

# worldly goods

Whether your taste is quintessentially English, sleekly Italian or smartly German, innovations in technology and communication mean that gorgeous kitchens from all over the globe are now easily accessible.

While the kitchen once merely consisted of a cooker and couple of cupboards, today's designs are not 'just kitchens' but rather extensions of our personality. Never before has it been easier to display one's individual style and so we're keen to embrace the influx of new ideas from a number of different countries.

## Italian desires

It is the Italian idea of encompassing the kitchen within a large family room, a synergy shared by the French, that has filtered most prolifically across the Channel into the British psyche. These open-plan schemes are now commonplace in homes all over the globe, proving the Italians are once again leading the way in forward-thinking design.

“With a wealth of options available, giving your home global appeal is now easier than ever.”

**main picture** Sleek, stylish and the true epitome of innovative Italian creativity, Integra Gola is an open and flowing design of white painted oak base units, high gloss lacquer tall cabinetry and a contrasting worktop in Moro oak. This particular configuration costs £60,000, but prices start from £35,000, at Pedini. **Tel: 020 7491 4020. www.pedini.co.uk**

**right** Clad entirely in Glacier White Corian®, this minimalist creation by Minotti uses repetition to build on the module concept and creates an angular island plus a bank of units that hide a wealth of integrated high tech appliances. Expect to pay from around £140,000, exclusively at Tsunami. **Tel: 020 7408 2230. www.tsunamiuk.com**



Amongst the first to develop the appearance of modular units, the Italians have since modified and improved this concept almost to perfection – a fact that doesn't stop progressive designers building on the basic grounding to constantly strive forwards. Explains Alberto Minotti, Director at Minotti, “We are committed to the development of solutions that offer superior formal elegance as well as technical and functional quality.”

Today we see an abundance of streamlined designs, sometimes curvaceous, often handleless, but always filled with well thought-out innovation. Durable, tactile materials in monochrome tones are on many occasions teamed with stainless steel for elite looks as well as practicality and that necessary element of hygiene within the cook zone.



**right** Based around the Italian ideas that a workstation must be close to storage that's practical and attractive, plus the fact that a kitchen is a family space, Effeti's L'Evoluzione emulates household furniture. In Blanco lacquer with stainless steel accents, it costs around £20,000, at Puro Design. **Tel: 020 7462 0002. www.puro-design.com**

**far right** Exuding a contemporary feel but with a hint of industrialism thanks to aluminium elements, the Zone kitchen by Boffi is also available in wood, Corian®, or high gloss polyester, matt, textured and smooth matt lacquer. Expect to pay from £30,000, at Alternative Plans. **Tel: 020 7228 6460. www.alternative-plans.co.uk. www.boffi.com**



## French elegance

While images of the traditional French kitchen, with its stained wood, rustic dining area and painted larders, may linger, modern designs are beginning to creep into the market. Though very different in appearance, they revolve around the enjoyment of food, as well as the idea of 'family togetherness'. Plus, there's always an underlying feeling of simple luxury that is associated with this sophisticated and elegant country. Keith Myers, a designer at Mobalpa stockists Myers Touch, explains, "France is a nation that is passionate about food so its kitchens fuse that 'wow' factor with optimum practicality – something that shines through."



**top** Pyram's striking Djin balances cool, crisp white with exotic Macassar ebony veneer. Exuding chic elegance with handleless doors, a dual height island and minimal clutter, it's available in 26 lacquers, plus 11 veneers. Expect to pay from £15,000, at Hadleigh Kitchens. **Tel: 01473 827666. [www.hadleighkitchens.co.uk](http://www.hadleighkitchens.co.uk). [www.pyram.fr](http://www.pyram.fr)**

**above** Warm yellow lacquer, richly toned walnut and metallic accents combine in this welcoming contemporary Gaïa Saffron kitchen. Simply stylish, the breakfast bar faces the cook zone for informal catch-ups while tambour shutters hide essentials. A 60cm base unit is priced around £235, at Mobalpa. **Tel: 0800 011 2585. [www.mobalpa.com](http://www.mobalpa.com)**

**left** Oak units in subtle Ash Blue evoke feelings of laid-back coastal living in Arthur Bonnet's Poésie kitchen. With cherrywood laminate worktops, ample preparation space, open shelving and a batterie de cuisine, expect to pay £10,000, at Dajon Interiors. **Tel: 01452 332336. [www.dajoninteriors.co.uk](http://www.dajoninteriors.co.uk). [www.arthur-bonnet-kitchens.com](http://www.arthur-bonnet-kitchens.com)**

## German efficiency

For practical reliability, it's the Germans who dedicate themselves to bringing the world smart design fused with superior functionality and ergonomic excellence. So great is demand, in fact, that the leading manufacturers can now be found scattered worldwide. The common link between every design is the attention to engineering and precision, values most noticeable in ranges such as Bulthaup's b3 – a modular collection of units hung from a framework attached to the wall.

With this practical German approach in mind, Philip Winter, Sales & Marketing Director at Bulthaup UK, sums up the overall philosophy, "The expectation of a German design is for a precise, exquisite and functional kitchen which is why we produce products that have a synergy with architecture, fitting naturally within its environment. We work with furniture systems that create kitchens to enhance the way we live and have a positive impact on our day-to-day lives."



“Designs are no longer ‘just kitchens’ but rather extensions of our individual tastes and personality.”

