



Left: The open-plan room is zoned into separate, but linked, inviting areas.

Interior designer Susan Venn has transformed this new-build house into a welcoming family retreat with shots of zingy colour and bags of personality

Words: **Amelia Thorpe** Photography: **Nick Smith**

Gone are the days when a kitchen was a tiny room at the back of the house occupied by a housewife in a pinny. Today, the move is increasingly towards open-plan living spaces that celebrate the pleasures of family life and easy entertaining, with layouts designed for cooking, dining and relaxing. And just such a room is what property developers Elaine and Kieran Redmond had in mind, as they began to build their own five-bedroom house in Ealing, west London, to share with their nine-year-old son, Eóghan.

"It's one thing to build a huge open-plan living space; it's another thing to know where to start on the layout," explains interior designer Susan Venn. "Elaine and Kieran were well aware that open-plan spaces can be unsuccessful, cavernous rooms if not planned properly, so they asked me to help them zone the kitchen, dining and living areas to get their room right from the outset." Here Susan explains more about the project...

How did you decide upon the layout for the kitchen-dining-living space?

Elaine and Kieran wanted a large dining table, as they frequently entertain friends and family, and it made sense to site this for the best views of the garden. An island with casual bar area separates the dining and kitchen zones, while on the other side of the room is the living area, with the same flooring and colour palette ▶

LEMON TWIST



The bronze mirror splashback adds gentle warmth and creates a transition between the social areas and the practical kitchen zone.

used throughout to create cohesion. The living area is marked by a partial wall, which breaks up the large space and helps create a cosy feel in each zone. A TV screen is sunk into its surface on the kitchen side, almost disappearing from view into the dark wall when it's not on. It is often difficult to incorporate a TV into a kitchen without compromising the design, so this solution was both practical and aesthetically pleasing.

Can you tell us about the colours and materials?

The accent colour is a citrine yellow, which adds lots of fresh zing and works beautifully with the dark oak furniture and cool stone floors. We used polished plaster finishes on the feature walls to add depth, while the splashback in the kitchen is a bronze

mirror which adds warmth and a touch of glamour. Sharan Johal of Vogue Kitchens suggested the textured Tobacco Oak finish of the kitchen cabinetry to make a wow-factor statement with the tall cabinets and contrasted this with Cashmere silky matt lacquer doors and marble-effect porcelain worktops, which are super-thin at 12mm and very durable.

How did you design the master bedroom?

This takes its inspiration from boutique hotel chic, with a moodier colour scheme than the ground floor. Luxury comes from sumptuous materials and layers of texture. The over-size upholstered headboard is designed to create drama and to suit the proportions of the large room and super-king-size bed.

What was the idea for the cloakroom and master ensuite?

Texture can add lots of interest, even in a small space. In the cloakroom, ribbed-effect wall tiles contrast with the decorative washbowl, while the shimmer of the mosaics in the master ensuite adds just enough impact to enhance the sanctuary-like feel.

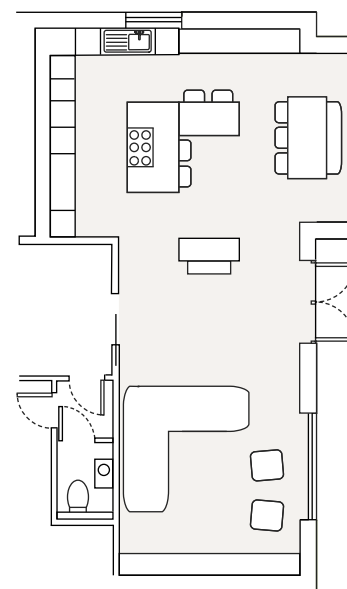
And can you tell us about Eóghan's bedroom?

It won't be long before Eóghan is a teenager, so we didn't want to create a childish space that he would grow out of quickly. So, we designed a bed that doubles as a den, and chose a neutral backdrop, accessorised with colours that he likes, including the funky bright green and black-and-white zigzag. It will be easy to update as he gets older. **[KBB]**



Above: The tall cabinets are recessed into the wall so that they don't look bulky. Instead, their textured Tobacco Oak finish creates a striking feature.

