

A photograph of a modern kitchen interior. On the left, there are tall white cabinets with a built-in oven and a glass-fronted refrigerator. A long white countertop runs along the wall, featuring a sink, a stovetop, and various kitchen items like a kettle and fruit. A large window with a dark frame looks out onto a garden. In the foreground on the right, there is a red kitchen island with a white countertop. The floor is made of polished wood.

The best of both worlds

A combination of Old and New
World know-how has resulted in
a clean-lined, contemporary home
with a few surprises in store

Report: Dee Hicks Photography: Rachael Smith Styling: Tamsin Weston

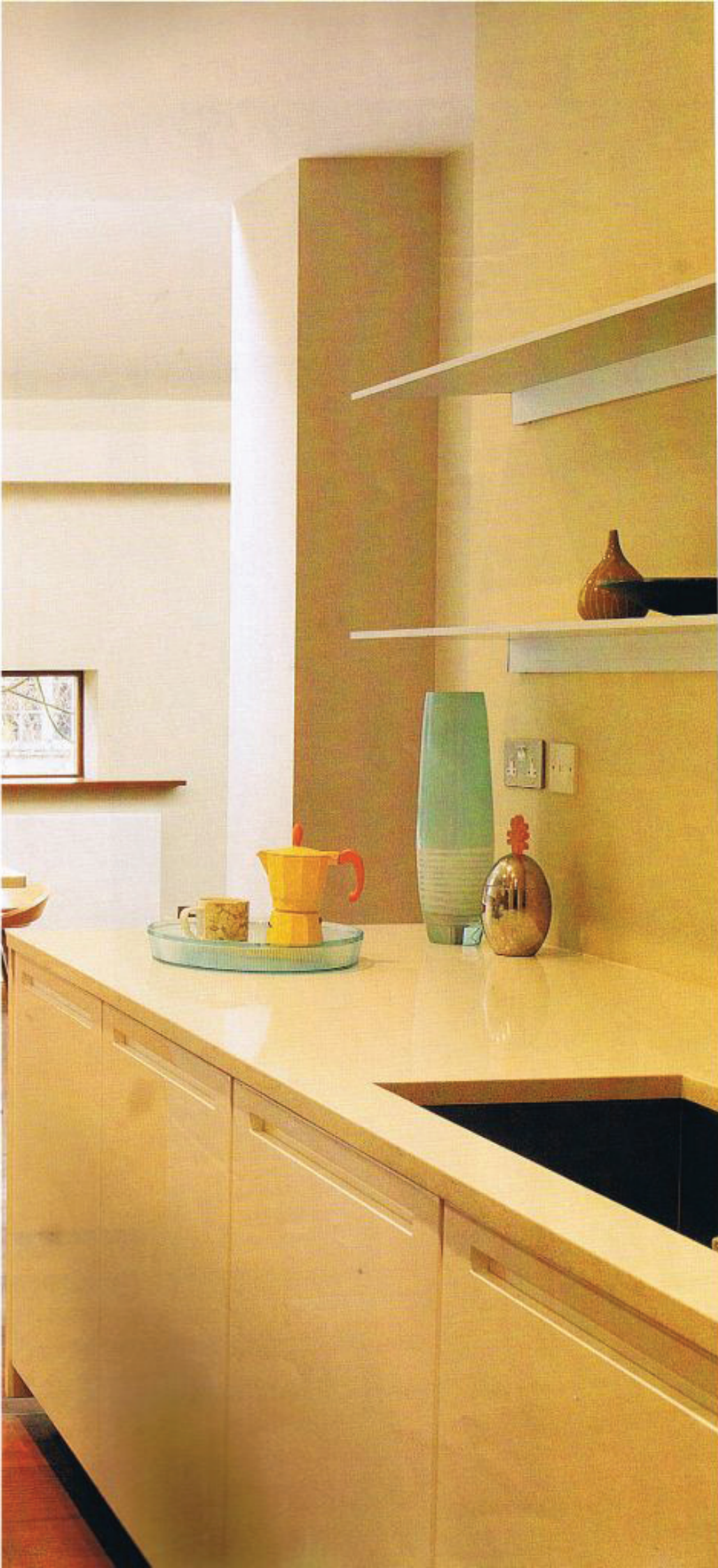
Katie Cole and her husband James Griffin share an eclectic mix of heritage and tastes. Australian-born Katie is accustomed to light, airy, generous spaces, while James grew up in Ireland, surrounded by more traditional design. Both favour minimalism but are also not averse to colour. Happily, all of these elements have been accommodated within their home, with the rooms a blend of classic and contemporary, each displaying what has become Katie and James's signature splash of vibrant colour.

