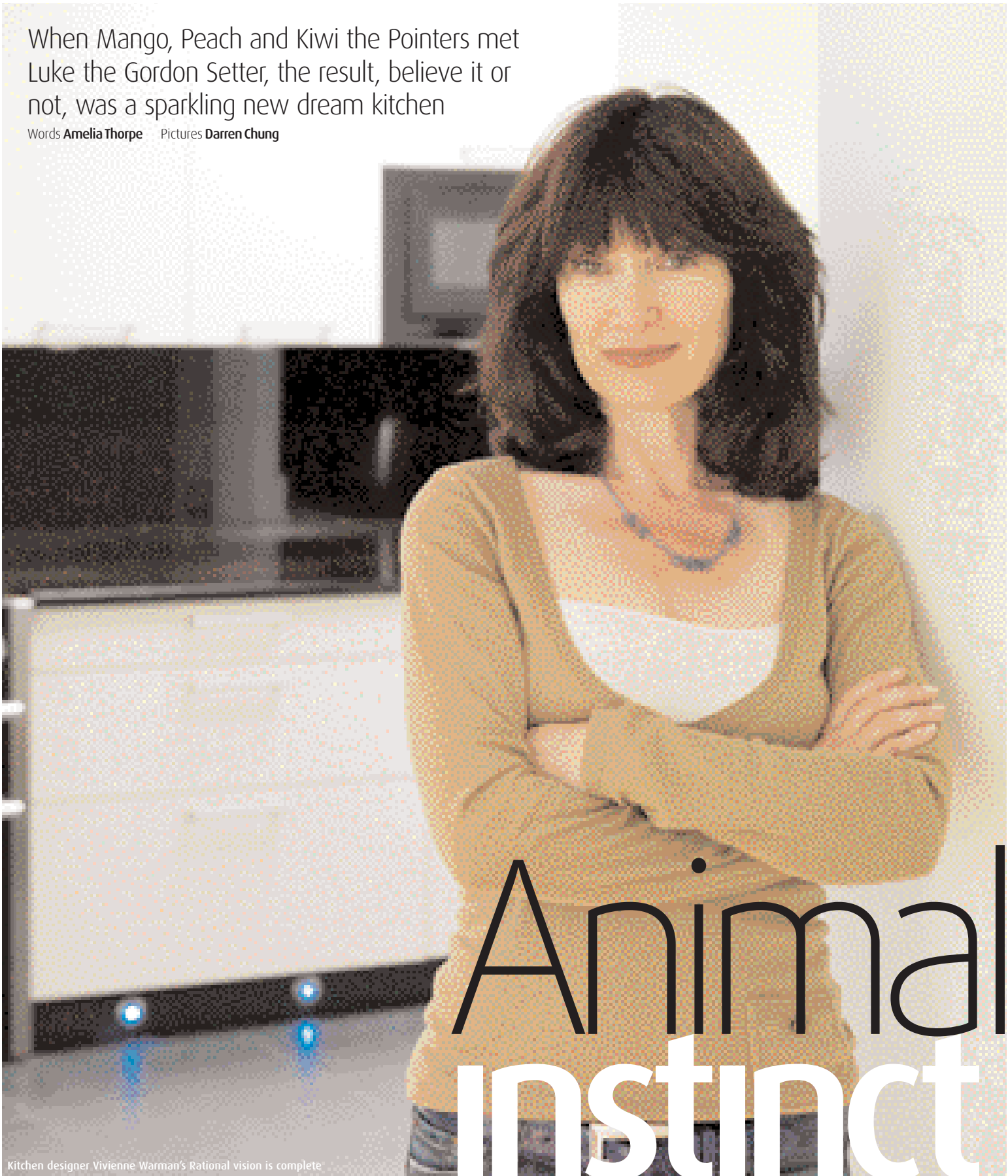


When Mango, Peach and Kiwi the Pointers met Luke the Gordon Setter, the result, believe it or not, was a sparkling new dream kitchen

Words **Amelia Thorpe** Pictures **Darren Chung**

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Kitchen designer Vivienne Warman's Rational vision is complete

It was their dogs that brought Joan and Paul Kern together with kitchen designer Vivienne Warman of Kitchen Co-ordination.

