



# PIMP MY KITCHEN

## A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TO MATERIALS, COLOURS AND TEXTURES IN THE KITCHEN

The KSA recently collaborated with Jason Wells, of PG Bison, to compile a talk called "Pimp my Kitchen." We wanted to challenge the more traditional thought processes to combining colour and texture in a kitchen and what affordable materials you could use to do this.

Moving through a pandemic has forced many changes on our lifestyles, all of which have impacted global trends. Spaces have become hybrid with work and home blending. Our timelines have changed with work and personal lines blurring. Spaces have been re-purposed and reinvented. Digital has become the new normal. Well-being and mental health have been highlighted. The natural and organic have been embraced. Nesting and the enhancement of the home have become a key expense focus and we have become more aware of thinking and supporting local.

These life trends impact material requirements and development. In recent years, colour trends have been changing faster than before. The current pallets we are seeing embrace aspects of nature and earth tones, with greys remaining ever popular. While accent colour trends may change, these colours have a longevity that does not easily date. The inclusion of more authentic textured and

patterned materials that echo those found in nature has also grown. The combination of bolder natural texture and patterns adds a tactile feature to the design, completing the sensory experience.

There has been a definitive move to low maintenance materials. Many people find themselves working from home, often without help to clean and maintain these spaces that would previously have been unoccupied during office hours. This has seen a rise in demand for easy to clean, durable, anti-bacterial materials. While the topic of sustainability gains momentum, there is also a new drive to support local manufacturing and innovation. The impact of the pandemic on the global economy has also increased the desire for materials that can achieve a high-end aesthetic, but, within a realistic, affordable budget.



How have we seen these trends and changes coming into effect in the South African kitchen? While gloss is still a major trend for many local markets, often used very effectively in small spaces to bounce more light to create scale, a trend quickly gaining in popularity is the move

toward low reflective, low marking matt and ultra matt finishes. These matt finishes are particularly popular in darker shades. While one would not think of using dark colours for smaller spaces, these matt shades work well in smaller kitchens with good lighting, subduing the intensity of the darker colour, combining well with other finishes and not overwhelming the space. There is also a very upmarket, sophisticated elegance to them.



Two and three tone combinations are on the rise with matts being combined with colours or wood grains. What is interesting to see is how the new wood grains are paired with a variety of solid colours, each solid colour enhancing different aspects of the grain and natural wood colouring. Combining tones is visually interesting and allows for a greater expression of personality. The combination of solid colour with a woodgrain tone also assists in balancing the intensity of some

of the popular static / solid colours and helps to create accents or feature elements.

This can be even further enhanced by introducing new tones / patterns / textures through your surfacing choices or feature wall cladding. Bold highly variegated wood grains and strong marble effects are becoming more and more popular.

Traditionally our kitchens have white carcasses. The addition of coloured materials to the internal elements of the kitchen adds a whole new level of sophistication. The coloured carcass adds a more finished and polished look, allowing the transition from kitchen space to living space happen more seamlessly. The 'surprise' of opening a cupboard or drawer and finding a colour or woodgrain detail inside makes the time in the kitchen more of an experience.



The question is, how do we achieve these high end looks while remaining conscious of budget, accessibility and durability? The answer, by changing



our attitudes to materials like high pressure laminates (HPL) and melamine faced board (MFB). The technology behind the manufacturing of HPL and MFB has seen incredible advancements in the past few years, realistically capturing the look and feel of other materials at a fraction of the cost. They offer a viable alternative to veneers and duco finishes at a price that makes a high-end look very accessible to a far wider range of the South African market. While Europe and the UK have already seen their kitchen market change their attitude to melamines and laminates, the middle to upper income bracket in South Africa tends to view the material as dated, unimaginative and non-sustainable, relating it back to the 1970's and 80's kitchens. In an exercise undertaken by one of the KBSA's (the UK's version of the KSA) key kitchen members, consumers were presented with a fully melamine kitchen and challenged to guess the materials used. Consumers were taken aback to learn the kitchen was not made with veneer and duco, and even more surprised when they learned the price.

By changing the way we view laminate and melamine, we facilitate access to high-end styling and aesthetics, that are locally manufactured, more affordable, easy to maintain and, if installed and manufactured correctly, very durable.

***With thanks to Jason Wells of PG Bison for their help with this article.***



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