

For high visual impact, checked flooring combined with specially designed handles in Britannia metal and a steel-framed pantry section create a unique textural combination in this kitchen from Marchi Group. www.marchiucucine.it



Above The grey Laminex silk-finish benchtop provides the base, while varying shades of grey are used to further accentuate a calm and serene feel. www.laminex.com.au

Colour

Coloured and textured splashbacks remain popular, but strong base colours are vital to create the right mix. “White and grey tones are set to prove important colours throughout 2012, no doubt due to how easy they work with myriad different veneer options,” explains Colin.

Laminex Design Centre Manager, Lorraine Brigdale, agrees: “Superb colour schemes are evolving as a result of the greyscale trend. Grey is not seen as drab any more, rather we now know how to blend an endless variety of grey

tones into elegant, sophisticated interiors that become a canvas for the addition of exciting vibrant colour accents.”

White has always been and always will be a popular base choice — one you can’t go wrong with. “The white palette has always been extremely popular for kitchen benchtops, especially for customers wanting to achieve a fresh, clean, modern look that will remain timeless, featuring clean lines and simple edge details,” Andre Dixon, Sales and Marketing Manager at Caesarstone explains.

TREND alert

WORDS Tatyana Leonov

Kitchen design continues to be a priority when renovating. If you’re thinking about renovating yours this year, keep up with the trends to create the perfect space

Texture

Texture continues to dominate trends for 2012. Texture can add contrast and interest to your kitchen surfaces — think of it in both tactile and visual terms. The texture of some materials becomes apparent when you feel it, while others have strong patterns or designs that create visual interest.

High-gloss lacquers remain popular choices and we are seeing an increased shift towards matt lacquers. “We are moving away from the polyurethane doors that have been dominant for a number of years. Combine this matt texture with open-grain veneers and the result is a practical and luxuriously tactile combination,” Colin Wright of Porcelanosa Studio explains.

Functionality

Clever design characteristics are continually being implemented to increase the functionality of the kitchen space. Colin has noticed that various manufacturers are creating subtle overhangs, bridges and open spaces within their designs. “This is a clever design element that maintains benchtop space yet increases perceived floor space by allowing the flooring to run through and underneath, which is particularly useful in small open-plan areas,” he explains.

Right This G950 kitchen by GamaDecor for Porcelanosa illustrates how floating units can increase the perception of floor space. www.porcelanosastudio.com.au





Geometry

Kitchen renovations are becoming more interesting with the interplay between heights and depths. These new dimensions not only create interesting designs but also focus on making kitchens more ergonomically practical.

“This was a feature introduced by German manufacturers years ago but through the availability and popularity of various kitchen components is becoming more widely used in Australia,” explains Colin.

