

DRAB *to fab*

The Swain's old kitchen may not have been the most glamorous on the block, but it had 'good bones', and these were optimised in the new design.

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In its former state, the room was a vision of brownness, from the rust-coloured wallpaper and linoleum floors to the chocolate-coloured cabinetry and swathe of beige splashback tiles. On top of its unappealing colour scheme, it lacked adequate storage which meant the family had to use the benchtops and open shelving for kitchen paraphernalia, creating an overall cluttered appearance. And there was a door to the adjacent laundry in it too, making it a corridor of sorts. It wasn't without its pros though – lofty ceilings and timber-frame sash-windows gave it a lot of potential for A-Plan Kitchen's kitchen designer Sue Terley, whose expertise brought the whole thing out of the darkness and into the light.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The brief was for extra bench space, cupboards with glass doors to showcase personal treasures, and larger, deeper drawers for more storage – and something had to be done about that laundry. In the end it was decided the doorways to the laundry and to the walk-in pantry, which runs along the same wall, be bricked up and a separate entrance

ABOVE LEFT: When guests take up a seat at the bench, they have a view to the collection of pieces in the cabinets – and it's an even more alluring display when the downlights are turned on.

ABOVE RIGHT: Family matters: the couple's children all had input on the type of whitegoods that went in the kitchen – and they made some brilliant choices. Here the curved glass on the rangehood is a pleasing departure from ones with a boxier look.

LEFT: Deep, wide soft-close drawers were just what the Swains were after to alleviate their storage issues. A handy metal rack for utensils makes an eye-catching feature that's practical too.



to the pantry be created behind the kitchen, through which there would be access to the laundry. This allowed Sue to extend the benchtop to form the last edge of a 'u' shape, which in turn made space for an extra two sets of drawers beneath it and the requested cupboards above it. A-Plan also designed the open tiered shelves that border them on one side, and together they make a stunning feature that brings added interest in the room. Underfoot, the distinctly dated linoleum was ripped up to reveal original blonde floorboards, which needed nothing more than a polish to match their updated surrounds.

There's no doubt the fresh light-neutrals colour scheme created the biggest transformation – not only does it lift the look of the room for a bright, clean ambience, in combination with the high ceiling it also makes it appear larger. Now the floods of sunlight coming in through the windows heighten the already airy feel in there.

TO THE DETAILS

Once the layout was configured, it was then just a matter of refining the kitchen to suit the French-provincial flavour the homeowners were after – with some modern stainless-steel conveniences, of course – and they employed interior designer Georgia Williams to give it some flair. "They love old houses and like to make them new, but with the feel of old-style luxury," she relates. The new kitchen's convenient layout and

ABOVE LEFT: A couple of groovy stools under the benchtop turn this part of the kitchen into a breakfast bar, or simply a place for friends to sit and chat. The Swains say their guests love the new kitchen because they get to interact with them more as they cook.

ABOVE RIGHT: The cabinetry features decorative capping and dainty black knobs, finishing off an utterly enticing display nook.



extra storage has made a world of difference to the family's cooking experiences, and they believe it to be much easier to maintain because everything is so well organised. "The owners told me that once things are put away, the whole thing can be wiped down easily because there's no clutter," she adds. "It always looks clean and organised without them really trying." Naturally this helps when friends drop round, and when they do they're likely to head straight to the stools at the benchtop for a chat as their hosts prepare food and drinks.

As with most renovations, the Swains nominate the end of it as their favourite part of the process, and luckily the one-month-long wait zoomed by without any hassles. Now they're busy filling their welcoming kitchen with the daily chatter of family life and are working on making it their self-described 'hub of togetherness'. ■

KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

- Oven & stove – Ilve
- Rangehood – Miele
- Dishwasher & fridge – Fisher & Paykel
- Microwave – Panasonic
- Benchtops – Hanex solid surface
- Tapware – Hansa
- Cabinetry – Polyurethane
- Doors – Polyurethane, painted with Taubmans 'Warm Smoke'
- Handles – Black French provincial from Mother of Pearl
- Splashback – White glass
- Stools – Exclusive to Harvey Norman
- Kickboards – Brushed aluminium from A-Plan Kitchens
- Interior design by Georgia Williams
- Kitchen design by Sue Terley