

**Kitchen  
FACT FILE**

**THE OWNERS** Brian and Leeza Minns. Brian is the owner of Sculleries of Stockbridge and Leeza is a civil servant. They have an 18-month-old daughter, Clara  
**THE HOME** A 1970s 'upside down' detached home in Dunfermline  
**THE CABINETRY** American Black walnut

**PRICE GUIDE**  
**£15,000**

Starting price for a similar Sculleries of Stockbridge kitchen, cabinetry only

**FORMAL DINING**

A glass-topped dining table maintains the light and airy feel of the room. For similar, try the Kai table from Barker and Stonehouse. For similar chairs, try Ripple at Dwell



# Bright IDEAS



Relocating their kitchen to a light-filled sunroom gave designer Brian Minns and his family the space they needed

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**THE DESIGNER**

Brian Minns in his stunning walnut kitchen



After 20 years of helping customers to achieve their dream kitchens, it was time for designer Brian Minns to draw on all his years of experience to produce his own.

'I was finally prompted into action when my wife Leeza and I bought a 1970s upside down-style detached house that needed to be completely refurbished,' he recalls.

The first floor, which housed the living room, kitchen and a sunroom, became the focus of the building work. 'It was our third refurbishment project, so we were quick to organise a temporary home on the ground floor. I advise my clients to move out when they undertake large projects,' reveals Brian.

**LOCATION, LOCATION**

The first decision to make was where the kitchen should be sited. 'I was focused on using the original, smaller space at the back ▶

