

While a true professional kitchen features stainless steel in abundance and is fitted with appliances that prize function over form, recreating this look at home is more about appropriating the best bits. 'There are many practical reasons for using ideas taken from restaurant kitchens – they're intelligently laid out, easy to work in and clean, and have robust, powerful appliances,' explains Laurence Pidgeon, director at Laurence Pidgeon (020 7610 6166; laurencepidgeon.com). 'At one time, microwaves, steam ovens, waste disposers and even dishwashers were found only in catering establishments. Even the fan oven, which is now almost universal, was introduced for professional bakers. Now instant hot-water taps, wok burners, induction hobs, teppanyakis and blast chillers are all appearing in domestic kitchens.'

CLEVER KITCHEN KIT

As cooking continues to grow in popularity, thanks to TV shows, celebrity chefs, food festivals and a greater interest in world cuisine, the desire to reproduce restaurant-quality meals at home is driving appliance development. 'We've seen a rise in steam and induction technology over the past few years with an emphasis on responsiveness and accuracy,' explains Martin Wilson, UK product manager of built-in hot appliances at AEG (0344 561 1611; aeg.co.uk). 'For example, AEG's MaxiSense Combi hob mimics the fingertip control a professional cook would expect, and has a FreeZone, which is effectively a chef's hot plate, allowing you to move up to three pans around one area.'

Sous vide, in which food is vacuum-packed then cooked at a low temperature in a water bath or steam oven, is also becoming more common in home kitchens. Whereas mastering the technique in a professional kitchen requires in-depth knowledge of different foods, the latest ovens often come with presets that work out the right conditions at the touch of a button. 'Sous vide has been around for years but celebrity chefs, such as Heston Blumenthal, have brought attention to it,' says Rhys Evans, UK and Ireland sales director at V-Zug UK (0843 289 5759; vzug.co.uk). 'It's great for budding chefs as it preserves the flavour, texture, freshness and appearance of the food. V-Zug has worked with top international chefs to develop recipes and guidance for its combi-steam ovens, which are also preloaded with sous vide programmes.' Automatic cooking modes and oven settings that weigh food before selecting an ideal time and temperature are also becoming more prevalent. →



TWO'S COMPANY

Dual islands allow keen chefs to have ample space to prepare a Christmas feast, with one serving as a prep station or dining table and the other as a cooking hub with banked ovens just a step away. Extra-wide drawers ensure easy access to kitchen essentials as you cook. Rococo kitchen in red, black and white ultra matt, from £15,000, Crown Imperial (01227 742 424; crown-imperial.co.uk)

FORM WITH FUNCTION

For professional styling with a look that's more suited to the home, choose open shelving that can be hidden behind sleek doors when you're not cooking. EL-01 kitchen designed by Ludovica + Roberto Palomba for Elmar in gloss white lacquer and natural oak veneer; units with stainless-steel doors and island in Nikron acrylic stone, from £20,000, Laurence Pidgeon (020 7610 6166; laurencepidgeon.com)

