



The huge photographer's light provides a stunning focal point and is also a conversation piece. Expansive windows flood the living room with constantly changing natural light.

Staircase custom made by Greenwood metalwork in South London. The sofa and armchair (right), are original 1970s Danish designs from Two Columbia Road



# Industrial past

CREATING A WARM AND COMFORTABLE HOME FROM A BUILDING ORIGINALLY DESIGNED AS A FACTORY IN THE 19TH CENTURY IS NO EASY TASK, SO IT IS A TRIBUTE TO CHARLES AND KATY-MARIE WILSON'S COMMITMENT AND SENSITIVITY THAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED JUST THAT

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Imagine taking on a building project so large that the debris fills a staggering 22 skips. We're talking about a building that had been used as an industrial factory in the 19th century, then a photographer's studio with a chemical lab in the 20th century, which needed to be totally gutted before it could be made habitable. Now imagine living on site – a shell with no hot water for six months – while the work was in progress. Not a project for the fainthearted (nor, indeed, the entirely sane). Fortunately, Charlie and Katy-Marie Wilson (a graphic designer and a lawyer) had a vision of what they wanted and the ambition and commitment to turn it into reality. Based in Hackney, the couple loved the industrial architecture and wanted to keep the building's 150-year heritage clearly visible, while also seeking to instil a softer, contemporary aesthetic into the warehouse space. By paying scrupulous attention to detail and dedicating 18 months of their blood, sweat and tears to this mammoth project, they have created a stunning blend of contemporary and historical styles. The house opens into the basement studio, where Charles runs his graphic design business, Natural Designs. With high ceilings, exposed brick walls and a bank of →



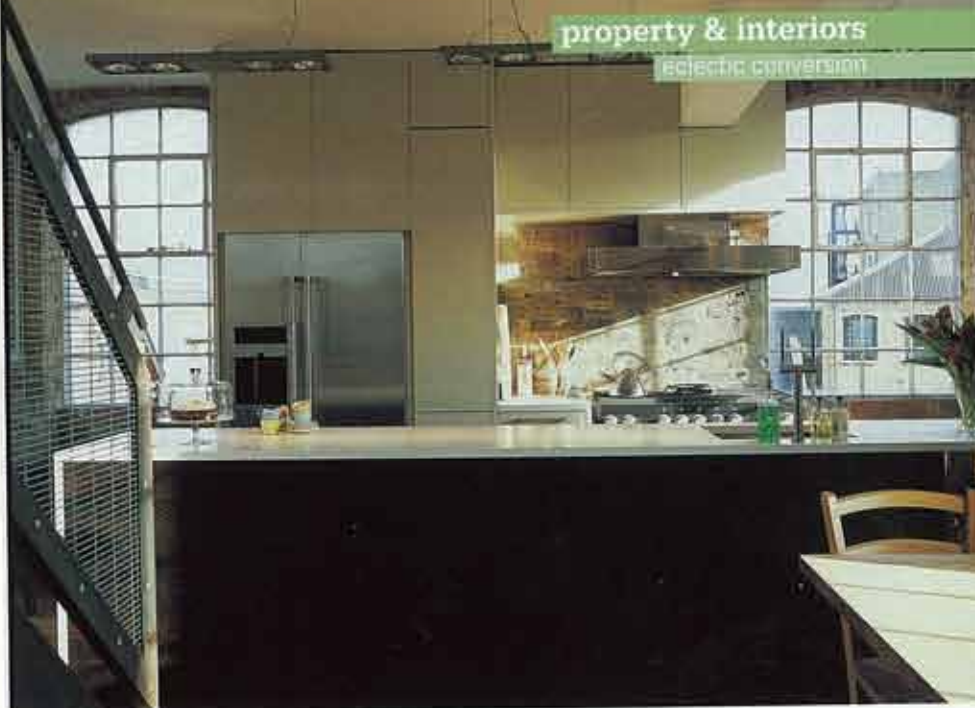
The open-plan kitchen by Funktional Kitchens and dining spaces are marked off from the living room by the extensive island unit, which serves as a physical divider between

the live, cook and eat zones. The high-gloss lacquered surfaces of the kitchen units contrast with the dark wood of the island. Kitchen table from Benchmark



it also refers to the building's past; it was built during the zenith of Britain's industrial era, so Charles wanted a powerful water system that would provide really vigorous showers. This involved having the road dug up to install new mains water supply and installing wider piping throughout the property.

The second floor houses their baby's bedroom, the spare room and guest bathroom. It's the open-plan kitchen-diner and living room on the third floor that provides the main living space. Designer Vicky Shudell of kitchen specialists Funktional Kitchens, has produced a high-gloss, soft-green, handle-less kitchen which is the height of timeless urban simplicity. Highly practical for cooking and entertaining, it looks streamlined and stylish and provides ample storage for all clutter to be tidied away. The long island unit acts as a demarcation zone separating the eating area from the cooking area, and also visually leads the eye into the living room.



### Living it

**What makes an interior scheme work?**

**Charles:** 'Getting the basics like plumbing, electrics, lighting and stairways done really well and then adding in the accessories.'

**So, what makes an open-plan kitchen and diner work?**

'Using a professional designer who knows their stuff! You need a kitchen designer who can utilise space but who will also collaborate with your creative vision and understand your style.'

**As a graphic designer, do you find it easier to design for other people or yourself?**

'Other people. I can see the right look for their brand because I'm objective, but everything for myself is personal so I've made mistakes.'

