



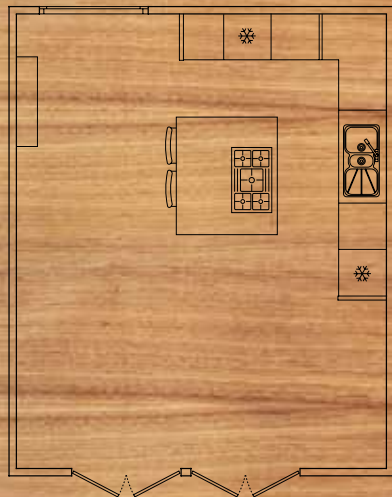
The couple opted for a fresh white palette and had skylights built into the new ceiling to give the kitchen a bright, airy feel. Two comfortable black chairs have been positioned alongside the island, providing a space to relax away from the work area or to watch TV



# Ever green

Extending into the garden has allowed Tim and Gaynor Ramskill to create a lasting kitchen that not only evokes a fresh feel but also provides ample storage space and an adjoining play area for the kids

Report: Felicity Borthwick Photography: Matthew Tomkinson/In Partnership



The Ramskills were immediately drawn to Sola Kitchens's Aspen range, which features beautifully crafted walnut cabinetry with white high-gloss laminate fronts. The framing around the tall housing makes a feature of this functional wall, which incorporates a larder, fridge and two ovens



**Left:** The top two drawers in the island feature wooden cutlery inserts including dedicated slots for knives and spices, ensuring they are always neatly stored and easy to access

**Below:** The Ramskills wanted to incorporate a microwave into their new kitchen so Sofia suggested building it into the base of the island where they could easily load and unload food onto the worktop above

**Above:** Recessed handles have been cut into the walnut drawers to keep the space feeling sleek and minimal. Tim and Gaynor were deliberating over two shades of ceramic floor tiles but eventually opted for the darker variety as they felt it would be more practical with young children

**Right:** Bright LED lights are built into the base of the units to accentuate the vibrant green wall and direct plenty of light onto the work area below



Anyone with young children will appreciate the importance of having large, open spaces in their home, especially when it's laid out so that the main play area is situated near the kitchen but still within its own defined boundaries. This is exactly what Tim and Gaynor Ramskill achieved by extending out the side and rear of their three-storey Victorian house and the couple declare it has transformed how they live.

"Our new kitchen is about two-and-a-half times the size of the previous one; it opens onto a garden at one end, with glass doors that fold all the way back, and we have created an adjoining playroom at the other end so we can keep an eye on the children whether they're inside or out," enthuses Gaynor. "It's wonderful; we spend all our time in here now and it's really changed how we live as a family. Moreover, our kitchen designer, Sofia Bune Strandh from Sola Kitchens, has created some great units either side of the chimneybreast in the playroom. They're perfect for storing the children's toys in but also feature walnut tops that double as seats."

As this end of the playroom is clearly visible from the kitchen, the units and shelving have been designed to match the kitchen cabinetry, which marries walnut frames with white, high-gloss laminate fronts. The island, meanwhile, is fashioned from oiled walnut for a lovely glossy effect and white composite worktops finish the scheme off beautifully.

"We wanted something very clean and modern that was two-toned rather than just one block of colour so when we saw Sola's Aspen range we knew immediately that it was what we wanted," explains Gaynor.

"However, the walls and ceiling in the kitchen are also white and we were worried that the room might look a bit stark. So we decided to paint the stretch of wall behind the sink and use a transparent glass panel against it as a splashback. We wanted a colour that would really jazz the room up and make it feel brighter so we opted for bright green."

Another key stipulation of the couple's brief was a large central island unit that incorporates a hob and breakfast bar to create a sociable environment where guests can sit and chat to them while they prepare food. However, it was important that the island wasn't too lengthy, as they also wanted to create a casual seating area with a TV just near the island, followed by a dining table towards the rear of the space so they can overlook the garden whilst eating and entertaining.