The couple harnessed expertise from both sides of the world to create their home. Katie's brother Richard, a Sydney-based architect, drew up the initial set of drawings for the house, which Hugh Tuffley, a former colleague of Richard's, then fine-tuned in London. With four children, ranging in age from five to newborn, any remotely minimalist scheme for the Griffin household had to be supported by serious amounts of storage.

"The Griffins were the first people in the country, if not the world, to have Boffi's glossy burnt orange in their kitchen"

Removing the dividing walls from four small rooms allowed the couple to create a large, open-plan kitchen-diner that includes a play area for the children. The space is flooded with light from a series of glazed doors leading to the garden, and a strip of skylights where the original house and a recent extension meet. Warm-toned Brazilian walnut flooring, more durable than American black walnut and more welcoming than a tiled floor, unifies the space. ▶

Left: The spacious kitchen is flooded with light from a series of glazed doors and a row of skylights



After extensive research, the couple chose a Boffi kitchen from Alternative Plans. Scott Mitchell, who designed the kitchen says, "People are attracted to Boffi kitchens initially for their looks but it's the sheer quality of the craftsmanship that gets them hooked."

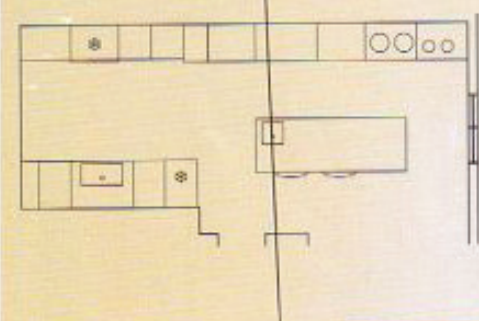
The clean-lined kitchen is unmistakably Italian and incredibly chic, its burnt orange

island – the trademark colour splash – a stunning focal point in a sea of white units. "The Griffins were the first people in the country, if not the world, to have the glossy burnt orange in their kitchen. It was so new, I didn't even have a sample, only a picture from our Milan office," Scott recalls.

The kitchen accommodates everything you would expect to

find in a modern family home – oversized fridge, larder cupboard, double oven, dishwasher, sinks, copious amounts of storage – but the presence of a black aga within the sweep of sleek units prompts a double take. "The room is so large that it was easy to fit everything in," says Scott. "It was just a question of tailoring the layout around the aga."

"It came with the house," says Katie. "I was adamant that I didn't want it, but James grew up with an aga, so it stayed and I've now grown quite fond of it." For practical purposes however, a twin-burner hob sits alongside the aga, together with a special barbecue ring, for when the British weather prohibits the use of the purpose-built barbecue in the garden. ▶



The burnt orange central island stands in sharp relief against a bank of pure white units



With twin ovens, an aga, a gas hob and a barbecue ring, all styles of cooking are catered for within the sweep of glossy white units



Throughout the house, original features have been retained or replaced while each room successfully combines traditional and modern design

Upstairs, in the master bedroom, Farrow & Ball's Cornforth White, a soft blue-grey colour, creates a restful backdrop for a traditional rosewood bed and bedside cabinets, while the wall-mounted LCD TV adds a contemporary touch to the scheme. On the chimney breast, the distinctive Orchid design wallpaper in vivid blue from Cole & Son provides, as Katie

points out, "a block of colour that can easily be changed, if we tire of it". Here, and throughout the house, the original corning and skirting boards have been retained or replaced, framing the well-proportioned rooms.

