

cooking up colour



It's been a while since Chris Pemberton was a professional chef – 16 years in fact – but she hasn't lost her old work habits.

So, when she briefed designer Sandra Grummitt for the kitchen in her very contemporary new home, she knew exactly what would work for her and her teenage son.

“With the proper layout in a functional kitchen, you don’t need a big space,” Chris explains. “I wanted a good work area, where I could stand at the bench and get to the fridge and the dishwasher. The walk-in pantry is also to hand.”

And Sandra quickly got the message that stark white would not do for Chris. For a start, the house is black cedar with silver joinery and polished concrete floors, so Chris wanted the contrast of colour in her favourite room. Together, they looked at pictures of kitchens in strong blues, with contrasting orange or aubergine and beech, and Sandra quickly knew what would appeal to her client.

“People have to understand that colour will override the rest of the design,” explains Sandra. “A lot of clients want to be conventional, with neutrals, but using colour can dominate and create a high-impact focus. The rest of the house was neutral, so we could afford to draw attention to the kitchen.”

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The palette of Resene Groovy and Resene Resolution Blue, which they settled on together, sings against the Resene Half Tea walls. Even the fridge is a sculpture of blue in its integrated cabinet next to the pantry. Sandra then added beech techno-ply to the front of the bar and the countertops, as a warm counterpoint to the concrete floors and the glossy lacquer and stainless steel of the working areas.

out with the old air

No doubt that chicken korma you cooked for dinner last night smelled and tasted delicious. However, when the aroma is still lingering throughout your house the next day, it’s not quite as appealing.

And with the modern home-design trend for open-plan kitchens and living areas, installing the right extraction system is more important than ever.

Mark Jones, owner of Applico Group, which imports and distributes Italian Smeg appliances, says there are many misconceptions about rangehoods and ducting.

“It’s an area of kitchen design that people often don’t give much consideration to – frequently it’s a bit of an after-thought and that can be a mistake,” he says. “As soon as you attach more than 1.5m of ducting to a rangehood, you significantly reduce its extraction performance. The same is true when you have bends in the ducting.”

What’s more, when it comes to extraction, size really does matter and bigger is definitely better.

“Hot air and steam don’t just go straight up, so your rangehood should always be wider than your hob,” says Mark. “If you have a 60cm hob, you should put in a 90cm rangehood. If the hob’s 90cm, you need a 120cm rangehood.”

Mark has noticed a real shift in the local market toward the 120cm-wide hoods, which is in line with the new European look for very long or even round extraction systems. Appliance manufacturers are also responding to consumer demand for better performance and smarter products with more functions.

“Most of the latest Smeg rangehoods have six speeds and extraction rates of more than 1000 cubic metres of air per hour. They also incorporate features such as a timer, and a light that tells you the filters need cleaning,” he says.

So what about aesthetics? It would seem we’ve come full circle and that the latest look is for concealed rangehoods, rather than the canopy hoods that were popular five years ago. The styling is also much slimmer now, to complement that of the kitchen cabinetry.

Mark advises those renovating or planning a new kitchen to factor in their extraction and ducting right from the start. That way, you’ll ensure your rangehood is as efficient as possible, and friends coming over for brunch won’t instantly know what you had for dinner last night.

“Chris is a vibrant, fun, smiley person. She wasn’t going to go with conventional colours,” says Sandra. “When the house was finished and she unpacked all her collections of Pacific blue and green, then the kitchen really was her. She loves those colours, and all her friends and family give her pieces to add to the collection, so the kitchen is her personality. And I love the high impact.”

Chris enjoys baking, spoiling her son by always having treats in the tins, and also spends her time stirring up pots of relishes and chutneys. So Sandra zoned the pantry as an accessible space, using open shelves and incorporating plenty of benchspace and electrical points, so Chris could leave appliances like the bread maker, mixer and food-processor plugged in and ready to go. Chris did not want a commercial cooker, but insists that her large Fisher and Paykel Titan oven is used to full advantage.

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The kitchen opens through French doors onto a covered courtyard that Chris, now working as a landscaper, is planting and shaping with railway sleepers. She loves to open the bi-fold windows into the barbecue area, which, with its north-facing aspect, is a great spot to catch the morning sun over breakfast. In the evenings, friends tend to congregate around the bar with drinks while Chris cooks – bar stools are next on her shopping list.

“I’ve had functional kitchens in my past houses, and they’ve all been good, but now I’ve got exactly what I want,” she says. “This kitchen is my place and I just love it. I’ve got friends who say they wouldn’t be brave enough, but others go ‘wow’. I love that it’s me.” **H**



Designer: Sandra Grummitt

Drawers: Metabox on Blum runners

Benchtops: Brushed stainless steel

Resene Half Tea 



Double flap mechanism: Salice

Cabinetry: MDF

Island back panel and toe-kicks: European beech

Handles: Forma in silver

Tap: Tower Tech

Light: Elektra

Utensil rail: Hettich Linero in aluminium

Splashback: Everlasting from Graphic Glass

Sinks: Franke

Resene Groovy 

Get the interior look with Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen tinted to Resene Groovy, Resene Resolution Blue and Resene Half Tea.

Resene Clockwork Orange 

Resene Resolution Blue 