

eating out

Alfresco dining is a concept enthusiastically embraced by us and spending summer evenings around the barbecue is now a national pastime. However, running inside every five minutes to get another drink from the fridge or grabbing a forgotten condiment can wear thin after a while. That's why some homeowners are cottoning on to the American idea of the outdoor kitchen.

With two teenage children and a love of entertaining, the owners of this new masonry home in Auckland asked architect Mark Wilson to incorporate a kitchen/entertaining area into the design, adjacent to the pool. Kitchen designer Sarah Waite-Quinlan, from Kitchens By Design, worked with Mark and the owners to create a space that housed everything they needed, including a generous outdoor fireplace, raised up to benchtop height, with wood storage underneath.

The kitchen also had to accommodate a large, freestanding Weber barbecue on the wall opposite the fireplace.

"The whole back of the house opens onto the pool area," says Sarah. "You walk through bifold doors from the living room, through the outdoor kitchen, to reach the pool and garden. This covered loggia provides a wonderful transition from the interior to the exterior of the house."

As the area is open to the elements, all the materials have been selected with durability in mind. The thick benchtop of polished concrete was poured in situ by the builder, and is a practical and hardwearing surface. In the rear corner of the space is a sink and tap with a commercial spray attachment. A heavy-duty waste disposal unit was installed to crunch up any leftovers and barbecue bones.

Just like everything else in the kitchen, the cabinetry has been built to withstand being outdoors. Its warm-toned Meranti plywood façade has been marine-treated and the cabinet handles are made from rust-proof stainless steel.

"While appearing simple, the cabinetry hides all sorts of gadgetry," says Sarah. "There's a special barbecue-implementation drawer, bottle storage for spirits and mixers, a 50-litre rubbish bin for the empties, tray and platter storage, and a pullout Liebherr drinks fridge."

A custom-made stainless steel meat drawer is designed to hold a layer of ice, so steaks and sausages can be kept cool without any risk of getting meat juice all over the beer bottles, says Sarah. The drawer is designed to be removable for easy emptying and cleaning.



In addition to being attractive and comfortable, the PVC-weave lounge furniture, selected by the owners, is weatherproof.

Cedar louvres on either side of the fireplace provide cross-ventilation during the heat of summer.

where do you start?

Renovating or building a kitchen can be an expensive project, so it pays to get it right. Employing a kitchen designer will make your task much easier, but before you do, decide if you just need help with the design or whether you also want someone to project manage the job, overseeing the subcontractors (builders, stoppers, cabinetry and flooring installers, plumbers, electricians and tilers), and ordering appliances and materials.

Having your kitchen out of action for any period of time is likely to cause major disruptions. However, by planning everything from start to finish, you can avoid the delays that tend to extend your kitchen down-time.

think about

design

Regardless of size, good layout is paramount. The work triangle is still a fundamental design principle, and can be worked into virtually any shape of kitchen. It sees the fridge, sink and cooktop positioned to form a triangle, generally with the sink at the apex, and the fridge and cooktop on the outer two corners. Ideally, no traffic should pass through this triangle, and it shouldn't be obstructed by an island or table.

storage

Sufficient, accessible storage is worth its weight in gold. Look at where you can make the most of every centimetre. Incorporate small box drawers into your cabinetry for spices and foil rolls, or use narrow slots for tray and baking-dish storage. Wire baskets and cup hooks let you utilise dead space between shelves, and carousels in corner cupboards mean all items can be accessed easily.

