


The heart of the home

Angelina Villa-Clarke explores what's new in the world of kitchen design, discovering impressive tech, new textures and tactile touches



T

he kitchen is one of the most functional rooms of the house, yet it also works as the heart of the home – often tripling-up as a communal space to cook, eat and socialise. The latest design trends ooze luxury and sophistication, with innovative materials, tech and elevated levels of craftsmanship championed by many brands.

Inspired by Scandi design, wood cabinets are making a return but this time around, the look is more polished rather than rustic. Coupled with the use of woods, natural-stone surfaces and organic textures lend a rich, warm effect.

Matching wood cabinetry with glossy stone surfaces will give the look an elevated finish. Cosentino's new Dekton collection, the Pietra Edition, was inspired by iconic Mediterranean stones. "The finish is durable and visually appealing, making it perfectly suited to the day-to-day wear of a

busy kitchen," says Katie Parry-Stone, retail manager at Cosentino UK.

Molly Chandler, designer at Cambridge-based kitchen company Willis & Stone, reveals that the company has seen a rise in the natural-kitchen trend. "Warm textures radiate a sense of comfort and cosiness, transforming what can sometimes be a stark, clinical space into a welcoming hub of the home," she begins. "Wooden cabinets and flooring, stone countertops and tactile finishes all help to connect the kitchen with the organic world, creating a sense of harmony and balance. This connection to nature not only enhances the appearance of the kitchen, but has also been proven to promote general wellbeing, reduce stress and improve mental health."

Interior designer Claire Garner agrees that the use of natural materials in the kitchen adds a sense of wellbeing to a space. "Wood plays a pivotal role – whether it's used for cabinetry, shelving or kitchen accessories – as its rich textures and warm tones infuse the space with a sense of history and authenticity. I frequently integrate other natural elements, such as stone surfaces, for worktops or flooring and brass hardware, adding layers of organic beauty, warmth and durability."

Meanwhile, Nicolle Whyte, design director at Olive & Barr – a specialist in Shaker-style kitchens – says that

WOOD AND STONE Cosentino's (left) Pietra Edition and Willis & Stone's (bottom) natural wood designs create stylish and practical kitchens

“Coupled with the use of woods, natural-stone surfaces and organic textures lend a *rich, warm effect*”





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New ideas to optimise your kitchen

- Invest in a home bar and add some of the latest tech, such as the new Vinidor wine cooler from Liebherr.
- If you have space, a 'back kitchen' is the ultimate luxury, combining a utility area and walk-in pantry.
- A high 'slab backsplash' made of the same marble or quartz as the worktop gives an immediate luxury feel.

the company has also seen wood kitchens gain popularity over the past year: "Homeowners are increasingly drawn to contrasting materials, both in texture and colour. This has led to more experimentation with wood finishes, embracing the rich and varied tones of oak and ash, which pair beautifully with natural stone and brushed-brass hardware."

When it comes to layout, the fashion for multi-functional kitchens is as popular as ever – with the space used for entertaining and working from home as much as it is for cooking and dining. As part of the trend, kitchen islands – which can double up as spaces to prepare food, for casual dining and hosting – have evolved to be centrepieces in their own right. Rising in popularity are islands with rounded shapes, large sculptural stone structures and half-islands (where they are cut on an angle to save space).

Allison Lynch, senior designer at Roundhouse Design, based in Cambridge, comments: "When designing a kitchen, it is good to bear in mind everyone's needs in the family. Clients with young children benefit from having a space for their little ones to sit, draw and be close to them while they prep meals, for instance. I also think desk space is worth a conversation when designing your kitchen. A pocket door is a great way to hide a desk as it can be concealed within a run of tall units. The doors are pushed back out of the way when in use and can be closed off again to maintain a sleek appearance."

Monochrome and minimalist designs – counterbalanced with statement lighting and bold accessories – play into the



COSY MEETS CLEVER The classic wood kitchens by Olive & Barr (top) exude warmth and charm, while Roundhouse Design (bottom) emphasise practicality with its clever kitchen designs



quiet luxury trend that's at the forefront of home design right now. With a showroom in Cambridge, Tomas Kitchen Living celebrates the aesthetic with handmade kitchens featuring handle-less cabinets, soft curves and an understated feel.

Kitchen brassware manufacturer Graff predicts pared-back design and timeless minimalism to dominate kitchen design in AW24 and into 2025, saying it sees a return towards cooler-toned metals. Ziggy Kulig, CEO at Graff, remarks: "Silver and chrome are timeless finishes and ideal for adding a sleek contrast to a warmer colour scheme, or to elevate a cooler space with chic metallic accents."

