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# KITCHEN BATHROOM BEDROOM

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# LA confidential

Once a cramped film worker's cottage, this airy home near the Hollywood studios has been opened up to suit the contemporary lifestyle of Los Angeles architect Kevin Oreck and his girlfriend Cindy.

Feature by Anthea Gerrie

Photography by Sara Essex

## kitchen profile

Painted units combined with limestone worktops give a timeless look in this updated 1930s California kitchen. For a similar style try Plain & Simple Kitchens, 1 Studios, 75 Filmer Road, London SW6 7JF. Tel: 020 7731 2530. [www.plainandsimplekitchens.co.uk](http://www.plainandsimplekitchens.co.uk)

Kevin chose pale blue limestone worktops and glass mosaic tiles as a splashback. Panelling was custom-made by the moulding shop of Disney Studios to match existing panelling around the fireplace in the kitchen-dining room.







With its simple, clean, 1930s lines, radically reconfigured to satisfy 21st century tastes, Kevin Oreck's Los Angeles cottage once again serves the function it was built for – to house artisans close to the film studios. Kevin, an architect, may not be in the movies, but his girlfriend Cindy is a designer for Disney and they both love living below the Hollywood sign in buzzy Beachwood Canyon.

Before its extensive renovation the house was a wreck which had suffered years of neglect. To Kevin, though, it represented a challenge – to realise the full potential of the house by opening it up and making sense of the awkward layout.

"I only added 90 square feet to the house overall, and, at 1400 square feet, it is still pretty small," says Kevin. "However, the experience of living here has been completely transformed



**top left** Kevin designed a recessed area where the washing machine can be stored for easy access.

**above** A deep, double sink maintains the streamlined look of the worksurface.

**left** A sleek Elica Zephyr stainless steel hood complements the minimalist style of the kitchen.

**below left** Open shelving provides extra storage and an attractive feature.

**below & right** The dining table is vintage, from mid-20th century manufacturers, Heywood-Wakefield. Similar modernist designs are available from The Conran Shop (see Useful Information panel).



"The talented couple have framed their own art... Cindy did the charcoal drawings in the living room."

## "Handsome period features and vintage furniture recreate 1930s style."

by reorganising the layout." In fact, Kevin lived with the old, unworkable floor plan for nine excruciating years after buying the house in 1994.

"When I moved in I did some basic cosmetic work – removing the blue shag carpeting, refinishing the oak floors underneath, scraping off the 'cottage cheese' ceilings, and decorating. I immediately sketched plans to remodel, but didn't do the structural work until 2003 when I could afford it," he laughs wryly.

"Cindy moved in four years ago, so I had the benefit of her opinion on everything, especially colours and materials. Her frustration with the kitchen probably resulted in the restructuring happening sooner than it might have," says Kevin.

The greatest design dilemma was whether to restore the house to its 1930s origins or to modernise. Compromise prevailed, erring on the side of contemporary without sacrificing handsome period features.

The first thing Kevin did was to move the front door, which originally opened into the kitchen, situated at one end of the long, narrow house. He then opened up the expanded space to the rest of the house, so the kitchen flows seamlessly into the living-dining space, enjoying views on both sides.

A hallway between kitchen and garden was knocked through to become a breakfast area from which the washer and dryer can be accessed via retractable doors. Panelling for this area was made by Disney's studio moulding shop to match the original panelling around the fireplace.





above The countertops are finished in luxurious Calacatta gold marble.



above Kevin designed the walnut vanity unit – a smart storage solution.



The two-person shower is flooded with Californian sunshine from the skylight.

right Simple styling keeps the look unified throughout.

Cindy loves cooking, and appliances include a chef's issue Thermador range, a huge Sub Zero fridge freezer and extra-deep sink. The industrial appliances don't detract from the beauty of the kitchen, which is enhanced by pale blue limestone worktops and an open-shelved crockery and glass cabinet designed by Kevin.

