

Whip up a treat

If Home is where the Heart is, then the kitchen is at the very heart of the home. As you compare older kitchens with new open plan kitchen/living areas, consider how times have changed – and we have the changing role of women to thank. Years ago, kitchens were designed on the premise that most women stayed at home during the day and worked alone in the kitchen. The kitchen was the warmest room in the house, with an open fire, a coal or wood range, the smell of freshly bottled preserves and the alluring fragrance of fresh baked bread. Most meals were cooked from scratch and eaten in a separate dining area. Less food storage was required as shopping was frequent and much of the fresh ingredients came from the home garden, possibly the farm. Kitchen designers now think in terms of multiple work stations to allow more than one person to work efficiently without getting in anyone else's way – men can cook too! The addition of an island in the kitchen achieves multiple work centres in a modern kitchen. Sweeping breakfast bars with attractive benchtops provide convenient areas to present a buffet when entertaining and act as an informal separation between the kitchen and living space. Professional advice helps, whether you are building a new home or replacing an older style kitchen. A good kitchen designer will have a good grasp on what you are trying to achieve within your budget. The key to a successful new kitchen is to identify needs in lifestyles, personal tastes and storage requirements. Choose design and colour with resale and changing trends in mind by selecting maximum and enduring appeal.

A guide to your new kitchen

Cabinets

Most cabinets in New Zealand are made from chipboard (known as Weetbix in the trade.) High Moisture Resistant (HMR) board is a better choice because it won't swell when wet. Cabinets are usually covered in Melamine, a white, low pressure laminate, but you can choose timber veneered board which is protected by lacquering. For the real traditional look, solid wood cabinets are available, top of the range.

Benchtops

Benchtops are designed to be hard wearing and durable. Although not in fashion, stainless steel areas provide a virtually indestructible bench space, with Melteca covering in a wide range of colours and designs popular. Engineered stone is an attractive, very durable surface, while granite is not as expensive as it once was.

Splashbacks

Easy to clean and looking good! Choose from colour coated glass, ceramic tiles or stainless steel.

Perhaps your old kitchen is looking dull and dated, but a new one is not yet on the budget. Look into painting the cupboards and replacing the benchtops to give a fresh look. New curtains/blinds at the window will bring the décor into the 21st century without the need for a major outlay.

Colours in a kitchen can be bright, particularly if the room is located on the shaded side of the house – this is a busy, warm and vibrant working space.

Wonderful New Fangled Machines

Cook it up

The beauty of a new kitchen is – this is your big chance to upgrade all appliances – big and small! Great grandma would have been amazed at what we now have in our kitchens. Bosch offer a range of conventional, combination, steam or Light Speed ovens. Compact combination ovens have integrated microwave features, so temperature can range from 30 – 300 degrees Celsius to cover all cooking requirements and keep food hot. The combined function saves power by cutting cooking time in half. Light Speed ovens cook faster than a conventional oven. This retains food's nutritional values, minimises moisture loss and retains the taste of the food by requiring less butter or oil for cooking. Steam ovens are suited to both fresh and frozen foods, while the Bosch patented Eco-Clean oven does away with that hated chore of cleaning the oven.

Wash it up and chill

The latest Bosch water-efficient dishwashers can save you money and energy, with up to a 4 star water and energy rating. These dishwashers are well designed to be eco-friendly and easy to use, leaving you to get on with daily life. A good fridge is a necessity. The Bosch range of frost free, auto defrost and anti-bacterial protection to provide a safe storage environment for food, is a long way from the old kitchen safe. A cool door system runs the length of the inner fridge door, keeping it cool where milk and juice are kept.

Scrub it up

Don't forget that important part of the home where laundry is tackled – the less scrubbing there, the better. Remember the relentless march across the floor of the dreaded out-of-balance washing machine? Here's a clever idea – Bosch have designed a washing machine with electric out-of-balance control. The machine seeks to control the imbalance with gentle spins in both directions, to relocate the load. If after 15 attempts, a 'dangerous imbalance' is still detected, the wash programme automatically eliminates the final spin to protect your machine.

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