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Pro styling secrets



REPURPOSING THE UNITS WAS MY best money-saving idea

After knocking through to create a sociable kitchen-diner, **Valentina Gross** turned her all-white kitchen into a personality-packed space



'I chose this vibrant Summer Garden wallpaper to create a fabulous focal point in the dining area,' says Valentina. 'It contrasts nicely with the floor while pulling together the yellows and blues used throughout the open-plan space'



TOTAL
£15,272

'It made good economic sense to keep the existing units as they were practically brand new,' says Valentina. 'I went for the brightest yellow I could find, and the blue and white floor tiles lift the whole space even more.' For a similar shade, try Mister David by Little Greene



About me

I'm Valentina Gross and I live here with my daughter, Astrid, 13, and son Diego, nine. Our home is a detached 1940s house in Weybridge, Surrey, and we moved here in July 2020.

BEFORE



My problem kitchen

The decor was bland, and the dining room was separate from the kitchen. It felt much more inclusive to combine the two spaces so we could be together as a family and socialise more easily with guests.

How I made it work

I knocked through to create a kitchen-diner, but the existing white kitchen was in good condition, so it was remodelled to suit the

space. I created a breakfast bar and a bank of floor-to-ceiling cupboards at the back of the space, which was sprayed bright yellow.

My favourite part

I love the new layout, as it means I can cook and interact with family and friends while preparing meals. It was difficult to entertain before but now, I have space for everyone and regularly host get-togethers.

When we moved in the kitchen had only recently been fitted, and while it was good quality, it didn't suit our lifestyle or taste.

As well as the kitchen, I knew that I wanted to tackle various design projects throughout the house, so I looked into finding an interior designer to help me. The options I found online were mostly very traditional, but when I came across Slightly Quirky, I loved the originality and vibrance of its designs. I met with Caroline and we clicked straight away. She was excited to use the colourful palette we discussed, and the team came up with some very inspiring moodboards. I wanted the new space to be light, bright and open while reusing as much of the existing kitchen as possible, which was pretty much brand new when we moved in.

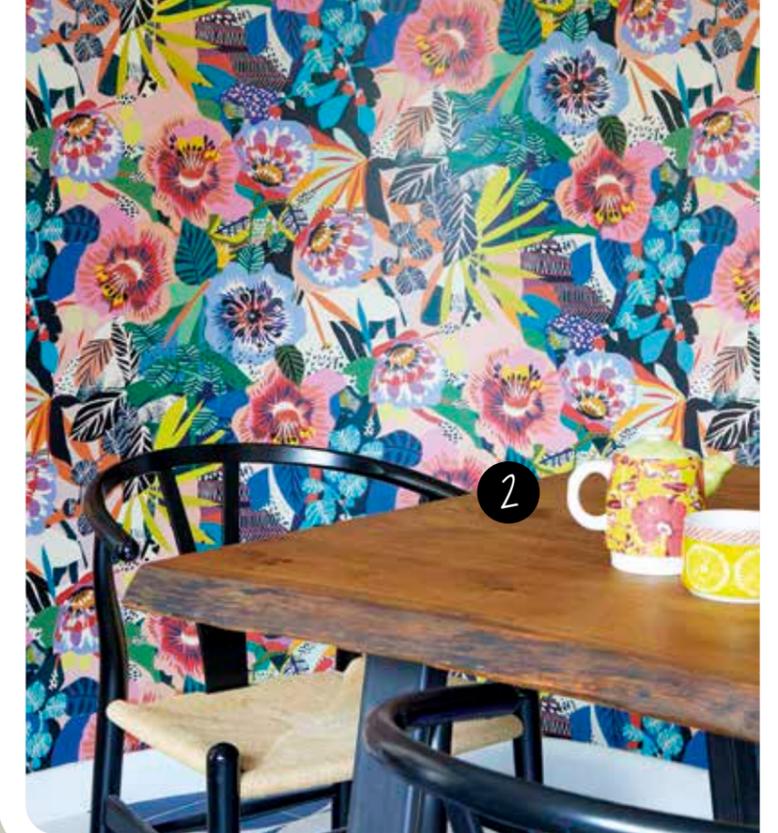
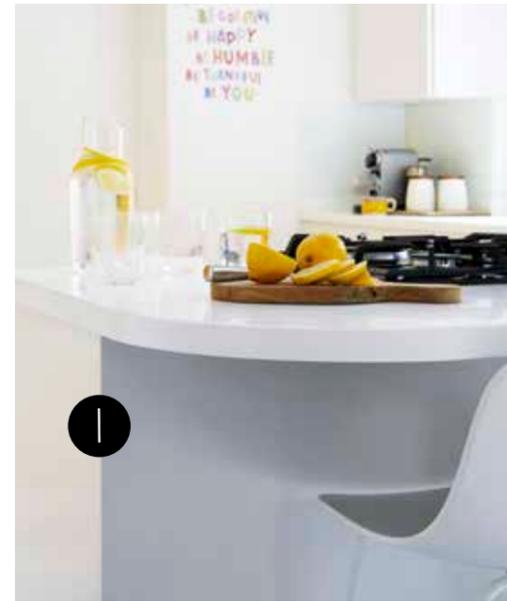
I had an overall budget for all the renovations, but opting for bespoke cabinetry ate into a lot of it, so we had to be resourceful to pull everything together at the end, which the team at Slightly Quirky really helped with. I did want to keep the original induction hob, but when I was using all the burners, it blew up! The price to mend it was half the price of buying a new one, so I opted for a new gas hob, which I prefer to cook on anyway.

