



## BIG IDEAS FOR A SMALL KITCHEN

**Homes are getting smaller but our kitchens are getting bigger...at least we want them to be. With more and more people downscaling to apartment and compact home living, how do they continue to enjoy cooking and entertaining without the kitchen being too large for the space and overwhelming the home? Fortunately, there are ways to maximise the usable space in your kitchen and make it feel a lot bigger than it actually is.**

In order to maximise your worksurface area it is important to design your kitchen giving at least one spot where there is a minimum run of 1.5m of undisturbed countertop space. Small appliances tend to be the greatest thief of countertop space so it is imperative your kitchen design has easy and accessible storage for these items. Leave only the few essential smalls out on display. For the others, think of adding specialised storage behind lift up doors or roller doors or add draws that pull out and allow the appliance to be used in situ. Make use of storage to accommodate knives and cooking utensils or hang them on the wall. There are a variety of attractive ways to hang your utensils that can add to your kitchen aesthetic. New hardware innovations now also make it possible to have

pull-out countertops. This allows you to pull the additional work area out when needed and store it back in place when you are done.

Make good use of your corners. The addition of a corner pull-out storage unit will allow you to maximise the storage ability of that space while still having easy access to everything you need. If you prefer drawers to cupboards, hardware is now available to facilitate fully extendible corner drawer units.

Drawers are a lot easier to organise through the use of drawer inserts. They also maximise your storage space better than a cupboard does, all while helping keep those lower back aches at bay. Ensure you use runners that allow for maximum drawer extension and that have a good load bearing capacity. Drawers might be more costly than cupboards however, the additional storage will be well worth the investment. If you like to have cupboard space, internal drawers can be added to the cupboard. These units are only seen once the



cupboard door is open and allow you to use the dead-space usually at the top of a cupboard. This is a relatively easy addition to make to your existing cupboard units.

The space under the sink is often under-utilised due to the cut out required for the underside of the sink and the pipe work. Drawer runners are now available that will allow for drawer units under the sink to clear the plumbing works, allowing you to capitalize on this extra bit of storage space that is often overlooked.

Give some thought to your sink – size, configuration, drainage etc. Going smaller because your space is smaller can be impractical. Sinks are now available with a nifty and stylish cover that slides over the bowls giving additional working counter space and facilitating a clean and tidy look when not in use. If this is not an option, look at an underslung basin. These are aesthetically non-invasive and will not overwhelm the space as much as a sink with a drainer. If you must have a drainer consider a sink in a colour to compliment your worksurface. This way the sink will blend in rather than stand out. The new synthetic ranges available ensure the durability of the colour in these options ensuring they are pleasing to the eye.

The addition of a pull-out pantry to maximise grocery storage and make your items accessible is an absolute must. There are a variety of sizes as well as configurations available that will suit your space.

Your choice of appliances is also important. Be cautious of choosing large bulky fridges or cookers; they have a tendency to steal precious space and dominate the room making a smaller kitchen look cluttered and overwhelmed. Look for cooking appliances with sleek lines that are unobtrusive. Most manufacturers now make a stackable range where oven, microwave, coffee machine and steam oven are all available in the same aesthetic and built to be installed one above the other. Allow your kitchen designer to guide you with regards to the possibilities as well as the recommended heights of your appliances to ensure their functionality is not compromised. If you are considering a gas hob, thought needs to be given to whether the gas bottle is able to be housed externally to the kitchen, or whether it needs to be accommodated within the kitchen units, as it will take up some of your valuable storage. Always ensure that the current bylaws and health and safety regulations are followed in this regard.



For your refrigeration and laundry, integrated is definitely the way to go. Given that integrated appliances are hidden from view by a cupboard door; they look incredibly sleek and allow the kitchen design to flow ‘unbroken’ and do not intrude on the space.

The pocket door is a great addition to a small kitchen, particularly one that is open plan. These can be used in any number of ways to conceal parts of the kitchen, whether it be the sink area, stacked laundry appliances or a coffee station. When closed, the kitchen presents as a piece of elegant furniture with no disruption from the usual kitchen trappings. When open, the kitchen is returned to a functional part of daily life. Investing in a good quality mechanism and a company that is experienced in the installation thereof is vital to the correct and on-going operation of the doors.

Making your small space seem large is not just about the physical kitchen itself. Colour, texture and light play an important role. When choosing your kitchen finishes, opt for those that reflect light rather than absorb it. While darker hued colours are very much on trend at the moment, they will only work in a small kitchen if there is plenty of natural light or very good layered artificial light; and if the open plan space itself is big even if the kitchen is not. Using neutral, natural finishes will help the space seem larger. Avoid adding anything

with a heavy pattern; whether it be tiles, wood grain or stone speckle, unless, as with the dark colours, you have an abundance of light and an extended area of space.

The addition of a large-scaled mirror to the space will help reflect light and add an illusion of depth and space. Caution against using the mirror as a splashback behind the hob, it will get splattered with grease when you cook and can be a chore to keep clean and streak free.

Good lighting is key and should be layered. Layered lighting will allow your kitchen to take on a new sense of space seeming small and unobtrusive when not in use and large and welcoming when in use. There should be functional lighting for the overall casting of general light, accent lighting to highlight specific areas like display cupboards, task lighting to illuminate work space areas, mood lighting to add subtle accents and feature lighting if you wish to add a central lighting piece as a functional design feature. We would advise consulting a lighting specialist to gain maximum insight.

The more streamlined your kitchen and design, the larger it will appear. Keep cupboard décor to



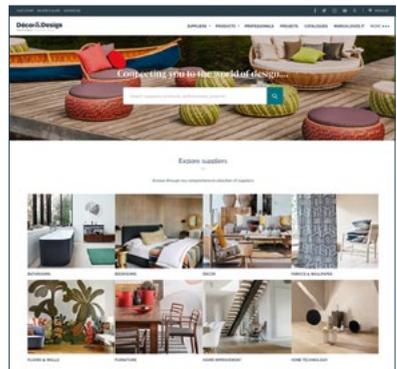
a minimum. Where possible, keep cupboards and drawers handle-less with push to open mechanisms or the addition of a channel or handle groove to facilitate opening and closing. Handles and knobs should only be used sparsely as a decorative accent.

It is amazing how big a small, well-designed, kitchen can be. Good planning is essential to optimising a small space, particularly one as well used as a kitchen. Give your kitchen company a good brief, but accept their expert input to ensure your space is maximised, and your aesthetic, durable and space enhancing.

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