

Planning Appliances

With more appliances available than ever, Natalie Du Bois breaks down the basics to ensure you pick the right ones for your kitchen.

THE LAYOUT OF TODAY'S KITCHEN IS VERY different from what was being designed only a few years ago; this is mainly due to the inclusion of so many appliances into the space. Our kitchens are now being designed to include several work stations; cleaning, cooking and preparing food along with pantry, crockery storage and now eating, entertaining and socialising. All of these activities are now a necessity in order for our kitchens to work and function well for our lifestyles.

Kitchens are more expensive than ever

before as we require so much more from them and that is why it is critical to put careful thought and consideration as to the functionality of this space. An expert tip is to read the specifications of each appliance; spend time talking to appliance experts or hire a professional kitchen designer who is up-to-date with the ever changing products and requirements. This in turn will save you a lot of time, money and give you peace of mind knowing that you have a kitchen that works, looks and functions the best it can.

Fridge-Freezers

When renovating it's recommended you upgrade your fridge-freezer. This can be expensive, but it can also be a costly and time consuming process if you design your new kitchen around your old fridge-freezer. It is often difficult to find a new model that will fit an existing space.

When choosing a new fridge you need to think about the storage capacity you will need now and in the future. Will your family be growing? Will there be more people living in your home? How often do you shop and entertain? Do you need a lot of freezer space? Think about the size of your home. Maybe there are only a few of you living in a large house, but if you were to sell would a bigger family be requiring a larger capacity fridge-freezer? If you have answered yes to any of these questions you might need to look at a bigger fridge-freezer.

All fridge-freezers require different air gaps so check this at the time of purchase as guarantees and warranties can be void.

Another point to consider is the location in your kitchen for your fridge; it can be extremely frustrating if you have to move your fridge every time you need to access the vegie basket or when you want to clean it.

RIGHT A Vintec single door wine cabinet has been included in the island of this kitchen design. For more from Vintec visit www.vintec.co.nz

OPPOSITE PAGE An award winning kitchen, designed by Morgan Cronin.

BELOW There are many styles to consider when choosing a fridge freezer.

1. Fisher & Paykel ES228 **2.** Fisher & Paykel E402BLXFD **3.** Red Baumatic BKTG6 **4.** Smeg SRA20X **5.** Smeg SRA40xhr



Wine Fridges

Another additional appliance we are seeing a lot of in kitchen designs are wine cabinets or a drinks fridge. When planning the integration of your wine cabinet into your kitchen remember that only some models are able to be fitted below a benchtop. Others will need to stand separate. Check the recommended air circulation in the specifications prior to purchasing. A drinks fridge can look impressive with integrated lighting or can be fitted with a door panel so you don't know it is there.



Rangehoods

Most rangehoods on the New Zealand market have been made to suit European ceiling heights so check that the flue will work in your home. Usually an extension piece is included when you purchase the rangehood — but this still might not be high enough if you want the flue to reach the ceiling. Many homes have high ceilings which may mean you will need to allow extra money in your budget for a fabricated steel flue to be made.

Note when buying your rangehood how powerful it is and if it can extract enough air for the size of your room. With open plan kitchens it is extremely

important to go for an extra powerful extractor and place it as close to an external wall as possible. Ideally there should be less than a three metre straight stretch of ducting to the exterior; if there are bends and turns in the ducting it can reduce the efficiency. An inline motor or an external motor can be purchased if the distance is long to help with efficiency. If there is no way to duct the rangehood to the exterior you have the option of having a rangehood with charcoal filters which will not get rid of the air but filter it back into the room. Usually the noisier the rangehood the more powerful.



ABOVE This rangehood is enclosed in matching kitchen panelling and sits over a gas hob.

BELOW LEFT An individual oven and ceramic hob are selected in this kitchen, but are kept together in the same cooking space.

BELOW Izona, Fisher & Paykel's latest induction cooktop, combines both electricity and gas in this sleek design.



