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THE HOMES MAGAZINE FOR MODERN LIVING

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JEWEL

IN THE TOWN

Furniture maker Dominic Ash and his partner Kate Mellor's flat is a sparkling urban gem that turns the concept of the family home on its head

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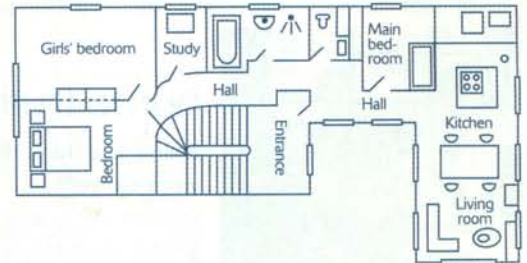




THIS PICTURE AND LEFT Dominic and Kate's simple but chic kitchen reflects their clever use of space. The glossy units and mirrored mosaics accentuate the light, while a sleek walnut island provides extra surface and storage space. Head to Plain & Simple Kitchens for similar units and a sink integral to the worktop. For a lookalike tap, try Aston Matthews.

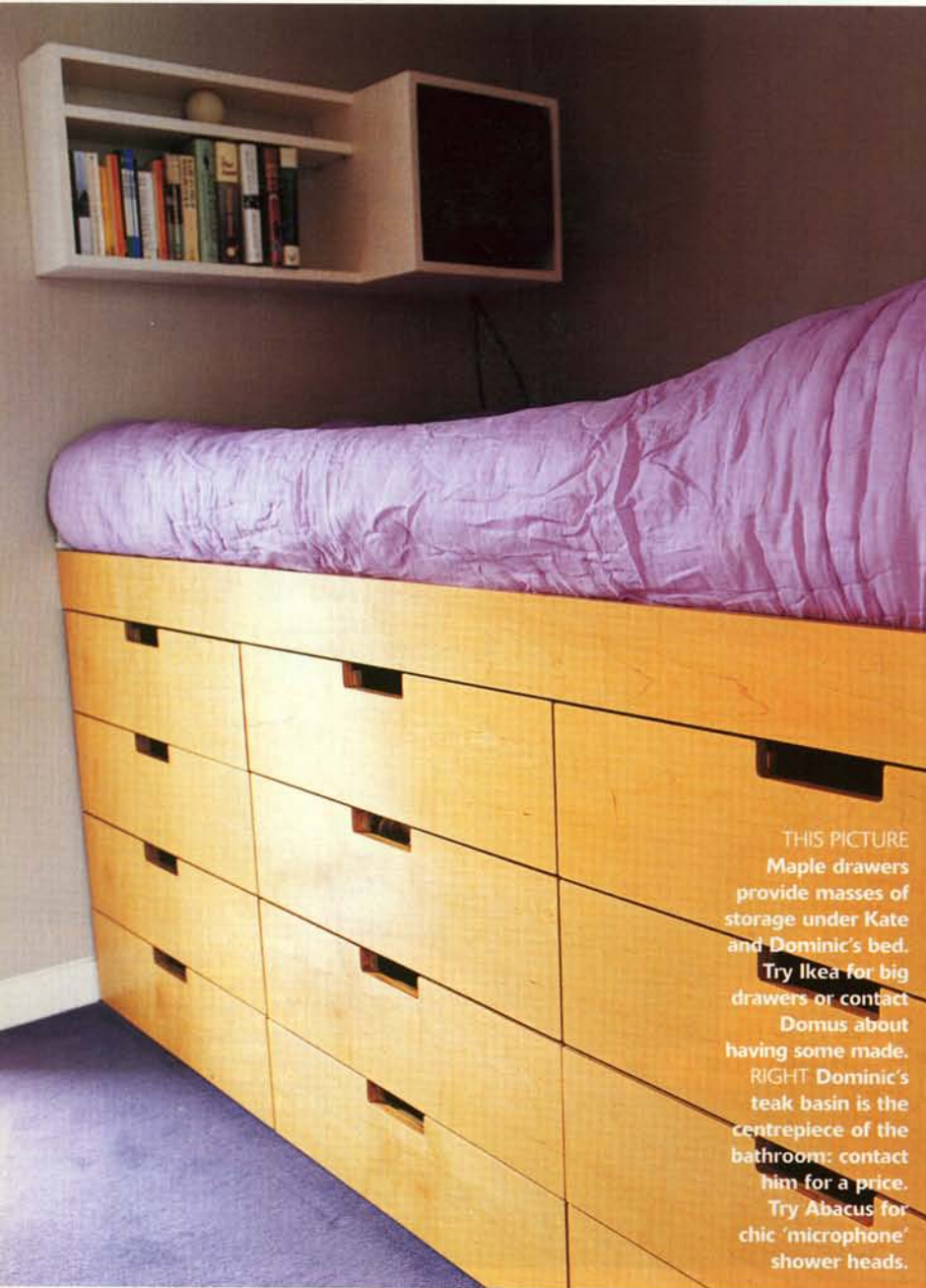


The heavy velvet curtains can be pulled across the whole wall to create a cosy effect. Dominic made the walnut seating unit that doubles as storage. The sofa is B&B Italia at Geoffrey Drayton. Get a lookalike cowhide rug from Floorhide.



