

Kitchens have become the new living room

By Martin Holliday, Founder and Design Director of national award-winning, bespoke kitchen and furniture company Chiselwood, based in Saxilby.

The way clients view their kitchen has changed dramatically since we began Chiselwood back in 1989.

How homeowners choose to live in their kitchens continues to evolve as quality construction and functional design transforms the room from a kitchen to a social area. The kitchen has become more of a gathering place where cabinetry is viewed as a piece of furniture rather than standard kitchen equipment.

Both the kitchen and bathroom are being seen more as a place of rest and sanctuary from the stressful outside world. Great kitchen design is all about understanding what kind of environment makes a person feel happiest at home.

Clients continue to place importance on quality and design when making decisions on a kitchen project, and they are willing to add to their budget if they believe quality and design will bring them long-term satisfaction.

At the same time, expectation levels have risen; they want long-term styling and great design without sacrificing function.

We are now experiencing the best business conditions since 2007 for bespoke design projects, along with high demand for re-modelling and renovation projects involving kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms.

A room once dedicated exclusively to food preparation is now a heavily used social space.

Most family life takes place in the kitchen: decisions are made around the kitchen table, homework, celebration, cooking, polishing shoes, charging phones and watching tv take place in this "heart of the home".

Not only is the kitchen for cooking and eating, it has evolved into a social setting where cabinetry is being viewed as furniture as opposed to standard kitchen equipment.

The day-to-day family-focused kitchen is often incorporated into a larger, informal living space crafted from the finest materials and incorporating the best finishes.

An integrated kitchen and living space must work as one entity, the kitchen design working seamlessly in the eating and lounging zones. A run of units might accommodate DVDs in one area and tea bags in another, and may be wall-hung, furniture-style, rather than floor-based as for traditional kitchen units.

Kitchens have become the new living room, and as a result, they are more unique in terms of design and finishes. I love hearing people talk about how important their kitchens have become to them, not just for cooking and dining but for just enjoying time with friends and family.



Continued on page 4.



I believe there will be a change in the hierarchy of the home that puts the kitchen as the priority in terms of design, budget, location, and space allocation.

Studies consistently document that with kitchen upgrades, homeowners enjoy significant return on their investment compared to other popular renovation projects—more than 40% in some cases.

Reconfiguring the kitchen or opening it up to the living areas of the home or including a sofa/tv area and dining space can give family and friends a meeting place to spend time together eating, socializing and relaxing, and is a great solution for smaller homes.

This makes an ideal space for entertaining too, making parties less stressful by having everything in arm's reach—and even with casual entertaining friends and family can pitch in to help chop the vegetables or open the wine.

A table, or a sitting workplace, is an important element in both traditional and contemporary open-plan kitchens. It's the place where many of the 'extra' activities take place, like homework, paying bills, conversations, etc. The sitting area is planned to be comfortable and well-lit with an attractive view.

The lighting should be chosen to give a warm and pleasant light in the evening, but still provide a good light for working.

Ultimately, time at home together is limited and so, every house needs a flexible 'common room' where everyone can relax. A room once dedicated exclusively to food preparation is now a heavily used social space and good kitchen design must ensure the practical demands of this social room work alongside great aesthetics and performance ■

Contact Chiselwood on 01522 704446 or visit www.chiselwood.co.uk