The existing ensuite was divided in two to create a dressing room and the new bathroom, dominated by a stunning wall of Bisazza mosaic tiles. "We really didn't want a

hotel-style bathroom," says Katie, "so decided to create a feature wall."

The generously proportioned space accommodates a Bette bath, walk-in shower, Duravit WC and twin Boffi basins. Hugh designed the wide walnut drawers on which the basins sit, together with the mirrored storage above. The unusual taps and showerhead – a dramatic slash of brushed stainless steel –

are by Boffi. "I felt it was worth paying for something special," explains Katie.

This is an inviting home in which a couple has taken cutting-edge design out of the showroom and used it to create an environment that is both a reflection of their personalities and a comfortable space in which to raise their children. It shows that colour confidence can make a big difference. **KBB**



His and hers basins set upon a stylish vanity unit create a luxurious pampering zone within the bathroom space

Q&A: DESIGNER

What makes these Boffi units so special?

"They are immersed in layer upon layer of polyester lacquer, each rubbed down and polished before the next coat. The finished result is stronger than any other manufacturer's. It's a system that Boffi has perfected over the course of 50 years."

What should people look for when choosing a kitchen?

"My advice is to let yourself fall in love with a particular look or material. Then see which manufacturers can supply that look, and then get down to the nitty-gritty of specifications, prices and so on."

What can prospective customers do to make your job easier?

"As long as they have prepared a wish list of their requirements then it's up to me to make it work. The size and shape of the space tends to dictate what can and cannot be done, but I try to find a way to make it all fit together, like a jigsaw."



The deep washbasins and unusual taps are both by Boffi



At opposite poles of the design spectrum: the elaborate mosaic feature wall and Boffi's Cut brushed stainless steel shower



Adamant that they didn't want a hotel-style bathroom, the Griffins chose a dramatic feature wall of Bisazza mosaic tiles

COST

Boffi kitchens start at £35,000. Similar bathrooms start at £12,000. Bisazza mosaic tiles cost from £40 per sq m

CONTACTS

DESIGN

Architects Richard Cole Architecture (www.richardcolearchitecture.com.au), Hugh Tuffley (07889 441345 or www.hughtuffley.com)

KITCHEN

Design Scott Mitchell of Alternative Plans (020 7228 6460 or www.alternative-plans.co.uk)

Units and worktops

Boffi (www.boffi.com) at Alternative Plans, as before
Ovens and fridge De Dietrich (0870 060 3230 or www.dedietrich.co.uk)

Hob Gaggenau (0870 125 4511 or www.gaggenau.com)

Taps Newform (www.newform.it) from Home Creations (0845 126 0731 or www.homecreations.co.uk)

Brazilian walnut flooring The Natural Wood Floor Co (020 8871 9771 or www.naturalwoodfloor.co.uk)

Accessories Fruit bowl, tray, coffee pot, glasses, plates and jars, TK Maxx (01923 473561 or www.tkmaxx.com)

BEDROOM

Wallpaper Cole & Son (020 7376 4628 or www.cole-and-son.com)

Paint Farrow & Ball (01202 876141 or www.farrow-ball.com)

Curtains Zimmer + Rohde (020 7351 7115 or www.zimmer-rohde.com)

Aquos wall-mounted TV Sharp (0800 262958 or www.sharp.co.uk)

Accessories Throw and cushion covers, The White Company (0870 900 9555 or www.thewhitecompany.com)

BATHROOM

Mosaic tiles Bisazza (www.bisazza.co.uk) from

Surface (020 7819 2300 or www.surface-tiles.com)

Crema Marfil tiles and matt white tiles Surface, as before
Bath Bette (01789 262262 or www.bette.de)

Basins, taps and showerhead Boffi at Alternative Plans, as before

WC Duravit (0870 730 7787 or www.duravit.co.uk)

Walnut storage Hugh Tuffley, as before

Wall-mounted radiator Tubes (020 7351 1988 or www.tubesradiatori.com)

Accessories Soaps and liquid soap, npw.co.uk (020 8735 2882 or www.npw.co.uk); Towels, TK Maxx, as before