"We design a lot of kitchens for rear extensions in Victorian properties and there's really only several practical ways to lay them out," remarks Sofia. "In the Ramskills' home, the kitchen couldn't extend too far down the room as they wanted to include a sitting and dining area. They also requested a larder and integrated fridge so it had to incorporate some tall housing, which we put against this wall, leaving the longer wall for a worktop and some low and high-level units. The base units conceal a washing machine, dishwasher and undercounter freezer." The couple also had some white painted units built alongside this, with one concealing an unsightly boiler and another featuring built-in wine storage and supporting a TV.

Despite accommodating so many appliances, the kitchen still offers plenty of storage space, all of which has been very carefully designed (both inside and out) to ensure everything has its own dedicated spot. ▶



**Above left:** The couple wanted a walnut dresser to store all their good glassware and tableware in but something that was relatively modern to tie in with the rest of the kitchen. Thus, this unit is entirely handleless and free of embellishment, save for tiny LED lights on the shelves, providing an ambient effect by night



**Above right:** White units and walnut shelving were also created by Sola in the adjoining playroom to create visual fluidity between the two rooms. Walnut flooring also ensures unity between rooms while giving the play area its own distinct character

“We particularly wanted lots of drawers as this was where our previous kitchen was lacking and we now have seven built into the base of the island, which is fantastic,” says Gaynor. Moreover, as they wanted three large drawers on one side and four smaller ones on the other, Sofia has skilfully linked the interior of the second and third drawer together, whilst creating the appearance of two separate drawers from the outside for a symmetrical look.

The larder further exemplifies Sola’s commitment to functionality with solid birch drawers that extend all the way out for quick, easy access to its contents. “A lot of larders today have shelves mounted on the inside of the door but then you can only access these from one side and it doesn’t really give you an immediate overview of what’s in there,” explains Sofia. She has also incorporated a clever storage solution in the corner of the room with shelves that come completely out from the unit so there’s no bending down and hunting around the back of shelves.

Although most of the functional elements in here are discreetly disguised behind minimalist cabinetry, Tim and Gaynor decided it would be nice to have a wooden dresser where they could display all their good glassware. Thus, they asked Sofia to design something that would work well with the modern kitchen scheme and the result is a simple but beautifully built walnut cabinet with shelves for glassware up top and an area for their good plates below. The thick glass shelves, meanwhile, feature tiny LED lights along the front and back, which look lovely by night and add a final touch of sparkle to the room. Perfect for a family space with bags of style. KBB

## SourceBook

### DESIGN

**Kitchen Design** Sofia Bune Strandh of Sola Kitchens (020 3004 0898 or [www.solakitchens.com](http://www.solakitchens.com))

### KITCHEN

**Cabinetry** Walnut with white high-gloss laminate fronts, Aspen range, Sola Kitchens, as before  
**Island** Oiled walnut base with white composite surfaces, Sola Kitchens, as before  
**Worktops** White composite worktop, Sola Kitchens, as before  
**Splashback** Glass, Sola Kitchens, as before  
**Appliances** Hob, double oven, microwave and fridge, Bosch (0844 892 9023 or [www.boschappliances.co.uk](http://www.boschappliances.co.uk)); Undercounter freezer, Electrolux

(0844 561 3613 or [www.electrolux.co.uk](http://www.electrolux.co.uk)); Extractor, Antartica by Elica (01252 351111 or [www.elica.co.uk](http://www.elica.co.uk))

**Sink and tap** Franke (0161 436 6280 [www.franke.co.uk](http://www.franke.co.uk))

**Flooring** Ceramic tiles, Fired Earth (0845 366 0400 or [www.firedearth.com](http://www.firedearth.com))

**Dresser** Walnut, Sola Kitchens, as before

**Barstools** For similar try Simply Barstools (0117 330 2278 or [www.simplybarstools.co.uk](http://www.simplybarstools.co.uk))

**Chairs** Black lounge chairs.

For similar try Dwell (0845 675 9090 or [www.dwell.co.uk](http://www.dwell.co.uk))

### COST

A similar kitchen would cost around £35,000