

Design talk

Utopia chats to industry experts for the lowdown on kitchen design



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FUNCTION FOREMOST

Whichever room you want to design, practicality has to be most important. A good place to start is to look at the previous kitchen and list the points you don't like or that haven't worked.

BRIGHT IDEAS

Lighting schemes are very important especially as kitchens are becoming more multifunctional. They need to be able to be adjusted, or for several schemes to be put in place to alter the ambience from bright lighting for working or reading to soft atmospheric for subtle dining or relaxation. The choice with low voltage LEDs and colour-changing lighting has made this area of design very exciting.

QUALITY PAYS

We believe in doing the job once. Picking the best quality products within your budget is key. Sometimes less is more, and you should sacrifice some things to ensure the products you do have will last the time. Look out for products from companies with good aftercare services, as this will ensure that you are well looked after long after the project is finished.

FREQUENCY FOCUS

During the design process, concentrate on the things that will be most used in the kitchen, for example the bin and then the fridge. Ensure that these items are easily accessed and not making walking long distances necessary.

EASY ACCESS

Careful questions asked at the early design stage will help the designer to assess the clients' needs, ensuring the kitchen will work for all users in the project, whatever their idiosyncrasies are. Designers should assess whether the user is left or right handed, or if several people including children will be using the space to make sure that the room works as well as it looks. Access to the space is important; for example, the height of cupboards and that of storage facilities should not be too low if the person who will be using them has difficulty bending down, and not too high if the client is short. Only once all this is determined should the aesthetics be added.

From coriander to Casa Batilo, here's a few of Martin's favourite things...



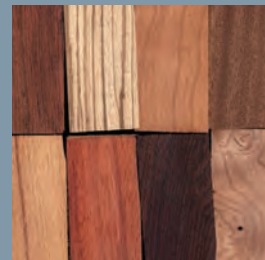
For inspiration, I love... the Hotel Victor in Miami designed by Lawrence Murray Dixon in the 1930s and recently refurbished by Jacques Garcia.



Cooking-wise, I... like to get fresh food from local producers and use things from the garden – it doesn't take hours to make great-tasting food.



I'd love to dine with... Tim Burton the film producer. I love his films with the attention to detail, the music and the sheer madness that his films portray.



My address book secret is... Capital Crispin Veneers. Laurence there has great knowledge and always rises to the challenge of each project.



I can never have enough... fresh herbs; we had a small herb garden but I've just built a new bed for basil, parsley and coriander.



I wouldn't be without... my Miele built-in pressure steam oven. It is versatile and suits my speedy type of cooking.



My favourite-ever design is... Porsche knives as they are elegantly designed but are balanced well.



My favourite building is... Casa Batiló in Barcelona designed by Gaudi who has long been an inspiration to me.



My favourite holiday destination is... Barcelona; it's an inspirational city at every turn.



My best buy was... a LeXpress coffee pot. Though the all-singing all-dancing machines are good, you can't beat coffee from this pot.