

ACE OF BASE

This beautiful sub-level kitchen strikes a perfect balance between family-friendly functionality and elegant Chelsea-style chic

Report: **Felicity Borthwick** Photography: **Michael Little**



Above: Interior designer Nina Moeller likes to use English woods in her work as much as possible, whether it be for the flooring, cabinetry or individual pieces of custom-made furniture, such as these barstools.

Top right: Nina devised the entire lighting scheme, from the integrated mood lighting concealed within the floor, ceiling and cabinetry to these stunning feature lights by Tom Dixon.



Between looking after her three sons – aged 11, nine and six – and launching Culture Whisper, a website suggesting cultural outings in London, Eleonore Dresch is one busy lady. Thus, when it came to choosing a new kitchen for the basement of her semi-detached home in Chelsea, she opted for a design that's highly functional yet aesthetically calming, with its soothing blend of clean lines and luxurious marble.

This fabulous design came about from working with interior designer Nina Moeller, whose background includes studies in furniture making under the legendary John Makepeace. "A friend of mine had had her house redone by Nina and I thought she did a beautiful job," explains Eleonore. "Plus, I like that it's not just a standard kitchen from one of the big names; it looks just as smart but has much more of a personal feel to it. I already had plenty of ideas and pictures of kitchens I liked, but Nina made it all happen and came up with some great suggestions," she continues.

The slab of Carrara marble that flows across the island, spilling over the end to form a breakfast bar, for example, was one of Eleonore's 'must haves'. However, Nina recommended using a thick 60mm slab rather than 30mm to make more of a statement and complement the chunky range cooker. "That was a great idea; it made a big difference," Eleonore reflects.

Another key element of the brief was for a 'brushstroke' finish on the cabinetry, as Nina recalls. "Eleonore was very definite about not having completely smooth fascias; rather she craved more of an industrial, brushstroke look. So we ended up using oak board, painted in a beautiful grey colour called Stone 3a from Papers and Paint, then Stone 3b – a slightly darker shade – on the walls." ▶



To offset the cool grey palette and introduce some warmth into the room, oak was used for the floorboards and furniture, including three bespoke barstools made by Nina. Lighting was also integral in keeping the space bright and welcoming, from the pair of stylish Tom Dixon pendants above the dining table to the integrated mood lighting sourced from John Cullen.

As well as making the space look beautiful, Nina was tasked with creating a design that flows effortlessly whilst also including ample storage and a large Wolf range cooker, plus a Sub-Zero wine storage unit and fridge. The cooker sits against one wall, on the working side of the island, while the enormous cooling appliances and a generous-sized larder are grouped together on the opposite wall.

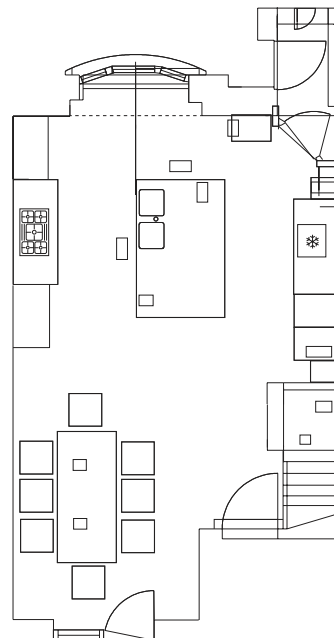
Eleonore was reluctant to have cupboards above the worktop, as she feels they can often look bulky, thus open shelving flanks the range cooker, allowing her to display some beautiful chinaware from her grandmother. Another shelving unit filled with cookbooks, meanwhile, slots neatly between the staircase and full-height storage bank, making the most of this narrow and otherwise wasted space.

In addition to a host of practical storage features, including a wide, shallow cutlery drawer and deep pull-outs (with dividers) for plates and bowls, the kitchen benefits from a dedicated cake cupboard. "Nina got to know us well during the design process and thought we were the type of family who could do with a cake cupboard as, with three boys, I'm always baking," laughs Eleonore. When there isn't cake in the house, however, it's a great place for storing cheese or pastries. It also allowed Nina to bring the beautiful Carrara marble – albeit on a much smaller scale – to this end of the room.

Finally, alongside the cake cupboard, a comfy bench seat stretches out beneath the window, providing the ideal spot to relax with a cup of tea and a book. "When you're sitting here or at the dining table and look back at the kitchen, it has a very soothing, calm feel," reflects Nina. Indeed, Eleonore's new kitchen is not just a work zone but a beautiful multifunctional space equally suited to rest and play.

KBB





Opposite page, top: Eleonore wanted an overhang on the island, with three barstools below, so all of her sons can sit here together and have breakfast or watch her cook.

Left: The large central island unit comprises ample storage on both sides along with two sinks, a dishwasher and multifunctional bin unit with four compartments for recycling.

Above: A full-height bank of units neatly conceals a large larder and a Sub-Zero fridge and wine storage unit with handy pull-out freezer drawers below. The Stone painted cabinetry offsets the Carrara marble worktop beautifully.



Top: Simple white fabric allows light to flood in through the large windows from the front to the back of the basement level.

Above: This sleek, simple KWC tap is a perfect fit for Eleonore's clean, calm, contemporary kitchen.

SourceBook

DESIGN

Kitchen Nina Moeller of Nina Moeller Interiors (020 8332 6204 or www.nina-moeller-designs.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Oak finished in Stone 3a paint from Papers and Paints (020 7352 8626 or www.papers-paints.co.uk)

Worktop Carrara marble from Stone Productions (020 7486 4838 or www.stoneproductions.co.uk)

Flooring Oak Polar White from The Solid Floor Company (020 7221 9166 or www.solidfloor.co.uk)

Tap KWC (020 8675 9335 or www.kwc-uk.com)

Appliances Fridge, wine storage unit, and freezer drawers, Sub-Zero (0845 250 0010 or www.westy.co.uk); Range cooker, Wolf (0845 250 0010 or www.westy.co.uk)

Walls Stone 3b paint from Papers and Paint, as before

Barstools Made by Nina Moeller, as before

Dining table The Conran Shop (0844 848 4000 or www.conranshop.co.uk)

Dining chairs For similar try the Bo chair by Philippe Starck, available from Made in Design (020 7692 4001 or www.madeindesign.co.uk)

Armchair For similar try the Sheepskin Lamino by Swedese (www.swedese.se) available from Hus & Hem (01531 631044 or www.husandhem.co.uk)

Pendant lights Tom Dixon (020 7183 9732 or www.tomdixon.net)

COST

A similar kitchen would cost around £35,000 (excluding appliances, flooring and John Cullen light fittings)