"We met while walking our dogs in the park," recalls Vivienne, who owns much-loved Luke. But in the love stakes, Luke had met his match in the three Pointers owned by Joan and Paul.

Paul and The Fruits', as they are known, are a regular sight in the park, because they need at least two hours of exercise every day. "And it's not a stroll," laughs Paul. "They like to run!" In one of his breath-gathering stops across the park, he told Vivienne that he and Joan would like a dream kitchen in their 1930s house where they have lived for 27 years. "We have four children, all now grown up, so we've had a lot of traffic through the house. It was time for something new," he says.

Joan, a housewife, and Paul, a taxi driver, opted for a complete change, starting with the removal of old pillars and arches to create one room with a more spacious feel, improved with skylights to enhance the natural light. "I hated having to switch on the lights even when it was bright outside," says Joan. Admiring Vivienne's contemporary designs using Rational furniture, Joan and Paul chose a mix of high-gloss



The Fruits, from left to right, Kiwi, Peach and Mango

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cream Cammee furniture and contrasting polished black Assoluto granite worktops in a simple sweep around the room. Explains Joan, "We wanted something clean and modern as a change from the traditional dark wood we'd had before. Everything felt cramped, so space was important."

There were two other considerations for Vivienne to include in her plans: Paul's accident-prone tendencies, and dog-proofing enough to cope with The Fruits. Vivienne took it all in her stride, "I suggested a streamlined design so that there were fewer parts for Paul to pull off or fall over," quips Vivienne, although she's only partly joking. (Paul stood on a nail yesterday and fell out of the loft last week, and he pulled the door off the oven in the old kitchen so many times that it could no longer be repaired.) She also suggested a non-slip unpolished porcelain tiled floor, and scratch-resistant, high-gloss lacquer cabinets, tailor-made for errant paws.

As well as being home to Joan, Paul and the dogs, plus their pet bird and snake, the couple's twenty-something children, Steven, Lee, Jenny and Lucy, tend to be about a lot. "The first thing they do when they come home is open the fridge and find out what's for dinner," laughs Joan. Paul admits that he talks about food "all the time", so home cooking is definitely a top priority in this household, making a kitchen that functions well especially important. Vivienne suggested the range cooker, which can cope with large-scale cooking, and streamlined drawers and cupboards for storage. "I can get more in here than I could when we had units here, there and everywhere," Joan says.



All the drawers are soft-close for a luxury finish



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Food preparation and a love of food are at the heart of the new kitchen

above & right The BlancoCurzon tap has a pull-out spray



I like to personally manage every one of my projects. Even if it is things I don't supply, such as tiles, I still make suggestions so that I can pull it all together for my client



A month after completion, Joan and Paul threw a party for 30 guests. "It was easy," recalls Joan

Vivienne suggested that the cream units be set on a black oak plinth to give a floating appearance to the design, inset with blue LED lights. It's the kind of touch that Vivienne is known for. "I genuinely try to make every single kitchen I do a little bit different," she says. "I like using interesting colour combinations, lighting and glass to create individual – and always contemporary – looks." Vivienne's approach is deliberately a very personal one. "Nobody works the way I do," she says. "At lots of kitchen companies, the client will see a designer but, once the project is underway, the designer is never glimpsed again. I like to personally manage every one of my projects. Even if it is things I don't supply, such as tiles, I still make suggestions so that I can pull it all together for my client."

Vivienne works long hours, often seven days' a week. "I think you have to, especially when you are relatively new." Word-of-mouth referrals and builders' recommendations bring in new clients. Publicity is, she believes, essential, and the new website is a useful marketing tool. "I was totally computer-illiterate," she says. "But I fumbled through myself, did a Learn Direct course, hired a web designer and then worked out how to link the website to useful search engines."

