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- Transformation of a cramped & dingy terrace
- Revival of a Sixties house with a modern twist

Kitchens

Beginner's Guide:
Design, installation,
worktops and
dining tables

External cladding

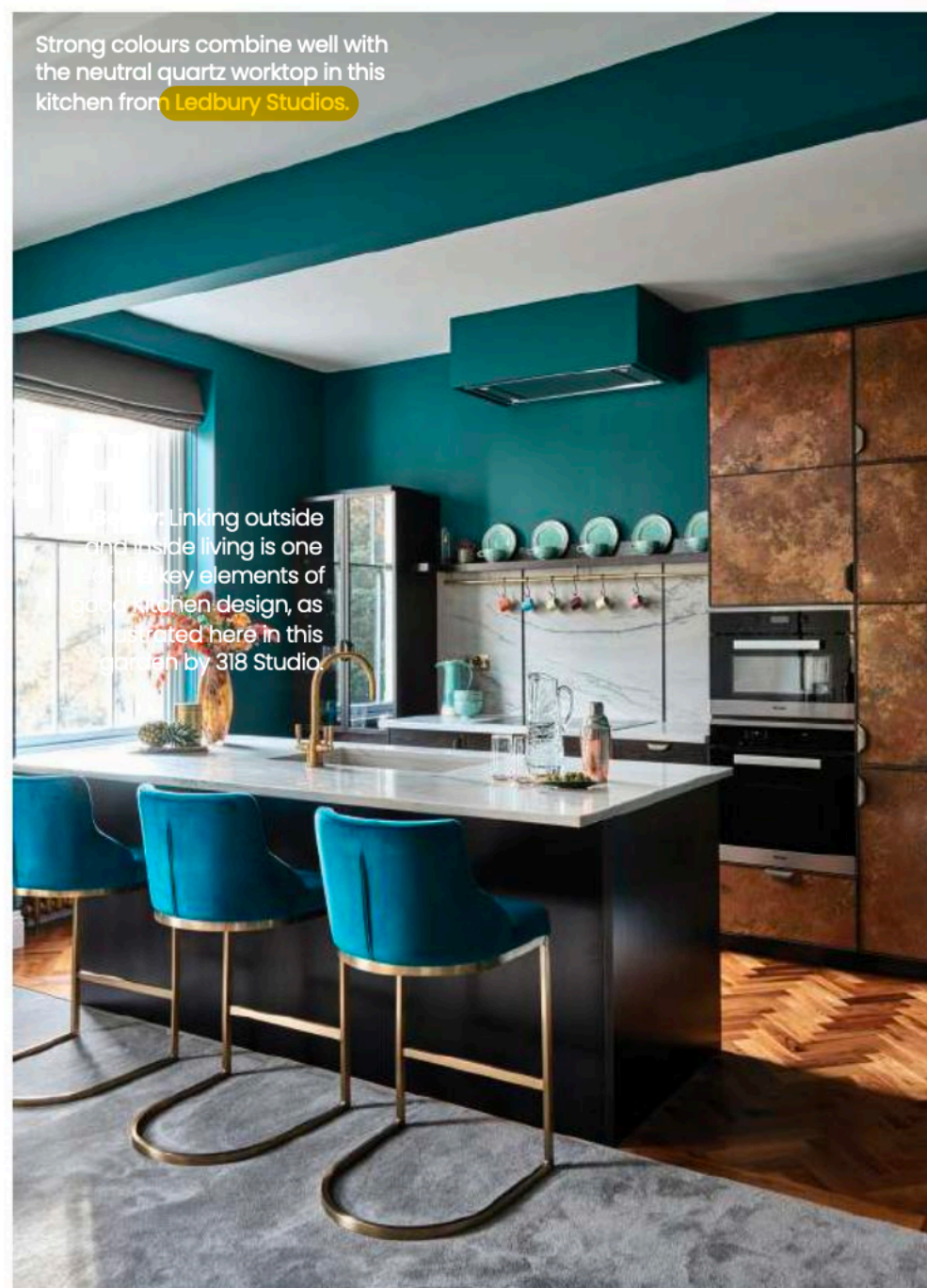
Winning combinations
to add kerbside appeal

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Clutter is hidden behind closed doors in this minimalist kitchen with adjoining dining area. The combination of a chunky timber worktop and slim metal support adds to the contemporary feel. (eggsmann.com)



Strong colours combine well with the neutral quartz worktop in this kitchen from Ledbury Studios.



Linking outside and inside living is one of the key elements of good kitchen design, as illustrated here in this kitchen by 318 Studio.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO KITCHEN DESIGN

Eating and entertaining are national pastimes, which are currently reflected in the houses we build. No longer the cramped galley room, tucked at the back of the house, the kitchen is now claiming centre stage and growing to encompass dining and family rooms, too. Some homes even go so far as to have a second utilitarian prep kitchen where unsightly preparation and washing-up can be hidden away from view while the main kitchen stars as the hub of the home.

In some respects, this preference for sociable, open-plan living is reminiscent of medieval hall houses, when the main hall was a place to eat, sleep and party as well as cook on the open fire. Times changed, and the kitchen shrank, or was positioned out of sight 'below stairs'. Now, the kitchen is once again venerated as the most important – and expensive – room in the house and demands some serious consideration at the design stage.

Planning

Careful planning is vital, and what better opportunity to get the exact kitchen you want than by selfbuilding or extending and designing it completely from scratch? Take time to focus on what you dislike about your current kitchen, such as a lack of workspace, and try to eradicate these problems in the new design.

Assess your needs: do you enjoy cooking? What shape will the kitchen have? How big is the family that will use it and how often will the room be used? Will you have