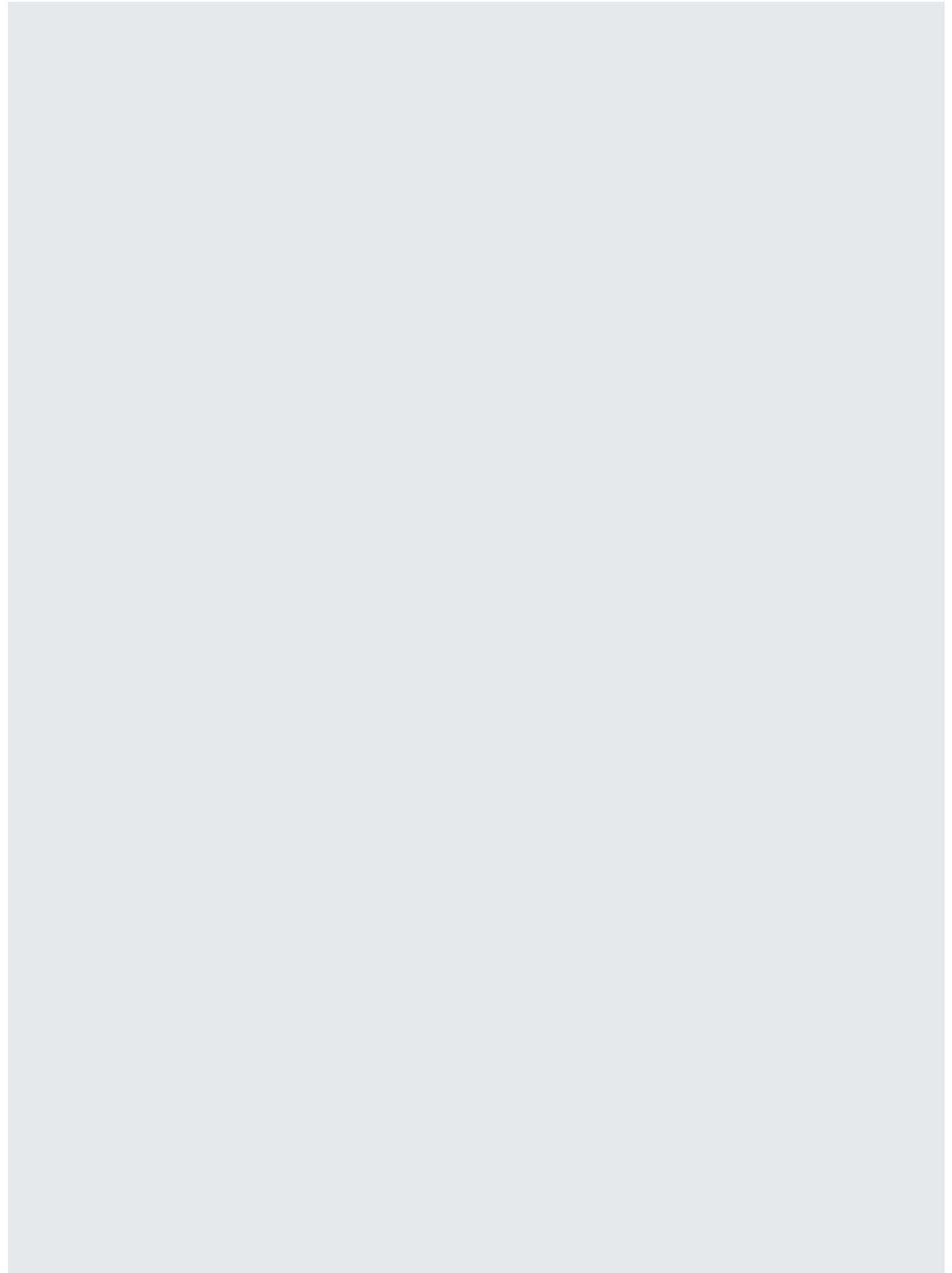
Assimilation

The kitchen is becoming more and more integrated into the home. Kitchen designs today are free-flowing and centred, encouraging interaction between household members. “This integration is seen in the increased inclusion of open shelves within kitchen designs, an area into which accessories can be dovetailed into adjoining areas and where social zones are defined,” Colin says.

The kitchen is experiencing a transformation and the look is going to stay. “The look is taking off now as the lines between kitchen and living rooms blur,” Valda Frewen of Wholesale Kitchens explains.

Above This G575 kitchen by GamaDecor for Porcelanosa is a stunning example of the interplay between dimensions. www.porcelanosastudio.com.au

Below This newly redesigned kitchen by DI Henshall Interior Design activates the use of space through the use of clean lines and a striking colour palette. www.dihenshall.com.au



SPLASHBACKS and benchtops

A striking splashback or benchtop can transform your kitchen space and is a pivotal focal point that needs to be right from the start. *Renovate* speaks to the experts about what to look for when choosing surface materials during your kitchen renovation



What colours should I consider?

Lorraine Brigdale, Laminex Design Centre Manager

Intense colours that are on-trend right now include those in the cooler part of the spectrum. We're seeing yellows and blues playing an important role in interiors.

Bright lime greens can also be seen everywhere. For punchy brights, check out decors such as Laminex Peacock; an intense turquoise, Laminex Juicy, a bright green; Laminex Chichi, a rich blue; and Laminex Hydra Mesh, a deep turquoise.

Bright colour explosions of orange, green and turquoise elevate the Laminex Metaline splashbacks and panels range, with Tangelo Metallic, Chartreuse Metallic and Lagoon Metallic joining the ever-popular Lipstick Red and Rubicon Perle.



Andrew Dixon, Caesarstone Sales and Marketing Manager

We have noticed a reduction in white doors and a move to subtle, warm tones and natural-finish timber veneers. However, the strength of white and off-white quartz benchtops shows no signs of slowing down. It is really interesting to note that we are also seeing new neutral colours emerging.



