

# KITCHENS BEDROOMS & BATHROOMS

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dark kitchen, so  
bringing in lots of  
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really important"*

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This kitchen design by Artichoke mixes Carrara marble and aged sycamore in a scheme heavily influenced by the grand Victorian kitchen at Lanhydrock House in Cornwall. Artichoke kitchens start from £150,000.

With the continuing popularity of open-plan living, another trend has followed: dividing the kitchen into zones according to function. Combining worktops is an excellent way of differentiating areas within the space while adding extra texture, greater functionality, and interest to your design. Here, we explore the latest options and show you how best to achieve the look

Words: Francesca Seden

# MIX IN THE K



The Modena kitchen from McCarran & Co combines walnut and painted furniture with the leathered Cosmic Black worktop, while the contrasting maple butcher's block features a stainless-steel surface. Kitchens from McCarran & Co start from £35,000.

**W**hen planning a mix-and-match worktop scheme, your first considerations should be practicality. For the area around the sink, for example, you might choose a non-porous, hard-wearing solid surface material such as composites, ceramic or quartz, from brands including Silestone, Caesarstone, CRL Stone, or Laminam. These surfaces offer antibacterial properties and are heat-resistant – so they are ideal for food preparation areas.

Natural materials such as granite and marble offer great heat resistance and will age well if looked after. However, marble can be tricky to maintain – so bear this in mind when making your choices.

A welcome contrast to stone or composite, wood is a warmer material and great for an island breakfast bar or your dining table. “Two contrasting materials, set at varying heights,

will further enhance differentiation between zones”, explains Laura Davie, marketing coordinator at Cosentino UK & Ireland.

If your kitchen design includes an island, you can use this as an opportunity to layer surfaces and create a sculptural statement and a hub for the family to meet while also adding a focal point to the room.

One of the key trends is to use natural materials where possible and choose surfaces that look the part elsewhere – for example real wood on a breakfast bar and a laminate with a similar look, which needs less care, for preparation areas. Colours are often either muted and neutral or rich and dark. Metallic finishes – including bronze, copper, and steel – as well as rough concrete textures feed an appetite for the industrial.

Giving advice around style considerations, Tom Howley, creative design director at Tom Howley, recommends choosing between two commonly used approaches. “When mixing

up your worktops, go either high contrast or pair colours along the same spectrum,” he says. “You might choose a bright white quartz kitchen island top with a deep walnut integrated breakfast bar or dining area. Or, to coordinate shades, an understated grey worktop with a smoked wood accent works well.”

Jon Stanley, vice president marketing at Caesarstone, recommends consulting professional designers who can advise on complementary materials and help you trawl through all that is on offer to find a combination to suit your scheme.

Finally, it’s advisable to stick to no more than three materials across all surfaces, or you risk the look becoming cluttered. The key things to remember are to work out what purpose the material will serve, pair it with contrasting style or in complementary tones, and don’t be afraid to experiment with something bold. In short: mix it up. ▶