



IDEAS FOR AN ENTERTAINER'S KITCHEN

If you're that friend whose place is known as the get-together hub, planning a new kitchen comes with a little pressure. Here are Shannon Vos's top design elements to consider including in the heart of the home

BUTLER'S PANTRY

Space is the ultimate luxury these days and that, of course, is rarely more evident than in the kitchen. The biggest brag about having more space has to be the inclusion of a butler's pantry, and it's not just for show either. Having all that space out of view – perhaps under a connected stairwell, behind the main wall of appliances or, in this Horton & Co. kitchen (hortonandco.com.au), to the side – really makes it easy to keep your main kitchen area clean both day-to-day and when you have loads of friends around. Easily ensuring your status as an impeccable host, it's the perfect hiding place for all the functional elements of your kitchen – the fridge, microwave, toaster, kettle and extra glasses – and the not so 'aesthetically pleasing' details such as Aunt Cathy's handmade platter or last night's dishes.



2 DISPLAY CABINETS

If you want your kitchen to feel homely without all the clutter, consider cabinets that give guests a taste of your personal style. Though not terribly in theme with modern design, displaying favourite items (not the kids' toys!) can make for a beautiful vignette just as it does in any other area. When you're displaying your possessions, think about shape and colour; in particular, repetition of similar items works well in this space designed by Horton & Co. (hortonandco.com.au). When it comes to the actual cupboards, consider the architectural elements. The sharp outline of a shelf is a great way to create a feature with colour, or by introducing interesting lines via textural timber. But don't forget the practical side – if they're above the cooktop, consider enclosing them in glass.



PHOTOGRAPHY (RIGHT) FRASER MARSDEN



3 ISLAND STORAGE

Entertainers need space and the more the better. I mean, where else do you keep 30 or so champagne coupes for that New Year's Eve soirée? Likewise, those bigger items – such as platters, punch bowls and fine china – need to be accessible but out of the way and an island bench is perfect for that. Try incorporating deep drawers (preferably with sides) and, if possible, locate them somewhere that doesn't open directly into the main thoroughfare. If you want a more open feel, try to limit the kinds of items you stack. Plates, bowls and baking trays are easy to keep stacked neatly, as seen in this kitchen by MAArchitects (above, maarchitects.com.au). The side that faces away from the kitchen is great for cookbooks and smaller decorative items such as candles.



4 PASS WINDOW

There's a common theme in many of these points, and that's the fact that the Australian lifestyle is all about bringing the outdoors in. Including a servery or a pass window to an external area, usually a terrace or deck area, will promote indoor/outdoor living – as seen in architect Tash Clark's kitchen (below, tashclark.com) – and ease congestion in the kitchen. Integrate the servery so it also doubles as a breakfast bar area with stools; just make sure you can close it all off to the weather when it's not being used. If you have the space, as this design by Lisa Hannaford Interiors does (left, lisahannafordinteriors.com.au), try not to situate work areas such as sinks or cooktops on the pass bench. This surface is much better reserved for chopping, plating up and a drink or two.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (TOP) LISBETH GROSSMANN (BOTTOM) NATALIE HUNFALVAY (OPPOSITE) ANSON SMART
STYLING: (BOTTOM) ADAM ROBINSON (OPPOSITE) MARIA DYONIZIAK



5 FEATURE ELEMENT

An entertainer's kitchen should make a statement – after all, that's why you've renovated and want to have people over, isn't it? While a classic white kitchen with clean lines will never date, you can give your space that designer edge by going bold with one or two elements. Some interesting lighting, a delicate calacatta marble benchtop or even a bespoke piece of joinery like the wall of citrus-yellow fronted cabinetry in this Olga Gruzdeff project (olgagruzdeff.com) will not only wow your guests; it will give your new room a massive dose of personality. For a more budget-friendly option, a few standout stools at the bench will make a style statement.