Self-taught she may be, but there's nothing amateur about Vivienne's approach to design or to project management. "Everything was brought to me, so I honestly felt like a star," recalls Joan. "And the kitchen suits us perfectly." And judging by the three snoring dogs loudly and contentedly in the corner, The Fruits feel pretty good about it too.



business profile

Kitchen Co-ordination

Who are we? Designer and sole director, Vivienne Warman

Where are we? 81 Penshurst Gardens, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 9TT.
Tel: 020 8958 6262.

Business history Years of working in property development followed by a stint of 'cutting her teeth' at a couple of kitchen companies gave Vivienne plenty of experience, until she decided to go it alone, founding Kitchen Co-ordination four years ago. From a standing start, the company has grown rapidly. "I'm working towards my first million," says Vivienne

What we do Design and project management of Rational kitchens. All plans are hand-drawn, and 70% of kitchens are designed from plan as part of building project work, usually side return extensions – a favourite requirement in London, where many of Vivienne's clients are growing families

Sales stats About 22 kitchens a year, prices start from £8,000, the average costs between £15-25,000

Showroom "If I had a showroom to run, I couldn't project manage the way I like to"

Qualities and skills Vivienne has a reputation for strong and imaginative use of colour, lighting and glass in her designs

Favourite client "One of my clients owns a body repair shop. So each time I ding my car, he repairs it for free. He's done it three times already"

Least favourite client "I devote lots of time to each client, so it's very disappointing if they turn out to be time-wasters"

Strange but true "Just before Christmas, I had six different clients, all of whom were eight months' pregnant"

product specification

Cabinetry Rational Arte Cammee high-gloss furniture with brushed stainless steel handles and black oak plinth, Kitchen Co-ordination

Worktop Black Assoluto granite worktop, Rossi Stoneworks. Tel: 020 7609 7212. www.rossi-granite.co.uk

Black glass splashback, Glass Express. Tel: 01233 642220. www.glassexpress.co.uk

Appliances Range cooker, Mercury. Tel: 01522 881717.

www.mercury-appliances.co.uk

Washer dryer, AEG. Tel: 0870 535 0350. www.aeg-electrolux.co.uk

Integrated dishwasher, Bosch. Tel: 0870 727 0446. www.bosch.co.uk

Microwave, Neff. Tel: 0870 513 3090. www.neff.co.uk

Glacier extractor hood, Elica. Tel: 01252 351111. www.elica.co.uk

Sink ARX160 stainless steel, Franke. Tel: 0161 436 6280. www.franke.co.uk

Tap BlancoCurzon pull-out spray, Blanco. Tel: 020 8452 3399. www.blanco.co.uk

Flooring Black unpolished porcelain, Tiles and Baths Direct. Tel: 020 8202 2223.

www.tilesandbathsdirect.co.uk

Table and chairs Furniture Village. Tel: 0800 783 0830. www.furniturevillage.co.uk

The Glacier extractor hood by Elica in stainless steel and glass adds a simple and elegant finishing touch



Cupboards and drawers wrap around two walls, making perfect use of the newly opened-out space





'I CAN GET MORE IN HERE THAN I COULD WHEN WE HAD UNITS HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE'



client profile

Name Joan and Paul Kern
Location Middlesex
Client wish list A dream kitchen – “We’ve spent 20 years talking about it,” admits Joan
Problems Pillars and arches made for a series of small, cramped spaces
The solutions Replace the pillars and arches with a structural steel beam in the ceiling and create one large room with sky lights, with a streamlined sweep of units around two walls

left Vivienne suggested that Joan and Paul visit Molesey Refrigeration (020 8783 0113) to look at range cookers. “The staff were very knowledgeable and helpful. In the end, we chose a Mercury dual-fuel model, which is great. I wish we’d bought one years ago,” says Joan

below Glass shelves by Rational have integrated lighting



Polished black Assoluto granite worktops and a sleek black glass splashback contrast with the glossy cream Camee furniture



The space-saving built-in Neff microwave



A new range cooker was the top of the couple's wish list



Hints of blue reflect off the porcelain tiled floor