My best money-saving idea by far was to keep the existing units, reusing some by spray-painting them yellow and adding them to a bank of cupboards. I also kept all the appliances, except the hob, and worked them into the new design.

I thought it was going to take three months to complete the kitchen, and I did change a few things along the way, but it ended up taking twice that. It was all well worth the effort though and I love it!



'There was an area at the back of the kitchen that wasn't fully utilised before, so we made the most of it with a bank of cabinets to rehouse the oven and create extra food storage,' explains Valentina



Style advice

Three simple tricks to try in your own home

1 Adapt existing worktops

The original Corian worktop, a material made from a blend of natural minerals and acrylic resin, was extended and given a circular finish to create a breakfast bar. 'I was surprised by how seamless the worktop looked when it was extended,' says Valentina. 'We managed to get an exact match to the existing one and used a filler to blend in the joins, which can't be seen now.'

2 Zone the space

Use wallpaper and colour to define an open-plan space. Valentina created focal points with the vibrant floral wallpaper behind the dining table, and the bank of bright yellow cupboards in the kitchen. 'The colourful elements have allowed me to bring in the personality and vibrancy I felt the kitchen was lacking, while zoning the cooking and eating areas at the same time,' says Valentina.

3 Repurpose what you have

Valentina was careful to keep the lower units when the wall was knocked through, and a small base unit was removed at the end of what became the bar area. The remaining cupboards were then used to create the storage wall. Where extra cabinetry was needed, it was built in the same style as the existing units. 'It was such a clever idea to spray the storage wall bright yellow as it tied the new and existing cabinetry together, and gave us the pop of punchy colour the kitchen really needed,' says Valentina.



Style idea

Make a statement with a bold graphic flooring design

The replacement hob was positioned on the peninsula to make cooking more sociable

My shopping list

Summer Garden **wallpaper**, £270 for 2 roll set, Milton & King. For similar, try Stonehouse Studio Mylo patterned **wall and floor tiles** in Ink, £39.55 per sq m, Victorian Plumbing. For similar, try Industrial colourful metal dome **pendant lights** in Blue and Khaki, £79.95 each, Lasson Living. Waney-Stöng **table** with metal legs, from £1,199, Konk Furniture. Whitby **bar stools** in White, £129 for 2, John Lewis & Partners. For similar, try Argon Tableware oval cast-iron **casserole dish** in Midnight Blue, £37.99, Tesco. Bloomique colourful inspirational **wall decal**, currently priced at £6.99, Amazon. For similar, try Jaoma striped ceramic **vase** in Yellow, £24.99, La Redoute. For similar, try stripe **plant pot** in Blue, £14.99, Hortology. For similar, try Icona Capitals **4-slice toaster** in New York Yellow, £114.99, De'Longhi



Wanda coloured glass **pendant light** in Dark Blue, large, £325, Glow Lighting



Walls & ceilings **matt emulsion** in Bright Bluejay, £20 for 2.5L, Crown Paints

Optiva **matt emulsion** in Safari, £18.64 for 1L, Tikkurila



M&S Collection Yellow bee **double oven glove**, £6, Ocado



Cello Aria **2-slot toaster and kettle** in Nocturn Blue, £45.95, Harts of Stur



Plain **seat pads** with button straps in Yellow, £24.99 for 4, Homescapes

COMES IN 18 COLOURS



Alfareria Luis Jimenez Blue and White striped **ceramic bowl**, £4.99, TK Maxx



Zamora highball **tumblers** in Amber, £10 for 2, Dibor



Arc **tile** in Lemon and English White, £4.80, Decorum Tiles



Lemons **ceramic measuring spoons**, £8.95 for 4, Rex London



Blue swirl **margarita glasses**, £29.50 for 2, Oliver Bonas



VALENTINA

found the brightest yellow to transform my space,

Sunny side up

Channel sunshine and clear skies in your kitchen with a cheerful yellow and blue colour scheme, like **Valentina** has done



Elements Wiggins **mugs** in Blue and Yellow, £4.50 each, Dunelm



Cornishware **dinner plate** in Yellow, £22, Rose & Grey



Ludo gas lift **bar stool** in Mustard Yellow, £229, Danetti



Stripe ceramic **milk jug** in Blue, £15, Joanna Wood



Orla Kiely afternoon tea **Blue tea towels**, £16 for 2, Oakley Home & Gifts



Julian Bowen Casa round **dining table** in White, £190, **dining chairs** in White Lined Oak, £225 for 4, both Next

Style idea
Add some houseplants to soften a bold scheme



Teresa Rego Porcelain and Tomatoes **A4 print**, £15, not just a shop



Sur la table colour me happy **Blue wire utensil pot**, £9, Harts of Stur

ADD A POP OF COLOUR



Blue dot enamel **roasting and serving dish**, £26.99, Sous Chef

3 OF A KIND... CRACKING EGG CUPS



Egg cup set in Graduated Yellow, £16.79 for 4 pieces, Cooks Professional



Ceramic **egg cup** in Blue, £6.95, Dyke & Dean



Marion **egg cup** in Blue, £4.95, Domestic Science