Right: Slender worktops of marble-effect Neolith porcelain add a classic look and it is much harder wearing than the real stone.





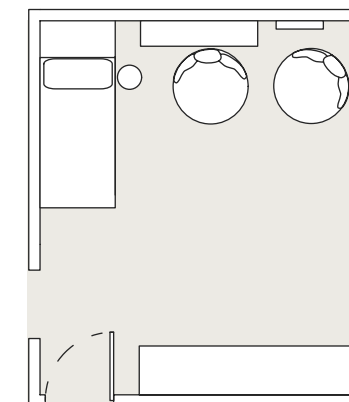
The breakfast bar is made of the same Tobacco Oak as the cabinetry.



Above: The L-shaped island was a considered choice, as kitchen designer Sharan Johal of Vogue Kitchens explains. "Its shape is interesting, and the bridged bar makes a comfortable area for sitting close to – but not in – the cooking and preparation zone."



Left: In the ground-floor cloakroom, a stud wall conceals the frame to support the wall-hung WC and its cistern, and houses illuminated niches for pretty displays above.



Above: In Eóghan's bedroom, the comfy lounging area features a removable cover, so it can be transformed into a spare bed when a friend sleeps over.

Q&A



Designer Susan Venn says...

Which elements took up the majority of the budget?

Much of the furniture is bespoke to suit the house, so this was a key part of the expenditure. To create harmony in the design, there are lots of details that make a difference too. For example, we built a ceiling coffer to frame the living area, incorporate lighting and conceal the curtain track for a smart and contemporary finish.

Any tips for people embarking on a similar project?

It is well worth paying a professional interior designer or architect to do a detailed specification for your project. Not only does this encourage you to think about what level of finish you want to achieve from the outset, but it also prevents costs spiralling out of control when you are faced with making last-minute choices.

What advice do you give clients on finding contractors?

It is always worth getting three estimates for building work. If you have a detailed specification, you should be able to get prices based on the same information so that you can make an accurate comparison between tenders.

What was the biggest challenge with this project?

Designing a large open-plan space is challenging, and creating flow between the different areas is crucial. A key focus is to ensure each zone remains practical whilst still being inviting and interesting.



Above: The headboard for the master bedroom was brought up the stairs in sections and finished on site, given its grand proportions.

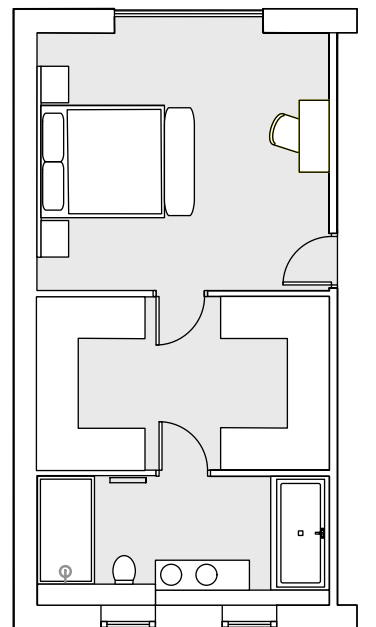
Right: In the master ensuite, simple washbowls are mounted on an elegant counter, with storage shelving below.

Opposite page, bottom: The freestanding bath is set on a plinth, which adds to its grandeur as well as concealing the pipework.



Left: Upholstered in amethyst-coloured velvet, the dressing table chair picks up the accent colours of the bed.

Below: Shimmering mosaic tiles add interest to the walk-in shower.



SourceBook

DESIGN

Interior designer Susan Venn of Susan Venn Design (01483 342101 or www.susanvenn.com)

Kitchen Sharan Johal of Vogue Kitchens (020 8997 5400 or www.voguekitchens.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Textured Tobacco Oak and Cashmere silk matt lacquer, Vogue Kitchens, as before

Worktops Neolith Estatuario Silk porcelain, Vogue Kitchens, as before

Splashback Bronze mirrored glass, Vogue Kitchens, as before

Appliances Integrated fridge, freezer and wine storage unit, Gaggenau (0344 892 8988 or www.gaggenau.com/gb); Ovens, steam oven, coffee machine, induction hob and dishwasher, all Siemens (0344 892 8999 or www.siemens-home.bsh-group.com); Ceiling extractor, Falmec (01206 849900 or www.falmec.co.uk)