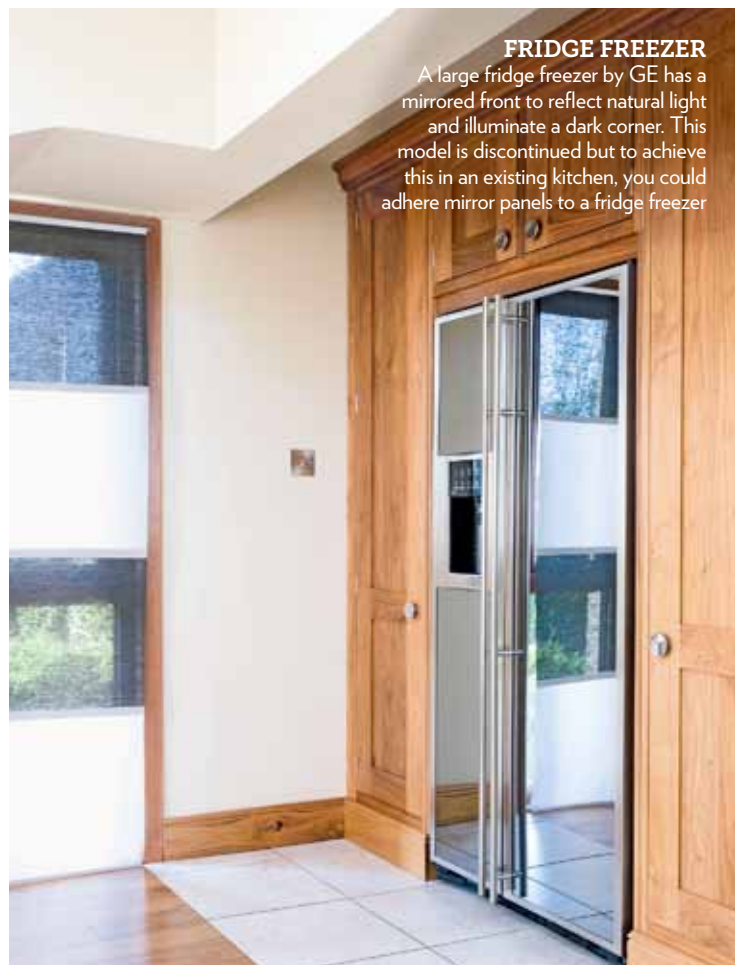
**THE HOME**

Brian and Leeza Minns's 1970s 'upside down' house



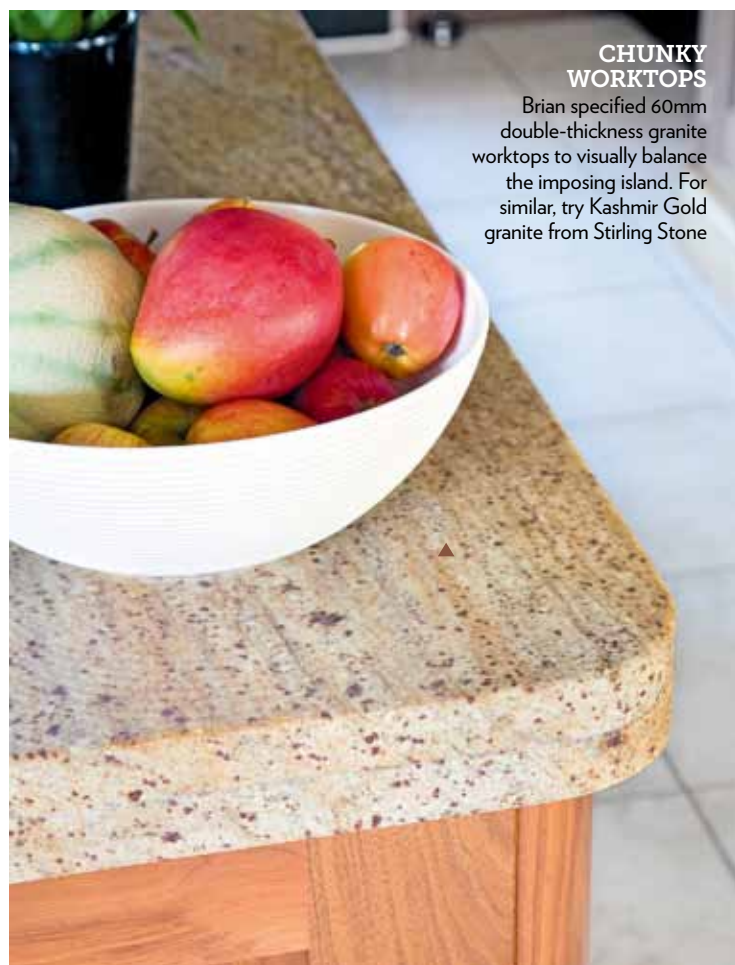
**FRIDGE FREEZER**

A large fridge freezer by GE has a mirrored front to reflect natural light and illuminate a dark corner. This model is discontinued but to achieve this in an existing kitchen, you could adhere mirror panels to a fridge freezer



**CHUNKY WORKTOPS**

Brian specified 60mm double-thickness granite worktops to visually balance the imposing island. For similar, try Kashmir Gold granite from Stirling Stone



**BREAKFAST AREA**

Brian chose American Black walnut cabinetry topped with pale granite. At one end of the island the granite overhangs to form a casual bar. The Iris stools are from John Lewis. Above, an extractor from Teka whisks away cooking smells. Durable Roma Marfil porcelain floor tiles provide a neutral base



**Advice from the DESIGNER**

**DON'T** always go for a company or a brand. Find a person who can work with you because that relationship is key to the success of any project.

**DO** invest in a hot water tap. When we have a houseful of guests it comes into its own, especially at Christmas time when it really works its socks off, keeping up with the demand for a quick cuppa.

**DO** save money where you can. Though we spent extra on the granite, we managed to make savings by opting for practical porcelain floor tiles, rather than going for a more expensive style.

**LETTING IN THE LIGHT**

The French windows are dressed with Anno Sanela panel curtains from Ikea that let light stream into the kitchen, ensuring the walnut cabinetry doesn't overpower it. Spotlights above the island continue to keep the room bright in the evenings



*'Treat a kitchen purchase as a **BUSINESS DECISION**. You're going to spend a great deal of money, so do your **RESEARCH** and interview designers until you find someone you **CONNECT** with'*



**CURVED DETAILS**

Inspired by Edwardian design, Brian added rounded corners that showcase the beauty of the walnut's grain

of the house and extending the kitchen into the hall,' says Brian. 'It was Leeza who suggested we re-site the kitchen to the sunroom and, with hindsight, I'm glad she won the argument,' he laughs.

