



The Roma luxury **vinyl planks**, from Distinctive Flooring's Italian collection, are a continuation of the flooring that runs throughout the rest of the ground floor.

DEPTH OF FOCUS

A keen eye for detail and meticulous planning over seven years allowed homeowners Bev and Matt Beard to create their ideal kitchen as the hub of the home for their family of three

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Photography: **Chris Snook**

There's certainly more to this kitchen than first meets the eye – which was exactly the intention homeowners Matt, Beard, a sales manager, and stay-at-home mum Bev had when they set out to renovate their space. The couple carefully considered every aspect of the redesign and treated each one as a work of art: from the composition and colours to the lighting and overall purpose. Since moving into the five-bedroom 1980s property in 2011, when their son Oliver was a newborn, the couple have spent their time redecorating and bringing each room up to date to suit their sociable lifestyle and contemporary taste. When it was finally time to turn their attention to the kitchen, they

knew exactly what they wanted: minimal fuss, maximum style, and an open-plan space that could easily transition from family-friendly meals to sophisticated dinner parties. Here, Matt explains how he and Bev pulled the finished look together...

What made you decide to renovate your kitchen?

"It was always the plan, ever since we first moved in. There had been a dividing wall between the kitchen and the dining area, which made two very small rooms and isolated whoever was cooking. The kitchen hadn't been touched since the house was first built, so looked worn and dated and felt cramped. ►

Over the years, we’ve completely redone the house room by room and the kitchen was left until last. One reason for this was prioritising less-functional rooms, but another was the expense since a kitchen costs a lot more than doing up a bedroom. We also wanted to make sure the rest of the house was liveable, as we didn’t want to have to move out during the renovations. Plus, it gave us time to come up with plenty of ideas and think about what we really needed.

Were there any changes to the layout?

There was a wall between the kitchen and dining area, which we removed when we started this project. And although we played around with different layouts, restrictions such as the placement of doors, pipes, and the fusebox meant it was more practical to keep the existing U-shaped layout. However, we reduced the depth of the worktops, to allow more space to move around, and lengthened the breakfast bar area to provide a casual dining space.

How did you find your kitchen designers?

We had seen a few different Neptune kitchens when looking for inspiration and knew we liked painted timber styles. A friend of Bev’s recommended Woods of London, an independent Neptune stockist, and when we met Alicia Turner, one of the designers there, we clicked instantly. She had a clear understanding of what we were trying to achieve. We wanted the space to flow and become the place where we could spend the majority of our time, whether it be as just the three of us for breakfast or for a dinner with family and friends. As we had waited a long time to finally transform this room, that was really important to us.

How did you come up with ideas for the overall look of the space?

We definitely took a reference from everything we saw and everywhere we went. Both Bev and myself enjoy food and were inspired by other kitchens and restaurants we visited. We also looked on Pinterest and other websites, saving anything that caught our eye. Over time, we were able to create a digital moodboard that represented our dream kitchen. Both of us wanted the scheme to look clean and fresh, but we were desperate to avoid having a plain white kitchen. We both liked the look of sage-green cabinetry, and thought a Shaker style felt homely without looking too traditional when paired with modern finishes.

But when the time came to actually start the project, it was function more than form which really led the design. The kitchen had to work before it looked beautiful. We specified the induction hob and a boiling-water tap, but

we also wanted as many of the appliances as possible to be hidden away, as these can often look unsightly. We opted for a fully integrated dishwasher, extractor fan, and fridge-freezer, as well as a sleek built-in oven.

What about the finishes?

We were restricted on changing the layout, but we still wanted there to be a noticeable difference. We decided to incorporate copper into the design – although it ended up becoming a labour of love. Having seen projects online that featured copper tiles, I was determined to have them in our own kitchen. But I soon realised most of these had been American or Australian homes and found it difficult to find genuine copper tiles in this country. Determined, I finally ordered some online directly from China – and luckily it paid off. The tiles go so well with the green cabinetry and will only continue to do so as they patina over time. They also complement the worktop, which is a matt-black Dekton. Despite the cost, it was everything we were looking for. It’s extremely durable, easy to clean, and so nice to work on. I particularly like its thin profile, which gives the kitchen a more modern look.

One aspect that was particularly important to get right for me was the lighting, as I think no one should underestimate the value of good lighting. I work within a photographic environment, so I am aware of the different shades and colours of light and the impact they can have in a space. I spent a great deal of time researching Kelvin ratings, to find the right soft, warm light. The LED spotlights, hidden uplighting around the cabinetry, and the pendant above the dining table output the same hue and are all dimmable, so we can control the mood of the space.

