

THE FACTS

Who? A professional couple
What? Renovation of a two-storey apartment
Where? Shoreditch, central east London
Cost? £120,000
Time? Three months



The couple's brief to Hayley Robson at Day True was clear – they wanted to create a cool space to reflect their personal style and impress guests. The artwork they had collected over the years was the basis of the initial design.



UNIQUELY INDUSTRIAL

When a sociable couple bought their dream loft apartment in the heart of one of London's most sought-after locations, they wanted to update it to reflect their personal style. Day True designer Hayley Robson helped them transform the property from a simple, contemporary space into a home with a much more daring design ▶

Words: Yvette Murrell Photography: Gary Summers SMD



THERE'S A CERTAIN STATUS OF COOL

that comes with living in Shoreditch, central east London. A popular hipster hangout, it's teeming with creative people, trendy restaurants, edgy bars, and plenty of artistic vintage pop-up shops – exactly what the couple renting in this modern apartment block loved so much about the location. So when an opportunity arose to purchase in the same building, they jumped at the chance. When they enlisted the help of interior architecture and design firm Day True to help transform the space into a more industrial-chic style, creative director Hayley Robson knew exactly what needed to be done. Here she tells us how the finished look came together...

The design brief:

"Having lived in the apartment block for some time, the couple knew the building well and were confident in the way they wanted their new space to look and feel before they officially moved into it. The block itself is a former industrial building that was converted into apartments, which the couple wanted to reflect in the design by enhancing the use of raw materials. In fact, they were already working with Kote London – one of our specialist installers – for their resin flooring, who then recommended us for the design of the rest of the apartment. The couple love to entertain, so it made sense that the majority of the space was for them to socialise in. Plus, having discussed their needs and ideas, one of the main objectives was to provide more privacy to the master bedroom on the open mezzanine level, while also maintaining good airflow and light. This was a challenge, as the only windows are at the front of the building. Being able to increase the amount of storage space was also a big concern, as they wanted the main areas to look clean and uncluttered for when guests come to visit. Alongside this,

they were keen to update their kitchen space, as they both love to cook. It looked modern but bare, and they were after a much more industrial-style look to reflect their surroundings and own tastes. They have collected some amazing artwork over the years, which they asked us to look at for inspiration when working out the scheme. These became hero pieces within the design, along with injections of some more playful patterns and pops of colour, too.

Creating the space:

While we essentially had a large box to play with, the main living area didn't need to change when it came to the layout – the kitchen sat in the best space and the dining table and sofas worked well where they were placed, near the windows overlooking the canal. So instead, we focused on introducing a dark wenge wood on the cabinetry to balance out the new white resin flooring. This was paired with industrial-style handles and stainless-steel appliances. There was already a kitchen island, which we extended to make into a larger peninsula, dividing the living and cooking areas without completely shutting the zones off from one another. This, in turn, also created a casual bar area so guests can converse across the island with whoever is cooking opposite. The exposed concrete ceilings throughout define the space's overall look and help tie it all together.

In both the downstairs bathroom and the master ensuite, we made two near-identical spaces that adapted the same palette as the kitchen, combining concrete finishes with dark wenge wood cabinetry. The couple have an eclectic taste, and with one of them being Brazilian they were keen to bring an element of their background into the design. They imported blocks from the country, which we used as shower screens, as well as the fun beetle tiles climbing up ➤

↖ The couple enjoy entertaining, and their dining space overlooks the canal with clear views of London's skyline. **Dining table** and **chairs**, for similar, try Cult Furniture.

→ The wenge wood kitchen cabinetry balances out the striking appearance of the **stainless-steel appliances** from Sub-Zero Wolf. **Hob** and **downdraft extractor**, Bora.



Updating the kitchen was one of the couple's main requests. Designer Hayley came up with a design that changed the look of the space drastically without needing to move the layout around.



the kitchen wall and blue patterned tiles on the staircase. These playful injections of personality make subtle connections between the different areas and create talking points throughout.

In terms of practical changes to the two spaces, we raised the level of the shower trays in both bathrooms, to ensure optimum drainage, and also installed underfloor heating so we didn't need to clutter the rooms with radiators.