With large feature windows and an open-plan arrangement, the sunroom provided ample space for a kitchen and a dining area. 'The house is built on a hill and although the sunroom is on the first floor, you can walk straight out of the kitchen patio doors into the back garden,' explains Brian.

**CREATING THE SCHEME**

'The design for the kitchen fell into place as I let the style of the 1970s architecture lead me. I began by placing an island at the front of the room, but the layout just kept insisting that the kitchen should be located at the rear near the doors,' remembers Brian. 'The key thing I had in mind was that I didn't want a design that ▶



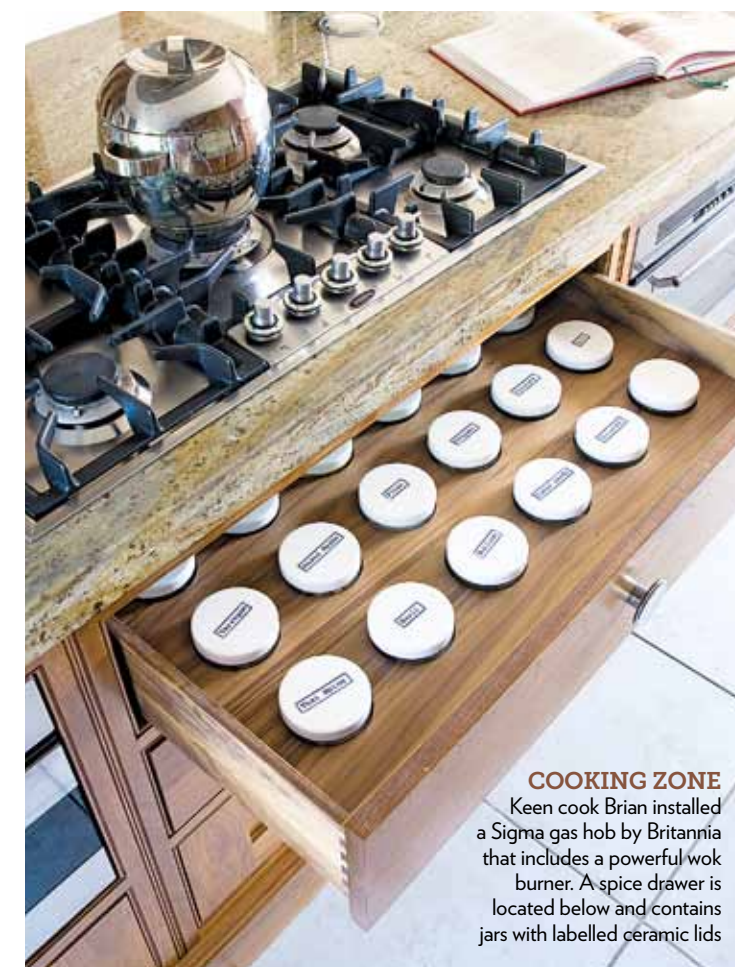
**SPACIOUS LARDER**

Built-in lighting illuminates the shelving in the pantry. 'One change I'd make is to remove the wine racks. They're just the right height for my toddler, who will take a bottle and run off with us in hot pursuit!' laughs Brian



**FILTER ON TAP**

The family has hot and chilled water on demand with their filter tap and a Perrin & Rowe tap with a separate rinse for washing food



**COOKING ZONE**

Keen cook Brian installed a Sigma gas hob by Britannia that includes a powerful wok burner. A spice drawer is located below and contains jars with labelled ceramic lids

## INSPIRED DESIGNS BLACK WALNUT

would date quickly. The kitchen industry is constantly evolving, so there was a danger that I could be distracted by all the new gadgets available,' he admits. 'The cabinetry was an easy choice and had to be American Black walnut. It yellows over time, which people can be unaware about but it needs plenty of daylight otherwise it can dominate a room,' advises Brian.

