



chiaroscuro

It all started with a bold, fun sense of style – slightly retro – and a love of entertaining.

The owners and the designer of this refurbished kitchen found the inspiration for its new look in a re-covered 1920s couch, a sitting room featuring tones of deep and mysterious black-red, and the overall style of their 1950s Christchurch home, which designer Sian Gillanders describes as “slightly Art Deco”. However, the first and most fundamental influence on the design was much more utilitarian.

“We wanted it to be very open plan, somewhere that we could have friends, cook, gather around – it needed to be quite a social area,” says owner Trudy Brown, who is renovating the home with her husband, Peter.

To accomplish this, the kitchen flows easily into the adjoining lounge, which in turn opens onto the outdoor living areas.

“The whole layout works really well,” Trudy says.

A sense of connection with the lounge, painted in Resene Diesel, then influenced the choice of a rich, dark finish for the kitchen’s cabinetry, with Melteca in Dark Oak providing the solution.

However, to find the real start of the design’s success, Sian, from Simply Kitchens, might suggest another step back is required.



“If a design has good balance and proportion, that’s the essence of it,” she says. “Good designers instinctively design in that form, and then you can add the details and finishes. People often don’t realise that it takes a lot of time to get balance within the forms. Once you’ve got that, then you can add colour, texture and surfaces.”

The solid, clean-lined balance of this kitchen’s structure shows through in the forms of the central island and a strong, furniture-like dresser unit between two windows on one side wall. On the wall opposite, a virtually blank canvas of dark Melteca was designed to provide display space for Trudy’s art. The back wall houses cooking and storage, including the gas hob, double oven and refrigerator. The island is very much the centre point of the kitchen, and its generous proportions and dark base give it plenty of weight to anchor the room’s design.

Trudy says that she and Peter had pretty clear ideas about the layout of the room, especially as they had recently been through the kitchen design process as part of converting an office block into a residence in Wellington.

“In terms of layout, we knew what had worked and what hadn’t,” she says.

As the project progressed, Trudy says, the only main ideas that changed were the addition of the dresser-like cabinet – a great suggestion from Sian – and the deletion of a table surface at the end of the island.

“We realised there wasn’t really room for that.”

The selection of the rich, heavy cabinetry colour was a foundation decision in the overall process of bringing the kitchen together. In order to stop the room from being too dark, a number of lighter shades and materials were added to the design palette.

“This space could take the dark finish because we kept the flooring and benchtops light,” explains Sian.

The benches, topped with Laminex Sheer Mesh, are light not just by virtue of their colour, but also their minimalist 20mm square-edge profile. The room’s two windows and the overall openness of the space also help to offset the dark cabinetry’s potential to weigh down the look of the room.

A large glass splashback on the back wall stands out among the cupboards. The same basic contrast is repeated in the dresser unit, which features the same Melteca up to bench height, topped with a nod to the white benchtops, and with tall glass doors above.

Also in the interests of keeping things light, backpainted glass infills with aluminium accents front much of the cabinetry above bench height. Trudy says she would have liked to use this material more extensively, but the cost was somewhat prohibitive. Custom-made aluminium handles in a simple, rod-shaped design also lighten the look and suit the retro feeling of the design.

Keeping the flooring light was a more complicated endeavour. Trudy says that they decided on white lino, but found it a very tough choice to implement.



“There’s just nothing out there. They’ve stopped making it,” she says. “We just found enough to do the job.”

She is pleased they went to the effort to find just what they wanted. As well as enjoying the light, contemporary look, she has found the floors, covered with a durable clear finish, practical and easy to clean.

The geometric, retro style is evident in the feature lighting, too, which adds fun – and light, of course – to the workspace on the central island. The same feel is reflected in the chrome and white barstools, which sit in circles of bold red on the floor. The red also creates a smart juxtaposition with the raisin macrosuede used to re-cover the 1920s couch, which offers guests a comfortable front-row seat just outside the action in the kitchen.

While the kitchen has come together with a practical and enjoyable layout, and is a great reflection of the owners’ bold style, the process was not without its pitfalls.

“Make sure you are aware of what needs to happen, in what order!” Trudy advises.

Cooking in her new kitchen got put on hold for an extra month after the hob had arrived, as it couldn’t be installed before the glass splashback was in place. Therefore, on top of six weeks planned for being without a kitchen, Trudy and Peter had to spend an extra month getting by mostly on takeaways.

“And you think you have everything organised...” she laughs.

Overall, though, Trudy says she is thrilled with the final result.

“We absolutely love it, and we get so many comments about it. The whole design just works really well.” **H**



Benchtop: Sheer Mesh natural finish laminex

Resene Surf Spray Grey



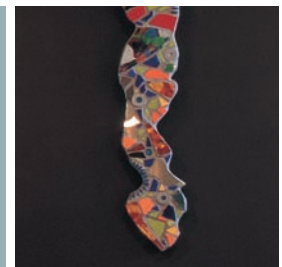
Barstools: Sunny Furniture

Get this interior look with Resene Sandspit Brown and Resene Diesel.

Resene Milk Chocolate

Art: Beatrice Bourthis

Resene Powder Blue



Red lampshade: Iko Iko

Resene Havoc

Cabinets: Melteca Dark Oak

Resene Zinc White



Resene Foggy Grey