

essential

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# KITCHEN BATHROOM BEDROOM

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# LET THERE BE LIGHT

A desirable blend of lacquer, wood and steel  
make this open-plan kitchen ideal for summer.

PHOTOS DARREN CHUNG WORDS AMELIA THORPE



A wall of glass breaks down the boundaries in this spacious kitchen, while a gentle, yet contemporary palette of cream adds to the ambient atmosphere.



**Above** This Scandinavian inspired kitchen boasts a wall of sleek floating cabinets, while a central steel-covered island and wooden table split the enormous room into practical zones.

**Left** A wall-mounted spout echoes the aluminium touches along each work surface.

**Opposite** Sun light filters through the wall of glass doors and roof lights, bringing an outdoor feeling into the kitchen and dining room.

**A**fter living in Scandinavia, there was one thing that Charles and Jenny Manning had at the top of their wish list for their next home in England. 'Light!' says Charles, emphatically. 'Because winter in Scandinavia is so long, homes are designed to be as light as possible, with lots of white and light wood, and it makes a very nice environment to live in.'

But if light was their priority, why did they buy a 1970s-built home in Oxfordshire, which hadn't been touched for over thirty years, and had a kitchen which was furnished in faded purple and about as dark as dark could be? 'We fell in love with the view across the meadows and down towards the River Thames – the sunsets are beautiful,' explains Charles. The couple weren't at all fazed by a project to renovate and reconfigure a house: this is their nineteenth home, and they clearly enjoy →

#### KITCHEN PROFILE

Bulthaup's b3 furniture in Greige laminate is fully suspended off the floor and along the wall in a beautifully engineered and light design, complemented by a streamlined island complete with oak breakfast bar. Slender worktops of Graphite Grey laminate are edged in aluminium, providing crisp contrast and emphasising the linear nature of the design. **Kitchen Architecture, 274 Banbury Road, Summertown, Oxford, OX2 7D** Tel: 01865 426990. [kitchenarchitecture.co.uk](http://kitchenarchitecture.co.uk). Priced from £35,000.

*'Suspended wall units emphasise the light ambience of the room, enhancing the feeling of space.'*





Looking out over the garden, the sleek floating island houses the flush hob, dishwasher and other bespoke storage options; while key wooden accents throughout the room warm this cool Scandinavian-inspired look.

*'The large folding doors let the sunshine in, warming the limestone floor.'*

design challenges, especially now they are both retired. 'We're never short of ideas and we like to sketch them out,' he says. So much so, that they did all the design work on the project to extend the kitchen themselves, demolishing an internal wall separating the old kitchen and dining room in the process. The result: one very large and spacious new room, which is more than double the size of the old kitchen, complete with a five metre wall of glass doors,

which can be folded all the way back throughout the warm summer months.

Impressed? You'll probably be even more so to learn that Charles and Jenny also decided to make the house as eco-friendly and energy efficient as possible. Despite the fact that they don't have any formal design or construction training, they planned the large folding doors to let sunshine warm the limestone floor, insulated the internal walls, researched and



installed a ground source heat pump and solar roof panels to heat water, chose argon gas-filled double glazed windows to reduce heat loss, and selected low energy lighting. 'I know to some it's tempting to think, why bother?', especially because some of these things can be quite expensive to install, but energy costs seem to always be rising - and if this house is likely to be around for another hundred years or so, it needs to be as energy efficient →

**Top right** Looking through into the living area, internal glass doors allow maximum light to flow through the house.

**Right** A blend of warm wooden accents balance out the use of white, throughout the house, keeping this light-filled space feeling warm and inviting.





*'The spacious new kitchen and dining room is more than double the size of the original space.'*

#### STOCKISTS INFORMATION

##### APPLIANCES

Similar ovens, HB55AB550B, £790 each, at Siemens; Vario VK232 gas cooktop, £775; Vario VK230 steamer cooktop, £1,600; Vario VP230 Teppan Yaki, £1,450; all at Gaggenau; KDN9713iD integrated fridge/freezer, £1,059; G5885SCVi integrated dishwasher, £1,680, at Miele.

##### FIXTURES AND FURNISHINGS

Bulthaup tap, sinks and Graphite Grey laminate

worktops, all priced to order, at Kitchen Architecture; Limestone floor tiles, from a selection, at Stonell; Similar dining table, from a selection, at Benchmark Furniture; Similar dining chairs, Straight Back, £59 each, at Dwell; Similar chairs (by glass doors), Amy, £322 each, at Lloyd Loom of Spalding; Folding glass doors, priced to order, at Sunfold; Internal glass doors, priced to order, at Go Glass; \*All prices are approximate. For stockists, see page 162.

as it possibly can be,' says Charles.

In the kitchen, the glass doors and roof lights maximize the natural -and minimize the electric- light, while bulthaup b3 furniture enhances the feeling of space. Explains Marcus Watkins, design manager of Kitchen Architecture, 'b3 is suspended from the wall, which emphasizes the light feel of the room.' The unfussy run of wall units is complemented by a parallel island, designed to be the principle work surface in the room and to provide plenty more storage.'

Slender laminate worktops add to the light feel of the design, and contribute to the property's green credentials. 'Materials are not wasted,' explains Marcus, adding that bulthaup manufactures to strict German environmental standards, using sustainably sourced materials where possible.

Their latest project has been to totally overhaul the garden, its grey and green planting designed to complement the kitchen. Says Charles, 'When we have a party in summer, we can throw open the doors and it's lovely to be able to wander in and out.'



**Above** Three separate storage, preparation and dining areas were designed to maximize the open space, with a consistent colour scheme flowing through each part of the room, uniting the scheme.

**Left** Decking is flush fitted to the limestone kitchen floor to create an almost seamless transition between the exterior and interior spaces.