

KITCHENS WITH TASTE

If a new kitchen is on your list for 2017, Seán O'Connell suggests choosing one with your very own ingredients



Lucas Designs



Roundhouse



Tom Howley



Farrow & Ball

“A place where food is cooked.” This is the first definition of kitchen in Chambers Dictionary and it says everything about the original function of the space that has since become the “hub of the home”. There is a reason houses were traditionally built with the kitchens at the back of the property, with barely enough space to swing the proverbial cat – eating only took place in the dining or breakfast room. And, of course, for the very well-heeled, the kitchen was a place never to be seen – it was strictly the domain of cooks and servants.

How times, and kitchens, have changed. Even in the past decade, the characteristics of this room have altered beyond recognition, and it is transforming the way we live. We now spend more waking hours in this area than any other part of the house. As a result, kitchens are increasingly becoming the place we lavish most of our love, attention – and money. A widely-accepted formula for how much you should outlay on a kitchen renovation project is 4-5% of the house’s value. So a £2m property would merit a budget of around of £75-100k.

STARTING POINT

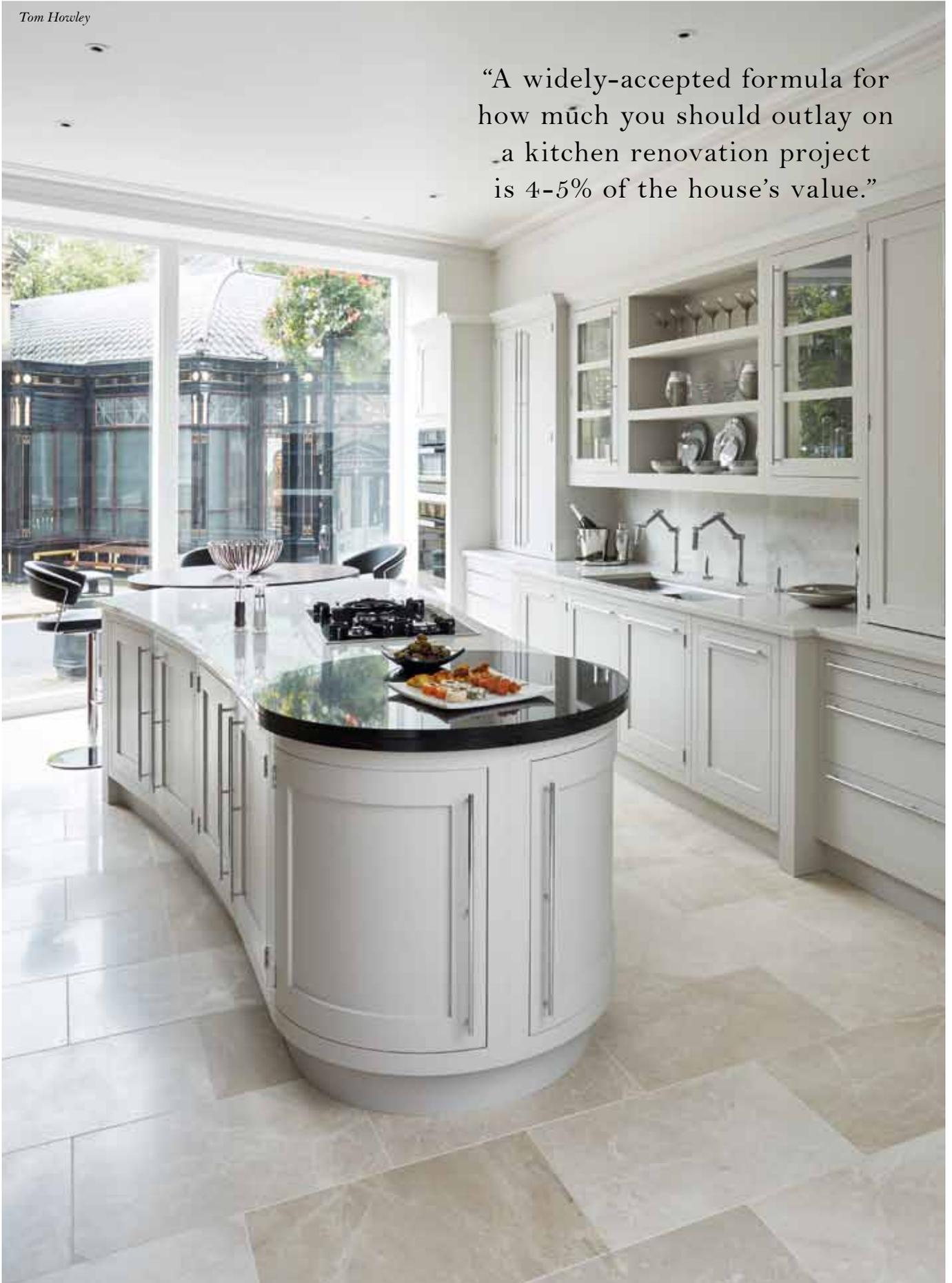
If you are after the personal touch, it goes without saying that careful consideration has to be given to the space that now has more functions than ever before. The modern kitchen is an open-plan place that acts as a family social hub, somewhere the children do their homework, where guests gravitate to during parties and – here’s a novelty – it’s where the meals of the house are prepared, too.

