



HOW WILL EUROPEAN TRENDS HIT THE SA MARKET...

The trends seen in the South African kitchen industry filter down from what is showcased at Eurocucina, one of the world's largest kitchen showcases that takes place in Italy. Many of the KSA's members attended this bi-annual show, which most recently took place in April 2018. While it usually takes one to two years for the SA retail market to embrace the new trends, the fact that key players in the kitchen industry are ready for these new trends, is invaluable.

Eurocucina 2018 showcased many features that were key breakaways from the trends we have become accustomed to in South Africa. Most specifically, the move from light to dark, and from high gloss to ultra matt. From an aesthetics perspective, there is a definitive move to fully embrace what is organic, tactile and raw. Steel and oxidized metals, wood and marble stood out. Timbers were definitely focused on; dark wood with linear grain, but in keeping with the shows overall feel for sustainability timber was reflected predominantly in veneers and not solids. The combinations of the dark timber with the change of the colour palette to dark matt shades of grey and blue, highlighted with greens and pale pinks, shows a very clear move away from the traditionally seen Scandinavian inspired light gloss look.

Smokey glass was also an interesting incorporation into many designs. Laminates were also strongly showcased.



Continuing the need for texture was the embrace of pattern, particularly with the amount of marble or marble effect surfacing and cladding. In the past we have seen dark cupboards offset with lighter counter-tops, but here, dark was often combined with dark. This heaviness was offset with clever, often 50's and 60's inspired, lighting and shadow lines created by setback plinths which allowed the dark colors to look light and weightless. Other than marble or marble effect quartz, there was a general move away from stone as a surfacing material, with most kitchens opting for the slimmer lines of ultra matt laminates like Fenix, Sintered stone or Porcelain surfacing materials. Combining of



surfacing materials was still popular though. Many appliance manufacturers were showcasing their versions of hob burners that get integrated directly into the kitchen surface rather than a traditional drop-in hob.

Technology was a key focus with kitchen companies working closely with appliance manufacturers and tech companies, to make the kitchen an integrated space that facilitates communication within the home and away from it. While we are already seeing kitchens in South Africa being designed to facilitate cordless charging of devices, with plug points that facilitate direct USB point plug-in, the companies at Eurocucina had taken it further, showcasing appliances and technology that interfaced; facilitating shopping list and remote switch-on, all aimed at optimizing our time management and well-being. Voice and gesture activation were the most prevalent.

The kitchen companies had placed as much importance on the people who would be in the kitchen, as the kitchen itself. The well-being of those in the space seemed to have been incorporated into most design elements, with colour psychology being used in the choice of colour palettes, the use

of mood lighting and a strong focus on ergonomics. The kitchen spaces had also been designed to be more multi-functional and adaptable than before. There seemed to be a real understanding that the kitchen was no longer just a functional room, but an integrated part of the home. There was effort made to detract from the visual appearance of pure functionality and focus on a look more aligned to elegant furniture and bespoke individual design. As such, integrated appliances, and appliances with variable décor panels, were strongly featured.

While sustainability and 'going green' has been a key focus of the show for some years now, this literally was a key area for most kitchens displayed in 2018. Where in the past the kitchens had shown green areas with herbs or pot plants, kitchens now housed mini urban farms where homeowners could grow not only their own herbs but vegetables too. The incorporation of these green spaces not only facilitates access to fresh organic foodstuff, but facilitates a sense of emotional well-being, clean air and environmental awareness.

It will be very interesting to see how the SA market embraces these new trends and puts its own unique twist on them.

