

# CITY INTERIORS

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FEBRUARY 2012

Essential

February 2012

# KITCHEN BATHROOM BEDROOM

THE ESSENTIAL KITCHEN BATHROOM BEDROOM MAGAZINE **THE UK'S NO.1** £3.75

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# DOWN UNDER

Going underground proved a great move  
for this luxurious basement kitchen.

PHOTOS JAKE FITZJONES WORDS ANNA TOBIN





Sebastian and Téa Johnston have a very full house. They share their 1950s five bedroom terraced home in Central London with their three children and three nieces, Eloise, 13, Tika, 12, Jasper, 9, Téa, 7, Felix, 6 and Tata 6. It was vital that their new kitchen would be able to accommodate everyone comfortably and give the couple room to entertain outside the family too.

'We chose architect Stephen Fletcher, whom we had worked with on our previous home, to redevelop the whole house to suit our needs,' explains Téa. 'He started from the bottom up, developing a plan to go

underground to create a basement which would provide a central eating, dining and living space where the whole family and all of our friends could hang out.'

She adds, 'With a basement you always have the problem of too little light, but Stephen overcame this by installing a feature glass floor in the living room above, and designing floor-to-ceiling glazed doors out on to the back garden, which we also had dug down to maximise the flow of light. When you're in here now, it's easy to forget that you are actually in a basement, it's so bright.'

The house's original kitchen was on the

#### KITCHEN PROFILE

The Johnston family dug down to create a spacious basement kitchen. The challenge was to maximise the feeling of space and light flowing into the room to create an airy open-plan kitchen/dining/living hub. Gleaming mirrored surfaces reflect the light from the glass ceiling above and the patio doors onto the garden to ensure that the room is always flooded with daylight, while flashes of vibrant citrus put an individual stamp on the ultra-contemporary scheme.

**Kitchen designed by Jane Stewart at Mowlem & Co, 555 Kings Road, London, SW6 2EB.**

**Tel: 020 7610 6626. mowlemandco.co.uk. Kitchens start from £30,000.**

**Architect: Stephen Fletcher at Stephen Fletcher Architects, 121c Cleveland Street, London, W1T 6PZ, 020 7637 1244.**

**Builder: City Interiors, Temple Works, Brett Road, London, E8 1JR. 020 8510 0555.**





**Above** Vertical lines of the mirrored wall units accentuate the height of the room, while the reflective surface adds depth. Stained wood veneers, and glossy quartz Oyster Caesarstone worktops, create an understated contemporary chic feel.

**Left** A specially designed drawer pulls out to reveal an extensive spice compartment, where each pot is easy to identify and access.

**Right** The glass ceiling is a great feature both in the living room above, and the kitchen below, bringing extra light into the basement. The splash of citrus inside the pantry adds a sense of fun to this sleek, modern and stylish scheme.



*'A feature glass floor in the room above maximises the flow of light.'*









This sophisticated kitchen/diner lends itself to informal family eating, but with the lights turned down in the evening, it is easily transformed into a formal entertaining space with an inviting sitting room beyond.





*'Mirrored wall units look great, and they also bounce light around the room.'*

ground floor and, although it functioned reasonably well, it was poky and lacked storage space so Téa never felt able to relax there. 'We both like contemporary style kitchens with lots of hidden storage so that there is minimal clutter on display,' says Téa. 'We'd gone to Mowlem to design a kitchen for us in our previous house, which we were very pleased with, so when the architect suggested that we use them here, we were very happy to use them again.'

Téa explains, 'Jane Stewart, the designer at Mowlem, came up with the brilliant idea of the mirrored wall units, which not only look great, and they also bounce light around the room. Although it is a large space already, they make it feel even more spacious down here.'

As the Johnstons often entertain and have parties in the house, it was important that the kitchen not only looked good, it had to function brilliantly too. 'There were certain things that we specified to the designer that we wanted, such as the easy-to-access drawer containing all my spices and the pantry for storing non-perishable foods, then Jane developed our requisites and came up with other great storage facilities too. I wanted everything to ➤

**Above** The Miele combination microwave oven, single oven and warming drawer have been ergonomically stacked, within easy reach of the serving area.

**Right** The handleless doors in the island unit open up on to a deep cupboard, large enough to hold an extensive dinner service.

**Opposite** A Westin ceiling pad extractor has been built into the bespoke surround to match the island. The unit plinths are made from steel to complement the mirrored panels and stainless steel appliances, helping to tie the whole scheme together.