So how do you create a scheme that is sympathetic to all these requirements? Enter the interior designer. Renovating the room your parents would probably have used simply for preparing food can mean expert help is needed to create cohesion. Consideration must be given to the feel of the rest of the house. “Visually, the most important thing is for the kitchen to be in keeping with your other rooms,” according to Matthew Lucas of Lucas Designs. “A kitchen can feel slightly out of kilter if a designer is working on it in isolation.”



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Considering how much time we spend in our kitchens, it is important that any colour scheme you choose is one that you are prepared to live with until the next time you get the decorators in. According to Charlie Cosby, Head of Creative at Farrow & Ball: “Colour is very personal – it reflects our character as well as creating emotional responses and atmosphere, so it’s important that you select a palette that feels right for you.”

Texture, too, is important in today’s personalised kitchen as it adds contrast and interest to surfaces – think of it in tactile and visual terms. The texture of some materials becomes apparent when you feel it, while others have strong patterns or designs that create visual interest. “We encourage our clients to mix materials and layer textures,” says Jamie Telford of Roundhouse Design. “We’re moving away from synthetic in favour of beautiful, natural stone and polished concrete. It’s about combinations of finishes, such as burnished metallics with natural stone, polished concrete with rough-sawn timber or river-washed ply and textured granite on worksurfaces and wallcoverings.”





Zbaeren



Zbaeren



Zbaeren

A MATTER OF TASTE

A defining aspect of our new-found attitude to kitchens is the desire to make them reflect our own needs, tastes and, importantly, personalities. One man whose life's work has been devoted to delivering the personal touch is Ben Zbaeren of Swiss kitchen manufacturers Zbaeren. "We're a family company that does everything from the design to manufacturing through to the installation. We look at the house as a whole and consider the taste of the client to create a look that all works together and truly fits the personalities of the owners," he says. "As a result, we end up with kitchens that are unique in terms of materials, size and style."

WITH MEN IN MIND

As we already know, the kitchen is no longer the domain of the woman, and this has resulted in a range of designs and functions undreamt of just a decade ago. In both their finish and construction, kitchens now boast features you would normally associate with that of high-end sportscars. Reacting to a demand for designs with male appeal, Poggenpohl teamed up with Porsche Design to produce a series of sleek, highly engineered kitchens all tailored to the customers' needs.





Artichoke

FINISHING TOUCHES

The trend for kitchens is to be open plan, with everything on show, but there is also a growing demand for installing an additional room that we usually associate with the Victorians – the scullery. More projects are now including this space, which acts as a second kitchen where all the work is done and, perhaps more importantly, where clutter can be hidden. These are much bigger than the walk-in pantries of the past and are frequently large enough to be used by caterers. Andrew Petherick of Artichoke says: “We design kitchens for large country houses and estates and our clients want pantries that are not only working rooms, but are also beautifully made with materials of character and quality.”

APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE

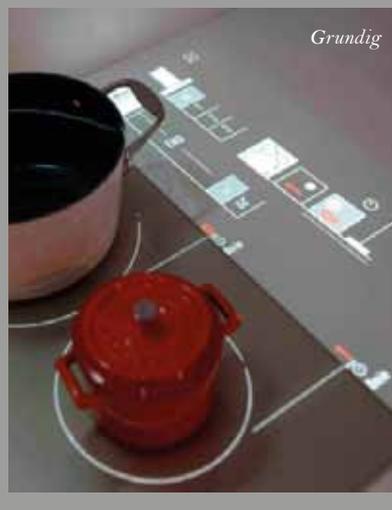
Whatever their style of kitchen, the homeowners of today demand the latest gadgetry, and the new generation of appliances not only caters for personal tastes, but takes the cooking experience to a higher plane. La Cornue’s new G4 range combines tradition with tech to offer a staggering array of cooking methods, while Grundig’s VUX system eliminates the need for knobs and buttons, thanks to its amazing Projection Technology.



La Cornue



Artichoke



Grundig