

KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

GUINEVERE DAVIES OFFERS A NO-FAIL
GUIDE TO CREATING A GREAT FAMILY
FRIENDLY OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN SPACE

Resisting the pull of a well-designed, functional, open-plan kitchen space is hard. The designated cooking, eating and household gathering spot, a family-friendly kitchen, is the hardest-working room in the home. But as the focal point of most open-plan houses, the space not only needs to function perfectly, but look good too. >

LET THERE BE (NATURAL) LIGHT

An abundance of natural light is one of the most important features for any open-plan kitchen space. It makes everything look better and helps to create a welcoming, spacious atmosphere.

"The ideal open-plan kitchen is light, airy and inviting, with a good flow," says Silvia Miles, founder and owner of Milestone Kitchens.

Siemens communication manager Lisa Greenwood echoes this sentiment. "Maximising natural light is key to getting the mood for the space right," she says. "If you have the option to build from scratch or renovate, aim to include folding glass doors that lead onto the garden. This will bring more natural light into your kitchen, while also creating alfresco dining spaces."

Greenwood adds: "In order to make the most of natural light coming into the kitchen, think carefully about the materials that you choose. Light colours, glossy kitchen tops, pale woods and mirrors help to reflect light."



CHOOSE LUXE, LIFE-PROOF FINISHES

"Materials and finishes can make all the difference in the way a kitchen will last," says FABRI's Erin Braithwaite. "Natural stone should be avoided (for countertops) as it's more difficult to seal and likelier to stain than engineered surfaces. In terms of cabinetry finishes, there are new innovations in nanotechnology that enable scratches to be repaired with warm water and are ideal for use in family-oriented kitchens."

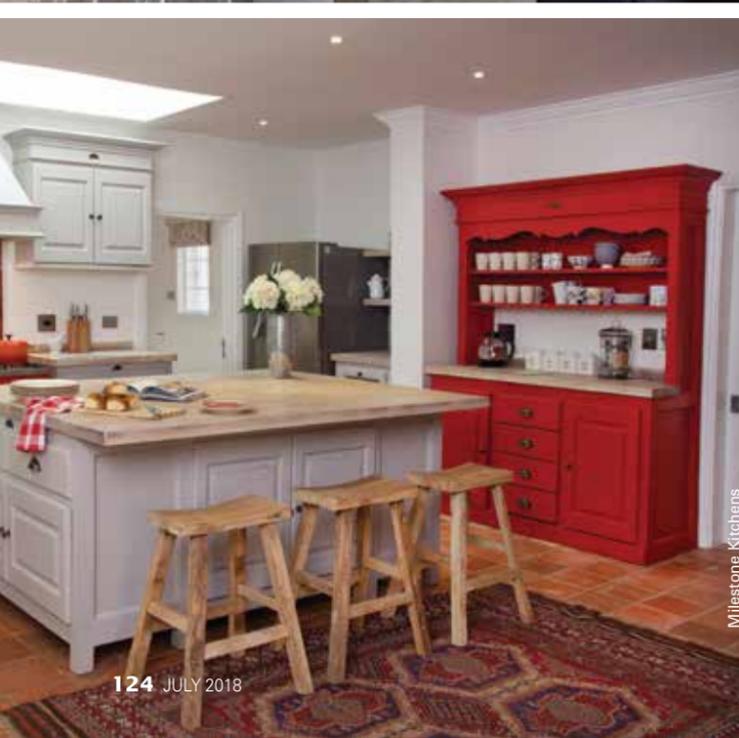
Engineered quartz gets the thumbs-up for countertops from the kitchen experts at Schmidt South Africa, who advise: "Quartz is highly popular, as it is both hard-wearing and appealing."

When it comes to countertops, Milestone Kitchens' Miles suggests mixing and matching to suit your needs. "Stainless steel is incredibly durable and hardworking and can withstand both water and heat. It's ideal for around a sink, as well as for preparation areas. It does scratch, but this creates a beautiful, worn patina over time, giving it character."

"We recommend choosing smaller pieces of granite, marble or quartz in areas that need it most. Then opt for wood, stainless steel or even concrete for the rest. I recommend wooden tops and seating area around any kitchen island. This ensures that the kitchen island is warm to the touch, and inviting for friends and family to sit around."

If you're looking to embrace a more unique finish, look no further than certain building staples, says blu_line's Philip Richards. "Quartz and granite counters are still the most practical, but accent counters in concrete and other bespoke materials can also work if designed correctly."

"I recommend wooden tops and seating area around any kitchen island. This ensures that the kitchen island is warm to the touch, and inviting for friends and family to sit around." - Silvia Miles



KITCHEN ISLANDS VS BREAKFAST NOOKS

The statement-maker sitting front and centre in almost every open-plan kitchen space, kitchen islands have become an integral part of modern kitchen design. But that doesn't mean the more traditional breakfast nooks have fallen out of favour...

"I would say the kitchen island is the most popular, practical and needed element in a family kitchen," says blu_line's Philip Richards. "It can cater for everything needed to avoid having to move around the kitchen when cooking. And the seating on the island offers a relational way for the family to connect." >





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– Lisa Greenwood

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Selma Zaifoglu, co-owner of Linear Concepts, agrees. “Cooking on a kitchen island creates a more social atmosphere, which is great for a family-friendly kitchen as it allows for parents to monitor what’s happening around them while still cooking.”

Zaifoglu adds, “Lower seating design and TV units in the kitchen are desirable for family-friendly open-plan homes, as they allow for parents to be in the kitchen while watching the children. We also suggest good table-leg support as we know kids love to climb and stand on everything.”

FABRI’s Braithwaite says: “A family-friendly kitchen island should encourage social interaction between the family members, which is easily achieved with a well-designed breakfast nook. In addition, it is increasingly important to have charging stations for devices that are easily accessible in the kitchen layout to allow the nook to transform into a work station if necessary.”

Schmidt South Africa’s experts advise including both, if space allows. “Breakfast nooks are making a slight comeback, with many of our clients requesting them to be fitted alongside their kitchen island.”

As far as Milestone Kitchens’ Miles is concerned, if you have to choose, there’s really only one winner. “Kitchen islands with a seating area are more versatile than the traditional breakfast nook, and are a better use of space in the kitchen.” 🏡

With thanks to *blu_line*, *FABRI*, *Linear Concepts*, *Milestone Kitchens*, *Schmidt South Africa* and *Siemens*

QUICK TIPS FROM THE PROS

HOW TO MAKE YOUR WARM, WELCOMING, ALL-EMBRACING KITCHEN EVEN BETTER

“Free-standing kitchen units, rather than fixed wall-to-floor units, are ideal for a family-friendly home, making cleaning that much easier. A broom and vacuum cleaner fits under the units with ease, and if you’ve chosen units on castors, then you can simply move the unit aside to clean the floor.” – **Silvia Miles, Milestone Kitchens**

“The charm of an open-plan kitchen lies in the way that you can cook, dine and relax in the same space. The challenge that comes with this is that you don’t want the smell of food drifting into the lounge area, nor noisy appliances getting in the way of a good conversation. Siemens offers appliances with low noise levels and unobtrusive extractor fans for optimal ventilation.” – **Lisa Greenwood, Siemens**

“Pocket door systems in open-plan kitchens are gaining popularity, as they allow whatever mess has been left behind on the surfaces to be hidden from view from guests quickly and easily.” – **Selma Zaifoglu, Linear Concepts**

“We suggest including a prep bowl and hob on the kitchen island to make it an actual working piece of furniture, and not just a showpiece.” – **Schmidt South Africa**