

# COLOUR | FIXTURES | DESIGN

## KITCHEN TRENDS

Colours, appliances, fixtures and fittings: designing or renovating your kitchen throws up a multitude of choices.

By Carli Ratcliff

\*Mirin  
nonton wrappers  
\*tofu  
Spring onions  
Sesame seeds  
Coriander  
Salt flakes.



Interior Designer Marni Burger, of Marni Burger Designs in Mosman, says colour is a key consideration in designing home kitchens. "Coloured cabinetry is suddenly a trend," she says. "Cobalt blue is popular at the moment, especially paired with white."

But not all clients are so bold, says Burger. "When a client is not a very colourful person, I often suggest white cabinetry, but paint the walls in a colour as it gives the room warmth and character." Even a tone makes a difference. "On the walls, I am a huge fan of Dulux Heifer," she says. "I've now used it in three different homes. It is a light grey tone, just stunning with white ceilings, and with cornices and picture rails in older style homes."

Painting the inside of cabinet doors is an unobtrusive way to inject colour, says Burger. "Sometimes I just paint the inside panels of the doors in a different colour. When you open the pantry doors, the insides give a burst of colour. It works especially well in large pantries, and is particularly chic in black."

Colour is a very personal choice, says interior designer Alexandra Arnold, who practises with Cox Architects, Canberra, and has her own freelance design company, Alexandra Arnold. "When choosing wall colours and finishes, pick colours and materials that you like – you have to live with them, not your designer." She suggests a neutral base palette, whether dark or light. "This then offers the opportunity to accessorise with the colour of the moment," she says.

A wall dedicated to a chalkboard is popular in family kitchens, creating a surface that can be used to exhibit family routines, make shopping lists, or provide little things with space to be creative. Stylist Sibella Court, through her retail outfit, The Society Inc. in Paddington, stocks a range of low VOC, chalkboard paint in colours ranging from 'farrier black' and 'paper bag' to vibrant 'dragonfly' orange.

Coloured appliances are also popular with some clients, says Burger. "An upright stove, like a coloured Woolf, Smeg or La Conche, can add a burst of colour," she says. "They also scream, 'I can cook!'"

That said, clients are very clear as to whether they want a statement or not, says Burger. Some brands, including Miele's range of wall convection and steam ovens, provide sleek, very integrated styling. Integrated ovens including convection, steam and combi steam ovens are popular. "I'm working with a client who has chosen a steam oven. The fact that it integrates into the wall saves space," she says.

"There are a plethora of appliances to choose from and it can be very overwhelming," says Arnold. "I suggest that clients set a budget, and try stick to it." The client's lifestyle and cooking style is also an important

consideration when choosing appliances and finishes, says Arnold. "People who love to cook tend to want everything close at hand. So open shelving, as you see in a hospitality environment, is often appropriate."

Fiona Glaskin, a management consultant based in Canberra, recently redesigned the kitchen of her apartment in Kingston with Arnold. A keen home cook, and mother of a young child, Glaskin opted for stainless steel hanging and wall mounted shelving in the place of traditional cupboards, coupled with stainless steel benches to create a serviceable kitchen with an industrial vibe. "The beaches are user friendly," says Glaskin. "I love that I can take something out of the oven and place it straight on the bench. I also like the look of them."

Builder James Harradence of Iron Cove Constructions, specialises in residential renovations in Sydney's inner west. He says that his clients also tend to choose an industrial aesthetic. "Most want an industrial feel, but they are trending back to classic items. For instance, clients have been opting to use deep ceramic (fire clay) sinks in kitchens."

Arnold says when it comes to sinks, the bigger the better. "A large sink is essential these days. Our chopping boards are big, serving platters for shared meals are big, we are in love with large dishes and big pots: a small sink just doesn't cut it."

Glaskin opted for an integrated stainless steel sink. "It's a trough," she says. "It is as deep as it is wide, so it fits my largest baking trays in flat for easy cleaning. The rounded corners in the base also make it easy to clean."

In keeping with the theme, Glaskin also chose stainless steel splashbacks, currently a popular choice, alongside subway tiles, says Harradence. "My last four clients have used subway tiles in their kitchens as splashbacks. They are fashionable, and some would argue overused, but these originate from public subway spaces, industrial kitchens and abattoirs, and have an 'olde worlde' feel which means that they will stand the test of time." Particularly when coupled with raw brass, or copper, taps and fixtures, says Harradence. "The tiles teamed with these kind of earthy fixtures result in a classic-meets-sleek industrial finish."

Bespoke is also a key trend, says Harradence. "One quirky thing we installed in a kitchen recently was a custom made zinc range hood, it was beautiful."

