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HOME

# Challenge ACCEPTED

Renovating a wreck was a dream come true for Kelly and Michala Bateman: it allowed them to turn a series of small rooms into their perfect large and airy kitchen >

Words: Allison Davidson Photography: Darren Chung

Once a warren of small rooms, the new kitchen is spacious and light with lovely high ceilings. The Tillington **cabinetry** from Devonport suits the scheme perfectly, with tall units making the most of the proportions. It has been **painted** in Farrow & Ball's Hague Blue. **Worktop**, Silstone; **sink**, Blanco.

## The FACTS

**Who?** Michala and Kelly Bateman with children Harvey, 24, Will, 22 and Edie, 15, their dogs, Layla and Riley plus cats Drago and Khaleesi

**What?** A kitchen renovation in a six-bedroom Victorian detached vicarage

**Where?** Essex

**Cost?** £100,000

**Time?** Nine months



The tall units around the fridge-freezer, from Sub Zero, are the first thing you notice as you walk into the room. Michala designed the glass and mesh top cupboards which she uses to display her art glass. Pocket doors slide back to reveal the breakfast station.



## It wouldn't BE EVERY COUPLE'S DECISION TO buy a property *that had been* EMPTY for a DECADE and was pretty uninhabitable but...

Michala and Kelly Bateman saw the large proportions and period features and fell in love. "There was such scope to create a wonderful home, we didn't hesitate," says Michala, although they did know it'd be a challenge.

The couple had been looking for a renovation project for years. "Our previous home nearby was ultra modern – there was nothing left to do to it and I had never settled there," explains Michala. "We put a new kitchen in and thought about moving to Suffolk, but realised we still yearned for an old house we could do up from scratch." Michala and Kelly looked at many properties but were always pipped to the post by other buyers – so to be in a better position, they decided to sell up and rent for a while. As luck would have it, they had actually found this Victorian vicarage before their house had gone on the market when serendipity stepped in – the day they sold their old property was the day their offer on the new home was accepted. "The house wanted us as much as we wanted it," smiles Michala. >



Michala saw the **banquette seating**, made bespoke by West End Interiors, in a bar in Edinburgh and thought it would be perfect. **Table**, West End Interiors.





The Arts & Crafts fireplace is original to the house and has been renovated. The blueish-grey limestone floor, from Floors of Stone, brings out the colour of the units and the tumbled finish makes it look like it has been there forever.

After laying empty for such a long time, the house had to be stripped back completely. "We went back to the bricks and rafters – even the chimneys came down," says Michala. "But we did manage to save the ornate ceilings and all of the original fireplaces, which were put into storage." Once the building work was done, new services were installed and the house insulated to bring it up to current standards, then it was replastered and the original features reinstated. "It isn't listed, but we wanted to restore it as sympathetically as possible," says Michala. "Friends ask if the windows are original until they get close and realise they are double glazed but with traditional lead and new stained glass panels."

The now spacious kitchen is made up of the original service quarters – a former small kitchen, a maid's and a gardener's room and tool shed, boiler room, and a small pantry, which were in a single-storey structure at the side. All of these were knocked together to make one large space. "I had plenty of time to think about what I wanted while the rest of the renovation was carried out," remembers Michala. "I knew the kitchen had to be sympathetic to the vicarage's age, but I didn't want a museum piece or a farmhouse style – so I collected lots of pictures of designs I saw on the internet, in magazines and from showrooms, and created an album of styles and interesting details." The one idea she wanted to take from their previous home was a large table that seated 10, which was the hub of the old kitchen so they knew they wanted something the same size. "I saw some lovely banquette seating in a bar in Edinburgh and thought it was perfect. So I drew up a rough design with an L in the middle, which were the

table and seating, and took it to Serena and the team at West End Interiors, who had designed the kitchen in our last house." The company had a Davonport kitchen on display in their showroom which Michala liked because it worked with the house's Arts & Crafts touches, but with the option for a modern colour.

With the smaller rooms knocked into one large space ready for the new scheme, the couple spent time deciding on the best design and layout. The room covers the whole of the side of the vicarage and has a pitched roof to one side, so the it had to cleverly make the most of this quirk, plus the cabinetry needed to suit the room's proportions. "The units had to be tall and quite grand," says Michala. "I wanted an overmantel, which I think suits the style of the house. And it's perfect for my range cooker." Serena designed the rest of the kitchen around this and the idea of the banquette seating, while Michala chose Hague Blue from Farrow & Ball for the units. "I always wanted a strong blue, so I think this tone bridges the gap between the traditional house and modern living," says Michala. She admits that Kelly was pretty easy going about the whole project but he did insist on a bar. "He knew exactly where he wanted it: next to the doors leading into the garden," she laughs. Storage wasn't a primary concern, as there's a large pantry and utility just off the kitchen, but tall cabinets either side of the fridge-freezer house a breakfast station and a steam oven and cupboards.

Now that the space is complete, Michala and Kelly love it. "The kitchen is perfect for entertaining as it opens straight into the garden. Our friends call it the party kitchen and I think it suits the house perfectly," says Michala. ➤



The cupboard next to the fridge-freezer houses a Mido steam oven and more storage.



above Kelly's bar, next to the fireplace and patio doors, is handy for the garden when the family entertain. The antique mirror back reflects light into the room. **Splashback**, for similar, try Crecglass.

The Davonport kitchen is designed so preparation, cooking and refrigeration are all within easy reach. The overmantle includes an engraving in homage to the property's past life. **Tap, Quaker**.