Because all the walls are made of concrete, we were restricted in what we could chase up them, so we had to be extra careful when it came to installing lighting throughout the property. Other than those on the exterior wall there are no windows, but we wanted the back of the apartment to be well lit – so this had to be well thought out, as we didn't want it to feel too artificial with lots of spotlights. In the end, we opted for large flush ceiling lights which don't detract from the rest of the design.

With meticulous planning, we moved the staircase and extended the mezzanine level, which enabled us to create a small guest bedroom that could also be used for storage. As for the master suite, we installed turquoise lacquered wardrobes for a pop of colour that matches the tiles leading up the stairs to the bedroom. The gloss lacquer also helps reflect the light around the room.

The next stage:

The element that changed the entire scheme was the Crittall-style wall along the mezzanine level. Previously, there was a half-height white balustrade, which left the bedroom completely open to the rest of the apartment. We needed to come up with a solution to enclose this area without restricting airflow, so I created a glass wall with windows running on a pivoting axis. It's one of my favourite parts of the project, as it offers a striking divide between the two areas and an interesting architectural aspect from both bedroom and living room viewpoints. It also means the couple can still enjoy the views and natural light from the bedroom without feeling too exposed.

Finishing touches:

Once all works were complete, we moved the couple's artwork and furniture from their first apartment into their new home. It all sits much more naturally within the space and really brings the whole scheme together, enhancing the connections between the different zones. The raw concrete look of the walls is an ideal backdrop for showcasing their prized pieces of art. The property now reflects both owners' styles, and they can enjoy hosting dinner parties while taking in the views along the popular Shoreditch canal."



For a fun twist to the kitchen, Popham Design Scarab **wall tiles** in the Jaws and Wallace patterns were incorporated into the design.

All **cabinetry** was made bespoke by Day True, using a dark wenge wood to soften the overall look. The **handles** are by Buster & Punch. **Sink** and **tap**, for similar, try Franke.



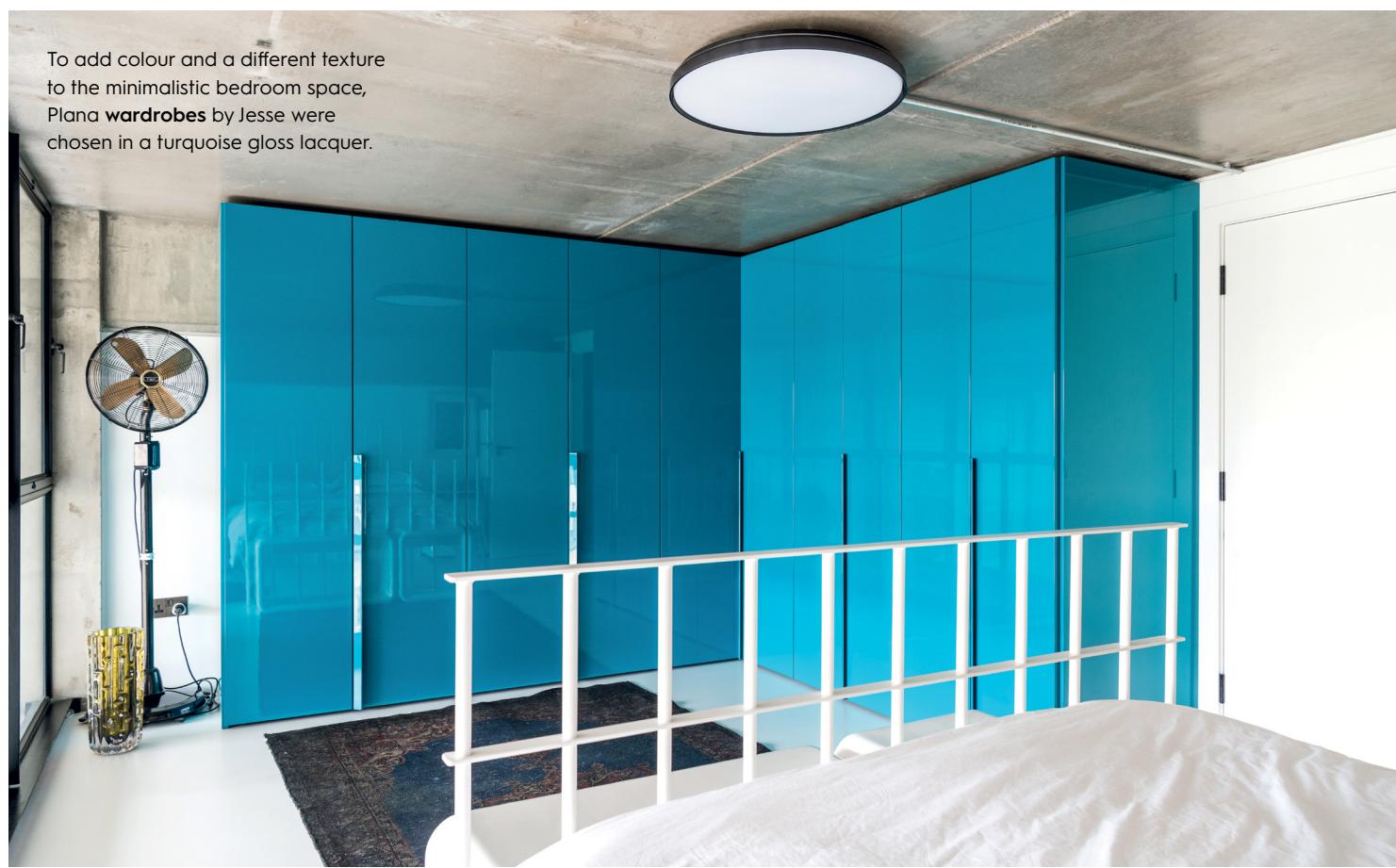
↓ The bedroom now benefits from the natural light that floods the rest of the space while still maintaining privacy. **Bed**, for similar, try Habitat; **rug**, for similar, try French Connection; **pedestal fan**, Cinni.