Hobs

What hob to choose: electric, induction or gas? Gas has always been popular due to instant heat and more control when cooking, but over the last couple of years there has been a surge in the preference for induction cooking. This is due to the easy cleaning qualities, speed of heating and safety aspects.

Another point to consider is the gas system behind a gas hob. It is not a simple change from electric to gas. It is also important that the wall material behind the burner is fire resistant.

Ovens

Oven placement can vary tremendously. If you desire a traditional or industrial look, a free standing oven or range cooker is for you. This style provides a bold commercial effect that draws your eyes to the cooking area.

If practicality is at the top of your list, then positioning the oven higher up is a good option. Be careful not to place it too high as you need to be able to open the door and reach inside the oven.

If you find you need more than one oven, try having them positioned side by side, providing you have the wall space. Elderly or those with young children benefit from having their ovens at eye level, as there is no bending required.

A benchtop in close proximity is advisable. If space does not allow for a benchtop next to the oven, then one should be placed only a pace away. There is nothing worse than grabbing something out of the oven only to find there is nowhere near by to put it down. This is when accidents happen.

Many of my clients who have young children worry about the heat that the oven doors give off. Most new ovens now have scald proof doors.

The interior sizing of ovens is also crucial when choosing which type is right for you. Previously the European single 60cm ovens put many New Zealanders off as they seemed quite small inside. More recently many European brands have increased their internal cavities making them more practical for our New Zealand lifestyles.



ABOVE This Bosch in-built microwave fitted into a wall unit shows a clean, sophisticated look.

LEFT A Miele oven and ceramic hob with slimline styling. The hob still fits four pots but allows more bench space.

Microwaves

Microwaves are best installed below eye level. When lifting things from the microwave they are often hotter than you expect and if you are reaching too far upwards you risk spilling the hot contents on yourself.

It is best not to house the microwave below bench level due to the amount of heat and steam it can give off. The ideal positioning is just above bench level as it is handy to view items and easy to take things out of it.

At the time of purchase check if your microwave comes with a trim kit, as this ensures if it is built into your cabinet it will have a flush fit. This trim kit will also help if you want to line it up with an oven below.

Dishwashers

Dishwasher placement is critical. Consider how much room is available to walk around it if the door is down. It is best not to place the dishwasher directly behind a cooker or hob if the space is narrow as this can cause accidents; nor to tuck it into a 90 degree angle corner as this will limit access.

Dishdrawers are a great option in narrow spaces as they are at a more ergonomic height. If space is an issue you could go from a 60cm wide dishwasher to a 45cm slim dishwasher or a single dishdrawer. These are particularly good in apartments where space is critical. Check when buying a dishwasher how loud it is when it is turned on; if you have an open plan kitchen you might want to have a quieter one. Most appliance showrooms will have their dishwashers connected so you can hear the difference between them. Work out if you want to see your dishwasher or if you prefer it to be integrated, with a cabinetry panel hiding it.



Coffee Machines

One of the most popular 'must have' appliances today is the coffee machine, and it can either sit on the benchtop or be built into the cabinetry for a flush look. When deciding what type of machine you want, think about whether you will take it with you if you move. How many people might you want to make coffee for? Some machines can be fairly fast per cup, while others can be quite time consuming, which can be unsuitable if you are catering for large groups.



ABOVE The Rocket is claimed to be the 'best domestic coffee machine in the world'. It is complete with industrial power to produce commercial grade coffee in your home. RRP \$3,375.
TOP RIGHT Creating a slimline and modern look, the Miele in-built coffee machine sits side by side with matching ovens and will set you back \$5,399.
TOP LEFT This Miele dishwasher has a flat surface and can take on the surface of surrounding kitchen cabinetry RRP \$2,999.
BOTTOM LEFT A Fisher & Paykel Dishdrawer DD60DCM6 \$2199 available from Noel Leeming.

Natalie Du Bois from Du Bois Design Ltd is a kitchen and bathroom designer and member of the NKBA. Visit www.duboisdesign.co.nz for more information.