### SPACE TO GROW

Leeza and Brian already have their eye on the future as they are expecting their second child. 'When I designed the island, I deliberately left a space, just in case I wanted to add a table later. It's always good to allow yourself a little flexibility because your family needs change very quickly,' comments Brian.

'When our new baby arrives, we'll lose our dining area to a playroom space, so the addition of a table to the island will provide us with a temporary solution at mealtimes.'

Having lived with the kitchen for a while, Brian remains enthusiastic about the design and values the experience of having been his own customer. 'It was the first time I was able to afford a handmade kitchen and I'm so glad I went through it. I've been designing kitchens for years, but have never gone through the process myself. It's been enlightening,' he says.

'I feel a great sense of pride every time I walk into our kitchen. This has been a very personal journey. When you continue to feel a sense of awe by the sheer beauty of the cabinetry, then you know a design ticks all the boxes and that it's a good job done.' □

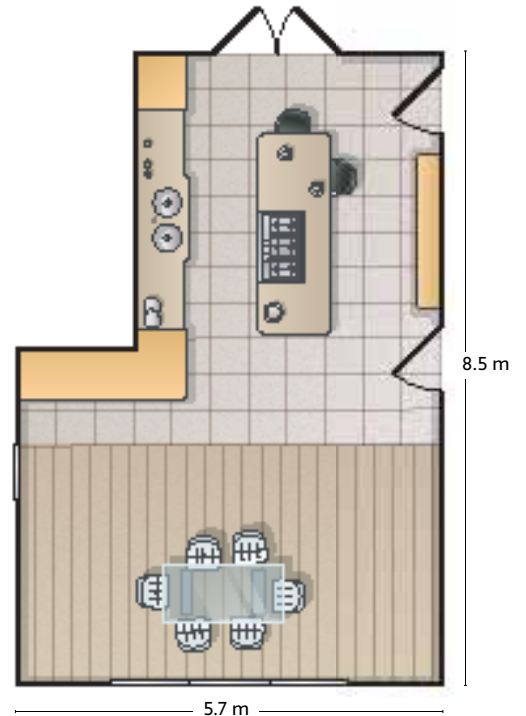
### DESIGNER'S TIP

*'Think how your kitchen will look through the seasons. What may appeal on a sunny day will differ on a winter's evening, so concentrate on lighting'* **BRIAN MINNS**



#### DESIGN TRICK

A tall, glazed dresser in American Black walnut hides a large radiator at the bottom, as well as providing storage for glassware



## SHOP THE LOOK

### CABINERY

■ Solid American Black walnut cabinetry by Sculleries of Stockbridge. Prices for a similar kitchen, cabinetry only, start from £15,000

### WORKSURFACES

■ For similar try Kashmir Gold granite, Stirling Stone. Price per linear m £550

### FLOORING

■ Antique Marfil Italian porcelain tiles, Sculleries of Stockbridge. Price per sq m £30

■ Solid American Black walnut, Sculleries of Stockbridge. Price per sq m £80

### APPLIANCES

■ Built-in single oven, Siemens £1,299

■ Built-in steam oven, Smeg £799

■ Built-in combination oven, Smeg £699

■ Five-burner gas hob, Britannia £899

■ Island extractor hood, Teka £899

■ American-style fridge freezer, GE £3,500

■ Fully integrated dishwasher, Miele £799

### SINKS AND TAPS

■ 2 x Classic round-bowl ceramic sinks in White, Shaws of Darwen £210

■ Phoenician monobloc mixer tap with rinse in chrome, Perrin & Rowe £208

■ Hot and chilled filtered water tap in chrome, In-Sink-Erator £500

■ Waste disposal unit, In-Sink-Erator £400

### FINISHING TOUCHES

■ Iris bar chairs, John Lewis, each £125

■ For similar try Kai dining table, Barker and Stonehouse £825

■ For similar try Ripple chairs, Dwell £89

■ Anno Sanela panel curtains, Ikea, each £12.26

■ Rise and fall pendant, discontinued

■ For similar spotlights, try Brushed nickel spots, Italian-Lighting-Centre.co.uk, each £195.17

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 144