

Mix & match

Create a unique kitchen scheme with a variety of materials, finishes, tones and textures for the ultimate cutting-edge design

FEATURE HAYLEY GILBERT

Forget a fully co-ordinated finish – today's kitchens are mixing materials for drama and definition. Anything goes when it comes to texture, colour, pattern and print but for best results, carefully consider the finished look and what purpose you want to achieve. 'Kitchens with contrasting materials will define particular zones in the space,' explains Andrew Hall, chief designer and managing director of Woodstock Furniture, 'which is why this has become so popular in line with the trend for open-plan living.'

Larger areas can support different materials more easily than compact spaces – an island may be contrasted with a run of cabinets for instance, while worktops can be mixed and matched to create a tailor-made cooking surface to suit your needs. One trend is to choose a harder, heatproof material near the hob with seamless solid surfaces in the wet zone and a cool marble for pastry.

The key is to avoid a disjointed feel with a hotchpotch of random materials, as Jamie Telford, Roundhouse director, explains. 'We use mixed materials in many of our kitchens – the urban industrial look combines rough sawn surfaces with polished concrete. Patinated or burnished metallics are teamed with polished stone surfaces while matt painted classic furniture is topped with beautiful Carrara marble.'

To ensure it remains current and not a fad that you grow tired of, kitchen designer Laurence Pidgeon advises you to choose the materials wisely. 'If it's a function driven decision, it's likely to be an enduring material. Elemental and natural materials have the greatest longevity – natural stone, wood and even stainless steel and glass. Be careful about artificial stone in bright colours and unnatural designs.'

When it comes to practicality, granite is the hardest stone for worktops and the least susceptible to stains. Next is artificial stone, which includes quartz, then marble and then limestone. Wood and Corian® by DuPont™, according to Laurence Pidgeon, are softer and less heat-resistant but are easy to make good with a rub from a Scotch-Brite pad. 'Stainless steel is incredibly durable and easy to clean but it'll scratch – though wait six months and the scratches will join up and become a uniform patination.'

Timber cabinets come in all forms, from painted and panelled to untreated and grained. 'Materials such as textured or raw wood have been heavily featured in design schemes in 2014 and going into 2015,' says head of design at DesignSpaceLondon Jamec Kong. 'I predict that design palettes will become even bolder, with wooden components still being popular but being incorporated in a less processed fashion.'

For a successful mix, wood works well with stone, old with new, light with dark, matt with gloss. Consider combining shiny accents such as copper pendant lights with wooden cabinet doors or worktops for that blend of the refined and the rustic. *ekbb*

'Copper or gold in a room adds a warm hue and provides a sense of welcoming, while silver and chrome create a sleek minimalistic look'



SLIM FIT

Elmar's Slim Matt Grey 4005 lacquer kitchen includes a fold-up Wing table in sawn cut Natural Oak veneer, which disappears as it folds down flush into the furniture. Prices start at €20,000 from Laurence Pidgeon