

THE 2015 KITCHEN SCENE



If this is the year for your brand new kitchen, you'll need to be well-versed on what's hot – and what's not – in products and design. **Lara Bailey** looks at the trends dominating stylish Melbourne kitchens this year.

Having a new kitchen built is an exciting prospect – it's the chance for you to put a personal touch on the space and make sure it suits your practical needs as well as your tastes. Whether you're having a new home built and have the chance to do everything right from the beginning, or are embarking on a much-needed renovation, it's vital to make sure the design ticks all the right boxes for you.

Knowing what is in style can provide a great basis for developing nuances in your layout and assisting in the creation of a beautiful and user-friendly space. Here, *Melbourne Kitchen + Bathroom Design* speaks with Dimitra Protopsaltis, an interior designer for Perini Kitchens & Bathrooms. Having designed some of Melbourne's most sophisticated spaces, Protopsaltis has a wealth of knowledge about kitchen design. She imparts her wisdom here for the benefit of interior design addicts and novices alike.

THE BIG PICTURE

Broadly speaking, the notable features of 2015 design include a change in the tactility and look of many kitchen surfaces, as well as exciting colour combinations, says Protopsaltis.

"We see a trend emerging ... of combinations of bold, exotic hues paired with a neutral palette," she explains.

"Colours such as Mediterranean blues, pastels and olive and charcoal tones will feature prominently in the world of home design in terms of soft furnishings, as well as splashbacks and feature cabinetry."

While bold colours may be breaking through, restrained finishes are leading the way.

"We are seeing a shift away from the high-gloss finishes that have dominated kitchen cabinetry in the past. We believe glossier surfaces, such as high-gloss painted cabinetry, will be a little less in demand in 2015, with a trend emerging towards a more subdued semi-gloss finish.

"[The] semi-gloss finish is becoming preferable due to the ease of maintenance and also the softer look a semi-gloss finish can offer a space."

The move away from glossy surfaces towards a more natural appearance extends to other elements of kitchen design, too.

"Natural stones such as marble and granite are increasing in popularity once again," explains Protopsaltis.

"Although manufacturers of reconstituted stone do offer amazingly durable [options], there are clients who prefer the 'real thing' rather than an engineered alternative.

"[The] semi-gloss finish is becoming preferable due to the ease of maintenance and ... softer look."

"Timber will also be a prominent feature in 2015, with clients opting for a more natural, refined rustic style in their home. Solid timber can be an expense [but] there are plenty of alternatives available such as the Laminex 'Impressions' range, which offers the look, texture and charm of traditional timber in laminate form.

"We believe there will continue to be a market for both natural and engineered products."

DOWN TO SPECIFICS

Don't leave anything to guesswork or make last-minute decisions about elements of your kitchen; even the smallest things can make a big impact. Here are Protopsaltis' tips for getting the details right.

Splashbacks

While glass splashbacks have been favoured for some time, Protopsaltis says the tide is turning back towards tiles.

"With the advances in tile manufacturing and grouting, tiles seem to be coming back into vogue! A vast array of textures, colours, materials and patterns is now available, [ensuring that there is] a style to suit every kitchen.

"Grout is no longer a maintenance issue, [thanks to] the introduction of specialised grouts which are non-porous and stain-resistant."

Taps and Sinks

Selecting tapware and a sink enables you to branch out and try something different without committing to a major design statement. From versatile, highly practical taps to avant-garde sink design, 2015 is the time to embrace change.

"Practicality and function will always be the most important thing to consider when selecting taps and sinks for your new kitchen. Pull-out/

down tapware offers an elegant style as well as functionality in a kitchen, while the classic stainless steel undermounted bowls will continue to be prominent in kitchen design," says Protopsaltis.

"This past year, we have seen sink manufacturers experiment with black glass and granite sinks, which, although they have been popular, are not to everyone's taste. We are certainly looking forward to seeing more new materials being introduced from the top Australian sink manufacturers."

Storage

When it comes to storage, forego the usual and instead try innovative drawer systems and alternating finishes in your new kitchen.

"In terms of storage, wireware accessories, pull-out units and organisational systems will continue to make our lives easier in 2015. Blum has some fantastic products in terms of organisational accessories for the kitchen and we're very excited to see what's next.

"Mediterranean blues, pastels and olive and charcoal tones will feature prominently."

"Overhead cabinetry will also be a more prominent feature in 2015's kitchens, with the experimentation of different looks and textural combinations. For example, textured, wood-grain finishes used on overhead cabinets pair well with a smooth paint finish on base cabinets, adding texture and interest in a space.

"Aluminium and stainless steel framed glass cabinet doors will also be a prominent feature in 2015 kitchen designs."

Benchtops

While reconstituted stone will continue its reign as the benchtop material of choice, a diversification of tones and textures will ensure maximum flexibility, says Protopsaltis.

"Reconstituted stone has been the go-to option for some time now; a trend that we see continuing well into 2015 thanks to its durability and ease of maintenance. With the introduction of new colours and textures [that are] now available from the top engineered stone manufacturers, the possibilities are truly endless!