Cameron Krone of Smith & Carmody Design, works



**Kitchen trends:** (clockwise from far left): Dulux Chalkboard paint; Sibella Court in her kitchen; kitchen by Marni Burger; all the latest trends from subway tiles to deep, large sinks; a toaster, blender and juicer from Harvey Norman. **Photos:** Mark Roper, Marco Del Grande, Rodger Cummins, Armelle Habib.



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**From left:** Trent & Steele Citrus Juicer in red, Trent & Steele 1.8L Blender in copper, Trent & Steele 4-Slice Toaster in aquamarine.

with Harradence on residential projects, but most of his business is in commercial kitchens, having designed cafes and bakeries including Cornersmith, Marrickville, Black Star Pastry, Alexandria and Brickfields, Chippendale.

He has recently moved into residential projects for select clients. "I think a working commercial kitchen is really appealing with all the equipment, pots and racks on display. I think this also applies to domestic kitchens," he says. "I am currently working on a kitchen for a food writer," says Krone. "Even though the commercial reference is relevant for this project, there still needs to be warmth."

The kitchen will have sinks, a separate vegetable washing trough, and a compost bin, all recessed into the stainless steel benches, along with a featured exhaust hood.

The commercial vibe of these elements will be juxtaposed with handmade elements and

other materials to help balance the space. Among them is an island bench made from hundreds of small pieces of tallowwood. "It will be like a giant chopping board," says Krone. "Handmade over several weeks by local woodworker Jonathan West."

Clients are very keen to incorporate handmade or handcast elements in a kitchen, including bench tops, says Harradence. "Concrete benches are very popular, they can be cast 50mm thick (much thicker than normal wooden or formica bench tops) and are able to be molded into any shape that the client desires," he says. "Clients tend to like the fact that concrete ages, and that the bench acquires its own character."

Choices aside, Arnold says the most important thing to keep in mind when designing a kitchen is to remember that it is much more than a space in which to prepare food. "A kitchen is a living space," she says. "Particularly with the layout of many homes being open plan, the kitchen has become a social environment." Glaskin agrees. "The best thing about my new kitchen is how it has changed the family dynamic. My son is happily propped up at the bench every day, whether he is helping me cook, colouring in, or eating, he is part of the action."

## DESIGNING WITH KATIE PAGE

HARVEY NORMAN CEO

**You travel a lot for work, looking into the next big thing. What is the next big thing?** The big thing for the next decade is food. It's been growing



and growing, ever since Masterchef really, which is a global brand, got young people cooking. Everyone is into food. There has been a huge change over the last eight years in how we design dining spaces. The formal dining has left; in its place the kitchen, dining, living and outdoor space are "all in one" spaces, not separate. Just look at fridges today compared to what happened five years ago. They are beautiful and practical, they're not with these crickety old clackety doors – they're on German runners and close so easily and smoothly. This is because women are now much more involved in the design of big and small appliances – before it used to be very technical. The manufacturers have listened.

**You really drove the move towards colour in appliances, in kitchen-gadget-as-fashion-accessory. Is there more to come in colour?** We are in the kitchen every day of our lives. We need things to stimulate us. Every appliance is designed for style, and to match: the fridge, the oven, the dishwasher, the coffee machine, the blender and the toaster. When you design the kitchen these days, it's better that it's a neutral colour – then you have fun with small appliances. It's no longer about buying a kettle or a toaster, you're wanting beautiful pieces on your bench. You can change the pieces then add pieces. This year, we have added copper, white and a beautiful blue.

**What are your favourite kitchen appliances?** Any kitchen that doesn't have a cold press juicer, NEEDS one. It's my favourite kitchen appliance at the moment. They are so easy. Just clean and wash the fruit/vegetable and then throw the whole thing in. This is my blend – beetroot, kale, spinach and carrot which we grow, plus ginger and green apple. I love my steamer oven too. I think in the future more people will have and use steamer ovens. I love steamed food – fish, vegetables, dumplings.

**You're very busy. Do you really cook?** Cooking is my relaxation. If I am not overseas, I cook every Sunday and I freeze a lot. We very rarely eat out when in Sydney. I'm a good cook and it has been my release. Gerry [Harvey] can't cook but he prepares with me. We are particular about the quality – it has to come from Australia and preferably be grown close to where we live. People should care about where the food comes from, and you can buy at a reasonable price if you are seasonal about what you buy. Too many people expect out-of-season produce and that's an expensive way to live.

**What hasn't been invented yet for the kitchen that should have been?** Voice-activated cooking. I want to talk to all of my appliances – tell them what temperature to cook at, to turn off or on. There's a lot of technology going into appliances and that will come on soon, I just don't know when yet. But I'd like it tomorrow!