→ The stairway was moved to create a more practical layout, which also allowed space for a guest bedroom. The colour of the tiles on the stairway connects with the turquoise shade of the wardrobes in the bedroom.



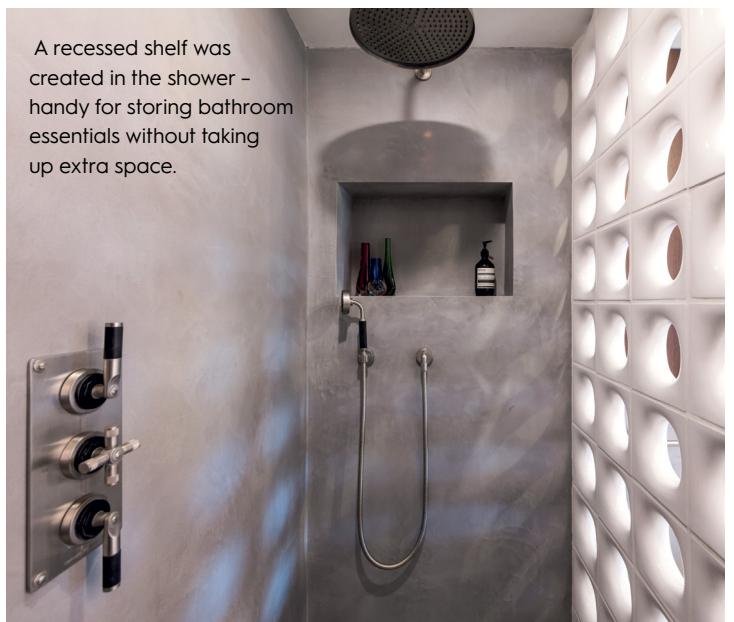
"The Crittall-style wall along the mezzanine level is one of my favourite parts of the project, as it offers a striking divide between the two areas."



↑ The couple imported block tiles from Brazil to create an interesting look for the shower enclosure.

