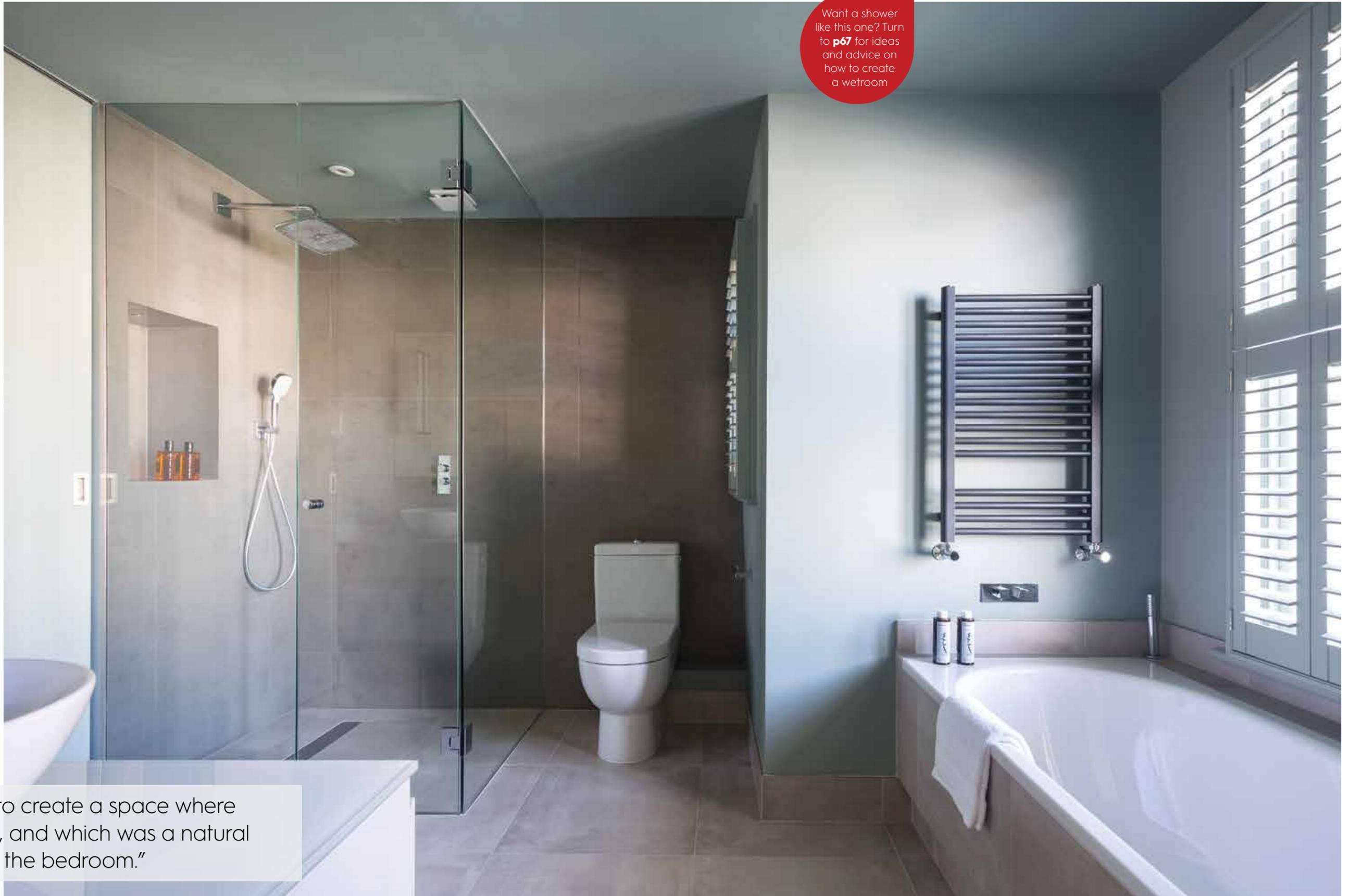
← Two steps mark the divide between the dining area and the playroom beyond and help zone the spaces.

→ The spacious master ensuite is easy to maintain and the neutral two-tone palette gives it a spa-like appeal.



→ A Bisque towel radiator, cleverly positioned above the bath for ease of use, complements the brassware. Mounting the shower screen straight onto the tiled floor creates a step-free enclosure.