Did you have any challenges along the way?

Woods of London helped us to source the copper sink. It is handmade and the dimensions that were described turned out to be a little bit generous. It ended up taking around a day and a half of labour to install, with some difficulty. Fortunately, it has a hammered finish anyway so you can’t tell.

How do you feel about the space now?

It’s used constantly. We’re not believers in eating in front of the television, so we use the kitchen-diner at least twice a day, every day. We can now spend more quality time together as a family, and Oliver enjoys helping out with the cooking. We also feel more able to entertain, whether it’s informal gatherings or intimate dinner parties. It’s such a nice, comfortable space to spend time in, and each time I walk into it there’s something different that catches my eye.” ►



The dimmable Artist 40 black and copper pendant from Nordlux has been hung low to draw focus to the dining table.



↑ The Miya Art mosaic tiles, Aliexpress, are made with pure copper, a material that naturally has anti-bacterial properties.



The window above the sink faces south, so during the day sunlight reflects onto the tiles and tap. Eclectica Etienne copper sink, Sinks.co.uk; Pronteau Prostream 3-in-1 tap in Urban Copper, Abode.

DESIGN
EDIT

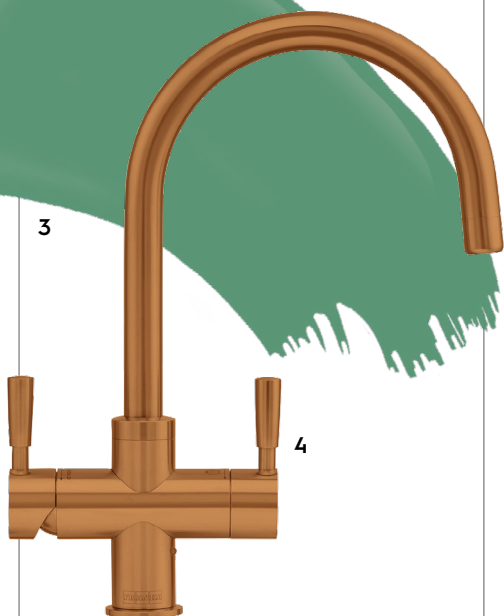
1



2



3



4

1 Enoch pendant, £95, Dör Lighting. darlighting.co.uk 2 Click Smart flooring in New England oak, £44.99 per sq m, Amtico. amtico.com 3 Green Globe Blend v500 Kitchen & Bathroom paint, £27 for 2.5 litres, Valspar. valsparpaint.co.uk 4 Copper 4-in-1 tap, £1600, Franke. franke.com



SOURCE BOOK

Design Woods of London 020 8852 1713, woodsoflondon.com

Cabinetry Neptune (neptune.com), from Woods of London, as before

Worktop Dekton by Costentino 0870 011 8788, cosentinogroup.net

Flooring Distinctive Flooring 01274 655 690, distinctiveflooring.co.uk

Tiles Aliexpress, aliexpress.com

Appliances Induction hob, Siemens 0344 892 8999, siemens-home.co.uk;

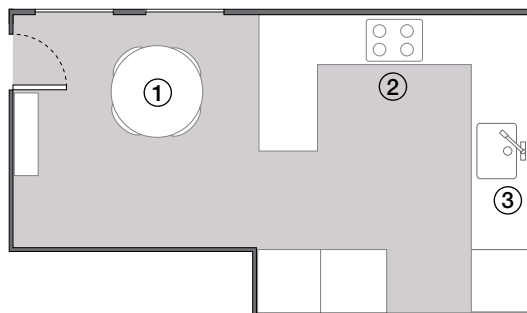
Oven, Neff 0344 892 8989, neff.co.uk

For full stockist information, see page 156

↑ The matt black worktop and dining table were both chosen for a sleek and sophisticated finish that does not reflect light harshly. **Dining table**, XZ3 from Magis Design; **Brooklyn dining chairs**, Furniture Choice.

THE PLANS

While the U-shaped layout of the kitchen stayed the same as before, a wall was removed to open up the space, creating one large room that felt more sociable and relaxed.



1 Dining area The round table, with its matt-black top, adds a contemporary element to the scheme and easily sits the family of three.

2 U-shape Matt and Bev decided to keep the original kitchen's U-shaped layout, but knocked down a wall separating it from the dining area.

3 Window The window above the sink faces south, which allows the space to be flooded with natural light. **KBB**