

Kitchen SOLUTIONS

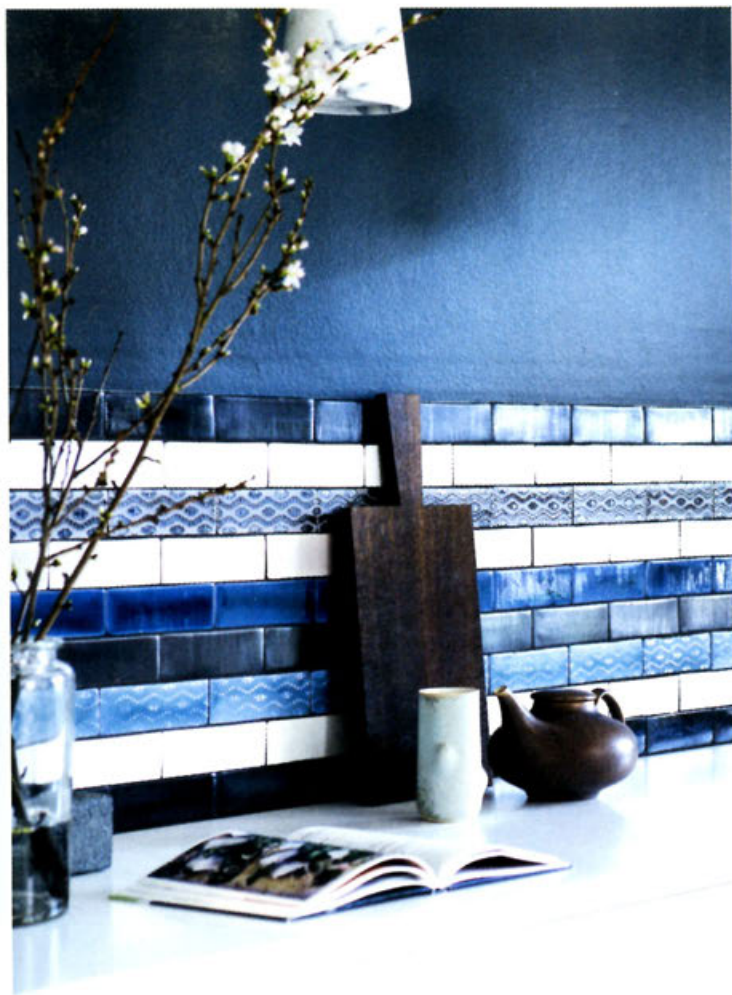
We take a look at a variety of clever ideas that will inspire your kitchen planning and layout, transforming the way you think about cooking, dining and entertaining at home

FEATURE EMMA FOALE

SLIDING KITCHENS

Whether you have limited space in your kitchen or have a larger area where you'd like more sociable seating, the Easy Table could be just what you need. Shown here in Elmar's Slim Kitchen collection, designed by Roberto + Ludovica Palombà, it pulls out (available in 1200mm or 1800mm lengths) or it can be fully concealed within the island or peninsular when not in use. It's cantilevered and has a positioning lock so that it does not move when in use, plus it can be easily fitted into back-to-wall, peninsular or island arrangements. Available from Laurence Pidgeon, kitchens start from £20,000.





BLUE IS THE COLOUR

Above Use varying tones of blue with alternate rows of pattern for maximum impact. Fatto a Mano lavastone tiles in Cristalli blue, white, black and pattern, from £436 per sq. m, Laurence Pidgeon

PORCELAIN PRINT

Above right The new Sorrento porcelain tiles (29.8x29.8cm) in Regina are inspired by the architecture of Italy's Sorrento. Prices start from £99.80 per sq. m from Fired Earth



One of the latest trends to emerge in kitchen design has not been for the cabinetry, worktops or even the appliances. Today's schemes are incorporating pattern and print, from entire walls and fully clad islands to tiled splashbacks and feature flooring.

Anything goes, whether it's an intricate detail, a retro revival or Moroccan influenced style.

'We have found that homeowners are becoming bolder in their choices when it comes to a more long-term investment such as the floor,' confirms Hamish Smith, creative director at Ca' Pietra. 'Pattern and colour generally go hand-in-hand and rather than opting for blocks of colour that you may find on walls or cabinets, pattern helps to break up a colour scheme and give you just the right balance.'

As well as a vast choice in terms of colour and design, there's also a range of materials with different qualities and benefits. Many architects and designers opt for cement tiles for flooring which use the encaustic technique, where pattern is inlaid into the body of the tile. Walls and splashbacks however are usually tiled in ceramic, with a surface pattern that is the product of the finishing glaze.

'Recent advances in technology have made it possible to print photo-realistic imagery onto hardwearing tile materials such as porcelain,' adds Kevin Taylor-Bottomley, brand director at The Baked Tile Company. 'This allows different colours, patterns

and materials to be replicated, so they can be introduced into high traffic, high noise and high moisture areas such as the kitchen.'

Ultra modern schemes can afford to be bold with bright shades and intricate patterns that be teamed with a fresh white to enhance the feel of space. High gloss finishes add to the counter feel. 'If you're not sure about covering the entire kitchen with tiles, why not use them to create feature wall instead?' adds Kevin. 'Patterned ceramic can be used to draw your attention to a particular area, adding depth and interest, particularly in a minimalist kitchen. Vintage tiles can also be used to give the space some eclectic charm.'

According to Ana Martinez of The Spanish Manufacturer's Association, the Spanish tile industry is looking back to classics, including the historic atmospheric influence of Moroccan colours and patterns, while patchwork-effect ceramics are on trend and Delft style is coming back. 'The looks lend distinctive character and tradition Mediterranean flair to a feature wall or a carpet effect of tiled flooring,' she says. 'Now, achieving this effect has been simplified with easy to install formats, facilitating the style of the artisan look without requiring considerable time and skill. Many Spanish manufacturers are also offering ready-made combinations of tiles that eliminate the hassle of sourcing individual patchwork tiles but which still allow for the creative arrangement of various sections and patterns.' *CABB*