**top right** Creating a floating effect, all the elements in this innovative b3 kitchen are hung from a wall-set frame. In addition to Swiss pear veneer units topped in slim stainless steel, clever storage solutions are concealed behind glass splashback panels. Expect to pay from around £20,000, at Bulthaup. **Tel: 0870 351 2012. [www.bulthaup.com](http://www.bulthaup.com)**

**above right** Urban-look L15 Cafe Latte smooth lacquer and N10 Pale Maple doors work together to form this perfect example of Germanic styling. Cooking, dining and entertaining zones are all included and Nero Assoluto worktops accentuate the neat effect. Expect to pay from around £14,000, at Miele. **Tel: 01235 554455. [www.miele.co.uk](http://www.miele.co.uk)**

**right** Boasting high quality and longevity, this SC19 kitchen comes in 11 laminate shades, as well as 12 wood finishes including Basalt Grey with aluminium edging, as shown. A smart design that's ideal for both large and more compact cook zones, it costs from around £15,000, at SieMatic. **Tel: 01438 369251. [www.siematic.co.uk](http://www.siematic.co.uk)**

## British beauties

Of course, the traditional British kitchen hasn't drifted from our consciousness – one only has to look at the prominence of manufacturers such as Mark Wilkinson and Smallbone of Devizes to see that their designs reflect the British ideals of solid craftsmanship and traditional values. Says Robert Entwistle, Sales & Design Director at Thomas & Thomas, "A quintessentially British kitchen is warm, solid, architecturally balanced and has the confidence to shun all gimmicks and fashion fads in favour of timeless elegance. It remains eternally popular because it's practical, beautifully proportioned, well-crafted and always inviting, plus is a space in which you want to spend time with friends and loved-ones."



**left** Inspired by the grand architecture of the 18th century, this Pilaster kitchen has granite surfaces, an intricate dentil cornice, plus raised and fielded panels which have their origins in the Georgian era. Offered in oak, or any bespoke paint finish, expect to pay around £30,000, at Smallbone of Devizes. **Tel: 020 7589 5998. [www.smallbone.co.uk](http://www.smallbone.co.uk)**

**below left** Solid oak and hand-painted cabinetry in China Clay combine for a fresh Shaker feel in this Artisan kitchen. Wonderfully versatile, allowing personal touches to be added for extra charm, it's complete with black granite, a Belfast sink and simple crockery for a classic look. It's priced from around £10,000, at John Lewis of Hungerford. **Tel: 0700 278 4726. [www.john-lewis.co.uk](http://www.john-lewis.co.uk)**

**above** Painted in New White with a larder unit in Berrington Blue, this bespoke farmhouse is a British favourite with a freestanding oak-topped island, timeless style and a large range cooker in the mantle. Hand-painted ceramic tiles further the iconic look. Expect to pay from £30,000, at Thomas & Thomas. **Tel: 01625 890490. [www.thomasthomas.net](http://www.thomasthomas.net)**

**below** A mix of warm walnut, painted units in hand-finished Winter Thaw, practical black granite worktops, chunky knobs plus open and glazed storage, The Cook's Kitchen is a fine fusion of understated luxury and optimum practicality. Taking its prose from the 'below stairs' designs of the Edwardian era, it costs from £30,000, at Mark Wilkinson. **Tel: 01380 850004. [www.mwf.com](http://www.mwf.com)**



## best of the rest

As well as the rapid influx of designs from those countries we would expect, there's also a few more unusual sources filtering into the market.

With notable presence in the UK and hot on the heels of their European counterparts are Spain, whose offerings exude texture and the spaciousness synonymous with its heritage, Holland, providing furniture packed with the quality and innovation of which the Dutch are so proud, and Sweden, from which two main styles abound. From the latter, both the more minimalist Scandinavian and traditional Gustavian designs reflect the Swedes' love of natural materials, as well as their design conscious ideals. Says Sofia Bune, Director at Sola Kitchens, "Swedish kitchens have pure and simple lines and are crafted from high quality materials with great attention paid to detail and function."

Further afield, influences from the USA have re-awakened our interest in glamour and luxury as classical furniture is teamed with large expanses of richly detailed granite, plus-sized appliances and breakfast bars for casual dining.

With many global options now in the UK, as well as available for export, giving homes a unique twist has never been easier or more exciting. ■



**above** The cook zone is the hub of a Swedish home so furniture is expected to last a lifetime. The walnut and stainless steel Mona by Ryssby reflects classic practicality, as well as the nation's love of natural materials. It costs from £8000, at Sola Kitchens.

**Tel: 0845 862 0297. [www.solakitchens.com](http://www.solakitchens.com)**

**left** Creamy hues of caramel and coffee, low-lustre lacquer fuse with chunky frames and a Shaker-style door in this sleek Villa kitchen from the Gold Label Collection. Simply chic, expect to pay from around £455 for a 60cm base unit, at Dutch company, Keller.

**Tel: 0161 962 6939. [www.dutch-design.co.uk](http://www.dutch-design.co.uk)**

**left** Clean lines, hygienic stainless steel, glossy white lacquer and concealed storage accentuate the spacious feel of this Minos scheme and typify the Spanish ideal. In a variety of colours, as well as textured or matt finishes, expect to pay £19,000, at Santos. **Tel: 01202 880832. [www.santos.es](http://www.santos.es)**

**below** Granite surfaces are desirable in American properties as they add a touch of large-scale luxury while being extremely practical. An impressive feature in this white-painted scheme, solid Juparana Classico worktops cost around \$13 per sq. ft. (around £66 per sq. m.), at Surface Pros.

**Tel: 001 714 540 8453. [www.surfacepros.com](http://www.surfacepros.com)**

