



What's hot and what's not – current trends in kitchen design

A new kitchen – whatever your budget – will be a sizeable investment. So deciding the features you want can be a tricky decision. In our annual look at what our customers are asking for in the kitchens we're designing for them, there have been some noticeable changes since last year and some perennial favourites that look like they're here to stay.

The overriding theme coming through in our clients' requests is for their new kitchens to be designed to make their lives easier; easier to clean and easier to use. People understandably want to spend less time maintaining it and more time to enjoy it.

- What hasn't changed from our 2013 report is the fact that we're all using our homes differently these days. Rooms that used to have specific functions, such as the dining room, are being used less frequently and clients are now much more inclined to make use of all the space in their home. As a result combining the kitchen and neighbouring living space into one is popular but the design needs to bring both areas together as one to create the best effect.
- Something else that hasn't changed over the past year is clients' need for storage, storage, storage! Everybody is looking to optimise all the space they have available. However, the benefits of taller cupboards and corner units can be lost if they're inaccessible. Pull out cupboards, pan drawers and 'magic corners' make using the kitchen easier because items come to you rather than you crawling into a cabinet to find what you need.
- The current trend in colour is for more neutrals and naturals – especially painted finishes. 50 Shades of Grey is popular in more than contemporary literature! Combined with bold accents of colour, neutral and natural colours can create a stunning effect.
- Curves are slightly less popular. Whilst they certainly add to the aesthetic appeal, are seen as more welcoming and can help the 'people-flow' in a busy room, they do come at an increased cost.
- Life is busy! People don't want to spend their time cleaning unnecessary elements of their home so we're getting fewer requests for open shelving, glazed units, wine racks and furniture that has the ability to become 'dust collectors'
- On the same theme our clients are looking for more contemporary kitchens. The minimalist look with clean, straight lines and less detail in doors - makes them more practical, easy to clean and beautiful on the eye. Production techniques of the PVC coated door have improved considerably and many 'slab' doors, which really embody this style, no longer have the 'orange peel' look about them.
- On this theme of people wanting to make their lives easier, clients are looking to get their ovens off the floor and built into tall housing units thereby avoiding bending down to reach into them to lift out hot, often heavy items.
- Separate hobs – and especially larger, five ring burners - are increasingly popular. Induction hobs are all the rage for their ease of use, safety features and ease of cleaning. But, remember if you're having this type of hob, to ensure the accompanying extractor is slightly wider!



- While we're talking about appliances, wine chiller cabinets are replacing the traditional wine rack and are the must have appliance for many customers looking to relax of an evening with a ready-chilled bottle of wine or when friends unexpectedly drop by!
- Another way people are looking to make their kitchens easier to maintain is by choosing glass upstands and splashbacks rather than tiles – Spaghetti Bolognese isn't fussy about where it splashes! Choosing a striking coloured glass – especially if complementing neutral coloured furniture - also allows clients to individualise their kitchen.
- Mixing and matching worktops finishes is becoming increasingly popular. For example, combining two finishes – such as granite and a wood area (for food preparation) – can provide both a highly practical and visually stunning effect. Practicality and cost are the two major decisions clients are having to make about their worktops and we've seen an increase in sales of quartz and ceramic surfaces.
- With their better quality and low cost laminate worktops are also becoming more popular; glossy, textured, crystal finishes and the ability to now incorporate small curves mean they look great and come at a lower price tag than granite or wood. Increasingly we're seeing customers mixing them with real wood or stone to make a feature or a breakfast bar area for family use.
- Lighting that adapts to the way clients use their kitchen is also increasingly being understood and requested. Under unit, task, plinth, and breakfast bar – today's lighting is all about the use of LEDs because they are both beautiful and practical. What's more they're more environmentally-friendly, cheaper to run and can immediately change the ambience of any room.
- Last – but not least and despite a supposedly improving economy – value for money is still all important whatever a client's budget. Whilst PVC doors and laminate worktops allow clients to reduce the cost of their new kitchen we're seeing customers that know the value of good design and better quality, longer-lasting furniture that won't start to dilapidate in just a few years as many lower-spec products sold by the DIY sheds will. Long may that be the case!

We hope you've found this report useful. If you're contemplating a kitchen project we'd love to help. Please visit us at our large, modern showroom in the heart of St Ives or telephone us on 01480 468598, email us at info@nicholashythe.co.uk or visit our website at www.nicholashythe.co.uk.