Above Caesarstone Classico in Organic White. www.caesarstone.com.au
Left Laminex Hydra Mesh is a deep turquoise. www.laminex.com.au



Above Laminex 180fx™ Carrera Marble. www.laminex.com.au

Is it worth looking at premium products?

Lorraine Brigdale, Laminex Design Centre Manager

The acceptance of the use of large-scale stones is growing in interiors, following on from the acceptance of Carrara and other white and grey marbles.

Our love of Carrara and other marbles is sometimes tempered in residential application by the soft and porous nature of the stone, but for a luxurious visual impact it is hard to go past Carrara or other natural neutral marbles.

Laminex® has answered the practical issues with Laminex 180fx™, which is an extremely realistic large-scale stone pattern and is available for benchtops and vertical application in DiamondGloss® surface finish and matte finish with nine striking marble designs.



Above Caesarstone Conoetto Argonite. www.caesarstone.com.au

Andrew Dixon, Caesarstone Sales and Marketing Manager

Among the many different design directions we do see a relatively small but growing number of people selecting special, premium products to make a statement in their home.

In some respects this is like that special piece of jewellery or an artwork. Over the past few years we have seen increased demand for organic large-scale designs and this is continuing.

Like rare and expensive natural stones, Conetto brings something exceptionally unique from nature into homes — be they contemporary and minimal or somewhat eclectic — marrying antiques or hand-crafted items along with the modern technologies throughout kitchens and living spaces.

Why not personalise your kitchen space with printed glass? It's a quirky and unique way to create a space to truly call your own — plus it's durable and easy to clean. Glass can be printed with any image, including personal photos, patterns, graphics, text or your own artwork (provided that they are a high enough resolution). Choose a bold design for a dramatic look or a subtle option to create a soothing environment. Many companies also have a catalogue of existing designs to choose from or are happy to create a unique piece for you.

Right These PaulM glass splashbacks will brighten any kitchen space. Choose any design for an instant uplift. www.paulm.com.au



Let's get **TECHY**

Technology is moving at a rapid rate and into all aspects of our lives, including kitchen design. Why not consider using a design software package, iPhone/iPad app or an online tool when renovating your kitchen?



Consider this: the first web browser was born in 1990 and by 1995 the web had an estimated 16 million users. Fast-forward three years and there were 147 million users, and then 500 million by 2001. The year 2004 saw the launch of Facebook, then YouTube in 2005, Twitter in 2006 and the iPhone in 2007. The first Android smartphone was launched in 2008 and the iPad in 2010. Each of these technologies offers a diverse range of functions, from apps providing colour advice to software that can help with an entire kitchen design solution.

If we embrace technology, we can also utilise it in all kinds of arenas, such as renovations. Not long ago you had to rely on architects and interior designers to help produce a kitchen design. The market is now flooded with software design tools and handy apps that can help you plan and render areas of your home for remodelling.

Kitchen design software can be split into two categories: paid and free — and these packages will vary greatly on what they offer. Google SketchUp is a free software tool that is moderately easy to use and has a strong user support base. Homestyler by Autodesk is another free online software package to consider and only requires the use of a browser (so no software to download).

Paid packages are a whole different story — these range greatly in price and what they offer. If you are considering using a software tool for your kitchen renovation, be sure to do your research first.



The Caesarstone app.

Try these handy online tools and apps that will help with your kitchen renovation

- Online tool Designer 3D (www.designer3D.com.au) allows you to create a digital design of your kitchen with Laminex and essastone products.
- Blum has an online Design Configurator (www.myintivo.blum.com) that allows you to play with different designs for the Tandembox intivo pull-out drawers.
- The iTrend app (www.trendgroupusa.com) for iPads shows you what your kitchen space would look like with tiles, glass mosaics, engineered stone, wallpaper patterns and more. You can use a photo of your kitchen or choose an image from its library. The app has just been updated with a colour palette and tutorial.
- Caesarstone (www.caesarstone.com.au) has recently released an app for iPhone with a “Visualizer” feature that allows you to take a photo and match it to an existing Caesarstone colour.
- Granite Transformations (www.granitetransformations.com.au) has developed the iGranite iPad app, which allows you to photograph your own kitchen and preview exactly how new elements will look.