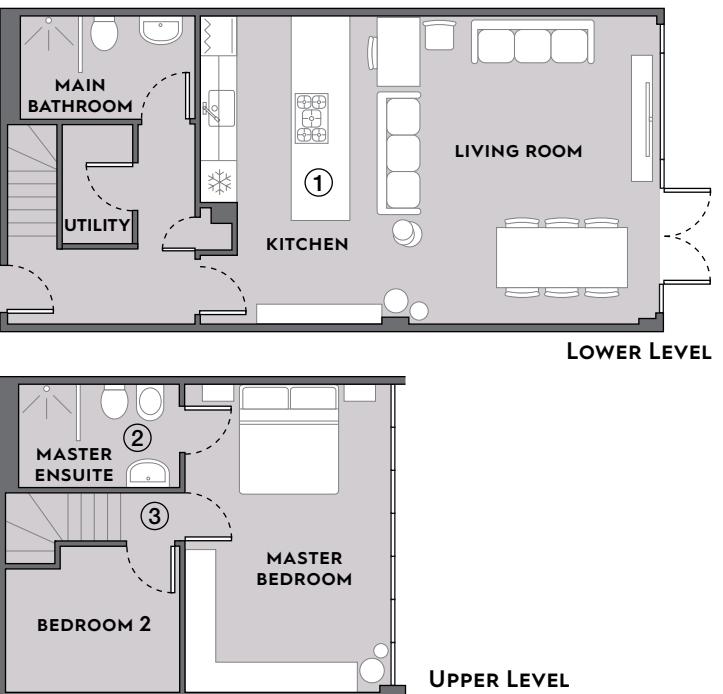
← The **bathroom vanity units** were made bespoke by Day True, using Calacatta Viola marble. **Basin**, Villeroy & Boch.





THE PLANS

While the downstairs layout remained the same, repositioning the staircase increased space on the mezzanine level. This allowed room for more storage and to create a guest bedroom.



SOURCE BOOK

Designer Hayley Robson from Day True 020 7788 9229, daytrue.com

Cabinetry Day True, as before

Handles Buster + Punch 020 7407 0888, busterandpunch.com

Worktop and splashback Mortex +1 5208872631, mortex.com

Appliances Fridge-freezer and oven, Sub-Zero Wolf 0845 250 0010, subzero-wolf.co.uk; hob and downdraft extractor, Bora +43 5373622500, bora.com; dishwasher, V-Zug 0843 289 5759, vzug.com/gb

Tiles Popham Design +212 524378022, pophamdesign.com

Flooring Kote London 020 3773 3555, kotelondon.com

Window screens 020 3051 0552, D&R Design dandrdesign.co.uk

For full stockist information, see page 154

1 Kitchen island The existing design was enlarged to create a more casual bar area suitable for entertaining.

2 Bathrooms Both the downstairs space and master ensuite were designed almost identically in terms of layout and finishes.

3 Staircase The stairs were moved to come up in the middle of the mezzanine, making room to create a small guest bedroom.

HOME STYLE

1 Union three-hole wall-mounted basin lever set in Brushed Nickel, £625, Crosswater. crosswater.co.uk 2 Liljebergs iridescent blue beetle print, £19.25, Printer + Tailor. printerandtailor.com 3 Fowler large shelving unit, £499, Made. made.com 4 Newgate Cubic alarm clock in Gravity Grey, £30, Black by Design. black-by-design.co.uk 5 Satin cutlery, from £3.50 for a coffee spoon, Robert Welch. robertwelch.com 6 Gemma tall vase, £655, Arteriors. arteriorshome.com 7 Aurelia Lines framed print, £27, Made. made.com 8 Sistine rug by Boca do Lobo, around £8067 (€8970), Covet House. covethouse.eu 9 Eames DSW chair in Mauve Grey by Vitra, £365, Heal's. heals.com 10 Split Shift Three encaustic tile in blue, £7.06 per tile, Bert & May. bertandmay.com 11 Ainsley mirror, £3754, Arteriors. arteriorshome.com 12 Nestun bed frame, £115, Ikea. ikea.com/gb 13 R151B Premium Blend v700 walls and ceilings paint in Jolly Blue, £25.20 for 2.5 litres, Valspar. valsparpaint.co.uk KBB