LEFT A porthole window provides natural light in the study; get one from Philip Watts Design. Dominic

made the wooden work desk, but you could try Ocean. ABOVE Dibor is good for chunky crockery.



THIS PICTURE
Maple drawers
provide masses of
storage under Kate
and Dominic's bed.
Try Ikea for big
drawers or contact
Domus about
having some made.
RIGHT Dominic's
teak basin is the
centrepiece of the
bathroom: contact
him for a price.
Try Abacus for
chic 'microphone'
shower heads.



home truths

Name one thing that makes this space work so well?

Dominic: We created sliding doors throughout the flat, which free up loads of space and are a really practical, stylish solution.

Are you naturally messy or tidy?

Kate: I'm messy and Dominic's tidy, so it's a constant battle.

What were the hardest things to find?

Dominic: The dining chairs. Kate's always loved an Arne Jacobsen design, but we tried them out and they just didn't work. We eventually found these Eames chairs, which look great and are really comfortable, too.

What has doing up the flat taught you?

Kate: That good storage is crucial. If you have that, you can cope with the limited space.



Dominic made the girls' bed from rubber-covered wood painted bright pink



LEFT Two-year-old Eden has inherited her parent's sense of style. Dominic has installed ash flooring throughout the flat. Make a visit to LassCo for reclaimed options.

desirable family space. The once-gloomy living room is now light, bright and beautiful, encompassing a dining area and glossy kitchen. Sunlight streams in through big windows on three sides, giving great views of London. 'There were only two windows here originally, so we added another two for extra light, but it turned out to be freezing in the winter,' says Kate. The solution, along with underfloor heating, was to invest in some curtains – not something you see often in modern homes, but they look brilliant here. Thick, mushroomy velvet hangs floor-to-ceiling from tracks sweeping round the room. A cowhide rug, deep, L-shaped sofa and a simple, open fireplace complete the cosy but contemporary feel.

Everything in this room comes together in a slick jigsaw of clever ideas, and most of that's down to Dominic, who designed and made practically all the furniture. 'We used a lot of wood – ash for the floors, walnut for the kitchen and wenge for the dining table – to keep a very natural, modern feel,' he explains. A low, slim cabinet for CDs and videos runs the length of the room and doubles up as extra seating. The central cooking island – a beautiful walnut cube – dominates the kitchen area, and a bank of tall, glossy units makes the most of the wall at the far end. And then there's the fabulous mosaic splashback. More than 2,000 tiny mirrored tiles produce a dramatic effect. 'We'd been thinking of using coloured mosaics,' says Kate, 'but realised the mirror effect would be a lot more fun.' Believe it or not, Dominic stuck them all on individually. 'At a rate of about 250 tiles an hour, it was very repetitive work, but it's resulted in that slightly rough, glittery finish,' he explains.

More clever thinking went into the couple's compact bedroom. Dominic made a wall of built-in, mirrored cupboards on one side and a high platform bed on the other with deep maple drawers underneath providing loads of much-needed storage. Further down the hallway is the girls' room with its amazing pink bed unit – all Dad's work, of course. He explains: 'I built it when Kate was pregnant with Eden and everyone

was saying, "Oh my god, where are you going to put the baby?". A sort of S-shaped bunk, it has display shelves underneath and room for a little desk and chair.

Even in the tiny bathroom, every inch of space has been organised creatively. Surprisingly, they've managed to fit a bath in there, too. 'Kate insisted on a bath. It isn't a full-size one, but with kids, it's kind of essential,' Dominic concedes. His passion for working with wood is much in evidence in here, too. 'Dominic used to build boats and he's used some of the same techniques,' explains Kate. The gorgeous wooden basin is made from durable teak, which has a large oil content, making it perfect for bathrooms. The walls are Formica-covered ply – used a lot on boats. Granite slabs cover the floor, there's a porthole window, and a glass wall panel floods light into the hallway beyond.

This is one family home that's a triumph of great planning. Would they swap it for a suburban semi? We don't think so. **□** Contact Dominic Ash on 020 7377 1982 and Sarah Featherstone on 020 7490 1212.

LEFT AND FAR LEFT India and Eden's bedroom is girly but contemporary. Dominic rustled up the unique bed-desk combo and painted it hot pink to coordinate

with the wardrobe space. Contact Junior Living for pint-sized modern storage solutions, and head to Descamps for pretty kids' bed linen.