Guests can perch on smart Azcast chrome stools to chat with their hosts across the breakfast bar. The furniture in this open-plan living space is an eclectic mix of mostly mid-20th century pieces Kevin has collected over the years, like his covetable Heywood Wakefield dining furniture. The talented couple have saved on pictures by framing their own art. "I took most of the photographs on the walls, and Cindy did the charcoal drawings in the living room," says Kevin.

Upstairs, one very long bathroom has been divided to create two rooms by taking over part of a useless balcony which overlooked the blank wall of a neighbouring house. Each bathroom has been dressed with vanity units and matching walnut-framed medicine cabinets, also designed by Kevin. But the undoubted star of the master bathroom is the two-person shower, custom-made from existing parts by Kevin's industrial plumbing supplier. The twin



Retro fabrics and a beautiful polished wood floor evoke the 1930s look.

heads sit below an operable skylight, to maximise light. Thoughtfully, Kevin has created a special tiled niche near the shower floor to make it easier for Cindy to shave her legs!

Throughout, the best of the original 1930s details have been preserved, like the six-panel interior doors and original hardware, which was replated in oil-rubbed bronze. But in some places Kevin had no choice but to radically update. "The kitchen and bathroom had been badly remodelled in the 1970s, so I decided to go completely modern with them, and make the two styles work together," he says.

Subtle shades of biscuit were chosen for all the paintwork – previously it was a dingy off-white, with a coat of pink on the outside – and they simplified the exterior by removing shutters and trimmings before giving the stucco a smoother finish. Removing a noisy heating and air-conditioning unit from the roof has also made a difference.

Kitchen and bathroom renovations have really boosted Kevin and Cindy's quality of life. "It's so relaxing to have a nice view from the kitchen, instead of a wall," Kevin explains. "Also, the large shower with open skylight is a huge improvement on the dark, depressing shower over the bath we had before."

## Useful Information

### Architect

**Kevin Oreck**, 113 N. La Brea Avenue, Suite 114, Los Angeles, CA 90036, United States. **Tel: 001 323 692 0896.**  
**Fax: 001 323 692 0962.**

### Kitchen

**Kevin custom-designed his own units.**  
**Worktops** are blue limestone.  
For similar styles, try **Charles Yorke**.  
**Tel: 01623 756080.**  
[www.charlesyorke.com](http://www.charlesyorke.com)

**One-inch glass mosaic tiles** from Fired Earth. **Tel: 01295 814300.**  
[www.firedearth.com](http://www.firedearth.com)

For similar **stools**, try John Lewis – Piran bar stools, £169. **Tel: 0845 604 9049.** [www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com)

**Astracool** has a range of double sinks from £300. **Tel: 01924 477466.**  
[www.astracool.co.uk](http://www.astracool.co.uk)

### Appliances

**Fridge freezer** 650F, £6698, from Sub Zero. **Tel: 020 8418 3800.**  
[www.sub-zero.eu.com](http://www.sub-zero.eu.com)

**Cooker** Thermador stoves are not available in the UK, but for a similar professional stainless steel range cooker try the Lacanche Cluny LG1052GE, £2870. **Tel: 01202 733011.** [www.dfed.co.uk](http://www.dfed.co.uk)

**Dishwasher** G892, £849, by Miele. **Tel: 01235 554455.** [www.miele.co.uk](http://www.miele.co.uk)

Elica Zephyr stainless steel extractor hood, £380, from the Discount Appliance Centre. **Tel: 0800 077 6901.**  
[www.thedac.co.uk](http://www.thedac.co.uk)

### Dining room furniture

For a similar table and chairs, try The Conran Shop. **Tel: 020 7589 7401.**  
[www.conran.co.uk](http://www.conran.co.uk)

### Bathroom

**Walnut vanity unit** and medicine cupboard were designed by Kevin.  
**Countertop**, try New Venetian Gold, £70 per m, from Rock Revelations. **Tel: 0845 351 0415.**  
[www.rock-revelations.co.uk](http://www.rock-revelations.co.uk)