



Soul of the home

> Kitchen takes the spotlight with some of the latest trends for 2017

BY ALYSSA J. OON

KITCHENS are an important part of a home, the place where sustenance for its dwellers is prepared. In more recent years, the place where the washing, peeling, cutting, chopping and cooking is done in has been getting a touch of “glamour”. It is no longer just another room in the house, but the soul of the home.

In Malaysian lifestyle, where food and beverage are an essential part of culture, the kitchen is hugely important. However, it has become far more than just the place where meals are prepared.

With houses within city limits declining in size, some homes may need to merge dining and kitchen quarters. While the experts say that dining in a dim, grey kitchen does not help appetites, designers give their take on the latest trends, soon if not already, dominating kitchens across the world. Point to highlight is that these new concepts and designs can be applied to kitchens of any size.

BARE IT ALL

Think warehouses and factories and you will have a rough idea of what the industrial-looking kitchen is all about. With key elements like exposed brick walls and steel beams, it does not sound like the epitome of a fancy kitchen. However, when done right, it gives the kitchen a certain personality.

The exposed brickwork is a classic industrial look. Amid all the metal and concrete, the colour of the bricks brings warmth to the



PIX: BRIO INTERIOR DESIGN



PIX: BRITTANY AMBRIDGE

room. While the thought of stripping bare the walls of your kitchen could sound tiring, the alternative is to turn to brick effect wallpaper to achieve the same look minus the hard labour.

If you prefer the concrete wall as is, then a nice backsplash could give the kitchen a simple lift. Use subway tiles arranged in a brick wall pattern for a clean, polished look.

Turn your utensils, equipment and crockery into a display when not in use by storing them on open stainless steel shelving units.

Balance out the coldness of metals with natural textures, like wood or marble tabletops, even wooden storage boxes, and add little potted plants for a pop of colour. Top it off with lighting in metallic copper colours or exposed light bulbs and see the difference.

SLEEK IS CHIC

In contemporary kitchens, sleek and streamlined cabinetry is seeing a rise in popularity. It was only a matter of time before people realised there was a way

to avoid knocking your knees against handles and getting tugged back when apron strings and clothes get caught at the corners.

Homeowners are looking to handle-less cabinetry for a fuss-free and safer kitchen. Pull recesses and push-open mechanisms have replaced knobs and hand-grips. The look is usually paired with high-gloss finishes in white, black or hues in between for that chic modern flat-out and feel. However, it is expected that handle-less units will be a fixture in other design styles with the introduction of painted colour options that allow homeowners to add texture to the cabinetry.

WORK FOR YOU

Technology is unavoidable and it follows even into the kitchen. To keep up with the demands of a fast-paced lifestyle, young homeowners will take to smart kitchen gadgets that make mornings and nights a little easier.

“There will be more of a focus on appliances such as integrated speakers with Bluetooth functionality, colour-changing lights and even pop-up sockets for phone charging, giving traditional kitchens a subtle, modern twist,” said LochAnna Kitchens category manager Pete Sherry.

Designer Gail Drury sees mobile applications playing a role in the kitchen, most notably in meal preparations, where homeowners can programme their appliances and monitor their meals all via their smartphone devices. “We will be able to turn our appliances on and



PIX: CATILIN MCCARTHY DESIGN

off from the office and adjust temperature settings,” she explained, allowing for smaller kitchen spaces that is still effective.

EASY PEASY UPKEEP

Also increasing in popularity as the number of young homeowners rise are low-maintenance spaces. These young homeowners will make design choices that make cleaning and home upkeep easier.

Drury’s colleague designer Jane Lockhart advises choosing larger-format tiles with less grout lines for floors and backsplashes for easier cleaning. Lockhart also advises, “Multiple-use appliances are more practical and easier to clean because they’re smaller with less surface to clean.”

Engineered materials such as quartz is used for counter-tops for its durability and ease of cleaning. According to Tukasa Creations marketing and social media director Sam Ferris, “Quartz is twice as strong as granite and is non-porous which means less scratches, chipping and no sealing”. Ferris also advises against raised panel styles and glass door fronts on cabinetry and to lose the crown, corbels and decorative legs.

PERSONALITY TOUCHES

Another modern kitchen element that is

noteworthy is that homeowners are ditching “playing it safe” with kitchen decor and adding personal touches to kitchens.

Lockhart notes that jewel tones such as ruby reds, golds, turquoises, emeralds and sapphires are growing in popularity. These tones (and sometimes real stones) will appear more in backsplashes, fabrics and hardware, but can even extend to a wide range of hoods.

“While white is still popular, it is not personalised, so we will see more individualised kitchens through colour and materials,” Lockhart said, adding that decor items such as area rugs and runners will find a place in the kitchen in materials that emphasise geometry and texture.

Kitchen makers have observed this trend as well and have brought into their catalogues cabinetry in bright, colourful hues. *Ideal Home* reported that high-gloss finishes are still popular as they add impact to a strong shade. However, matte finishes are on the rise, as they make dirty marks less visible.

With the pointers above, it is still advised that before starting any renovations to the kitchen, be aware of the various activities that will take place, and in which area of the kitchen. Once that has been ascertained, it is easier to plan kitchen decor that can satisfy your needs, whilst infusing a bit of your personality in its design.



PIX: HOUSE AND HOME



PIX: LOCHANNA KITCHENS



PIX: MEGAN BROOKE HANDMADE

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