Want a shower like this one? Turn to **p67** for ideas and advice on how to create a wetroom



"Our brief was to create a space where we could relax, and which was a natural continuation of the bedroom."

The wall-mounted vanity unit allows for easy cleaning and offers practical storage for toiletries. The oversized mirror and two basins mean the couple can get ready at the same time.



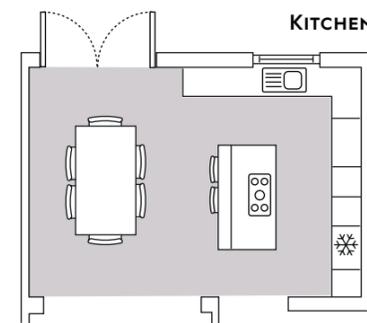
GET THE LOOK



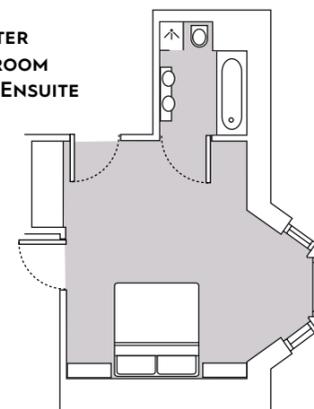
1 H6860 BPX ArtLine oven in Graphite Grey, £3949, Miele. **0330 160 6600 or miele.co.uk** 2 Retro grey porcelain tiles, £94.80 per sq m, Lapidica. **01423 796288 or lapidica.com** 3 Mind the Gap Banana Leaves wallpaper, £150 for three rolls, Amersham Designs. **01494 721089 or amershamdesigns.co.uk** 4 Tuscany basin, £180, Albion Bath Company. **01255 831605 or albiobathco.com** 5 Team 7 Ark barstool, £952, Wharfside. **020 7253 3206 or wharfside.co.uk**

THE PLANS

Extending into the side return created a spacious kitchen-diner.



MASTER BEDROOM AND ENSUITE



SOURCE BOOK

DESIGN

Architect and main contractor Qualitas (020 8432 1520 or qualitasconstruction.com)
Interior designer Nicola Hicks (07801 700723)
Kitchen Eclectic Interiors (020 8673 0572 or eclecticinteriors.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Eclectic Interiors, as before
Worktop Quartzform quartz, Eclectic Interiors, as before
Appliances Induction hob, ovens, warming drawer and ceiling extractor, Miele (0330 160 6600 or miele.co.uk)
Sink Franke (0161 436 6280 or franke.co.uk)
Taps Mixer tap, for similar try Franke, as before; Boiling-water tap, Quooker (0345 833 3555 or quooker.co.uk)
LED lights Eclectic Interiors, as before
Flooring Engineered wood parquet, Cheville (020 7183 6352 or cheville.co.uk)
Splashback Glass, Eclectic Interiors, as before
Barstools Houseology (0330 363 0330 or houseology.com)
Dining chairs Vitra (020 7608 6200 or vitra.com), available from Chaplins (020 8421 1779 or chaplins.co.uk)
Wallpaper Sanderson (0844 543 9500 or sanderson-uk.com)
Dining table Poliform, (020 7368 7600 or poliformuk.com)

MASTER BEDROOM

Bedframe, headboard and bedside tables Poliform, as before
Flooring Marlow's Carpets (020 8871 1169 or marlowscarpets.com)
Curtains and shutters The Curtain Lady Interiors (020 8947 6225 or thecurtainladyinteriors.co.uk)
Sideboard Cappellini (020 3039 3034 or cappellini.it)

ENSUITE BATHROOM

Bath West One Bathrooms (0333 011 3333 or westonebathrooms.com)
Tiles European Heritage (020 7381 6063 or europeanheritage.co.uk)
Basins, vanity unit and mirror cabinet West One Bathrooms, as before
Brassware Hansgrohe (01372 472001 or hansgrohe.co.uk)
Towel radiator Bisque (020 7328 2225 or bisque.co.uk)
WC Villeroy & Boch (villeroy-boch.co.uk), West One Bathrooms, as before
Wall lights Hector Finch (020 7731 8886 or hectorfinch.com)
Shutters The Curtain Lady Interiors, as before

COST

A similar kitchen would start from £55,000, a similar master bedroom from £15,000, and a similar master ensuite from £20,000