STRIKING *KITCHEN* SCHEMES

With so many of us spending more time at home than ever, the kitchen has truly earned its reputation as the backdrop to our daily lives. Surely, then, it deserves to be made the most impressive of spaces. Here's our edit of the boldest new looks to love...



PAVE THE WAY

A floor treatment that's more commonly seen in exterior spaces, crazy paving is the latest eye-catching surface to be reclaimed by interior designers and architects, and not only for its practical, hard-wearing properties. In this project by Studio Esteta, irregularly shaped slabs of slate inject subtle texture and movement – the perfect foil to the smooth swathes of oak and polished blue-grey stone above it – and lead the eye from the monolithic island to the matching marble-wrapped nook on the rear wall (studioesteta.com.au). ➤

ON THE GRID

From metro-style to mosaics, tiles are an eternal favourite in the kitchen for obvious reasons. The most current shape and size for making a statement is the unassuming rectangle, but take heed of the all-important rule; for impact and loftier-looking ceilings, vertical orientation is a must. There's no limit to the creativity that can be conjured from these brick-like blocks. Multidisciplinary studio H+O's Mondrian-esque scheme (right) applies them to walls, floor and built-in sideboard, creating a precise, graphic look. Meanwhile, the pale and interesting space conceived by architecture firm Kennedy Nolan has a softer feel (below), making a sculptural feature out of the extractor (too often an eyesore) by covering it in the same tiles as the walls (hpluso.design; kennedynolan.com.au).





FOR IMPACT AND LOFTIER-LOOKING CEILINGS, VERTICAL ORIENTATION OF YOUR TILES IS A MUST

PICTURES: GIORGIO POSSENTI, DEREK SWALWELL, GENEVIEVE LUTKIN

CURVE BALL

Tasked with creating a kitchen in a space blessed with palatial proportions and an abundance of original features, London-based design outfit Sella Concept steered clear of trying to reproduce something of the period. Instead, they opted for a contrasting contemporary scheme that echoes the building's arched windows; sweeping curves have been sliced from the custom-built celadon-green cabinetry, while the breakfast bar has been similarly rounded-off. Green marble and brass details add a suitably luxe edge (sella-concept.com). ➤



CHECK MATE

When Fien Muller and Hannes Van Severen – aka Dutch design duo Muller Van Severen – embarked on creating their family kitchen, the pair seized the chance to incorporate their signature bold shades and materials. The result (opposite) is a melting pot of surfaces; sea green enamel cabinets, richly veined marble and a red and white checkerboard floor that recalls a 1950s diner, demonstrating that being brave with unusual combinations can pay dividends. Playfully pulled together by dining furniture and bright ceramics, this is an expressive space that tells its owners' story (mullervanseveren.be).

RESTORED TO GLORY

Over almost 30 years, bespoke salvage studio Retrouvius has turned reclamation into an art form. This striking kitchen, with its exquisite panelled cabinetry, pays testament to the enduring appeal and adaptability of wood and proves reclaimed needn't mean rustic. Discarded shelves receive a new lease of life as statement geometric fronts in tulipwood and oak trim, via a diagonal cut that creates distinctive lines and eliminates waste. They even outshine the monolithic onyx island – in a similar honeyed hue – which would be the showstopper of any other space (retrouvius.com). ➤

DISCARDED SHELVES RECEIVE A NEW LEASE OF LIFE AS STATEMENT GEOMETRIC FRONTS IN TULIPWOOD

PICTURES: KEVIN FAINGNAERT, TOM FAILON



RETRO FLAIR

The 1970s have already influenced furniture, fabrics and lighting – now the era is making itself known in the realm of the kitchen. Dark timbers and veneers are key to the look. Design practice Marcante Testa's galley kitchen (left) nods to the period with wenge wood, green laminate cabinets and a ceiling adorned in Little Greene's densely patterned 'Fern' wallpaper, all brought up to date with a marble floor and brass accents. Taking a more minimalist approach, a Flack Studio-designed space (below) favours a white grid of tiles to temper the richness of its custom cabinetry (marcante-testa.it; flackstudio.com.au).



NOW THE 1970S IS MAKING ITSELF KNOWN IN THE REALM OF THE KITCHEN

PICTURES: CAROLA RIPAMONTI, DEREK SVALDVEIL, ADRIEN DIRAND



MONUMENTAL MARBLE

Overuse marble or stone in a kitchen and it could be in danger of feeling cold and austere. It's clearly a material Paris-based architect Joseph Dirand has much experience with, as his masterful treatment of the stone in his Right Bank apartment shows. Carved from a hunk of breccia stazzema marble, the colossal island is softened with gentle fluting on the base while the top's generous radius gives it a tactile quality. Rounded edges are repeated on the counter and shelves while the subtly grey washed walls enhance the space's mellow feel (josephdirand.com). ➤

SMOOTHLY DOES IT

Framed by original wood panelling, pale timber cabinets and sleek brass details, the stretch of concrete in this understated space feels refined rather than rough-hewn – a testament to the metamorphosis of a material in a different context. London architecture firm McLaren.Excell has eschewed the industrial palette usually paired with concrete for an effect that's subtler, softer and supremely liveable. Take note of the seamless transition from butler sink to splashback, which tempers any industrial edge (mclarenexcell.com).

PLY FOR HIRE

Considering its versatility, affordability and tensile strength, plywood's status as a solely functional material seemed somewhat unjust. It's since been reincarnated as an architect favourite, driven by a renewed interest in humble, untreated materials and smart housing solutions like prefabricated homes. Proponents of ply are now shifting attention onto coloured stains: in this ply-clad kitchen by Feina Studio (opposite), visible grain tinted in a forest green hue creates a visual connect between a stretch of low cabinets and a distinctive exposed ceiling (feinastudio.com). ED



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