Meanwhile, putting the kitchen as a centrepiece of the home, jewel-box

colours and dramatic designs continue to dominate. Liebherr's Blacksteel – a black stainless-steel surface – offers a dramatic alternative to a classic stainless-steel finish, while Otto Tiles & Design's Luna range, part of its Mediterranean Collection, offers statement geometric patterns. Crafted by Otto's master atelier, they are made from Italian nero marquina, bianco carrara and tundra grey marble using intricate hand-cutting techniques. The result is a dynamic pattern and strong colour contrasts.

You can even create a talking point with functional appliances, shares heating specialists M & J Abbs, which has a showroom outside St Ives in Cambridgeshire. It supplies radiators, Rayburns and electric Agas – all available in bold colours to bring beauty to an otherwise practical piece.

Allison Lynch from Roundhouse Design also suggests that using a mix of materials works well to achieve a high-end result. "We would suggest dark greens and metals paired with textured worktops. The bolder use of colour is being explored – whether it be on walls or cabinet doors – to create mood and add depth to the space. We are also seeing lots of open shelving to display collections of sculptural vases and less need for several wall cupboards." ●



STOCKISTS

Claire Garner Interiors

01442 801220

clairegarnerinteriors.com

Cosentino

cosentino.com

Graff

graff-designs.com

Liebherr

liebherr.com

M & J Abbs

01954 267267 | mjabbs.co.uk

Olive & Barr

01684 574779 | oliveandbarr.com

Otto Tiles

ottotiles.co.uk

Roundhouse Design

020 7297 6220

roundhousedesign.com

Tomas Kitchen Living

0800 023 6471

tomas-kitchen-living.co.uk

Willis & Stone

01353 361843 | willisandstone.co.uk

FINISHING TOUCH The minimalist brassware by Graff (bottom) pairs perfectly with Liebherr's (top) striking Blacksteel for a modern aesthetic

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Waterbeach offers a sustainable lifestyle – with miles of off-road walking and cycling routes, green space and much more

Discover a thriving community just north of Cambridge. Waterbeach boasts an incredible natural landscape that sets it apart. From the 23-acre lake and accompanying lake loop trail to dappled woodland and open green spaces, nature runs through its heart, sitting hand-in-hand with everything else you need for an exceptional quality of life.

Miles of off-road walking and cycling connections are set in 250 acres of green space, allowing car-free access around the community and encouraging sustainable methods of transport for health, wellbeing and environmental benefits.

If you want to get a flavour of a day in the life at Waterbeach, why not join one of the monthly wellness walks to explore the development. Meeting by the lakeside cafe at 1.30pm on the second Tuesday of every month, join a guided stroll around to get out in nature, meet new people and learn more about the new town.

Or you can take a ride on one of the free bikes from App Bikes, based at the innovative sustainable transport hub at the gateway of the development. Enjoy 45 minutes of free hire, as part of the development's commitment to encouraging active travel within and beyond the area. Take a ride around the lake and explore the beautiful scenery, or pop into the village for a spot of shopping or to run some errands.

The sustainable travel options sit alongside a range of buzzing community spaces created by Waterbeach master-developer Urban&Civic. The Wild Wood play area is a new play space that allows children to get out in nature and play under the canopy of a picturesque woodland.

Alternatively, take a moment to unwind at Evolve, the peaceful lakeside cafe. To get the blood flowing, the sports hall and studio host over 45 groups each month, offering a wide range of activities – from yoga and pilates to Rugbytots and the Waterbeach brass band. With so many

INTO THE WILD

Community spaces are set amid scenic green areas and woodland



options, you'll find plenty of motivation to stay active and settle into your new home.

These amenities are set against the bustling backdrop of the monthly community market, which takes place on the third Sunday of every month in the Terraces space – selling everything from food and drink to arts and crafts. It's a great chance to support local vendors and discover unique finds, all while soaking up the vibrant community spirit.

From one-bedroom apartments to four-bedroom houses, all properties have been designed to integrate into the woodland setting, with the expansive walking and cycling routes connecting you to nature as well as the wider community.

Cala and Stonebond's homes have been designed with contemporary living in mind and are made to the highest sustainability standards. Homes are fitted with air source heat pumps and charging points for electric cars, allowing you and your family to make sustainable changes right from the get-go.

Stonebond and Cala are open every day, with show homes available to view. Pop into the offices to discover a wide range of incentives and find out more about how you can start a new chapter at Waterbeach. ●

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