



We also spoke to Sue Terley of Sydney kitchen company A-Plan Kitchens

R&E: What trends have you seen recently in kitchens?

Sue Terley: There are two trends emerging. The first is the very slick, modern look — a mixture of polyurethane and veneer doors without handles and honed benchtops up to 100mm thick. The second is a traditional kitchen with a modern take — simple Shaker-style doors in matt polyurethane, butler's sink and solid timber benchtops.

R&E: Do you have a favourite trend?

ST: I personally love coloured carcasses. I like the surprise when opening a cupboard door or drawer and there is a blast of colour or contrast.

R&E: How have kitchens changed in the past few years?

ST: Consumers are far better educated these days. They come armed with magazines and ideas. We see more integrated appliances (fridges/dishwashers/microwaves) as kitchens become part of the living space rather than separate rooms. Cupboards are smarter, filled with accessories and inner drawers.

R&E: What do you predict will be big in kitchens in 2009?

ST: Super-gloss and sand-blasted doors. Honed finishes in benchtops. Contrasts. Ovens, fridges and pantries fully hidden behind sliding or folding doors used in conjunction with double-sided islands.

R&E: If people are on a limited budget, how can they save money with their kitchen?

ST: Use laminate finishes. They are the hardest wearing and the least expensive of all the materials. Be adventurous with colours. You can achieve a great look. New profile laminate benchtops now look terrific.

R&E: What tips do you have for readers about to embark on a kitchen renovation?

ST: Do lots of research. Establish your budget. Get your kitchen professionally designed by someone who you have a rapport with. Before you purchase the appliances, discuss it with your designer to ensure you get an optimum plan. Work to the "grand plan" even if you are not doing it all now.

R&E: How influential do you think overseas designs and trends are and why?

ST: European trends influence the Australian market. We bring back what will suit our Australian lifestyle. There are world trends in colour and materials, but we also have our own bent on these. Our designers are some of the best in the world, but our market is relatively small.

R&E: Why is good kitchen design so important?

ST: The kitchen is the heart and soul of a home. It is the most frequently used room in the house and probably gets the most vigorous treatment. It needs to be serviceable, practical and aesthetically pleasing. It adds the most value to a home when it is done well.

R&E: What do you think most kitchens lack?

ST: Imagination. Clients often find it difficult to see the space as it could be rather than as it is. That is why a designer is so important.

R&E: What should be the most important consideration when designing a kitchen?

ST: The family or people using the kitchen. It should suit their lifestyle. It should fulfil the storage and work requirements. The kitchen should be proportional to the home style and size. A kitchen for a two-bedroom terrace house will be different to that needed for a four-bedroom family home.



THIS IMAGE Vibrant colour from A-Plan Kitchens. ABOVE A blast of colour works well with crisp, sleek cupboards and benchtops from A-Plan Kitchens.