6 FREE-FLOW DESIGN

Having good flow in a kitchen is vital to its functionality, and, in turn, its aesthetic. If you have the square footage, a 'walk-around' island bench, such as the one in this zone designed by Minosa (minosadesign.com), creates a sense of space and luxury that is seldom delivered by other elements. There are no corners to get stuck in and traffic will move more freely, especially if you have guests. A functional working triangle (fridge, sink and cooktop) will also mean you can make the most of your kitchen. If you're someone who has a lot of people around on a regular basis, you might want to position the fridge at one end or near an opening, so they can help themselves to drinks. Also, consider two sinks so tasks can be divided between them.



PHOTOGRAPHY: OPPOSITE NICOLE ENGLAND,
(MAIN) SHARYN CAIRNS

7 THE RIGHT APPLIANCES

Functionality is key to entertaining, and while top-of-the-range appliances will wow your guests, choosing suitable equipment that will make your parties easier is what it's all about. It helps if the design, as seen in this kitchen by Rosstang Architects (rostantang.com.au), allows the appliances to seamlessly fit in. Opt for a wider 90cm oven or even a double oven for those roasts and bulk bakes; cooktops with extra burners that combine, depending on your cookware, are great for larger dishes like whole fish; and French-door fridges will make it a breeze to store extra food and accommodate wide platters once you've prepped and plated up. If you can, have a separate drinks fridge easily accessible for friends to top up their glasses.



PHOTOGRAPHY: (TOP) SHANNON McGRATH, (BOTTOM) BRETT BOARDMAN

8 INDOORS AND OUT

We live in the best country in the world, and the best room in the house is not actually inside. Cook outside, eat outside and entertain outside! Make the most of both kitchen and courtyard by creating a seamless connection with location and clever material choices. Doors that seem to disappear and having the same floor level across the zones are essential, as in this space by Matt Gibson Architecture + Design (above, mattgibson.com.au). In the best-case scenario, your kitchen will run from inside to out with barbecue included. In terraces, flip the idea of locating the living space at the back, leading to the yard, and go for a galley style that runs the kitchen down one side, such as this one by Scale Architecture (right, scalearchitecture.com). L-shaped designs also work beautifully.

9 LUXURY OF SPACE

Again, space is a luxury you simply can't buy in a store. If you have the option, going bigger with the structural elements will give your kitchen that extra something special while also making it so much more functional. Go for 1800mm-wide walkways and island benches and even oversized countertops, as seen in this Ballingslöv kitchen (en.ballingslovinternational.se) - to give your cooking zone a sense of grandeur and allow more flow of traffic when you need it. However, be careful not to put too much space between key prep areas, such as your fridge and sink, though. No-one wants to run a half marathon while the in-laws are over for dinner... or do they?

10 **A LARGE SINK**
An oversized sink is a must-have for any serious entertainer. We all get stuck trying to wash platters and oven trays – not to mention those fragile glasses – in a tiny sink. If you’re starting from scratch, keep your smaller variety in the butler’s pantry and save your statement sink (yes, there is such a thing) for all to see. You can have almost any shape or size in aluminium, but there’s a nice sense of family-friendly style that goes with a Belfast sink – the bigger the better, as seen in this Templer Interiors design (below, templerinteriors.co.nz). Just be careful with those delicate glasses against the porcelain! A big sink also serves as a neat hiding place for piles of dirty dishes.



PHOTOGRAPHY: LARNIE NICOLSON. (OPPOSITE, TOP) GIBEON
PHOTOGRAPHY: (OPPOSITE, BOTTOM) PETER CLARKE

11 **AN INTEGRATED DINING TABLE**
I’m a massive fan of island benches that are extended to incorporate a separate dining area. They bring a unique architectural element to a kitchen as these examples by Hughesumbanhowe (above) and Mim Design (left) prove. Saving space by designing a built-in dining table can also save you a few bucks when it comes time for furniture shopping. Though not ideal for large dinners (keep it under eight), they are great for the casual entertainer who wants to keep friends close while cooking. Having a ‘good room’ – a separate, more formal dining space – would mean you could cover all dinner-style options. **10**
For details on Shannon’s work, visit voscreative.com.au.