Sink and tap Blanco (01923 635200 or www.blanco-germany.com); Boiling-water tap, Quooker (0345 833 3555 or www.quooker.co.uk)

Flooring Perugian Stone Grigio porcelain floor tiles, Stone & Ceramic Warehouse (020 8993 5545 or www.stoneandceramicwarehouse.co.uk)

Barstools, dining chairs and bench Bespoke, Susan Venn Design, as before

Dining table Bespoke, Robert Aston Furniture (020 8879 4224 or www.robert-aston.co.uk)

Pendant lights (above island) Unika by Northern Lighting, Clippings (020 3808 9449 or www.clippings.com); (above dining table) Luna Shadow, Copper & Silk (020 8459 8772 or www.copperandsilk.com)

Curtain fabric Taro, Zimmer+Rohde (020 7351 7115 or www.zimmer-rohde.com)

LIVING AREA

Wall finishes Polished plaster finishes, Susan Venn Design, as before

Sofa and occasional chairs Bespoke, Susan Venn Design, as before

Coffee table Plato, Camerich (020 7372 9887 or www.camerich.co.uk)

Side table Martini, West Elm (020 7637 9150 or www.westelm.co.uk)

Fire Marble Hill Fireplaces (020 8892 1488 or www.marblehill.co.uk)

Floor lamp Large Bow lamp, Made (0344 257 1888 or www.made.com)

Rug For similar try The Rug Company (020 7908 9999 or www.therugcompany.com)

Console table Athena, Swoon Editions (020 3389 7550 or www.swooneditions.com)

CLOAKROOM

Basin, mixer, countertop and WC Alternative Bathrooms (020 3375 9002 or www.alternativebathrooms.com)

Mirror 3D Vision LED, Mirror For You (020 3769 7848 or www.mirrorforyou.co.uk)

Wall and floor tiles Porcelanosa (01923 815200 or www.porcelanosa.com/uk)

MASTER BEDROOM

Bed, bedhead, bedside cabinets, ottoman, cushions, dressing table and chair Bespoke, Susan Venn Design, as before

Bedside lamps Naiad Smoke, Heathfield & Co (01732 350450 or www.heathfield.co.uk)

Bed linen The White Company (020 3758 9222 or www.thewhitecompany.com)

Artwork Ben Lowe (01452 863796 or www.benlowe.com)

Mirror For similar try Porta Romana (01420 23005 or www.portaromana.com)

ENSUITE

Bath, basins, vanity unit, brassware, shower screen and mirror Alternative Bathrooms, as before

Wall and floor tiles Porcelanosa, as before

CHILD'S BEDROOM

Bed and cushions Bespoke, Susan Venn Design, as before

Chairs Zig Zag Cocoon, Graham & Green (020 8987 3700 or www.grahamandgreen.co.uk)

Ceiling light Rock, Habitat (0344 499 4686 or www.habitat.co.uk)

Shelving unit Antonn, Habitat, as before

Bedside cabinet Kartell Componibili, Heal's (020 7896 7451 or www.heals.com)

Wall light Dwell (0345 675 9090 or www.dwell.co.uk)

COST

Designs by Vogue Kitchens start from £20,000, a similar master bedroom would cost around £17,500, a similar ensuite around £10,000, a similar child's bedroom about £8500 and a similar cloakroom around £5000

GET THE LOOK

Right: Axor Starck Organic basin mixer, £419, Hansgrohe. (01372 472001 or www.hansgrohe.co.uk)



Above: Illusion blanket, £1318, Calligaris. (020 7580 5288 or www.calligaris.co.uk)



Ludwig two-seater sofa in Cube 501, £2072, Voyage Maison. (0141 641 1700 or www.voyagemaison.co.uk)



Below: Wave rug, £159, In-Spaces. (07860 773691 or www.in-spaces.com)



Right: Paris barstool, from £745 plus fabric, The Sofa & Chair Company. (020 8752 8935 or www.thesofaandchair.co.uk)



Above: Green Leaf tea light holder, £9, Barker & Stonehouse. (0333 331 5863 or www.barkerandstonehouse.co.uk)