Try to store things you need as close as possible to where you'll use them – put cooking utensils next to the cooktop and unload dishes directly from the dishwasher into overhead cupboards or adjacent cutlery drawers. Heavy and large items are best stored in drawers or cupboards below benchtop height. Keep handy the things you use daily, while infrequently used items should go in more out-of-the-way places. Remember to allocate storage space for miscellaneous items, such as mops, brooms, pet food, highchairs, cookbooks, family noticeboards and recyclables.



bench space

Adequate bench space is vital, especially when you have more than one person cooking or preparing food at a time. Be sure, also, to allow enough bench space around the cooktop and oven to set down hot dishes.

appliances

Rather than buying appliances with whiz-bang functions you'll never use, go for practical features that make life easier and reduce power consumption. Make a list of all the things you really need and want in each appliance, then go shopping.

electrical and plumbing

If you're renovating your kitchen, try to keep the plumbing and wiring where it is. Using existing service points will save a lot of money. Bear in mind that for the warranty to be valid, most appliances must be installed by a certified electrician.

Good lighting is another must-have. In addition to general lighting, position task lighting above cooktops, meal-preparation areas and the sink. You may also want to add feature lighting inside and under cabinets.

ventilation

Don't make this an after-thought. Rangehoods ducted out through the roof or an external wall are the most effective, and allowance will need to be made for this at the initial design stage.

cleaning

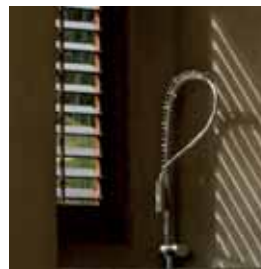
Choose surfaces, materials and colours that are easy to clean and maintain. Display shelves, open plate racks and cup holders, and benchtop appliances tend to attract dust and grime, causing added work.

avoid common mistakes:

- > Power points. Ask your electrician to install more power points than you think you'll need. You may want to put one or two power points inside benchtop cupboards for small appliances such as blenders and coffee grinders.
- > Sinks. Make sure your sink is big enough to wash large platters and baking trays.
- > Storage accessibility. Stretching to reach items in high overhead cupboards is annoying and can be dangerous. Likewise, you'll grow tired of getting down on your hands and knees to retrieve items at the back of under-bench corner cupboards.
- > Appliance placement. Ideally, the dishwasher should be as close to the sink as possible, to make rinsing and stacking easier.

smoke alarms

The kitchen is one of the most common places for a fire to start, and yet smoke alarms can be problematic when mounted in the kitchen itself – many models have a tendency to be triggered in the general course of cooking. Mount an alarm in an adjacent space, such as a hallway, where it will pick up fire heat but not that of cooking. Make sure it's not too close to the bathroom for the same reason. **H**



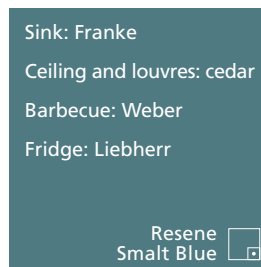
Benchtop: polished concrete, poured in situ
Tap: Vela L by In Residence

Resene Rockpool Green



Cabinetry: Meranti plywood (marine-treated) by Fyfe Kitchens

Resene Ecrú White



Sink: Franke
Ceiling and louvres: cedar
Barbecue: Weber
Fridge: Liebherr

Resene Smalt Blue



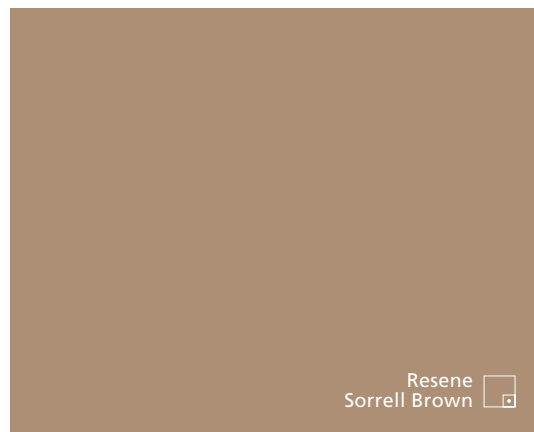
Floor: fossilised limestone from Jurassic Stone

Resene Fuscous Grey



Get this look with Resene Sandtex tinted to Resene Neutral Green.

Resene Neutral Green



Resene Sorrell Brown