

# KITCHENS BEDROOMS & BATHROOMS

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*Buying*

# A KITCHEN?

DISCOVER HOW TO HAVE YOUR  
DREAM DESIGN, NO MATTER THE BUDGET

Georgina enjoys a cup of tea while looking around a kitchen display at Halcyon Interiors.



*Hey, I'm Georgina...*

# How to buy a KITCHEN

Whether you're about to have a new design as part of an extension, or you've had the same cabinetry for decades and it's time for a refresh – acting editor Georgina Townshend finds out how to get the process started, no matter your budget or style >



*Looking at samples with Graham*

Warmed by a cup of tea and an industrial-style fireplace, I spoke with co-founders Andy Driscoll and Mike Hill about the process they go through.

Anyone looking for a kitchen with them will have an initial phone consultation, to learn more about the technical things such as budget, ideas and timeframes – a process you will find most companies undertake in one form or another. The team will either then visit the homeowners to progress the design and measure up, or invite them to the workshop. Of course, unlike a regular showroom, you won't be able to touch, feel, and visualise your space – and you can't point to worktops, appliances or cabinetry you like the look of. However, this can be made up for by the fact that Shere Kitchens can work with tricky-shaped ceilings, create any size of cabinetry, cornice match, or engrave names on drawers – nothing is impossible. Andy and Mike will dedicate hours to the small details to make these kitchens perfect. In fact, Mike told me he wants his clients to be “brutal” in their feedback when going back and forth with designs – as there's no point spending all that money if they aren't 100% happy. And this is important advice for any budget or design. I'm pretty blown away at how these beautiful kitchens come from such humble origins – and I can see the appeal of being able to watch your

cabinetry being made. However, if you are going for a bespoke kitchen company, or a joiner, with no showroom, I would recommend trying to visit or at least talk to homeowners who have finished a project with the company for reassurance. I was invited to a home down the road from the workshop to see a kitchen they had completed two years ago – and it still looked perfect.

While the process of buying bespoke is fairly similar to others, the level of detail, options, and customer service you are presented with sets it apart – but it also makes it that much pricier. The designers will work with you to overcome any logistical problems, advise on all parts of the kitchen, from materials to appliances, and be with you from the beginning right through to the final fix – and after, too.

Of course, you can still have a similar service and a highly personalised, unique space by choosing a kitchen company that offers custom-made (also known as made-to-order) cabinetry. Often, these retailers will use two to three different furniture manufacturers and have a range of appliance partners. You'll find the crème de la crème of these lining Wigmore Street in London – known by some in the industry as the epicentre of kitchen design. I decided to visit one showroom to see how this differed from my first experience. >

Georgina tests out one of the kitchens at Halcyon Interiors.



*Who's hungry?*

A kitchen should be something that lasts for years, so don't rush the decision. This large open-plan scheme, from Piqué, features a beautiful range of materials and textures. Prices for a Piqué kitchen start from £35,000.



**above** Don't forget to include elements such as lighting, flooring and handles into your budget. Hunza chandelier, £580, Pooky.

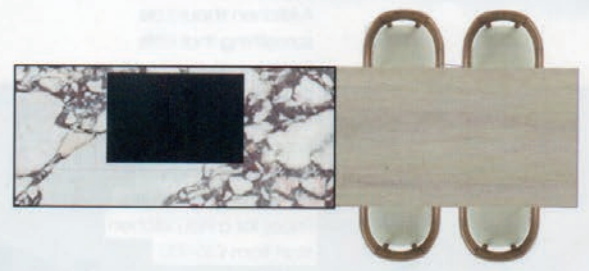
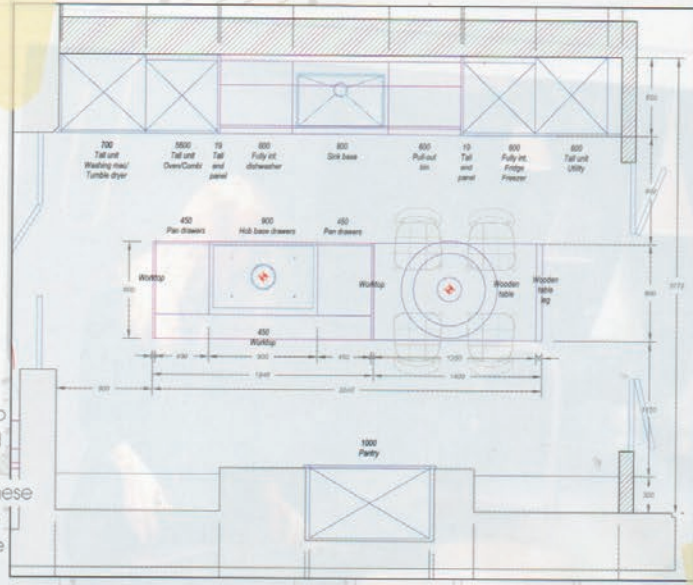


Photography: Chris Snook

Halcyon Interiors specialise in luxury minimalist kitchens, with the average price of their designs typically being around the £55,000 mark. Designer Graham Robinson gave me the tour as if I was a potential client and talked me through the early stages of buying a kitchen. It felt very relaxed and informal, with no pressure or sales pitch whatsoever. This is probably because he describes the first meeting as more of an initial chat with you – from finding out how you live and how you cook to seeing if you like to do a lot of online shopping (so get lots of cardboard) and how big your wine glasses are. Expect these meetings to last for around two hours. From there, he'll get designing and invite you back in for a second visit to go through the plans and start finessing the layout. Graham's top tip is to take the time to think about what you really want, as your kitchen is a big investment you will use for years to come. There is no limit on how many alterations to the designs that can be done or how long it can take. Graham tells me plans can be signed off in as little as a couple of weeks – or take as long as more than a year to finalise, in some extreme cases.

However, you don't have to trek all the way into central London to get a similar experience. A few days later I visited Day True on Wimbledon high street, who describe themselves as kitchen, bathroom and home retailers with a difference. They offer a mix of bespoke and made-to-order furniture, and take an approach to design that is driven by the belief that good design has the potential to improve happiness and wellbeing. Over a coffee I spoke with co-founder Hayley Robson, who tells me initial meetings will include discussing timescales, budget and stages of readiness, while looking at drawings, clippings, or an iPad full of the homeowner's ideas. During this meeting they'll explore some musts and likes and, just like Halcyon Interiors, discover more about how you live. >

Plans from different companies will vary in style, so be sure to cross reference and compare any you have completed. These designs by Day True include a socialable island, glamorous marble surfaces, and banks of units.



Checking out the kitchens at Day True